ONE-YEAR FOLLOW-UP REPORT

PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW (PPR)
Bachelor of Arts
International Economics and Finance
Faculty of Arts

In accordance with Ryerson Senate Policy 126, section 12, the Economics Department has prepared this One-year Follow-up Report to the PPR for the Bachelor of Arts, International Economics and Finance. The report addresses the department's progress on the three issues specified by the Academic Standards Committee in their Evaluation of the program's PPR Final Assessment Report presented at the April 7, 2020 Senate meeting.

SUMMARY OF THE PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW OF THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMICS AND FINANCE PROGRAM

The International Economics and Finance program submitted a self-study report to the Vice-Provost Academic on January 17, 2020. Three arm's-length external reviewers, Dr. Alok Johri, Department of Economics, McMaster University, Dr. Miquel Faig, Department of Economics, University of Toronto Mississauga, and Dr. Yuanshun Li, School of Accounting and Finance, Ted Rogers School of Management, Ryerson University, were appointed by the Dean of Arts from a set of proposed reviewers. They reviewed the self-study documentation and then conducted a site visit at Ryerson University on April 8 and 9, 2019.

In their report, dated May 24, 2019, the Peer Review Team (PRT) provided feedback that describes how the International Economics and Finance program meets the IQAP evaluation criteria and is consistent with the University's mission and academic priorities.

The Chair of the International Economics and Finance program submitted a response to the PRT Report on September 18, 2019. The response to both the PRT Report and the Program's Response was submitted by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts on January 15, 2020.

The Academic Standards Committee completed its assessment of the International Economics and Finance Program Review on February 27, 2020**.** The Academic Standards Committee recommended that the program continue, as well as provide a one-year follow-up report by June 30, 2021**,** as follows:

1. Update on 2nd year student retention numbers;
2. Update progress on incorporation of cultural relevance and EDI in course content;
3. Report on the status of the initiatives outlined in the Implementation Plan.

The next section in this report provides a follow-up on each of these three areas.

ONE-YEAR FOLLOW-UP REPORT TO THE PPR

1. Update on 2nd year student retention numbers

Table 1 provides updated data on second year student retention numbers published by the University Planning Office (UPO) in the January 2021 Progress Indicators and Related Statistics, available at https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/university-planning/Data-Statistics/ProgIndJan21.pdf. The data reports numbers for the International Economics and Finance program, the Faculty of Arts and Ryerson as a whole.

Table 1: Second year student retention rates

	Percentage of students retained in any year level of same program after TWO years of study									
Cohort:	*Fall 2008*	*Fall 2009*	*Fall 2010*	*Fall 2011*	*Fall 2012*	*Fall 2013*	*Fall 2014*	*Fall 2015*	*Fall 2016*	*Fall 2017*
Retained in:	*Fall 2010*	*Fall 2011*	*Fall 2012*	*Fall 2013*	*Fall 2014*	*Fall 2015*	*Fall 2016*	*Fall 2017*	*Fall 2018*	*Fall 2019*
International Economics and Finance	**59.0**	**50.0**	**55.6**	**55.3**	**55.2**	**52.5**	**57.5**	**50.0**	**54.8**	**62.9**
Faculty of Arts	64.8	67.4	66.1	66.0	65.7	63.9	64.6	63.1	62.0	63.4
Ryerson	72.9	75.9	74.3	76.2	77.3	76.5	76.9	77.5	76.3	77.0

Source: Indicator 5e, Progress Indicators and Related Statistics, January 2021, University Planning Office, Ryerson University
https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/university-planning/Data-Statistics/ProgIndJan21.pdf

The table shows a substantial improvement in the second year retention rate for the cohort that entered the program in Fall 2017, relative to previous years. The retention rate for this cohort was 62.9 percent, 8 percentage points higher than the previous year's cohort, and close to the average in the Faculty of Arts (63.4 percent). This increase occurred despite the fact that the first year retention rate for the Fall 2017 cohort was not significantly higher than in previous years (please, see table 2). The department believes that this higher retention rate is the direct result of curriculum adjustments introduced in Fall 2017. In particular, the department reduced the number of compulsory courses in the second year from nine to seven, by moving ECN600 (Intermediate Macroeconomics II) and ECN700 (Intermediate Microeconomics II) to the third year of the program.

