

STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT REPORT

PROGRAM: Economics (B.A.)
SUBMITTED BY: Dr. Brian Hollar
DATE: September 30, 2020

Executive Summary: Description of Assessment Process

List *all* of the program’s learning outcomes, as of the assessment year’s catalog: (regardless of whether or not they are being assessed this year)

Learning Outcome	Year of Last Assessment	Assessed This Year (Y=Yes)	Year of Next Planned Assessment
Understand economic analysis and use its concepts to provide insight into a wide range of human concerns	2018-2019	Yes	2020-2021
Communicate economic information and concepts effectively in both written and oral forms of communication	2018-2019	Yes	2020-2021
Work effectively as an entry-level research or policy analyst and develop opportunities and techniques for lifelong professional development	2017-2018	Yes	2020-2021

Provide a **brief** description of the assessment process used including how results are shared and discussed and strengths, challenges, and planned improvements to the process, providing evidence of a culture of continuous improvement based on assessment. If there is something that is impeding your ability to implement improvements, please comment on those issues (generally not more than two paragraphs, may use bullet points):

The Economics program faculty discusses assessment results in its faculty team meetings. The data is used to plan improvements and new approaches within courses and across the curriculum.

The Economics program transitioned five years ago as the BA in Economics replaced the BA in Economics in Society. Since then, the Economics program has experienced significant growth in student enrollment and has sought to continually improve. This growth has come despite only having varied between 2 and 3 full-time, tenure track faculty during this time.

Over the last year, we added a BS in Economics after receiving feedback from many students that they would like more quantitative courses for during their time at Marymount. The BS in Economics requires students to take Econometrics, a more advanced statistics course (MA 218), Calculus, and a Python programming course. The BS in Economics was launched in Fall 2020 with many students excited about this program. This degree will provide students with additional marketable skills and better academic preparation for graduate studies in Economics. We plan to try to recruit our strongest students into the program.

The BA, Economics program will participate in the College of Business, Ideation, Leadership and Technology (BILT)’s expanded assessment process to be launched in AY 20-21. The BILT will establish an Assessment Committee to support the continuous improvement of student learning outcomes. The Assessment Committee will assist directors and program champions in refining learning outcomes and will focus on documenting progress on the improvement measures established by the faculty. This approach will strengthen further the College’s mission and vision.

Closing the Loop: Progress on Planned Improvements from Prior Year

Describe how the program implemented its planned improvements from last year:

Outcome	Planned Improvement	Update
<p>Understand economic analysis and use its concepts to provide insight into a wide range of human concerns.</p>	<p>Our faculty have seen a large change in the past year with one full-time faculty leaving Marymount and the hire of a new hire of a full-time, tenure track Assistant Professor beginning the 2019-2020 academic year. We are offering higher level Microeconomic and macroeconomic courses, developed an Econometrics course, spearheaded the development of an Applied Statistics minor, and are working on offering a BS option for the Economics degree. In the future, we will analyze microeconomic and macroeconomic analysis as a separate learning outcome using developed rubrics. This will allow us greater ability to identify where students are struggling most and use this knowledge to develop strategies for improving our program. These two future outcomes will be as follows: 1) Understand and apply microeconomic analysis and use its concepts to provide insight into a wide range of human concerns. 2) Understand and apply macroeconomic analysis and use its concepts to provide insight into a wide range of human concerns.</p>	<p>We have started a new BS in Economics which requires additional quantitative courses for the major. These additional courses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECO 335 Econometrics • IT 229 Python Scripting • MA 181 Calculus • MA 218 Probability and Statistics <p>New BS Economics program learning outcomes: 1. Understand economic analysis and use its concepts to provide insight into a wide range of human concerns. 2. Communicate economic information and concepts effectively in both written and oral forms of communication. 3. Analyze complex relationships in quantitative information to make meaningful decisions from data. 4. Work effectively as an entry-level research or policy analyst and develop opportunities and techniques for lifelong professional development.</p>
<p>Communicate economic information and concepts effectively in both written and oral forms of communication.</p>	<p>As we continue to offer new electives for economics students, many additional measures are being added to improve students' writing skills. Papers will be subject to earlier and more commentary and revision. With the development of more advanced microeconomic, macroeconomic, and econometric courses into the curriculum, we expect the communication of economic concepts and theses to improve over time. Students have been and will continue to be encouraged to present their work at Marymount's annual Student Research Conference and at external conferences around the country. In the future, we will use rubrics to evaluate student papers rather than</p>	<p>In Spring 2020, we offered ECO 335 Econometrics for the first time which focuses on advanced data analysis skills including the visual display of quantitative information. Students were taught how to use a software package called Stata for doing regression analysis and making a variety of advanced graphs. In particular, students were taught in March and April how to download publicly available COVID-19 data sets for the US, each state, and countries around the world. Students used this data in real-time to understand the dynamics of the pandemic and create visual representations of exponential growth patterns and regional analysis. This preparation in communicating data helped students obtain jobs after graduation.</p>

