

Washington State University School of Economic Sciences Strategic Plan

Vision

The WSU School of Economic Sciences will be recognized as one of the nation's leading economics programs at a land-grant research university.

Mission

The WSU School of Economic Sciences is a unified general and agricultural economics program committed to the land-grant heritage and tradition of discovery, education, and service to society. Our mission is threefold:

- To **advance** economic knowledge through creative research and scholarship.
- To **extend** economic knowledge through effective educational programs in which emerging scholars are mentored to realize their highest potential and assume roles of leadership, responsibility, and service to society.
- To **apply** economic knowledge through local and global engagement that will improve quality of life and enhance the economy of the state, nation, and world.

Values

The WSU School of Economic Sciences (SES) will act to accomplish its mission while adhering to the following values:

- **Quality and Excellence:** We are committed to maintaining quality and excellence in all our endeavors.
- **Integrity, Trust, and Respect:** We are committed to demonstrating trust and respect for all persons and cultivating individual and collective integrity in all that we do.
- **Discovery, Innovation, and Creativity:** We are committed to the pursuit of inquiry and discovery and to the creation and dissemination of knowledge.
- **Land-grant Ideals:** We are committed to the land-grant ideals of access, engagement, leadership, and service to bring the practical benefits of education to the state, nation, and global community.
- **Diversity and Global Citizenship:** We embrace a worldview that values diversity and cultural differences and recognizes the importance of global interdependence and sustainability.
- **Freedom of Expression:** We are committed to protecting the free exchange of ideas while encouraging dialog that is constructive and civil.
- **Stewardship and Accountability:** We are committed to being ethical and responsible stewards of University resources and to being accountable for upholding the full scope of these values.

Strategic Goals

The WSU School of Economic Sciences has identified four main goals. Achieving them will accomplish the SES mission.

Goal 1: Achieve a national and international reputation and recognition for economic discovery

Goal 2: Provide a premier economic education and transformative experience that prepares students to excel in a global society

Goal 3: Lead in relevant local, national, and global economic outreach and engagement

Goal 4: Embrace and facilitate an environment of diversity, integrity, and transparency

Core Areas

The School of Economic Sciences (SES) is a PhD-granting academic unit in economics. As such, strong faculty expertise in the core areas of economics are essential to fulfilling and enhancing our responsibilities to university, profession, and society. The core areas are the following:

- Microeconomics
- Macroeconomics
- Quantitative Methods

The core areas serve as the foundation for developing and expanding teaching, research, and outreach activities in the strategic focus areas.

Strategic Focus Areas

Strategic focus areas define the teaching, research, and outreach endeavors where the School of Economic Sciences currently has a strong national reputation or has the commitment and capacity to develop one. The School will devote significant resources to these areas. The current strategic focus areas in the School are:

- Agricultural and Consumer Economics
- Health Economics
- International and Development Economics
- Transportation Economics
- Environmental and Natural Resource Economics

Our current strategic focus areas facilitate collaboration as well as national and international visibility in these fields of economics. However, quality research, teaching, and outreach in the core areas and other fields of economics are essential for a vibrant, productive, and broadly relevant School of Economic Sciences. Therefore, the relative benefits of hiring within and outside these strategic focus areas should be carefully weighed when deliberating about future hiring decisions.

Goal 1: Achieve a national and international reputation and recognition for economic discovery

Consistent with Washington State University's mission as a public research university committed to the land-grant heritage and tradition, it is critical that the School of Economic Sciences be committed to advancing economic knowledge through scholarship in research, teaching and extension. SES has demonstrated excellence in several focused areas, and individual faculty members are nationally and internationally recognized within the discipline.

To move towards the goal of national and international recognition for the school while simultaneously strengthening our commitment to the land-grant heritage, we must have a strong core and invest in and promote the identified focus areas.

Strategies

Strategy 1: Develop and maintain a talented faculty and staff who are, or will be, leaders in their fields.

Tactic 1a: Hire outstanding faculty through active recruiting and competitive employment packages.

Tactic 1b: Retain outstanding faculty through effective mentoring, senior faculty/administrative leadership, and competitive employment packages.

Strategy 2: Secure funding to support programs of economic discovery.

Tactic 2a: Provide incentives, possibly including periodic reduction in education (teaching and/or extension) responsibilities, for the development of fundable research programs.

Tactic 2b: Seek to establish endowed sources of funding and/or mutually beneficial partnerships outside WSU.

Tactic 2c: Establish research collaborations with visiting scholars and outstanding researchers from other institutions.

Strategy 3: Leverage current and emerging strengths in the university community through involvement of SES in multidisciplinary initiatives.

