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Attachment A
Faculty Senate Agenda
May 7, 2007

MEMORANDUM

April 14, 2009

TO: David Lang, Chair
Curriculum Policies Committee

FROM: Jeffrey Brodd, Chair *Jeffrey Brodd*
Program Review Oversight Committee

SUBJECT: Economics Department Program Review

The Program Review Oversight Committee has reviewed the Economics Department Program Review report prepared by Bob Buckley and the Review Team, and agrees that it is ready for final approval.

Given the unusual circumstances that were beyond the control of the Economics Department and that substantially delayed the completion of the Program Review report, the Program Review Oversight Committee considers the Department's response to the Program Review (dated April 2009) to be the most current, relevant, and appropriate document to consider in concluding this cycle of the Program Review process. The response is to be kept on file along with the report.

The Review is ready for action by the Faculty Senate. The next review cycle of the Economics Department will be scheduled to take place six years from the time of approval by the Faculty Senate.

cc: Mark Siegler, Chair, Economics Department
Otis Scott, Dean, College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies
Bob Buckley, Chair, Program Review Team
Ming-Tung "Mike" Lee, Associate Vice President and Dean for Academic Programs
Joseph F. Sheley, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT

ECONOMICS PROGRAM

College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies

Program Review Team

Bob Buckley, Department of Computer Science, Review Team Chair

Sue Cote, Criminal Justice Division

Scott Modell, Kinesiology and Health Science Department

External Consultant

Dr. Jack W. Hou

Department of Economics

California State University, Long Beach

Review: Fall 2004

Report Draft: Spring 2008

Report Approved: Spring 2009

Note: All information leading to the generation of this report was gathered in 2004; observations, commendations, and recommendations thus reflect the Review Team's perspectives at that time.

COMMENDATIONS

Retirements and hiring have been common throughout the CSU system, however, the magnitude and rapidity of this turnover in the Economics Department at CSUS has been most significant. Twelve of the current fourteen faculty were hired in the past four years (eleven were hired between 2001 and 2003). As mentioned by the external consultant, "such tremendous infusion of young faculty seem to have truly revitalized the Department, as the energy they bring has shown up in the enthusiasm of their teaching, their research interests, and reflected in the students' responses." As was also noted by the review team, the faculty are clearly committed to teaching, willing to serve on committees, and active in research. The level of genuine collegiality is commendable.

The assessment plan of the Economics Department appears well thought-out and appropriate. It consists of mainly two parts. One is the use of a capstone class (ECON 145) to assess the cumulative learning of the students through their stay at CSUS. The second part of the assessment plan involves an exit interview with graduating seniors. The capstone course is designed to provide a direct/objective evaluation of whether the students have achieved the Department's goal of developing a set of skills, which will prepare them for a professional career.

Teaching is still the most essential responsibility of the faculty. In this aspect, the Economics Department has excelled. Student feedback to both the external consultant

and the review team was consistent. The students praised the quality and commitment of their professors. The external consultant requested the fall 2004 teaching evaluations of four, randomly selected faculty (the specific undergraduate courses were randomly selected and not specified). As he noted in his report, out of the 15 classes examined, the LOW score was 4.41, with a high of 4.92. The two large classes scored 4.90 and 4.86, respectively. The low overall rating was 4.09 and the high 4.92, but 10 out of 15 classes had a score of 4.5 or higher. The two large classes scored 4.72 and 4.91, respectively. The review team agrees that these are truly outstanding evaluations, and the faculty should be commended for their demonstrated devotion and commitment to teaching.

The review team, along with the external consultant, commends the Department's efforts to improve student advising through the implementation of a new advising system. This new system now involves four highly committed faculty that serve as advisors for two-year terms. The terms are staggered, limiting the turnover in any given year and thereby ensuring continuity amongst the faculty advisers, and most importantly, with the students being advised. In addition, continuity is further enhanced by allowing students to continue with their original faculty adviser even after that faculty member completes his or her service as one of the four faculty advisers. This allows many of the students to continue with the same advisor through to graduation. This is the type of "best practice" which maintains relationships between students and faculty and contributes significantly to student success. The Department's efforts in this regard are exemplary.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PROGRAM

RECOMMENDATION 1. Ongoing Assessment of Alumni. The external consultant recommended the establishment of a detailed survey of alumni, two years after graduation, on their evaluation of the Program. These Surveying efforts should be focused on recent enough graduates in order to capture both their recent memory of the education they received but also to ensure their work experience has been sufficient to be able to comment on whether their academic work prepared them for their professional work. The analysis of these survey results could help guide the Department in maintaining and improving, as appropriate, the quality of the program.