Outcome	Planned Improvement	Update
	grades to develop our indirect measurement into a direct measurement of economic communication abilities of our students. We will also identify a specific way to measure oral forms of communication as this assessment only measured written forms of communication.	

Provide a response to last year’s University Assessment Committee review of the program’s learning assessment report:

Comment: NA/“Well done!”

Response: The Program is continuing its work in assessment process improvement, with emphasis on launch of the BS, Economics program in AY 20-21.

Outcomes Assessment 2019-2020

Learning Outcome 1: Understand economic analysis and use its concepts to provide insight into a wide range of human concerns

Outcome Measures <i>Explain how student learning will be measured and indicate whether it is direct or indirect.</i>	Performance Standard <i>Define the acceptable level of student performance.</i>	Data Collection <i>Discuss the process for collecting this data: who conducted the assessment, when, and how?</i>	Result <i>Did you meet your target? What was the result?</i>
(Direct) ECO 350, The Economics of Poverty Research Paper #2 (See paper rubric in appendix below.)	At least 60% of students perform at the Excellent or Good level.	Grades for ECO 350 Research Paper collected from a total of 18 students. These students were overwhelming ECO majors and minors.	61.54% of students scored Excellent or Good.
Indirect: Alumni survey questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apply knowledge and skills to new situations. 2. Solve problems in your field. 	At least 60% of students respond Good or Excellent.	Seven alumni responded to this survey this year.	71.4% of respondents answered Good or Excellent on the first question, but only 57.1% answered Good or Excellent on the second question.

Interpretation of Results

Analysis and Implications: *What does this result tell you about the extent to which your students achieved this outcome? What are the strengths and weaknesses that this result highlights, and what are the implications for your curriculum or your program?*

By one direct measure students generally met the standard.

For two questions analyzed for the indirect measurement, we met the standard for the first question (“apply knowledge and skills”), but not for the second (“solve problems in your field”). Our alumni answering the survey has the associated issues of a small sample size and the answers provided are close to the desired outcome. According to the metrics measured, we are close to meeting our objective, but did not on one of the survey questions.

Discuss planned curricular or program improvements for this year based on assessment of outcome:

To help better prepare students to solve problems in their field, we have started the BS in Economics, now offer an Applied Statistics minor, and offer Econometrics, Intermediate Microeconomics, and Intermediate Macroeconomics. These courses and options were not available to the alumni who answered the survey. We believe these course offerings will result in better course preparation for our students. In addition, we will focus on providing more application-oriented teaching in our core classes, including more usage of Excel (a request by multiple students). Going forward, we will encourage all BA Economics students to take ECO 335 Econometrics and monitor the percentage of BA students who do so. Our goal is to see this percentage increase over time. The following is a summary of improvement to date:

Out of the total 29 [ECO.BA.UG](#) students in 20/SP, eight (8) [ECO.BA.UG](#) students took ECO 335, Econometrics. One (1) of these eight (8) students has changed their BA, Economics to BS, Economics as of this semester. We will continue to encourage a higher percentage of students to enroll in this course.

Learning Outcome 2: Communicate economic information and concepts effectively in both written and oral forms of communication

Outcome Measures	Performance Standard	Data Collection	Result
(Direct) ECO 335, Econometrics State COVID-19 Data – Two Graphs (See assignment in appendix below.)	At least 60% of students perform at the Excellent or Good level.	Grades for the ECO 335 assignment collected from a total of 13 students. These students were overwhelming ECO majors and minors.	66.67% of students scored Excellent or Good.
(Indirect) Alumni Survey: Develop a coherent written argument	At least 60% of students respond Good or Excellent.	71.4% responded Good or Excellent.	By this standard, 71.4% of alumni said they could write a coherent written statement which meets our desired performance standard.
(Indirect) Alumni Survey: Develop a coherent oral presentation.	At least 60% of students respond Good or Excellent.	57.1% responded Good or Excellent.	There is an opportunity to strengthen student skill in oral forms of communication.

