

**Economics – Undergraduate, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies**

**Cyclical Program Review**

**Cyclical Program Review – 2004 - 2014**

**Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan\_Executive Summary**

**Reported to Joint-Committee on Quality Assurance: November 2015**

**Program description:**

The Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies was formed in 2009 as a result of the amalgamation of the Faculty of Arts and the Atkinson Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies. At that time, the Economics unit in the Atkinson Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies was merged with the Department of Economics in the Faculty of Arts.

At the undergraduate level, the Department of Economics within the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies delivers academic programs in

1. Economics (BA, Honours BA, Specialized Honours BA)
2. Business Economics (BA)
3. Financial and Business Economics (Specialized Honours BA)

Program	Accepts 2013	Enrolment FTES 2013	Degrees Awarded 2013
Economics	311	856	83 Hons BA; 187 BA
Business Economics	308	730	5 Hons BA; 76 BA
Financial and Business Economics	469	787	97 Hons BA

**Reviewers appointed by the Vice-Provost Academic:**

Professor Pierre Lasserre, Département des sciences économiques, Université du Québec à Montréal  
 Professor Dwayne Benjamin, Department of Economics, University of Toronto  
 Georges Monette, Associate Professor, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, York University

**Site Visit: October 27 and 28, 2014**

The reviewers met with Alice Pitt, Vice-Provost, Academic, Kim Michasiw, Vice-Dean, Liberal Arts and Professional Studies (LAPS), the Chair and Undergraduate Program Director, Mahmudul Anam and Neil Buckley. In addition, the reviewers met with librarians from the University libraries, and full-time and contract faculty and students from both the Glendon and Keele campuses.

**Outcome:** The Joint-Committee on Quality Assurance concluded that the Decanal response adequately addressed the review recommendations. Follow-up report due May 2017.

**Summary**

The three streams (Economics, Business Economics and Financial and Business Economics) are built on a foundational core curriculum covering microeconomics, macroeconomics, mathematical economics and statistics/econometrics in the 90-credit degree with additional requirements fleshing out the specializations and honours degree programs. Each program has clearly articulated degree level expectations and mapped the curriculum to ensure appropriate



content mastery. The Review Report states that “[o]verall the programs are well-designed and faculty members are committed to high-quality undergraduate teaching.” Faculty members are active researchers with strengths in all areas of the program and particular strength in applied micro- and macroeconomics.

In addition to faculty renewal and the need to provide stronger mentorship for junior faculty members, the self-study identified several academic program issues that require attention. Among these are concerns about program progression and the role of introductory courses initially designed for non-majors to allow students to count courses as electives if they change their program. Significant growth both in terms of the number of majors and the number of students who require introductory courses for other programs (notably in the School of Administrative Studies), along with the growth of international student enrolments has resulted in the need for greater co-ordination of first-year courses that satisfy different curricular needs. Other issues warrant further exploration: the role of full-time faculty in introductory and upper-level courses, class-size in upper-level courses and the potential increased teaching assistant support, the demands of courses designated as ‘writing courses’.

The Decanal Implementation Plan supports the unit’s interest in revising its curriculum in ways that will better serve students with a deep interest in Economics as their major.

In addition, the Dean’s Office holds the view that the creation of a degree program for students with a stronger interest in business than economics and who lack the mathematical capacity to excel in existing business programs at York. Discussions have also begun with faculty from ADMS, Economics and Business and Society about the potential development of a proposal for a less mathematically exacting program which emphasized the so-called soft skills that can be cultivated in a Liberal Arts program might satisfy the needs of such students for a business-related program. The Dean’s Office would strongly support such a project.

The Department has committed to undertake improvements in the statistics/econometrics sequence, identified as a high priority in the Review Report, and has confirmed a willingness to revisit the role of ‘writing courses’. The plan further suggests that this initiative would benefit from the LA&PS Writing Department’s expertise.

In terms of faculty: student ratios the Dean’s Office acknowledges the need for renewal and augmentation in alignment with revised curriculum needs. Addressing the diverse needs and interests of a heterogeneous student population is the highest priority, and this will be accomplished through revised curriculum and strengthened academic support in numeracy and literacy. Faculty renewal remains a priority but requires a complement that aligns with future program needs.

Progress on these actions will be addressed in the May 2017 follow-up report.

Alice J Pitt, Vice-Provost Academic  
November 2015