While the information is dated (even in 2004), the results from the past alumni surveys identified some areas which respondents felt were weak. Two such areas were computer/technology skills and exposure to graduate school choices. Other identified weaknesses were in advising, internship opportunities, and information on career choices.

RECOMMENDATION 2. Addition of Quantitative and Theory Courses. In interviews with graduate students, those having received their undergraduate degree in Economics from CSUS expressed what they felt was a need for increased exposure to theory and the development of quantitative skills in the undergraduate program. The external consultant also noted that in contrast to most undergraduate programs in Economics, the Sacramento State program did not

have a Math/Calculus requirement other than high school algebra. Again, as noted by the consultant, calculus is an important tool in economics and certainly warrants its position as a requirement for the major. In addition, this implies that there must be upper division courses within the major that require an understanding and the use of calculus. This is not a recommendation that all upper-division courses have a calculus prerequisite. Many courses within the curriculum can be taught at the appropriate level with only principles as a prerequisite.

This is merely a recommendation for the Department to engage in conversations about the appropriate placement of quantitative and theory courses within the undergraduate curriculum.

RECOMMENDATION 3. Development of an Advising Handbook. Documenting the knowledge gained by the cadre of faculty advisers would be of significant help for those faculty that assume an advising responsibility for the first time or resume an advising role after a hiatus. The development and continual updating of a Department "advising" handbook would benefit future advisors. Certainly, a section of "frequently asked questions" would be useful in covering the changing context and requirements for the program.

RECOMMENDATION 4. Maintain and Support the Program's Student Association. Student engagement beyond the required coursework is important. The review team concurs with the external consultant in recommending that the Department invest more in the student Economics Club. As noted by the external consultant, most of the students did not seem to know of its existence. Student associations provide the opportunity to bring to campus professionals from various sectors of industry, business, and government to talk about what they seek in an Economics major. In addition, involving alumni with the association would help build networks between students and the alumni. A student association provides an arena in which faculty can discuss graduate school and how to prepare for work on an advanced degree in Economics. Again, as noted by the external consultant, an active student association would provide a venue for organizing field trips where the students can visit, for example, the Pacific Stock Exchange and the Federal Reserve Bank branch in San Francisco as well as a number of places in Sacramento that would interest and benefit the students.

RECOMMENDATION 5. Establish an Industry/Government Advisory Committee. The establishment of an Advisory Committee could be a valuable resource as well as a source of data related not only to the outcomes of students after graduation but also to the expectations of employers of the Department's graduates. In addition, establishing and maintaining contacts with alumni could provide data that would contribute to the Department's formative assessment process.

An Advisory Committee and an alumni relations system could be a resource for providing students with up to date information about internships as well as employment opportunities. Both could also provide opportunities for bringing speakers to campus, engaging the Economics Club members with the community at-large, and possibly providing field trip experiences to business and government agencies within the Sacramento region.

RECOMMENDATION 6. Undertake Efforts to "Market" the Economics Minor.

Currently, there appear to be a relatively small number of students minoring in Economics. Marketing efforts within the University could be helpful in increasing the interest in Economics as a minor. The external consultant discussed the close working relationship that his department has with the Business School, where they have developed two types of minors. One was tailored for the students in majors throughout the university and the other for the students majoring in business. In his case, a business major would need only 3 additional classes (9 units) to satisfy the Business Economics Minor requirements. Furthermore, business majors at his university need only take 5 additional classes (2 more than the minor) to double major in Business and Economics.