Interpretation of Results

Analysis and Implications: *What does this result tell you about the extent to which your students achieved this outcome? What are the strengths and weaknesses that this result highlights, and what are the implications for your curriculum or your program?*

Students met the standard in the one outcome we have data for. The econometrics assignment from ECO 335 indicated the program is doing a good job helping students develop the ability to communicate in writing and orally.

Discuss planned curricular or program improvements for this year based on assessment of outcome:

We will work with our university assessment team to try to obtain graduating student survey data in 2021 to ensure we have more ways of analyzing this learning outcome. A better rubric needs to be developed for the graphing assignment for the ECO 335 Econometrics course. We will also work with faculty to develop a rubric for an oral presentation for ECO 485 International Economics to keep track of an oral course in a required course for BA students.

Learning Outcome 3: Work effectively as an entry-level research or policy analyst and develop opportunities and techniques for lifelong professional development

Outcome Measures	Performance Standard	Data Collection	Result
Direct: ECO 490 Internship Supervisor Survey “Intern was able to apply academic knowledge to the workplace.”	At least 60% of students receive a score of Excellent (5) or “Good” (4).	Missing data for one student (out of 7 total students). Out of the six (6) students’ supervisor responses, all six (6) students scored “Excellent” with a score of 5 or “Good” with a score of 4.	100% of students (6 out of 6) received a score of 4 or 5. Standard met.

Outcome Measures	Performance Standard	Data Collection	Result
Indirect Graduating Student Survey for AY 19-20 asks the student to rate his/her Ability to conduct research to support a position.	At least 60% of students receive a score of Excellent (5) or "Good" (4).	The survey sample was very small, with 4 students responding. One of the four students, 25%, scored the question as Excellent or Good.	Due to the small number of students responding to the survey, it is difficult to draw a conclusion regarding the result.

Interpretation of Results

Analysis and Implications: *What does this result tell you about the extent to which your students achieved this outcome? What are the strengths and weaknesses that this result highlights, and what are the implications for your curriculum or your program?*

Students met the standard based on Internship Supervisor Survey, but not on our indirect measurement using the Graduating Student Survey. One interpretation of this data, is that it appears that employers are satisfied with student preparation for careers, but students are either not confident in and/or satisfied with their career preparation. The survey sample size in both metrics was small, so we are hesitant to draw strong conclusions from these results.

Discuss planned curricular or program improvements for this year based on assessment of outcome:

This data indicates a need to address making students feel more prepared for careers after graduation. One focus for this is improving the opportunities for quantitative training for students. We launched the BS in Economics in Fall 2020 to help address this situation, which requires students to take Calculus, Econometrics, and Python. Additionally, we have added ECO 310 Intermediate Microeconomics, ECO 311 Intermediate Macroeconomics, and ECO 335 Econometrics as annual offerings to the curriculum which require more advanced economic analysis than previously required of majors. In the future, we should work to develop assignments in Excel across the curriculum to ensure students graduate with advanced knowledge of how to use spreadsheets and work with quantitative data, conduct statistical analysis, and perform advanced financial calculations that would be of use to future employers.

Appendices *(please only include items that will help reviewers understand your process – for example, test questions, rubrics, survey questions, more detailed description of assessment measures, summary tables of survey results, etc.)*

APPENDIX

LEARNING OUTCOME 1 - ECO 350 ECONOMICS OF POVERTY RESEARCH PAPER RUBRIC

MODIFIERS	Penalty	Remarks
Does this meet the required word count? % word count submitted = word count of paper not including title, bibliography, footnotes, etc. / proposed word count		If below the required word count, the final grade will be multiplied by the % word count submitted.
Was the paper submitted by the due date?		10 points off final grade per calendar day late.
Did you use a footnote or endnote?		1 point off for each footnote and each endnote.
Did you claim something as fact without citation?		3 points off for each instance.