Tactic 3a: Provide incentives for the development of research grants emphasizing collaborative work across disciplines.

Tactic 3b: Increase the visibility of research and outreach work of SES through conferences, showcases and seminars.

Strategy 4: Enhance the visibility of research accomplishments and impacts of faculty and students.

Tactic 4a: Secure funding for faculty and student research presentations.

Tactic 4b: Broaden the dissemination of existing communications highlighting faculty and student accomplishments.

Goal 2: Provide a premier economic education and transformative experience that prepares students to excel in a global society

Economics education is part of the core mission of any Land Grant University. It is both part of a well-grounded liberal arts education and fundamental to broad areas of technical, professional, and vocational education. It directly serves those students who intend careers in business, finance, administration, policy analysis, and governance. It prepares others for academic careers in economics and related disciplines. In addition, economics education carries a heavy responsibility to teach key economic concepts and to enhance the critical thinking relevant for the careers, professions, and citizenship roles of a broad range of students. Hence, to quote the WSU strategic plan, the SES intends to ‘extend [economic] knowledge through innovative educational programs in which emerging scholars are mentored to realize their highest potential and assume roles of leadership, responsibility, and service to society.’”

SES has several distinct sets of students: undergraduate majors and minors, undergraduates who rely on SES classes for part of their career training, undergraduates for whom SES classes are part of a liberal arts education, Masters students, and PhD students. In this very heterogeneous environment, SES seeks to provide each of its student-client groups with the means of learning and using economic knowledge for specific applications as well as for general development of critical thinking skills. More particularly, SES seeks to be recognized nationally as a venue for high quality graduate education in economics; to have its undergraduate majors and minors recognized as well prepared for life and careers; and to help shape WSU graduate and undergraduate students’ commitment to excellent life abilities, good character, and “Coug” enthusiasm.

In pursuing its goal of providing a premier economic education and transformative experience, SES is committed to following specific elements from the WSU strategic plan:

1. *Provide high-impact learning experiences that engage students.*
2. *Develop and support outstanding graduate programs.*
3. *Ensure an infrastructure that supports excellence and adapts to advances in knowledge and technology.*
4. *Foster core competencies in our learners.*
5. *Significantly improve retention and graduation rates of our students.*

Strategies

Strategy 1: Continuously review and refine, as necessary, the curriculum supporting the undergraduate degree and service courses.

Tactic 1a: In our major and minors learn the critical theories and quantitative methods needed for applied analysis and problem solving.

Tactic 1b: Provide depth of theoretical and quantitative training and application experience to assure adequate preparation for students who are considering graduate study in economics and related fields.

Tactic 1c: Assure that students in supported programs, including liberal arts and business, attain basic understanding of economic constructs, theories, and economic thinking in an applied setting.

Strategy 2: Assure that undergraduate and graduate majors and minors receive effective advising.

Tactic 2a: Appoint faculty members to serve as career advisors to undergraduate and graduate majors.

Tactic 2b: Support and provide resources to faculty members regarding their roles and responsibilities as advisors

Tactic 2c: Teach and maintain and support a professional academic advisor.

Strategy 3: Provide undergraduate students with superior opportunities and environment to learn and be mentored.

Tactic 3a: Assure that all students in our major have a chance to interact with faculty who are conducting significant disciplinary research and have relevant applied knowledge.

Tactic 3b: Provide an undergraduate curriculum which includes experiential learning, self-directed learning, and international experience.

Tactic 3c: Recruit and support a diverse faculty dedicated to the teaching mission.

Strategy 4: Provide graduate students with a strong and nationally recognized core curriculum in economic theory and quantitative methods and field courses which correspond to the faculty expertise and student demand..

Tactic 4a: Assure that graduate students acquire the tools of analysis for economic issues, including the relevant and evolving theories and quantitative tools relevant to performing well in academic, government, and private sector careers as economists.

Tactic 4b: Assure that students obtain experience applying appropriate theories and methods to solve the types of problems they are likely to face in their careers.

Tactic 4c: When the budget allows, offer seminars, talks and short courses by well-known guest speakers to expose students to frontier thinking, to enhance their knowledge, and to promote our teaching in those areas.

Tactic 4d: Provide opportunities for graduate students to interact with guest speakers and visiting faculty to broaden and deepen students' economic understanding.

Strategy 5: Provide all students with opportunities that will help them successfully engage their lives and careers.

Tactic 5a: Provide incentives for students to attend national and international economic conferences.

Tactic 5b: Encourage faculty to include team work in courses.

Strategy 6: Assure high quality content and teaching of all courses consistent with curricular learning objectives.