RECOMMENDATION 7. Explore the Potential of Developing a Public Economics

Concentration. Being located in the state capital provides a unique opportunity for students with academic background in public choice or public sector economics. As the external consultant noted, the Department has a comparative advantage in preparing students with this type of background for positions throughout the state agencies, as well as the private sector firms that advise and lobby the state. In the previous program review, the external reviewer suggested that the Department explore the possibility of undertaking a cooperative effort with the Public Policy and Administration program to enhance the both its graduate and undergraduate programs. For example, with the likelihood that a sizable percentage of the students will enter public service upon graduation, the external consultant recommended establishing a program (or concentration) in public economics that would produce graduates ready for this distinctive area of employment. More specifically, the external consultant recommends that the Department form a committee (with both faculty and perhaps senior alumni that are employed in the government sector) to look into how to tailor a program that best prepares students with public service as their career choice.

Furthermore, the external consultant recommends exploring the potential for developing and offering a Master of Arts degree in Public Economics. One would think that Sacramento has a large demand for such a program. If so, CSUS should have the market virtually cornered. Such a program has the potential of such a program being nationally recognized. As the external consultant noted, the graduate programs at universities located within and around Washington D.C. (e.g. America University, George Washington, Georgetown, etc.), are filled with employers from various branches of the government. CSUS has the unique advantage of being the only major university close enough to be feasible for the majority of public sector (state) employees interested in pursuing such a degree. Establishing such an important connection with the public sector would also provide a tremendous source of internship and employment opportunities for the students.

RECOMMENDATION 8. Retention of Faculty. As we all know, the challenge in retaining those faculty hired in the past decade is a difficult one. Due to collective bargaining, our pay structure is fixed with extreme rigidity. The Department, with the support from the Dean, has tried to accommodate for this somewhat by bringing in the junior faculty at the maximum step. However, due to the budget crisis, this means that they have seen no increase in their salary (no step increase, no cost-of-living increase). As noted by the external consultant and recognized by

the review team, the twelve junior faculty are of high quality, with great promise, and absolutely outstanding teaching abilities. While the infusion of new faculty has resulted in the rebuilding and revitalization of the Department, keeping these faculty will be much more difficult. Given his understanding of the market for economists, the external consultant expressed concern that many of the junior faculty will be soon testing the job market. This, evidently, was communicated to the consultant by the students that were interviewed. While we all understand that this is a challenge facing many other departments in the University, we recommend that the College Dean work with the Department to take whatever measures that are possible to retain this group of faculty. As stated by the consultant, "tough as it may be in recruiting them, loosing [sic] them would be far worse."

RECOMMENDATION 9. Program Assessment. In addition to information that can be collected through surveys of alumni and feedback from a departmental Industrial Advisory Board, the Department's undergraduate capstone course (Economics 145) provides access to all graduating majors and, as such, is an excellent resource for the collection of student outcome data that can be used to further enhance the Department's formative assessment efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COLLEGE

The following recommendations are related to corresponding recommendations made to the Department.

RECOMMENDATION 1. Faculty Retention. As discussed in Recommendation 8 above, the Department faces a challenge in retaining those faculty hired in the past decade. The Department, with the support from the Dean, has tried to accommodate for this somewhat by bringing in the junior faculty at the maximum step. However, due to the budget crisis, this means that they have seen no increase in their salary (no step increase, no cost-of-living increase). As noted by the external consultant and recognized by the review team, the twelve junior faculty are of high quality, with great promise, and absolutely outstanding teaching abilities. While the infusion of new faculty has resulted in the rebuilding and revitalization of the Department, keeping these faculty will be much more difficult. Given his understanding of the market for economists, the external consultant expressed concern that many of the junior faculty will be soon testing the job market. This, evidently, was a feeling shared by their students to the consultant. While we all understand that this is a challenge facing many other departments in the University, we recommend that the College Dean work with the Department to take whatever measures that are possible to retain this group of faculty. As stated by the consultant, "tough as it may be in recruiting them, loosing [sic] them would be far worse."

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE FACULTY SENATE

On the basis of this Program Review and the Self-Study prepared by the Economics Department, the review team recommends the Bachelor of Arts Degree in Economics, the Master's Degree in Economics, and the Minor in Economics be approved for six years from the date of Senate approval of this Report.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT FROM 1998-99 PROGRAM REVIEW.

1. The Department should examine and revise its advising policy to provide greater direction and increased contact with students through their undergraduate careers.

The policy has been updated and a new system of advising instituted with four faculty serving as undergraduate advisors. Each adviser serves staggered two year terms. Their majors must meet with a faculty adviser at various stages of their progress, including when they enter the University as freshmen, transfers or when they declare Economics as their major. All majors are encouraged to meet with an advisor each semester prior to registration.

