Economics
Department and Program Review (2025-2026)

Section 1: Report on Previous Goals & Requests

Previous APR Goal	What Happened
Continue to aggressively maintain consistency between instructors in the discipline over course goals and assessments through collaborations	Since the last APR in 2021, the one full-time economics faculty member retired. In 2022, the position was filled with a full-time tenure-track hire. Since 2022, all economics courses offered by the college have been taught by me, Abhay Ghiara, the one full-time economist.
Remain on the cutting edge of our discipline using applicable examples and narratives throughout our courses.	I engaged in extensive collaborations with Sustainability faculty leading to the core EC 201Z (Principles of Microeconomics) and EC 202Z (Principles of Macroeconomics) courses receiving the sustainability designation (SD). The core economics courses (EC 201Z, 202Z, and 230) have been redesigned to incorporate recent research, economic trends, and historical and contemporary examples of economic theories and principles.
Provide additional economics course offerings	An International Economics (EC 230) course focusing on the rigorous application of microeconomics and macroeconomics to the global economy, especially the Global South, has been revived and is offered each academic year.
Better ensure all economics instructors can teach all courses in the discipline.	See comment above regarding staffing changes since the previous APR.

Section 2: Fulfilling Your Mission

The Social Sciences mission statement is as follows: “Social science engages students to create an inclusive environment which fosters personal growth, appreciation of local and global diversity, and critical thinking to understand complex social issues.” The general social science mission statement captures the spirit of programs in the Social Sciences department. The economics program supports the broader social sciences mission and its own mission. This mission has two central components. First, to instruct students in the methods, ideas and communication of modern economics inquiry. Second, to prepare students for the transfer to and completions of programs in economics, business, health, forestry, and engineering.

The present economics program at COCC is rooted in the United Nations' sustainable development goals (SDGs include no poverty, zero hunger, gender equality, reduced inequality, and responsible consumption and production). These goals have been adopted by all member states with the intent of ending poverty, protecting the environment, and ensuring prosperity for all. Our program has considerably broadened its content emphasis to include grassroots level applications of economics principles to disadvantaged communities worldwide. Microeconomics principles are illustrated by analyzing farmers markets and community cooperatives. Macroeconomics principles are illustrated by examining the Grameen band model (administering micro-credit) and Community Development Credit Unions (providing tailored low interest loans to underserved entrepreneurs). Additional areas of analysis based on my professional work include clean drinking water in the slums of Mumbai, creation of community money in favelas in Rio de Janeiro, and moneyless training within a Philippine community. This social justice approach has broadened the program since I took the reins of the department in 2021.

Assessments for EC 201Z and EC 202Z have been completed and the other regularly offered economics course (EC 230) is scheduled to be assessed in 2026-27.

I collaborated with the Office of High School Partnerships to extend awareness of COCC's economics courses to high school students and to encourage concurrent enrollment.

Section 3: Fulfillment of College Goals and Initiatives

The Economics program has helped fulfill the institution’s mission to empower students by offering rigorous 100 and 200-level economics courses. The program consistently fosters equity by connecting theoretical concepts such as trade-offs and incentives to real-world applications such as the economic skills related to COCC’s mission that empathizes preparing students for lifelong success. The economics program achieves this by cultivating the ability to analyze information, question assumptions, and make reasoned, evidence-based decisions.

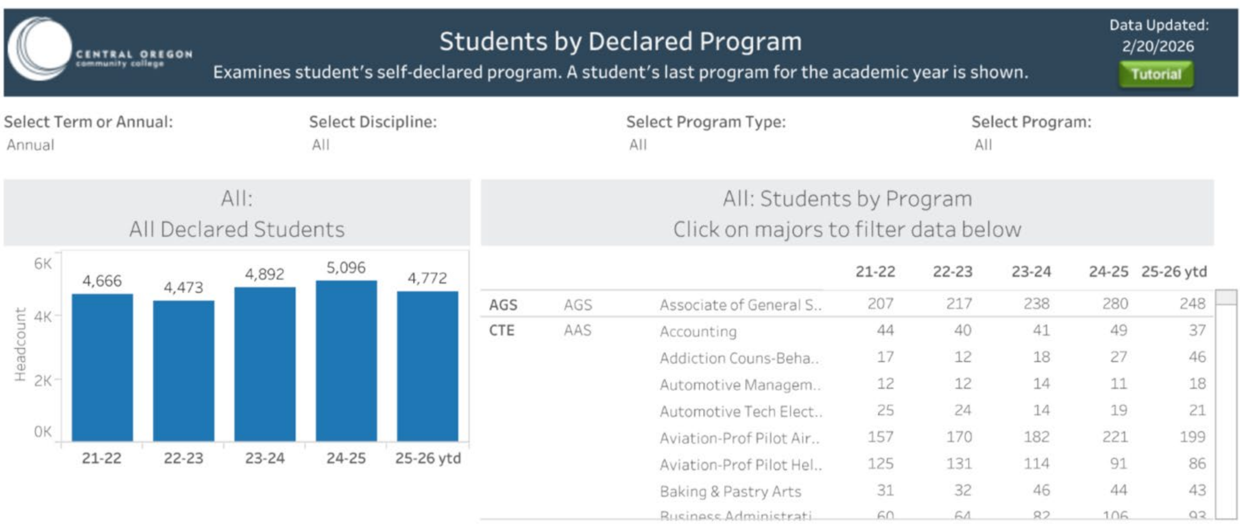
The Economics program has helped fulfill the institution’s vision by offering a sustainability-based curriculum that is accessible to all students. Economics courses develop critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, students are empowered with a quality inclusive economics education that emphasizes applications to a wide range of fields and professions. Finally, I offer courses in a variety of instructional formats (in-person, remote, and online) to meet student needs.

