

Assessment of Non-Academic Outcomes (Fall 2003 and Spring 2004)

Please provide the information below about how your unit assesses the extent to which it meets its expected outcomes. If you need assistance, please contact Dr. Virginia Wheelless at 565-2085 or on Groupwise email. This information is due in the Planning Office no later than February 2, 2004, and will be updated annually.

Unit: Center for Economic Development and Research Date: 1/21/04

Person Completing the Information: Dr. Terry L. Clower Email: tclower@scs.unt.edu

Head of the Unit: Dr. Bernard L. Weinstein Email: budw@scs.unt.edu

I. Mission

The Center for Economic Development and Research exists to provide applied economic and public policy research expertise to national, regional, and local organizations concerned with economic development. This mission is central to, and highly supportive of, UNT's role as a leading metropolitan university. Moreover, constituents of higher education – from taxpayers to legislators – increasingly expect university participation in efforts and activities that lie well beyond the traditional functions of instruction and basic research. The Center has a central role to play in this transition.

Corollary to this, the Center is expected to play a significant role in raising national and regional awareness of UNT and its programs.

II. Previous Evaluations of the Unit (in past 5 years)

Sunset Review FY 2000

- 1) Department Self-Evaluation Report Submitted December 1, 1999 to the Vice President of Academic Affairs.
- 2) Subsequent Team Review and Report submitted in Spring 2000.

III. Statement of Expected Outcomes:

- 1) **Respond to at least six RFPs or client-initiated research projects each year.** Funded research projects are used to provide scholarship support, graduate research assistantships, and hands-on training for all students in the Applied Economics MS degree program. If applicable to the course, students are assigned a portion of the research project to complete as class assignments. Information

and data collected by students are then reviewed and refined for use in the final project report.

- 2) **Provide an annual minimum of \$5,000 in scholarship support to the Economic Development Scholars scholarship fund.** This scholarship support enables the Center to assist qualified and deserving students in the master's degree program in applied economics. Scholarship support is available to resident and non-resident students and to full- and part-time students.
- 3) **Support a minimum of two graduate research assistantships per semester.** Depending on the number of funded research projects awarded to the Center, the Center supports at least two graduate research assistant positions. Positions are open to full-time students in the master's degree program in applied economics. These positions give students hands-on experience in research, data gathering, and client contact that they will encounter in jobs in the economic development field upon graduation.
- 4) **Strive for student involvement in research projects.** Involve other graduate or undergraduate students in research projects conducted by the Center.
- 5) **Respond to information requests by University administrators, relevant state agencies, and elected officials.** Center staff responds to requests for information and helps with data gathering and report preparation when requested.

IV. Measuring Expected Outcomes: Describe how the unit measures how the outcomes have been achieved and provide a list of methods and/or tools with the following information:

1. Name of assessment method or tool
 2. If the method/tool is copyrighted, provide the name of the company who "owns" the tool.
 3. Frequency of use – how often is the tool/method used, e.g., every spring semester students, staff, and faculty are surveyed about parking at UNT; customers are asked to complete evaluation forms when services are rendered; or each fall, the Enrollment Management Committee reviews the results of the Graduating Student Survey produced by the IR&A Office.
-
- 1) **Respond to at least six RFPs or client-initiated research projects each year.** Staff maintains a file with all RFPs responded to during the calendar year. At the end of the calendar year, staff reviews the file to determine how many RFP responses were sent and how many were actually awarded to the Center.
 - 2) **Provide an annual minimum of \$5,000 in scholarship support to the Economic Development Scholars scholarship fund.** During August of each year, the Center transfers at least \$5,000 into the Economic Development

Scholars account for use in the upcoming academic year. This account funds scholarships for master's students in the applied economics program. More funds may be transferred into this account on an as needed basis if there is a greater need for scholarship support to deserving students.

- 3) **Provide a minimum of two graduate research assistantships per semester.** Based on the number of funded research projects, the Center employs graduate research assistants to assist Center staff with the research projects. The number of research assistants employed during a specific semester is determined based on the availability of funds, number of funded projects, and number of qualified full-time students who apply for a position. Staff constantly reviews Center projects and RFPs to determine the number of assistantships that can be awarded during an upcoming semester.
- 4) **Strive for student involvement in research projects.** Annual review of projects completed or in-progress determines input received from students.
- 5) **Respond to information requests by University administrators, relevant state agencies, and elected officials.** At the end of each fiscal year, Center staff reviews projects, committee testimony, and other activities accomplished at the request of University administrators, relevant state agencies, and elected officials.

V. Use of Assessment Results: Describe how the results of the assessments described in IV above are shared with staff in the unit? How are the results used to improve the unit? Help improve student learning? Enhance student development? Meet the university's vision?

The results of the assessment will be shared with all professional and support staff in the Center. If the stated goals are not attained, strategies will be developed to achieve them in the shortest time possible. We will also discuss the assessment results with our graduate students to ensure that they are gaining skills and experience by assisting with Center research projects.

Because we are an applied economic and policy research center, we expect the findings and recommendations of our studies to find their way into the public domain. Based on presentations, conference, and media coverage, we can ascertain the degree to which this goal is obtained. The ultimate aim is to enhance the university's role and visibility as a leading metropolitan university.

The purpose of the review of information requests is to make sure the Center remains responsive to these important stakeholders and to examine emerging trends in the type of information the Center needs to be able to provide.

VI. Changes Made Based on Assessment Results: Describe how the unit has changed (or why it has not changed) based on the results of the assessment of outcomes. Indicate the year

the change was implemented. Please indicate how the expected outcomes have changed if applicable.

The Center for Economic Development and Research was created in June 1989 and has been preparing research and policy reports for clients for nearly 15 years. It has a proven track record in terms of output as well as credibility in the policymaking community. Because all previous assessments have been positive, we have made no changed in our modus operandus.

When new issues emerge either through RFPs, contract opportunities, or information requests, Center staff can make sure we are prepared to meet these opportunities. For example, electric deregulation, the impact of broadband telecommunications capacity, and the role of public transit facilities in spurring development and neighborhood redevelopment are among a host of issues the Center currently addresses on a recurring basis that have emerged as key issues for our clients and constituents since the Center's inception.

Signature of Person Completing the Form:

Date _____

Signature of Department Chair after Reviewing the Form:

Date _____