2. The Department should take steps to institute a more aggressive internship program.

The program has been strengthened and streamlined during the past few years. The Vice Chair of the department is responsible for coordinating the internship program.

3. The Department should provide additional opportunities for increasing contact between its undergraduate students and its alumni.

Faculty invite alums to their classes to give guest lectures in their areas of expertise. The Economics Club also sponsors events with guest speakers, including alumni. Masters degree students have the opportunity to meet MA alums at the annual fall barbeque.

4. The Department should institute a faculty or student-faculty colloquium in which faculty members present their current research efforts or pedagogical innovations for comment and review.

The Department in cooperation with Public Policy and Administration has begun a colloquium series where faculty members present current research and receive feedback and suggestions from colleagues. The series meets every other week and has very good attendance.

5. The Department should, in consultation with the Dean of the College, improve its notification to faculty members regarding the provision of travel funds and monies available for supporting research available both through the College and the University.

During the last few years faculty have taken advantage of travel and research funds available through the College and University. Many junior faculty have applied for and received summer faculty fellowships. In recent years all faculty have attended the American Economics Association annual conference. Many attend regional conferences in their specialties.

6. The Department should undertake a comprehensive planning exercise that establishes the Department's curricular strengths and weaknesses in light of present faculty staffing and

predicted changes in staffing over the next three to five years. The goal of such an effort should be to proactively plan the Department's way into future areas of excellence.

In spring 2001, the Department revised its "five year plan", which was included as an appendix in the Self Study Report. The focus of this revision was to identify curricular needs and to formulate a plan for future hiring. This plan provided the basis for requested positions over the next several years. The Department has been successful in recruiting and hiring 12 new faculty since spring 2001.

The Department's curriculum went through a major revision last year. Course descriptions were examined and revised to reflect current teaching practices. After much discussion, the Department decided to require majors to take Quantitative Economic Analysis, in which they will learn statistical methods, data analysis, and presentation skills. We have broadened our history requirement, so that students can choose either History of Economic Thought or Economic History of the United States. Faculty have introduced new courses in Sports, Movies, Game Theory, and Economics of Education. These changes reflect broad changes that are occurring in Economics curriculum throughout the country, and reflect the interests of our new faculty members. They also respond to suggestions from graduating seniors.

7. The Department should give serious consideration to establishing a cluster of "applied" or "social issues" General Education courses.

The Department's General Education course offerings have not changed significantly over the last few years. Economics 184: Women and the Economy. Both Sports Economics and Economics at the Movies were submitted for General Education course approval, but both proposals were rejected.

8. The Department should review, on a continuing basis, all of the department's General Education course offerings and consider, in particular, the possibility of submitting ECON 104-Introduction to the United States Economy as a GE course.

Economics 104 was not proposed as a GE course, as it is a course that specifically meets the needs of the liberal studies program. Economics 1A and 1B are better General Education courses that cover similar topics in more depth. These courses provide students with a strong and broad foundation in economics.

9. The Department should revisit its committee structure to institute changes that ensure that all faculty members have a chance to contribute to departmental governance in a meaningful way.

All faculty serve on at least one Department committee. We have 6 standing committees, and at the first Department meeting each academic year, faculty join any committees they have an interest in. Faculty feel very comfortable raising issues of concern, and challenges are discussed and resolved in a democratic way.

10. The Department should increase its commitment to and investment in the Center for Economic Education.

The Center for Economic Education has been revitalized under the leadership of one of the junior faculty,. The Center offers workshops for current teachers, supports CSUS faculty and school teachers in the region, and certifies teachers with a "Certificate in Economic Education." The Director organizes the Northern California Economics Challenge competition for high school students, which is sponsored by the National Center for Economic Education and Goldman Sachs. Many faculty participate in the Economics Challenge each spring by proctoring exams, grading exams, or running the college bowl event.

11. The Department should initiate discussions with appropriate members of the College of Business to repair past differences and plan for areas of common concern in the future.

Communication with the College of Business Administration has improved. Their undergraduate students are now required to take Economics 1A and 1B. MBA students also take Economics 204. In addition, many business students choose to minor in Economics. The courses in economics also offer theoretical foundations for the applied business courses.