Tactic 6a: Review course content and teaching effectiveness for all teaching faculty every year and develop and implement an action plan where improvement is needed.

Tactic 6b: Promote participation of all instructional faculty in college and university teaching workshops.

Tactic 6c: Regularly review content of all courses to assure they are consistent with curricular learning objectives.

Goal 3: Lead in relevant local, national, and global economic outreach and engagement

Economics outreach is part of the core mission of any Land Grant University. To facilitate better informed economic decisions by private firms and public entities, it is essential that research findings be broadly disseminated. Two-way engagement is also a goal of outreach in order to better inform researchers about problems, which, if resolved by research discovery, could have high value to society. Outreach includes many activities that create a culture of engagement with problems and issues of interest to external constituencies.

The diversity of economic issues within the state of Washington provides a wide array of research and outreach opportunities. Outreach programs in SES contribute to and benefit from high quality research, effective education, and public and private solutions to important economic problems. Faculty who both conduct research and engage in outreach help assure that both are state-of-the-art, significant, and effective. All SES faculty, regardless of appointment, are expected to embrace both the research and the outreach mandates of the land-grant university.

SES outreach programs seek to provide timely and relevant economic information and education programs on critical priority issues and decision problems applicable to citizens in numerous roles. All outreach, but especially formal extension programs seek to be action oriented and stimulate behavioral changes that help citizens more effectively fill their chosen roles. Faculty with extension appointments seek to produce highly relevant results, of high quality, and with high impact, as judged by peers and other important audiences. Commitment to continuing communication with stakeholders by SES will allow us to make significant contributions to the economic development as well as the quality of life of the state's citizens.

Strategy 1: Deliver important research discoveries by SES faculty members in a timely and effective manner to potential users in Washington, the nation, and the world community.

Tactic 1a: Educate Washington, national and international businesses and organizations about informed economic decision making.

Tactic 1b: Aid informed decision-making and progressive public policy development.

Tactic 1c: Provide economic education using traditional and innovative communication tools.

Strategy 2: Increase the visibility and accessibility of SES outreach by accessing relevant research discoveries throughout the world and utilizing an appropriate mix of traditional and contemporary information delivery technologies.

Tactic 2a: Enhance the SES outreach presence to provide information and data that helps citizens and stakeholders make informed and efficient decisions.

Tactic 2b: Develop the SES outreach web presence to be a primary site of reference for regional economic issues.

Tactic 2c: Maintain coordination with WSU Extension's statewide strategies and investments in web and contemporary technology support systems.

Strategy 3: Engage with the private sector and public agencies to identify research and outreach opportunities that could help resolve important societal problems.

Tactic 3a: Recognize that the individual faculty member is responsible for identifying important problems, conducting scholarly research, disseminating discoveries and engaging with the private sector and public agencies.

Tactic 3b: Engage with Washington, national and international businesses, public agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other organizations in important problem identification and resolution.

Tactic 3c: Pursue integrated funding projects that actively involve private sector and or public agencies in project: design, execution, reporting and outreach.

Goal 4: Embrace and facilitate an environment of diversity, integrity and transparency

SES is committed to promoting and cultivating an environment in which diversity, integrity and transparency is valued and respected in all that we do. This applies to the collegial atmosphere and mutual respect between and among faculty members, students, staff and administrators, regardless of race, sex, age, physical/mental ability, sexual orientation, religion, philosophy or culture. We are also committed to the highest degree of academic and professional integrity and transparency in our teaching and educational programs, research, extension/outreach and service activities.

Strategy 1: Recruit and retain faculty, administrative staff and student populations that exemplify diversity, professional integrity and transparency.

Tactic 1a: Assure hiring plans include broad candidate pools that are reflective of excellence across the diversity of qualified people.

Tactic 1b: Facilitate periodic diversity training for all faculty, staff, and graduate assistants.

Tactic 1c: Encourage faculty to include international and intercultural experiences in their conference, professional leave and other professional activities.

Strategy 2: Encourage and foster an environment of diversity, integrity and transparency in our graduate and undergraduate educational programs.

Tactic 2a: Assure that student advising / mentoring programs provide useful information regarding university / college resources for minorities, special needs and under-represented groups.

Tactic 2b: Strengthen cultural exchange programs that provide students opportunities to study abroad.

Strategy 3: Develop outreach/extension programs and service activities that embrace diversity, integrity and transparency.

Tactic 3a: Identify appropriate avenues for dissemination of research findings among the diverse audience / constituency in the state and region.

Tactic 3b: Encourage faculty to participate in service activities in the local community that benefit underrepresented and minority groups.