



8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC
Canada V5A 1S6

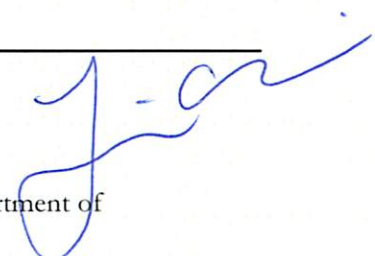
TEL: 778.782.3925
FAX: 778.782.5876

vpacad@sfu.ca
www.sfu.ca/vpacademic

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION Senate
FROM Jon Driver, Vice-President, Academic and
Provost, and Chair, SCUP
RE: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: External Review Update for the Department of
Economics (SCUP 15-09)

DATE February 11, 2015
PAGES 1/1

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Jon Driver", is written over the right side of the memorandum header.

At its February 4, 2015 meeting, SCUP reviewed the External Review Update Report for the Department of Economics within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. The report is attached for the information of Senate.

c: G. Myers



8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC
Canada V5A 1S6

TEL: 778.782.4636
FAX: 778.782.5876

avpcio@sfu.ca
www.sfu.ca/vpacademic

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION	Jon Driver, Chair, SCUP	DATE	January 19, 2015
FROM	Gord Myers, Associate Vice-President, Academic	PAGES	1/1
CC	D. Jacks and J. Craig		
RE:	External Review Update for the Department of Economics		

The External Review of the Department of Economics was undertaken in March 2011. According to the procedures established by SCUP, the Unit is required to submit an update describing its progress in implementing the Action Plan, which was derived from the External Review report, in the fourth year following the start of the External Review process. Please find attached this update, together with a copy of the Action Plan approved by Senate.

Based on this midterm report, my assessment is that the Department of Economics has made substantial progress toward implementing the Action Plan.

External Review Update for the Department of Economics	
Action	Progress Made
1. Faculty	
- 6 net new junior positions made available - replacement at the same level of any loss of existing faculty - size of the department to climb to 40 CFL	- 6 net new assistant professors hired from October 12 to date - 2 assistant and 1 associate hires for replacement to date - department stands at 41 faculty members (including two half-time Appointments)
2. Programming	
2.1.1 Undergraduate	
- shift ECON 301 earlier in the sequence and make it necessary to pass before being able to declare economics as a major - increase the CGPA necessary to declare a major in economics - facilitate degree completion by expanding capacity and choice at the 300 and 400 levels - adjust the credit hours for honours degrees to 120 hours - adjust the minor in economics to become a meaningful option	- transition to offering ECON 201 in place of ECON 301 is now complete and cumulative effects of change being evaluated - CGPA necessary to declare major raised from 2.0 to 2.6 - major bottlenecks to completion removed primarily through additional hiring as outlined above - completed - ongoing
2.1.2 Graduate	
- investigate whether MA comprehensive exam should be replaced by a summer paper - revisit role of recently added math requirements at the PhD level - determine whether PhD field exams should be maintained - revisit ECON 900	- starting in the 2015/2016 academic year, we will require our MAs to take a summer writing course - ongoing - ongoing - ECON 900 reorganized by graduate chair and regularly held
3. Research	
- no specific actions suggested	- continued efforts
4. Administration and Working Environment	
- no specific actions suggested	- continued efforts
5. Other	
N/A	

**External Review Update
Department of Economics
January 7, 2015**

1.) Faculty

In the external review action plan dated October 31, 2011, it was agreed that six net junior positions be made available to the Department of Economics over the next three years and that the department could replace at the same level any loss of existing faculty members. Consequently, the department was to reach a size of 40 CFLs by Fall 2014.

Over this three year period, the department hired eight assistant professors and one associate professor. Two of the assistant hires and the one associate hire represented replacements for lost faculty members. This brings the full complement of faculty members in the department to 41 (including one continuing lecturer, two research professors on modified half-time contracts, and one research professor currently appointed to the office of the Vice President-Academic).

2.) Programming

2.1.1) Undergraduate

There were a number of suggested actions:

- 1.) shift ECON 301 earlier in the sequence of undergraduate courses to the second year and make it a course necessary to pass before being able to declare economics as a major;
- 2.) increase the CGPA necessary to declare a major in economics;
- 3.) facilitate degree completion by expanding capacity and choice at the 300 and 400 levels;
- 4.) adjust the credit hour requirement for honours degrees from 132 to 120 hours;
- 5.) adjust the minor in economics to become a meaningful option.

