

**Weber State University**  
**2013 External Regents Review**  
**Department of Economics – Faculty Response**

The Department of Economics would like to thank the review team (Drs. Eric Amsel, Attila Cseh, Seokwoo Song and David Tufte.). Faculty enjoyed their conversations with the review team and were impressed with the team's dedication to analyze and improve the department's work. The team provided a number of specific recommendations. These are listed below and the faculty responses are in italics.

1. We recommend that some of the funds generated by the program be used to hire a part- or full-time instructor to teach College and University service courses which provides release for regular faculty to teach more upper division courses required by the 2 + 2 students.

*The faculty wants to follow up with this recommendation. Preliminary discussions between the dean's office and Continuing Education have taken place.*

2. We recommend the recognition of the Department's 2 + 2 program as an important contribution to the College's strategic plan for internationalization, as this would justify the flow of additional College resources and recognition to help ensure the flourishing of the program.

*The economics department faculty endorses this recommendation.*

3. We recommend a department-wide discussion on curriculum and other issues (see Summary) and consider making available different paths through the curriculum to accommodate the needs of students who desire professional preparation in economics (emphasizing practically applying theory) or academic preparation (emphasizing scholarly understanding of theory).

*The economics department will initiate a curriculum discussion that takes into account existing assessment data that speaks to student preparation before entering the 2+2 program, but also to the fact that not all students desire a graduate level degree.*

4. We recommend that assessments be initiated going forward, perhaps in the form of graduating senior questionnaires, to assess students' judgments of the quality of program advising.

*The economics department will amend the departmental exit survey to get information about the new advising model and will continue to closely work with advising staff.*

5. The committee recommends that the department, as part of the wide ranging discussions on curriculum and other topics, include discussions on how to work with career services and secure more (if necessary, unpaid) internship possibilities for students (also see G. Relationships with External Communities)

*One part of the curriculum discussion will be the introduction of an official Internship course. The economics department will work with career services and the international student office in clarifying the rules for internships for domestic and international students, procuring additional*

*internships and systematizing the requirements of completing an internship class. This may be modeled on internship classes offered in the Business Administration department, for example.*

6. The committee was compelled by these reasons and recommends that the department engage in discussions which will address strategies to grow the number of domestic students.

*The department will carefully consider a number of strategies to increase recruiting of domestic students to the economics major. These strategies include faculty hiring, advertising (e.g. departmental website), curriculum discussion and availability of internship opportunities.*

7. We recommend that the chair update the faculty about the college-wide changes as frequently as possible including sending out minutes from the College executive committee, as well as other sources.

*The chair plans on regularly disseminating the minutes from the Executive Committee meetings to all departmental faculty and staff.*

8. The committee additionally recommends yearly meetings with adjuncts individually or collectively to review such topics as course evaluations, changes in curriculum, assessment goals and findings, and departmental expectations.

*Maintaining quality instruction is a high priority for the departmental faculty. Adjuncts are recognized as an integral part in achieving departmental goals and should be systematically included in curriculum and assessment discussions.*

9. We remain concerned about such space [computer labs], particularly if the number of majors increase and recommend that the issue be monitored, perhaps through graduating student assessments.

*The department is pleased to have expanded computer lab space and tutoring services in the form of a quantitative methods lab (funded through student fees). The current space works well, largely also as a space for study groups with access to a tutor. The department will monitor usage and need for expanded hours.*

10. The committee recommends the Department to take steps leading to the development of a departmental External Advisory Committee.

*The department will explore whether an external advisory board can be constituted. In the past, with a small number of students who pursued very different paths after graduation, targeted staffing of an external advisory board proved difficult.*

11. Although there are specific recommendations for dealing with particular short-term and long-term issues, the committee recommends that the Department begin a process to write a 5-year strategic plan that will address (among other topics) its mission, curriculum, culture, pedagogy, faculty roles and responsibilities, and relationships with the career center.

*Faculty feels that the department needs to systematically address all issues mentioned. It remains to be seen what form these discussions will take. A 5-year strategic plan is certainly one option that will be considered.*