Table 2: First year student retention rates

	Percentage of students retained in any year level of same program after ONE year of study									
Cohort:	*Fall 2009*	*Fall 2010*	*Fall 2011*	*Fall 2012*	*Fall 2013*	*Fall 2014*	*Fall 2015*	*Fall 2016*	*Fall 2017*	*Fall 2018*
Retained in:	*Fall 2010*	*Fall 2011*	*Fall 2012*	*Fall 2013*	*Fall 2014*	*Fall 2015*	*Fall 2016*	*Fall 2017*	*Fall 2018*	*Fall 2019*
International Economics and Finance	**54.8**	**82.7**	**77.6**	**80.2**	**77.2**	**84.9**	**75.0**	**61.5**	**77.5**	**78.1**
Faculty of Arts	74.9	80.4	77.3	77.0	74.1	76.2	74.6	70.2	73.3	71.1
Ryerson	81.0	82.3	82.1	83.3	83.2	83.5	84.1	82.9	83.5	81.9

Source: Indicator 5d, Progress Indicators and Related Statistics, January 2021, University Planning Office, Ryerson University
https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/university-planning/Data-Statistics/ProgIndJan21.pdf

To further analyze retention patterns and to attempt to identify characteristics among the newly admitted students that could lead to higher retention rates, the department obtained microdata from the University Planning Office for newly admitted students who had enrolled in the program from 2015-2019. The data included the students' high school entry averages, student type (high school, mature, international) as well as their CGPAs, academic standing and program of study for each year that they remained at Ryerson. The main findings from this analysis are listed below:

Finding 1: There is no overall pattern in the difference in retention rates based on entry averages.

Finding 2: Mature and international students tend to have higher retention rates than high school students.

Finding 3: Most students who leave the program in the first two years leave Ryerson University altogether (only about one quarter of these are Required to Withdraw) and only a few transfer to another Ryerson program.

The department is considering several strategies to further improve retention rates, based on these findings. These strategies include: (i) take steps to identify struggling students early on in the program, and act to keep them engaged; (ii) better market the program to prospective students so that they have a better understanding of its technical nature and requirements , (iii) increase the cutoff grade for both Mathematics and English to 70 percent (at par with the requirements of the Business Management program at TRSM), but keep the minimum entry average unchanged, and (iv) advise University Admissions to allow and accept a greater percentage of mature and international students into the program.

2. Incorporation of cultural relevance and EDI in course content

The department has taken several initiatives to identify and incorporate cultural relevance and EDI in course content:

2.1 Explicitly list EDI-relevant course content in course outlines.

Economics course outlines tend to list only general topics, and relevant EDI content covered in case studies and/or class examples often does not explicitly appear in the outline. To illustrate this point, we provide below some examples of EDI-related content included in some of our courses that may not be explicitly specified in their outlines. Instructors have also committed to identify additional EDI-relevant applications to be included in their courses.

ECN 101 (Principles of Microeconomics) and ECN 104 (Introductory Microeconomics)

- Topic on labour markets: discusses gender-based labour market discrimination
- Topic on resource allocation: discusses important tradeoffs between economic efficiency and equity (applied to people with disabilities)
- Topic on income distribution and the welfare state: issues related to poverty and inequality of opportunities and policies/programs to address these inequities

ECN201 (Principles of Macroeconomics) and ECN 204 (Introductory Macroeconomics)

- Topic of economic growth: includes discussions of the economic importance immigration of the increase in women's labour force participation after WWII
- Topic of unemployment: discusses how unemployment rates differ across different social groups and how these differences accentuate income inequality.

ECN507 (Ethics and Justice in Economics)

- The course covers the critical issue of the widening wealth gap between the rich and the poor and how issues related to race, gender and ethnicity contribute to this gap.

ECN 620 (Applied Economic Analysis)—Capstone course

- The course has a project that applies the economic theory of discrimination to the gender wage gap. Students review legislation on equal pay and economic policies introduced to promote gender equality in the labour force.
- The course has a research component where the students investigate a current issue related to an important public policy topic and present it in class. Students often choose EDI relevant issues like indigenous policy, health and welfare of low income households, access to postsecondary education and food security.

ECN 722 (Economic Issues of Professional Sports) and ECN 729 (Sports Economics)

- The courses cover issues related to women in professional sports and gender and racial discrimination in sports practice and management

ECN 702 (Econometrics II)

- Topic on Regression analysis with a binary dependent variable. As an application to the theory, the course discusses the role of racial discrimination in mortgage lending.

2.2 Offer new courses with strong EDI components or refocus existing ones

Two courses with strong EDI components will be offered starting Fall 2022:

ECN 640 (Economics of Immigration)

In the academic year 2021-2022, the department will be offering a new course on the Economics of Immigration (ECN 640) [the course was in the books but had not been offered for many years] with a focus on inclusionary immigration policy. For examples, topics related economic assimilation and human capital loss of newcomers; gender race inequality; and underrepresentation of immigrants in senior positions at workplaces. We do not have an outline for the course yet, as it will be redeveloped and taught by a new instructor.

ECN 503 (Economic Development)

In 2021, the department hired a new faculty member (Dr. Nicholas Li) with expertise in economic development and the economics of poverty. Dr. Li is redesigning our Economic Development course (ECN 503) to focus it on the economics of poverty and how they affect the developed world. The course will be offered in Fall 2021 and, even though Dr. Li has not completely finalized the curriculum for the course, he shared his plans so that they could be included in this report.