The transition to offering ECON 201 in place of ECON 301 is now complete. This has certainly reduced many of the bottlenecks with respect to scheduling identified in the external review. At the same time, students are now required to have passed ECON 201 and maintained a CGPA of 2.6 to declare economics as their major. We are still waiting to ascertain any effects on student quality as a results of these two changes.

With respect to course access at the third and fourth year level, the number one factor in driving change for the good has been the increase in our faculty numbers. While total enrollment numbers in economics have increased over the past three years, the average class size in the third year in particular has declined appreciably. We are also now able to offer students a much wider range of courses in the third and fourth years. We are confident that these two factors have substantially enhanced the undergraduate experience in the department.

We have also recently amended the requirements for the honours degree following the Senate's decision last year allowing for a credit hour requirement of 120 hours. We hope this will serve to increase uptake in our honours program which has suffered as of late. Finally, we continue the

discussion as to what steps can be taken to ensure that our minor is of potential use to non-economics students.

2.1.2) Graduate

Again, there were a number of suggested actions:

- 1.) investigate whether the MA comprehensive exam should be replaced by a summer paper;
- 2.) revisit the role of recently added math requirements at the PhD level;
- 3.) determine whether PhD field comprehensive exams should be maintained;
- 4.) revisit ECON 900, students' involvement with it, and the role of the graduate chair.

Presently, there is no MA comprehensive exam. Presently, there is also no summer paper. However, starting in the 2015/2016 academic year, we will require our MAs to take a summer writing course, subject to approval by the Senate Grad Studies Curriculum Committee.

With respect to the second and third items, these remain items under consideration and debate within the department. A final decision with respect to item 3.), in particular, is likely to be made by the end of this academic year. Finally, ECON 900 has been substantially improved with our current graduate chair meeting nearly every week with our Ph.D. students who are required to present their latest work at least once per term.

3.) Research

No specific actions were suggested, but we continue to strive to be among the best departments of economics in Canada, a process which has been greatly aided by the large number of new hires we have made in the past few years.

4.) Administration and Working Environment

No specific actions were suggested, but we continue to strive to be a collegial, efficient, and equitable department.

5.) Other

N/A



OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC AND PROVOST

8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC
Canada V5A 1S6

TEL: 778.782.6702
FAX: 778.782.5876

glynn_nicholls@sfu.ca
www.sfu.ca/vpacademic

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION David Jacks
Chair, Department of Economics

FROM Glynn Nicholls
Director, Academic Planning and Quality Assurance

COPY John Craig
Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

RE: External Review Update for the Department of Economics

DATE November 24, 2014

PAGES 1

As per Senate guidelines, the Department of Economics is to report on progress being made in the implementation of the Action Plan that resulted from its external review in March 2011. This report will be presented to SCUP and Senate for information.

Please submit your progress report, using the attached template, by January 12, 2015. Also attached, for ease of reference, is the Action Plan that was approved by Senate on January 9, 2012.

Although your external review took place prior to the requirement to develop educational goals and assessment beginning with the 2013-14 external review cycle, any progress being made in your department in defining program and/or course level educational goals for academic programs would be welcome in your progress report.

Please contact me at 2-6702, glynn_nicholls@sfu.ca, or Bal Basi at 2-7676, bbasi@sfu.ca, if you have any questions or concerns regarding the external review update process.

Attach.

EXTERNAL REVIEW – ACTION PLAN

Section 1 – To be completed by the Responsible Unit Person e.g. Chair or Director

Unit under review	Date of Review Site visit	Responsible Unit person,	Faculty Dean
.....Economics.....	March 18-21.....	Nicolas Schmitt.....	John Craig.....

***Note: The Action Plan is only a summary of the most important points.
See the Appendix for a detailed response on all the issues raised by the reviewers.***

1. FACULTY

1.1 Action/s (description what is going to be done):

- 6 net new junior positions made available to Economics over the next three years (recommendation 1);
- Economics can replace at the same level (but not necessarily at the same scale) any loss of existing faculty in Economics;
- The implication of the above is that the size of the department should reach 40 CFLs.

1.2 Resource implications ((if any):

The resource implications are substantial since each new junior position involves market differential that is at least equal to the one offered over the last two years, starting research funds, five course buyouts (two paid by the Department) and benefits.