12. The Department should consider starting discussions with other departments, particularly Government and the Masters Program in Public Policy and Administration, to investigate possible joint and expanded offerings.

The Department has collaborated with the Department of Public Policy and Administration and requires their minors in Public Policy to take a course in public sector economics. Graduate students in Economics are able to take Urban Problems, Economics, and Public Policy, which is the cross listed course and often taught by a PPA faculty member.

**Department of Economics Response to the
"Economics Program Academic Review Report"
April 2009**

Although we are pleased that the Program Review Team recommends that our major, minor, and graduate program be approved for the next six years, we have serious concerns regarding the long delay in receiving the report, the length and content of the report, as well as many of the recommendations contained within the report.

Delay

Although our Academic Program Review Report contains "Fall 2004" in the title, the Department did not receive the first draft until February 2008 and the final report until March 2009. In our opinion, this long delay severely undermines its usefulness. Since Fall 2004, the Department has undergone significant personnel changes, and the University budget situation is far different today than it was several years ago. As a result, some of the recommendations are no longer feasible. Perhaps more importantly, the Department has continued to move forward and we have already addressed many of the recommendations, although we have often done so in a different manner than what is suggested in the report. We will elaborate further on this below.

Length and Content

The "Commendations" section of the report is not even a page long. Although it states that "the faculty are clearly committed to teaching, willing to serve on committees, and active in research," no specifics are provided with the exception of mentioning the Fall 2004 teaching evaluations of four randomly selected faculty members that the external consultant examined on his campus visit. The Department wrote a very detailed and comprehensive self-study, which specifically documented our contributions in terms of teaching, scholarship, and service, yet there is no indication that the review team looked at our self-study.

In addition, since Fall 2004 the Department has continued to receive high teaching evaluations (with a rigorous set of course offerings), while increasing our productivity in terms of both scholarship and service. For example, our self-study reported nearly thirty journals where Department members had recently published. Since 2004, Department members have published over forty refereed articles (<http://www.csus.edu/econ/faculty/Publications.htm>). We believe that this warrants more than just three words: "active in research." We also believe that our service contributions warrant more than just "willing to serve on committees." Our self-study lists over forty committees and other contributions of university and community service, and our involvement in institutional and community service has broadened since that time. We believe that we have been as active as any other Department in the University in this area, yet there is no indication of this in the report. Overall, the Commendations section is so boilerplate and generic that it could apply to virtually any department.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Ongoing Assessment of Alumni

The external consultant recommended the establishment of a survey of alumni two years after graduation. We have no objections to this recommendation and believe that more information is preferred to less. Although alumni are currently surveyed, it is not explicitly done two years after each major has graduated. We would be willing to discuss this with the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) to see if this is a possibility.

Recommendation 1 also cites previous alumni surveys identifying Department weaknesses in terms of "computer/technology skills . . . exposure to graduate school choices . . . advising, internship opportunities, and information on career choices."

The Program Review Team stresses that this "information is dated" and we agree with this assessment. In fact, much of this information is from a decade ago. Many of our classes are now taught in computer labs, and Economics 140, which is now a required class for all majors, includes emphasis in these areas as well. The Catalog description for Economics 140 consists of an "examination of the basics of conducting quantitative economic analysis. Included are basic concepts and methods of data analysis and research. Students will examine economic data using spreadsheets, will develop presentation skills, and be introduced to career opportunities." Finally, we have established a new advising system in recent years (discussed under Recommendation 3 below) and improved our internship program (discussed under Recommendation 5 below).

It is our hope and expectation that future alumni surveys will no longer cite these factors as Department weaknesses.

Recommendation 2: Addition of Quantitative and Theory Courses

As mentioned under Recommendation 1 above, Economics 140: Quantitative Economic Analysis is now a required course for all majors. In addition, Statistics 1 is required of all majors. We have also introduced other quantitative and theory courses including Economics 142: Introduction to Mathematical Economics and Economics 161: Fundamentals of Game Theory. Moreover, Math 26A (Calculus for the Social and Life Sciences) or Math 30 (Calculus I) can count as elective courses in our major. Finally, some of our best undergraduate students have enrolled in Economics 200M: Mathematics for Economists, a recently introduced, required graduate-level course for our Masters students.