CRITERIA	Penalty	Remarks
Has the author connected their work to economics of poverty concepts we have discussed in class / read in our books?	20%	
Is the paper well written?	20%	
Is the paper well formatted? (This includes title, name, alphabetized bibliography, consistent font and spacing, etc.)	20%	
<p>Book Review: Can I clearly understand what the entirety of the book is about based on the author's review?</p> <p>Research Paper or COVID-19 Paper: Does the paper have a clear and valid conclusion based off of the author's research? (No confusing correlation with causality.)</p>	20%	
<p>Book Review: Does the author provide at least <i>eight</i> key insights learned from the book? Each insight should be clearly explained with a minimum of three sentences each.</p> <p>Program Design/Research Paper: How many <i>academic journal articles</i> does the paper have in the bibliography in <i>proper Chicago author-date style</i>? (Minimum of <i>eight</i> required.)</p>	20%	

LEARNING OUTCOME 2 - ECO 335 ECONOMETRICS COVID-19 GRAPHING ASSIGNMENT

Create a graph of a state of your choice (except Virginia) using data downloaded from the COVID Tracking Project. (<https://covidtracking.com/>)

Use Stata software to create the following two graphs for the state you choose.

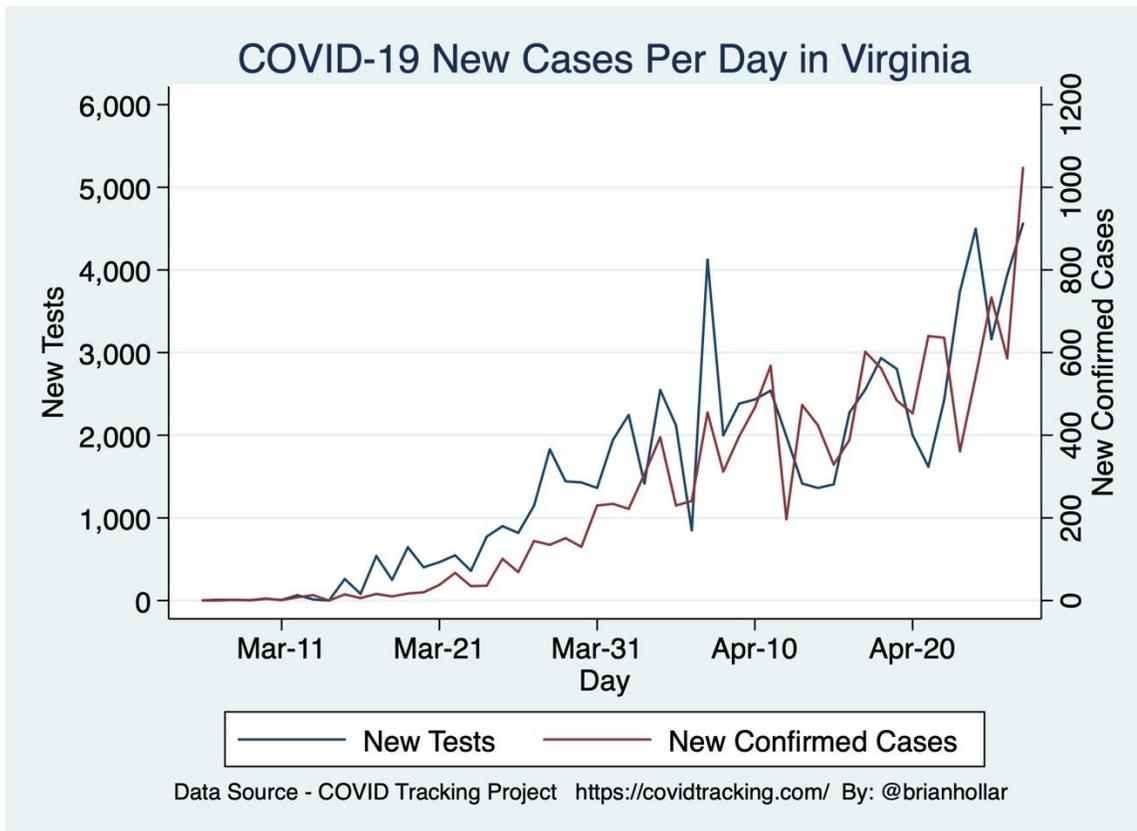
1) Daily tests and daily confirmed cases with the date on the x-axis. Your graph must have **two y-axes** like the example I made shown above.

2) A plot of total confirmed cases vs. total tests. You should include a regression equation for this line as a subtitle to the graph.