1.3 Expected completion date/s:

September 2014

2. PROGRAMING

2.1 Action/s (description what is going to be done):

2.1.1 Undergraduate:

- Econ 301 shifted to Econ 201 with Econ 201 becoming a prerequisite for many 300-level courses (recommendation 3) and a course necessary to pass before being able to declare Economics as Major.
- Increase CGPA necessary to declare a Major in Economics;
- Facilitate Majors being able to complete their degrees on time (recommendations 4 and 5) by having enough choice and enough capacity at the 300 and at the 400 levels;
- The department and FASS agree that Economics will adjust its Honour degree credit hour requirement from 132 to 120 as soon as the university has made this feasible (recommendation 7);
- Adjust the Minor in economics to as to become a meaningful option in Economics.

2.1.2 Graduate:

- Investigate whether and how the MA comprehensive exam should be replaced by a Summer paper (recommendation 8);
- Revisit the role of recently added math requirement (ECON 831) at the PhD level (recommendation 9);
- Determine whether PhD field comprehensive exams should be maintained (recommendation 9);
- Revisit the role of Econ 900, the timing of PhD student's involvement with it and the Graduate Chair's role.

2.2 Resource Implications ((if any):

Most of the above items have resource implications: (i) moving Econ 301 to Econ 201 means that many more students may take Econ 201; it will be imperative to offer enough capacity; (ii) making sure that Majors can complete their degrees means that enough 300 and 400 elective courses must be offered; (iii) having a larger Honours cohort means that core courses that are currently offered once a year may need to be offered more than once per year; (iv) Having a more accessible Minor in economics means that some elective courses at the 300 level may have an even higher demand than they currently do. Against these forces, we are making access to our Major more selective thereby reducing the demand for many of our courses. The net effect is uncertain. It will need to be monitored carefully. However, we expect to be able to face these challenges with the actions listed in 1.1.

2.3 Expected completion date/s:

Regarding the undergraduate programs, everything should be implemented by September 2012. The only uncertainty is about the Honours degree at 120 credits. We are awaiting university decisions to implement this particular item.

Regarding the graduate programs, the items should be investigated during the 2011/12 academic year and implementation be effective by September 2013 at the latest.

3 RESEARCH

3.1 Action/s(what is going to be done) :

There is no specific recommendation regarding research. We note however that the reviewers acknowledge that the Department of Economics made considerable progress since its last review and are placing us among the five best Economics departments in Canada. Our goal is to progress further by increasing our research output and making it more visible. These goals can be achieved by careful hiring and tenure/promotion decisions.

3.2 Resource implications(if any):

Those associated with 1.1.

3.3 Expected completion date/s:

Continuous effort.

4 ADMINISTRATION AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Action/s(what is going to be done) :

There is no specific recommendation regarding the governance or the working environment of the Department. Improvements can always be made and will continue to be made but the reviewers note that the Department is very collegial and issues are adequately addressed.

4.2 Resource implications(if any):

None

4.3 Expected completion date/s:

--

The above action plan has been considered by the Unit under review and has been discussed and agreed to by the Dean.

Unit Leader (signed) Name <u>[Signature]</u>	Title <u>Acting Chair Economics</u>	Date <u>Oct 31/11</u>
---	-------------------------------------	-----------------------

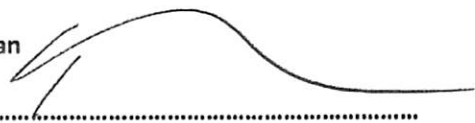
Carson Myers

Section 2 - Dean's comments and endorsement of the Action Plan :

I met with colleagues Nicolas Schmitt and Gord Myers from the Department of Economics on 22 June 2011 together with Glynn Nicholls to discuss the external review prepared by Professors Boadway (Queen's University), Carlos (University of Colorado) and Scarth (McMaster University).

I have given close consideration to both the external review and to the detailed response from the Department of Economics dated 25 June 2011. I agree that the external reviewers produced a thoughtful document that has captured the strengths found in the Department of Economics and the challenges it faces. The response from the Department of Economics is both substantive and persuasive. It has my full support. I agree that the Department is seriously understaffed and that unless this is addressed, the quality of the program in Economics will be imperiled. Specifically, the reviewers have recommended the appointment of six net new faculty members by 2014. The Dean's office, working closely with the Vice President Academic and with the Department of Economics, is determined to make this recommendation the priority for the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

Faculty Dean
John Craig



Date
31 October 2011