Based on a claim by the external consultant, the Program Review Report states that "[i]n contrast to most undergraduate programs in Economics, the Sacramento State program does not have a Math/Calculus requirement other than high school algebra." We do not believe that this characterization is accurate. We surveyed all other Economics Departments in the CSU system and found a relatively even split between those that require calculus and those that do not.

Moreover, this split largely reflects whether the Economics Department is housed in a business school or whether it is part of a social science college.

We have talked about a calculus requirement in Department meetings both prior to and since the external consultant visited our campus, and we have concluded that this is not in the best interests of the Department. Many years ago, the Department instituted a calculus requirement and the number of majors fell precipitously. Given our students' lack of mathematical preparation and proficiency, we believe that a calculus requirement would seriously reduce our number of majors and minors. We recognize the importance of mathematical skills to succeed in economics, particularly beyond the undergraduate level, but we believe that the best course of action is to teach these skills within our curriculum, instead of making an external calculus requirement a barrier to students who are interested in studying economics. Through our advising system, we strongly recommend that individual students interested in post-graduate study in economics take additional mathematics courses and we are pleased that several of our students are currently enrolled in top-tier Ph.D. programs in economics.

Recommendation 3: Development of an Advising Handbook

Our advising system consists of four faculty dedicated to advising each academic year. Advisors serve a two-year term and there are two new and two continuing advisors each year. The purpose of staggering terms is so that information passes from seasoned to new advisors. In addition, the Advising Committee regularly meets to discuss any changes in the program requirements and how that influences student advising.

After several years of having this system in place, we have many Department members who are knowledgeable of Department and University policies, and we believe that this information has been shared widely among faculty. There is also a binder available to Department advisors that contains the Student Handbook, and common forms for students (add/drop, declaring a major, etc.). In addition, we have improved our Department website substantially including the addition of a FAQ section. This material is available to students (and advisors) online. We also have all forms and Department policies on our Departmental shared drive for easy access by all faculty. We could certainly codify this knowledge more formally in an "Advising Handbook" and we would be willing to do so if asked.

Recommendation 4: Maintain and Support the Program's Student Association

Prior to the Program Review in 2004, the Department restarted the Student Economics Association (SEA). In recent years, the scope and activities of the SEA have expanded tremendously. Each year, several social events are sponsored by the SEA (bowling, skating, miniature golf, etc.), and many guest speakers have been invited to campus. The SEA has also taken field trips to the San Francisco Federal Reserve Bank and the California State Capitol Building. In addition, the SEA has provided students with graduate school and job market advice by fostering connections with state agencies and the business community (see Recommendation 5 below).

The Department's chapter of the international economics honor society, Omicron Delta Epsilon (ODE), is also actively recruiting eligible members and honoring them with a well-attended induction reception at the end of each academic year. It is hoped that such commendation by faculty will foster both pride in the students for their academic achievements as well as continuing relationships beyond graduation.

Recommendation 5: Establish an Industry/Government Advisory Committee

Our Department believes that an advisory committee is unnecessary since the Department already networks with members of the business community and public sector in a variety of ways. We have frequently adapted our curriculum in response to the needs of our business and government community. One such example was the addition of Econ 110: Cost-Benefit Analysis to provide our students with the knowledge and skills to interpret and conduct such studies as requested by several state agencies.

Faculty have worked with many local and state government agencies, including the City of Sacramento, the City of Davis, the California Water Resources Control Board, the California Employment Development Department, the California Environmental Protection Agency, the California Department of Mental Health, the State Board of Equalization, and the UC Davis Medical System's Community Advisory Board. Members of the Department have also consulted with the Sacramento Regional Research Institute (SRRI), the research arm of the Sacramento Area Commerce and Trade Organization (SACTO) on a number of projects.

Faculty also present their work to a variety of local audiences. For example, last semester the Department sponsored and participated in a forum on the global economic and financial crisis. Members of the Department have also spoken to many business groups in the community and have regularly presented at the Sacramento Economic Roundtable, a chapter of the National Association for Business Economics. Networking at these events keeps faculty informed about the needs of public sector employers and the business community.