Section 4: Diversity and Inclusion Insights

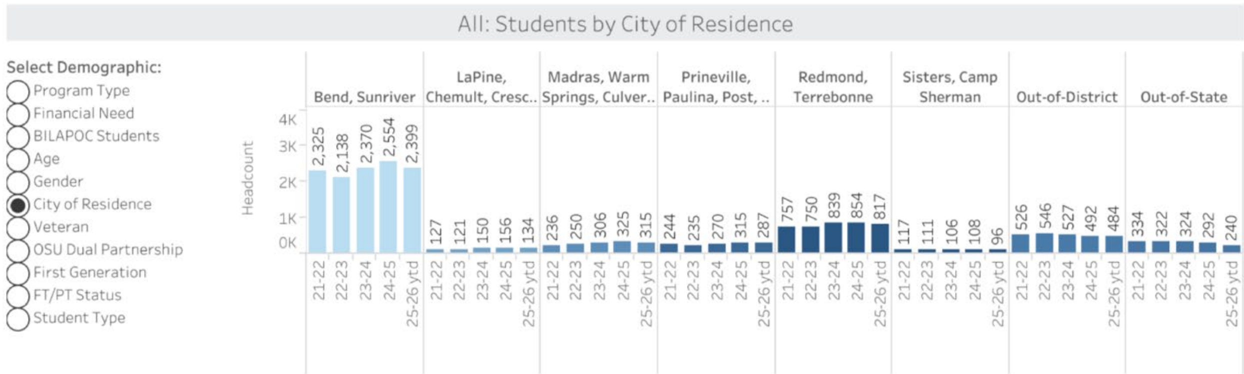
After studying the data on diversity and inclusion I have decided to focus on two key areas where the economics program has found notable points of success:

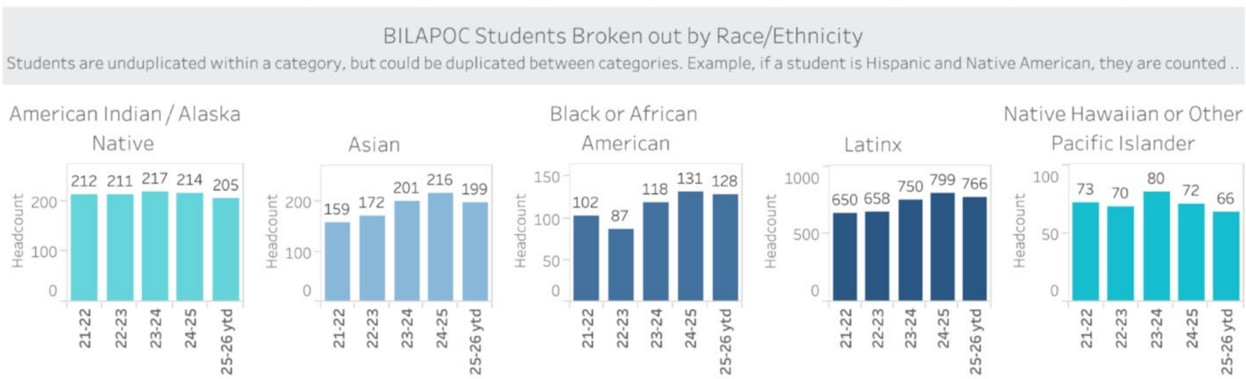
Successful Course Completion: In term of successful course completion across all economics courses, the program had an overall 86 to 96 percent course success rate compared to the college's overall 80 to 82 percent rate from the 2019-20 academic year to the present. When these results are filtered to include only the BILAPOC students, the success of the economics program is even more notable: The program had an overall 87 to 94 percent course success rate compared to the college's overall 82 to 85 percent rate from the 2019-20 academic year to the present. Hence, successful course completion is an area where the economics program has excelled in the area of diversity and inclusion.

