

Internal Academic Review 2008-2009

Department of Economics Internal Academic Review Committee Report to Senate

The Internal Academic Review (IAR) of the Department of Economics is now complete. The Internal Academic Review Committee (IARC) has taken into consideration all of the submissions related to the IAR of the Department of Economics and respectfully submits the following report. The IARC Report to Senate is intended to supplement the findings of the attached Review Team Report and to provide a mechanism for the Head of the Department and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science to jointly report on the progress in addressing the Review Team recommendations (please see the “Outcomes” section of this report).

Summary of the Internal Academic Review of the Department of Economics

The Department of Economics is to be applauded for its excellent national and international reputation and for being ranked the best in Canada by “Research Papers in Economics (RePEc)”. This accomplishment reflects the strength of the Department’s students, staff and faculty. The IARC also commends the Department for progress made since the last IAR including the rebuilding of its faculty complement. This is especially notable given the current financial circumstances and because Economics departments globally experience higher turnover than most other disciplines.

The Department of Economics should be recognized for its admirable collegial environment, and its success in fund-raising and securing research grants and awards. The Department has a number of unique strengths including its workshop and visitors programs, its strong record of public service, its success in placing its graduates and its balance across all of the major discipline fields. The IARC acknowledges the successful leadership of the head of the Department and applauds the dedicated administrative and support staff.

The IARC agrees with the Review Team and the External Consultants in their recommendation that the regular faculty needs to be more closely involved in the day-to-day management and teaching of the curriculum, especially at the undergraduate level. In order to foster excellent teaching standards, the IARC urges the Department to ensure its Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Teaching Fellows are adequately trained and supervised and recommends that it seek additional training opportunities including those provided by the Centre for Teaching and Learning and the School of Graduate Studies.

The IARC also encourages the Department to be more proactive when looking for opportunities to improve equity and diversity within the Unit.

The IARC recognizes the Department of Economics as an outstanding Unit and anticipates its continued success. The IARC fully supports the Department’s efforts, in collaboration with the Faculty of Arts and Science and the School of Graduate Studies, to sustain its prominence globally and its top ranking in Canada.

**Outcomes of the Internal Academic Review of the
Department of Economics**

*Joint response submitted by the
Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science and the
Head of the Department of Economics*

The Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science and the Acting Head of the Department of Economics welcome the very positive assessments of the Department of Economics by the IARC, and are happy to provide the following in relation to specific points raised by the IARC.

Increased Involvement of regular faculty in the management and teaching of the undergraduate program

We agree that this is a desirable goal, and have made progress with respect to our 200-level courses in particular. In 2010-11, teaching fellows will be responsible for teaching only three of thirteen sections of our core 200-level courses, ECON 212, 222, 250, and 255. Of the remaining ten sections, six are taught by regular faculty, two by continuing adjuncts and two by term adjuncts.

As the number of sections taught by regular faculty increases, a larger number of teaching assistants are then supervised by regular faculty. Incoming graduate students who will be working as TA's are offered training in the department, and are also encouraged to attend seminars and courses offered by the Centre for Teaching and Learning.

A more proactive approach to improving equity and diversity within the unit

The Economics Department has been trying for some time to increase the representation of women and members of other designated groups within the faculty complement. Of our most recent hires, two of three at the entry level and two of four have been women. In addition, the recent departures of three male faculty members will hopefully mean that we have a chance to hire additional members of under-represented groups in the near future. Entry-level hiring is the route most likely to be effective, as the pool of applicants for faculty positions in economics has recently begun to increase significantly in diversity.

We have also recently increased our efforts to recruit female graduate students. Of the class of eleven new Ph.D. students entering the program in 2010, four are female. This constitutes some progress as the preceding classes contained two (2009) and one (2008) female students respectively. Similarly, of our 41 incoming M.A. students for 2010-11, 19 are female, and this represents an increase relative to the historical average as well.

Finally, it is encouraging to note that both the external IAR consultants and the Internal IAR Review Team recognize a number of the unique strengths of the Department, including the workshop and visitors programs, the Department's success in placing its graduates and its strong record of public service, and the Department's balance across major fields in the discipline of economics.