Another important way for faculty and students to interact with the business community is through the Student Economics Association (SEA). A faculty member, in coordination with the organization's student leaders, devises activities that promote increased student awareness of both additional educational opportunities as well as career opportunities for economics majors. This awareness is achieved by inviting speakers from local businesses, graduate schools, and government organizations to speak about how students can put their degree to use once they leave Sacramento State. In addition, the SEA has also hosted a resume workshop and encourages its members to take advantage of the career counseling opportunities afforded by the university. In addition to these formal events, a number of our adjunct faculty work for government agencies, such as the California Departments of Finance and the California Energy Commission, and informally connect our students with job opportunities.

The Department also provides a course release to the Vice Chair, who works closely with the Career Center on campus, to provide abundant and meaningful internship and career opportunities for our students.

In sum, we believe we meet the goals of an advisory committee through other means.

Recommendation 6: Undertake Efforts to "Market" the Economics Minor

Although the Department has done a substantial amount to recruit majors and minors, we agree that we could do more to market an economics minor to students. Most, if not all, full-time faculty who teach our introductory courses spend time near the end of the semester informing students about major and minor programs in Economics. In addition, through the Student Economics Association, we have instituted a "Student Ambassador's Program," where our students and faculty visit area community colleges each spring to encourage them to major and minor in economics. We have also authored a "Student Handbook" and are in the process of printing a brochure highlighting the advantages of the Economics program. Finally, we are regularly represented at Major Fairs and through summer advising for first-year and transfer students.

We can, however, work with the College of Business Administration to encourage more business students to minor in Economics and will strive to do so in the future.

Recommendation 7: Explore the Potential of Developing a Public Economics Concentration

Given our proximity to the state capitol, and the fact that several faculty members have an interest and expertise in public economics, this recommendation is based on sound reasoning. However, this simply isn't feasible for us now or in the foreseeable future given budgetary and staffing limitations.

In Fall 2004, when the external consultant visited the Department, less than ten percent of the Department's courses were taught by part-time faculty. In contrast, by Fall 2008, over fifty percent of our courses were taught by part-time and visiting faculty. It has become increasingly difficult to staff our current courses in recent years, and it is simply not feasible to offer additional courses in public economics or any other subfield of economics without the addition of several new tenure-track faculty.

Our "Student Handbook" provides a listing of elective course groupings for students interested in particular careers or graduate study. These groupings include electives for "Careers in Federal, State, or Local Government," "Careers in Banking and Finance," "Careers in Education," "Graduate Study in Economics," "Graduate Study in Business," and "Graduate Study in Law." Our curriculum provides seven elective courses for students interested in careers in federal, state, or local government.

While, in many ways, we already offer an informal concentration in Public Economics at the undergraduate level, we are reluctant to make such a concentration explicit in the present budgetary climate since it would lock us in to offering a specific set of courses for students on this tract, and it would lessen our ability to modify our course offerings in light of budgetary cuts.

Finally, the Public Policy and Administration (PPA) Graduate Program emphasizes "public economics" at the M.A. level and is an excellent option for any of our students interested in public policy careers.

Recommendation 8: Retention of Faculty

We agree that this has been and will continue to be a serious concern. In recent years, four tenure-track/tenured professors in our Department have resigned. In addition, we have had several faculty members end their period in the Faculty Early Retirement Program (FERP). As a result, our reliance on part-time faculty has increased dramatically (see the discussion under Recommendation 7 above).

With substantial budget cuts looming and the increased workloads that will undoubtedly result for full-time faculty, along with pay that is still substantially below market rates compared to Economics faculty at similar institutions, the Department faces a potential crisis. With a talented and dedicated faculty with increasingly better options elsewhere, we may not have seen the last of our faculty resignations. In addition, it has become increasingly difficult to recruit new tenure-track faculty as our starting salaries have not kept up with market increases during the past several years.

We would welcome any relief in this area, in terms of competitive salaries at all ranks and more tenure-track positions.

Recommendation 9: Use the Capstone Course for Program Assessment

We have been using our capstone course, Economics 145: Economic Research Methods, for program assessment since 2002, prior to the Program Review. Each student at the end of Economics 145 fills out an "Exit Questionnaire for Graduating Seniors in Economics" that consists of sixteen multiple-choice questions and eight written-response questions. This survey has provided the Department with valuable information and we have every intention of continuing to use this survey for program assessment in the future. Department faculty also regularly attend Economics 145 project presentations to assess students' ability in achieving Department goals and objectives.