Students by City of Residence: The economics program shows significant success in enrolling students from all regions served by using a broad strategy of offering distance education options of hybrid, remote, and online classes. Students from all the cities and towns served by COCC enrolled in economics courses. Most significantly, the percent of students out of district taking economics courses was twice as high as the college at large. During the 2024-25 academic year, for instance, 17 percent of the economics courses were taken by students (33 out of 193 students) outside of the district as compared to the 9.7 percent rate (492 out of 5096) for the college at large. This attests to the effectiveness of the diverse formats of course offerings of the economics program.



			21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26 ytd
AGS	AGS	Associate of General S..	207	217	238	280	248
CTE	AAS	Accounting	44	40	41	49	37
		Addiction Couns-Beha..	17	12	18	27	46
		Automotive Managem..	12	12	14	11	18
		Automotive Tech Elect..	25	24	14	19	21
		Aviation-Prof Pilot Air..	157	170	182	221	199
		Aviation-Prof Pilot Hel..	125	131	114	91	86
		Baking & Pastry Arts	31	32	46	44	43
		Business Administrati..	60	64	82	106	93





Section 5: Program Strengths and Accomplishments

The Economics program provides a strong foundation in economic theory, critical thinking, and data analysis, with a focus on sustainability. Perhaps our greatest strength is that for the first time in COCC history, the core economics courses (EC 201Z and EC 202Z) have received the Sustainability recognition.

The Economics program actively participated in the Oregon Common Course Numbering system, a statewide initiative, and has aligned course titles, numbers, and content across higher education institutions in Oregon to simplify credit transfers.

The Economics program offers a comprehensive curriculum; courses cover economic principles, global markets, and real-world issues, enhancing data analysis and problem-solving skills. The program also integrates themes of global sustainability, equity, and personal responsibility, encouraging students to analyze the ethical implications of micro- and macro-economic choices and systems.

The Economics program is designed for diverse learners, offering evening, in-person, and online options, making it accessible for high-school students, working students or those balancing family commitments. In addition, the program prepares students for transfer to universities or careers in finance, management, and public administration.

Section 6: Challenges

As for the discipline of economics itself, a significant number of peer-reviewed articles and books point to the predominantly Western emphasis of the academic field that gatekeeps unconventional thought and lacks demographic and intellectual diversity. This Western bias makes the teaching of alternative economic thinkers such as Mahatma Gandhi, Amartya Sen (Indian Nobel Laureate in economics), and Muhammad Yunus (Bangladeshi economist, Nobel Peace Prize recipient, and founder of micro-credit) challenging as most textbooks do not contain this information.

COCC students have been socialized into dominant cultural narratives about capitalism and the marketplace. Introducing and exploring economists who challenge these narratives can, at times, be challenging. To encourage exploration of a broader range of economic philosophies, I introduce alternative approaches into lectures and course readings.

To complete degree and certificate requirements, students taking courses at the Redmond, Prineville, and Madras campuses need social science courses, and in the case of business and other select majors, economics courses. To address these course offering needs, we posted a position to recruit part-time faculty. The posting went live October of 2025. As of February 20, 2026, we had received 3 applications. All applicants were highly trained in a narrow area of economics. At this point, Tom Barry and I are talking about whether to proceed with these applicants. Our hope is that through recruitment efforts that additional viable candidates apply and that we can start offering economics courses on those campuses.

Section 7: New Goals and Resource Needs

Goal	Timeline for achieving goal	Resources needed
Curriculum innovation and alignment: Making sure that the coursework remains relevant to the contemporary global economy and college transfer requirements.	Ongoing	Continued support from the Assessment and Curriculum Department.
Open Educational Resources (OER) Integration: Continued adoption of OER resources to reduce textbook costs and improve accessibility	Ongoing	Continued support from eLearning in the integration of textbook content into Canvas.

Advancing diversity and sustainability goals for the program: Move beyond abstract models to include diverse lived experiences (e.g. replacing traditional examples with those focused on inequality, climate change, and the economic history of marginalized groups).	Ongoing	Continued collaboration and support from colleagues in Social Sciences and the instructional team. Continued collaboration with Sustainability faculty.