

Executive Summary and Implementation Plan  
Quality Assurance Cyclical Program Review  
Department of Economics  
March 2013

In accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) the Department of Economics submitted a Self-Study (October 2011) to initiate the cyclical program review of their undergraduate programs. Volume 1 presented program descriptions, outcomes, and analyses, institutional information and statistical data. Volume 2 and 3 provided a collection of the program course outlines and the CVs for each full-time member in the Department.

Two external reviewers and one internal reviewer, selected from a set of proposed reviewers, examined the materials and completed a day and a half site visit April 2012. The visit included interviews with the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Deputy Provost, Dean of the Faculty of Science and Environmental Studies (SES), the Chair of the Department of Economics, the Librarian, and meetings with full-time teaching faculty, contract lecturers, graduate assistants, and support staff. The Review Team also had an opportunity to meet with a group of undergraduate students, and to visit the Departments' computer lab, lecture and seminar rooms, and the library commons.

In their report, submitted May 2012, the Review Team provided feedback that describes how the Economics programs meet the Quality Assurance Framework evaluation criteria and are consistent with the University's mission and academic priorities. They reported that the program requirements and learning outcomes set out in the self-study are clear, appropriate and in alignment with the institution's statement of undergraduate degree level expectations. The admission standards, curriculum structure and delivery, and teaching and assessment methods are consistent with those of other undergraduate Economics programs in Canada and are effective in preparing graduates to meet defined outcomes and the degree level expectations. The faculty members are active in research and publish in top journals. Based on the teaching evaluation data, student surveys, and the positive attitudes displayed by the group of students who were interviewed, the Review Team identified the quality of teaching and student engagement as a strength of the programs.

The Review Team provided feedback related to faculty resources and noted that the Department was severely stretched in terms of their ability to offer sufficient breadth and choice of undergraduate courses. They provided a number of

comments and recommendations that linked initiatives to increase enrolments and the number of economics majors with opportunities for Department expansion. They emphasized the importance of promoting the new and innovative HBSc Resource and Environmental Economics program. The Review Team provided twenty-three recommendations with supporting rationale for future consideration.

The Chair of the Department of Economics, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty, submitted a response to the Reviewers' Report (October 2012). Recommendations were grouped into themes, and clarifications and corrections presented. A Final Assessment Report was prepared to provide a synthesis of the external evaluation and internal response and assessments of the undergraduate programs delivered by the Department of Economics. The report identifies the significant strengths of the program, the opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, and sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

The Implementation Plan identifies who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the Final Assessment Report; who will be responsible for providing any resources made necessary by those recommendations; any changes in organization, policy or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations; who will be responsible for acting on those recommendations; and timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

## Implementation Plan: Part A Follow-up Responsibilities - Department of Economics

Suggestion/Recommendation	Follow-up	Responsibility*	Timeline
<p>R1 - Make the admission requirements of the HBSc program in Resource and Environmental Economics match those of similar programs in the Faculty of SES</p> <p>R3 - Add alternative Mathematics (Calculus) and Statistics requirements to the Honours BSc (Resource and Environmental Economics) program to make it more like other cognate Science programs</p> <p>R4 - Explicitly specify the requirements of the 20 credit (FCE) non-honours degree (Four Year non-Direct Entry) program in the calendar</p> <p>R5: Specify the program requirements of all of the Economics programs in terms of “credits” or “FCE courses”, and not just “courses”</p>	These minor changes will be addressed as calendar changes	Department Chair	Next round of calendar changes (2013/2015)
R2 - Add a Math requirement to the first (and/or second year) year of the Economics programs that require Economics 3117	Consider adding a requirement or specifying a course recommendation that students take a mathematics course as an elective. Complete any required calendar changes.	Department Chair	2013/2015
R6 - That tutorials be scheduled for as many Economics courses as possible (subject to resource constraints) and that all tutorials be structured with assigned questions/problems to be completed	Consider the addition of tutorials for the following courses (1100, 2017, 2037, 2203, 3117, 4217). Develop a	Department Chair with support from the Dean of the Faculty of SES	2013/2015

during the tutorial session	plan with the Dean to provide the necessary teaching assistance. Complete any required calendar changes.		
R11 - that open source software be considered for use in Econometrics courses	Software will be used in ECON 3111 during the 2013/2014 academic year (it has already been adopted for ECON 4217/5115).	Department Members	Ongoing
R16 - Reconsider the use of the "computer lab" as a computer lab, perhaps specifying it as a graduate or undergraduate student work room	The Department will change the lab space to a student work space.	Department Chair	2013/2014
R12 - Prioritize enrolment growth to create a compelling case for additional faculty resources  R20 - Recruit a greater number of qualified students	Continue current efforts and work with the Dean and others to initiate new recruitments plans.	Department Chair with support from Dean of the Faculty of SES, Admissions & recruitment	Ongoing
R23 - Resources available to the Chair for the administration of the Department should be increased significantly in order to reduce the pressure and demands of the position	The Department is currently experimenting with a Chair rotation schedule. One faculty member will serve in a supporting role to help reduce the pressure and demands of the Chair position.	Department Chair and Department Members	Ongoing

## Implementation Plan: Part B Joint Follow-up Responsibilities

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility*	Timeline
R17: That the number of graduate student teaching assistant positions at least be maintained, and increased if possible	Develop short and long term plans to address graduate student teaching assistant needs in the undergraduate program	Department Chair in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty of SES	Ongoing
R13 - Faculty replacement during sabbatical leaves - hire an academic-year full-time replacement when someone is taking a 12-month sabbatical	Develop Department plan for Sabbatical leaves	Department Chair with consultation and support from the Dean of the Faculty of SES	Ongoing
R 14 - Adding limited term position(s) to allow the Department to develop courses and programs to enhance enrollments and the number of majors	Submit strategic hiring proposals	Dean of the Faculty of SES	2013 - 2016

\*The Dean of the Faculty, in consultation with the Department Chair shall be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Plan. The details of progress made will be presented in the Deans' Annual Reports and filed in the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)