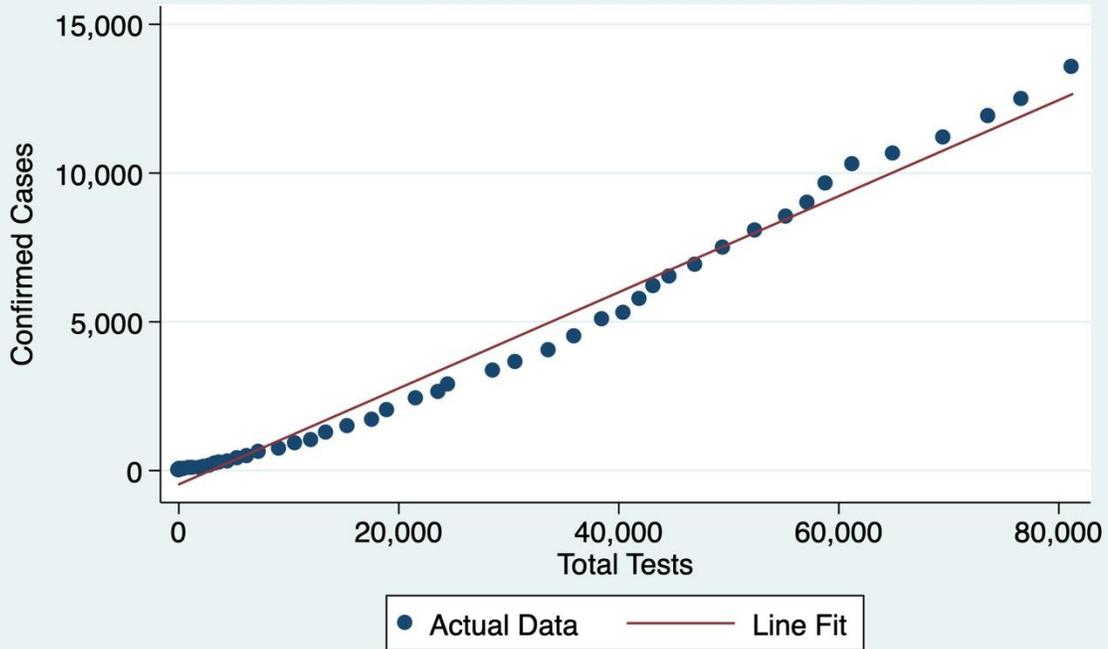
BONUS (+5 points): Include a line fit in the second graph like my second example above.

Both graphs must be **saved and uploaded as a JPG file.**

My graphs below give a good idea of what I am looking for. I will evaluate you on how well formatted the graph is and how professional it looks. This is your chance to shine and show me what you can do. Please let me know if you have any questions.



COVID-19 Total Tests & Confirmed Cases Virginia
Confirmed Cases = $0464 + .1615 * \text{Total Tests}$, $R^2 = .985$



Data Source - COVID Tracking Project <https://covidtracking.com/> By: @brianhollar

2019 Marymount Alumni Data -- By Program

2008-09 Respondents: 1
 2013-14 Respondents:
 2017-18 Respondents: 7
 Total Respondents: 8

Undergraduate
 Business and Technology
 Economics (B.A.)

<i>From your experience at MU, how would you rate each of following?</i>	<u>Percent Good or Excellent*</u>	<u>Valid N</u>
Overall experience	57.1%	7
Academic quality	71.4%	7
Major department or academic program	71.4%	7
Library and Learning services	42.9%	7
Academic advising	57.1%	7
Marymount's academic reputation	57.1%	7

For each of the following skills, please indicate how well you believe your education prepared you to:

Find a job in your field	57.1%	7
Pursue more education in your field	71.4%	7
Find appropriate sources of information	85.7%	7
Evaluate the quality of information	71.4%	7
Conduct research to support a position	57.1%	7
Develop a coherent written argument	71.4%	7
Deliver a coherent oral presentation	57.1%	7
Use quantitative/qualitative techniques within your professional field	42.9%	7
Determine the most ethically appropriate response to a situation	71.4%	7
Understand the major ethical dilemmas in your field	57.1%	7
Use technology effectively in a workplace environment	42.9%	7
Apply knowledge and skills to new situations	71.4%	7
Solve problems in your field using your knowledge and skills	57.1%	7
Work collaboratively with people from diverse backgrounds	57.1%	7
Apply education to serve others in your community	71.4%	7

