



Minutes from Programme Committee meeting in Master of Science in Economics (M-ECON)

Date: 19.10.2018, 13.00-14.00

Location: T435

Attendees: Roberto Garcia – Leader, Stein Holden, Ståle Navrud, Sharon Nytte Makokha

Note Taker: Kateryna Krutskykh

Agenda for the meeting

Approval of minutes from meeting 31.08.18

Resolution: Minutes from meeting of 31.08.18 are approved.

Action Items

Item 1/18:	1. Curriculum changes for 2019-2020
Item information	1.1 New specialization in Agri-Food Economics 1.2 New required course (BUS360) and reduced credits for ECN320 1.3 Thesis workshops, blue sphere, and ECN306
<i>Resolution:</i>	(Attachment 1) A new specialization in M-ECON is proposed, beginning in academic 2019-20 (Agri-Food Economics or similar name). The specialization ticks several important priorities with the School. It should, in time, achieve the following: 1) Broaden the economics program to include a study profile that is consistent with the School's and university's unique expertise and for which society will always have a need for qualified candidates; 2) Create synergies within the School's competence of economics and business, allowing students from both branches to study together; 3) Help with the recruitment of more students to the M-ECON program; and 4) Establish closer ties between the School and the agribusiness community through an executive in residence program (guest lectures and short-term presence of agribusiness leaders), student

internships, and thesis case studies with advice and supervision involving faculty and business leaders.

Three new core courses are required. Two courses previously taught in the School but were cancelled will be resurrected. ECN330 (Economic Integration and Trade Liberalization) will have a focus on agriculture and food and will be offered for 10 credits (Garcia). ECNXXX previously offered in Norwegian as a 5 credit course (Matvare Markeder og Politikk, Ivar Pettersen). It would remain a 5 credit course taught in English.

An instructor will have to be found. BUSYYY, a 10-credit course to be developed by Stig Aune touching on subjects related to supply chain management, organization, leadership, marketing and related subjects. The course will cater to both students of economics and business by bridging topics of interest to agri-food economics students and business students.

BUS360 (Tax, Inequality and Sustainability) is a new course being developed by Alstadsæter and is to be required for both economics and business students. This course is an additional avenue through which the School strengthens the ties between economics and business programs and the students. For M-ECON the requirement is for 5 credits offered in the Jan block period. The course continues for an additional 5 credits in the spring semester for those who are interested it is as an elective. M-ECON already has 45 credits of required courses. Thus, the proposal is to reduce ECN320 (Macroeconomics) from 10 credits to 5 credits as a means of accommodating the additional requirement for BUS360. The economics faculty have already voiced their approval for the reduction in credits to ECN320 and for the inclusion of BUS360 as a requirement.

A thesis workshop in September for M-ECON students is proposed as it is for the business programs. The objective of the workshop is to give students another avenue to discuss thesis topics with their peers, faculty supervisors and PhD student advisors. The workshop is to be integrated with recently implemented measures under the M-ECON program: ECN306 (Economics of Sustainability) which complements ECN305 (Research Methods) and Blue Sphere, a Facebook page where masters' students, PhD candidates and faculty can interact to exchange ideas related to research for a thesis. Arild Angelsen, the course responsible for ECN305 and 306 has agreed to incorporate the workshop as part these courses, assigning PhD candidates as mentors and faculty supervisors as facilitators. Kateryna will maintain the Blue Sphere site, uploading faculty suggested research topics and encouraging PhD candidates to participate in Facebook discussions.

Item 2/18:	2. Learning outcomes
Item information	<p>2.1 Matrix of courses aligned to learning outcomes</p> <p>2.2 Learning outcomes for specializations</p> <p> 2.2.1 Environment and Climate Economics</p> <p> 2.2.2 Energy Economics</p> <p> 2.2.3 Development and Global Change</p> <p> 2.2.4 Finance and Commodity Market Analysis</p>
<i>Resolution:</i>	<p>The program learning outcomes, having gone through several iterations, are at a sufficiently advanced stage to undertake the next steps in their development for the M-ECON program. A table of learning outcomes was constructed with the Dean with the codes for knowledge and skills, according to the framework established for all of the School's programs (Attachment 2). A matrix of the required courses under M-ECON has been mapped against the learning outcomes at the program level with the participation of the course responsible. The matrix needs approval before it is proposed to the Dean and Head of Academic Affairs.</p> <p>(Attachment 3) A first draft of the learning outcomes have been submitted for some of the M-ECON specializations. These require some discussion for approval at the next meeting. At which time these learning outcomes will be proposed to the Dean and Head of Academic Affairs.</p>

Item 3/18:	3. Evaluations by students on courses/instructors
Item information	<p>3.1 Procedural matters regarding course and lecturer evaluations</p> <p>3.2 Institutional mechanisms related to course/lecturer evaluation</p>
<i>Resolution:</i>	<p>The Head of Academic Affairs has suggested that the program should intervene when students' evaluation of a course or instructor fall below an average score of 3.0. In looking over the evaluations for courses and instructors falling under M-ECON, there are no cases to consider. Procedures will have to be put in place for the eventuality of such a case. However, intervention will only really need to be taken when/if the situation is repeated over more than one academic year or if the situation occurs in more than one of the instructor's courses within an academic year. A discussion on what sort of intervention should occur would be useful.</p> <p>The accreditation process will require more formal and practical institutional mechanisms related to course, instructor and student evaluations. That is, we will need to document and demonstrate how evaluations improve teaching quality and measure students' learning outcomes. A discussion on what sorts of measures might be taken to improve course/lecturer evaluations and evaluations of students' learning outcomes is proposed.</p>

Other information

	Students' health and well-being
For future discussion	<p>1. The results of the SHoT report 2018, Studentenes helse- og trivselsundersøkelse, NMBU (Students' health and well-being survey: results for NMBU) need to be studied and discussed. A copy of the report is attached for future discussion. The PR leader will summarize areas of particular concern for that discussion.</p> <p>2. A previously discussed item related to involvement of students. It was discussed that we should invite all M-ECON students to a future PR meeting as a means of having students raise issues directly. We could, for, example, have students join us for 30-minutes to raise their concerns/suggestions before our scheduled meeting, and the PR can take up those matters directly afterwards.</p>
Resolution:	<p>Need student input on what factors might contribute to the scores in the survey and proposals for measures the School might implement to improve on the criteria presented in the report. Specifics for future discussion will be forthcoming for the next meeting.</p> <p>The new PR needs to decide whether the open invitation is something we would like to do.</p>