**Based on a five-point scale: (5) excellent, (4) good, (3) adequate, (2) needs improvement, (1) poor.*

<i>Which of the following statements describes your start at MU? N = 8</i>	<u>Percent</u>
MU was the first college or university I attended	50.0%
I transferred into MU from a community college or four-year college or university	50.0%
I earned a degree from another college or university prior to enrolling at MU	0.0%

Relative to completing your degree, when did you find your first professional position? N =

	Percent
Continued a position held while attending school	0.0%
Found a new position prior to graduation	14.3%
0-3 months	28.6%
4-6 months	14.3%
7-12 months	42.9%
More than 12 months	0.0%
Have not yet entered professional position since graduation	0.0%

How closely related was your college/specialization to this position? N = 7

Directly related	42.9%
Somewhat related	14.3%
Not related	42.9%

Which of the following best describes your current employment status? N = 7

Employed full-time	100.0%
Employed part-time	0.0%
Not employed, but seeking employment	0.0%
Not employed, and not looking	0.0%

What is your current salary range? N = 6

\$10,000 and under	0.0%	\$60,000 to \$69,999	0.0%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	0.0%	\$70,000 to \$79,999	16.7%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	0.0%	\$80,000 to \$89,999	33.3%
\$30,000 to \$39,999	0.0%	\$90,000 to \$99,999	16.7%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	0.0%	\$100,000 and above	16.7%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	16.7%	Mean Salary**	\$83,333.33

****Mean salary based on midpoint of range indicated.**

Have you pursued further education since completing your degree? N = 7

No	42.9%
Yes	57.1%

Number pursuing further degrees: N= 4

Bachelors		Doctoral
Masters	100.0%	Other

2019 Alumni Survey -- Employment

Business and Technology

Undergraduate

Economics (B.A.)

Job Title	Employer	Location
undisclosed	undisclosed	undisclosed
Market & Competitive Intelligence Research Analyst	Ntrepid Corporation	Herndon, Virginia
Accounting/HR Manager	Columbia Books Inc	Arlington, VA
Project Officer	New Jersey Economic Development Authority	Newark, NJ
Associate	Unanet	Sterling, VA

2019 Alumni Survey -- Comments

Business and Technology

Undergraduate

Economics (B.A.)

What are the strongest aspects of your MU education?	What aspects of your MU education need the most improvement?	If you have any other comments regarding your MU education, please provide them here.
Quality of education, Academic Advisor	Following up with International students	N/A
Student to teacher ratio that enabled me to ask questions on a day to day about anything really. The teachers passion for their job and their encouragement motivated me to pursue further education. If Marymount had a better selection of master programs I	I would have like to be prepared for analytics and working with large data sets. Having an econometrics class or even degree would have made me see a greater value to the education I received.	The global class room experience was amazing, however, the staff that went with my professor on the trip was immature and I still recall the experience negatively and would not recommend that that staff member be allowed on trips. Not to mention that afte
my economics and philosophy professors and nothing else.	everything but my economics and philosophy professors.	no
Diverse student body, Access to Washington, DC and all it has to offer in terms of job opportunities, events, things to do, etc. Small class size	More attention to smaller programs, full time professors instead of adjuncts, speaker series, partnerships with DC businesses, technology class requirements for all majors	
Study abroad opportunities were great. Campus Ministry and related activities, community, were excellent. Small class sizes and available professors were great.	Trauma or disability services, for lack of a better term. I went through a horrific trauma at the beginning of my senior year that deeply impacted me as a person, let alone my ability to keep up with my classes. I sought out help to receive accommodations for the semester due to the event that had occurred and the difficulty I was experiencing. I was directed from one campus office to the next, being constantly made to retell my story and trauma over and over and over. I was asked to provide doctor's notes, psychiatrist recommendations, numerous "proofs" over and over again - all of which I did - only to be told no one could help me. No professor or office was willing to make any small adjustment or accommodation for me when I was experiencing the most difficult events of my life thus far. And that is why I will never recommend Marymount to anyone.	n/a

2019 Alumni Survey -- Comments

Business and Technology

Undergraduate

Economics (B.A.)

What are the strongest aspects of your MU education?	What aspects of your MU education need the most improvement?	If you have any other comments regarding your MU education, please provide them here.
Real World situations	Needs to be more challenging	no