The course will cover standard topics in the economics of developing countries - nutrition, health, education, fertility and intra-household decision-making, risk, access to capital, labor markets and entrepreneurship and political economy – and it will show how these same issues are relevant in studying poverty in North America and, in particular, Canada and the GTA. The main objectives are to de-otherize and de-colonize the way in which these topics are conventionally taught (as something foreign that affects only developing nations) and to increase the relevance of the material by showing that it can be applied to their own community.

Topics that will be covered in the course:

- Challenges faced by remote/rural communities with limited access to markets and the relevance of these issues for aboriginal peoples of Canada.
- Discrimination in labor markets and affirmative action policies (linking discussions of caste and gender based discrimination and policies in India with studies on discrimination faced by Canadian immigrants and racialized minorities in North America).
- Interactions between gender and poverty: discrimination against girls, relationship between gender norms and labor markets.
- Importance of neighborhood peer effects and the influence of culture through the study of housing and re-location policies with applications to the Regent Park project housing in Toronto, the US moving-to-opportunities program and slum clearance programs in India.

Dr. Li is planning to add a Canadian Indigenous perspective to the course by incorporating readings from the book “Indigenomics” by Caron Anne Hilton. The book is particularly relevant to provide an indigenous perspective to the units on entrepreneurship and environmental issues that will be part of the course.

Dr. Li also plans to add a unit on colonialism that will cover the legacies of colonialism in both developing countries and the North American context, including recent work on the legacy of residential schools in Canada and the slaughter of the plains bison in the 19th century.

2.3 Increase diversity and acquire expertise in EDI-related topics through new faculty hires

The department has hired two new faculty members in 2021 with expertise in economic development and the economics of immigration and who research in EDI related topics.

For 2022, the department has proposed to search for an EDI hire, with expertise in the areas of Indigenous Economics, Economics of Racism or the Economics of Inequality, Gender and Discrimination.

3. Report on the status of the initiatives outlined in the Implementation Plan

The department of economics has made some progress towards implemented the initiatives outlined in our Implementation Plan. Due to the pandemic, the department concentrated most of its energies in the planning and delivery of the curriculum virtually and decided to postpone major changes in the curriculum until after our return to campus. Nevertheless, we have had some discussions related to the recommendations in the Implementation Plan and we have formed committees that have drafted some proposals. The status of each of the initiatives for the 1-year Follow-up Report are listed below, under each of the priority recommendations.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Priority Recommendation #1: *Investigate incorporating concentrations within the current program.*
Rationale: *Following the global financial crisis, there has been increased demand for expertise in financial economics. This observation was reinforced with feedback from some employers in our internship program and from discussions with our Program Advisory Council. In addition, the feedback from our students over the years was that some of our students would like to take more financial economics courses in their upper year and other students prefer more international economics courses. To acquire the necessary expertise in any of these economics fields and to distinguish themselves from general economics majors, students should take nine to ten field-specific courses in financial economics or in international economics. Currently, our curriculum has twenty-four required courses and thus it is difficult for students to take extra field-specific courses. To meet this demand the Department had initially proposed that we split the Bachelor of Arts (International Economics and Finance) program into two programs, namely, Bachelors in International Economics and Bachelors in Financial Economics. However, following the reports from the PRT and Faculty of Arts, the Department has reconsidered splitting the Bachelor of Arts (International Economics and Finance) program into two programs and, as a first step, we will investigate incorporating concentrations within the current program.*
Implementation Actions: • *Develop concentrations within the Curriculum Committee* • *Review with faculty* • *Implement assessment/approvals process for integration of concentrations into curriculum* • *Clearly communicate availability of concentrations and registration process to students.* • *Develop any core elective courses required for the concentration, if any* • *Monitor course availability* • *Monitor student enrolments in concentrations*
Timeline: (What are the estimated timelines for acting on implementation of the recommendation?) *2020-21 academic year with submission of proposal to VPA by June 30, 2021; commences Fall 2022*
Responsibility for **a) leading initiative:** *Program Chair/Director* **b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:** *Faculty Dean, ASC*
Status for 1-year Follow-up Report *The department has had several discussions on the issue of adding concentrations to the program. Following an in-depth analysis of microdata on student retention and the feedback from students, the department has concluded that it would like to attract a wider variety of students with interests that go beyond business. To this effect, the department is now discussing the possibility of adding* ***Concentrations*** *to the curriculum. Under this proposal, after two (or maybe three) semesters in the program, students would choose a Concentration, depending on their interests (policy, theory or a mixture). The department has formed a committee that will prepare a proposal for a curriculum with Concentrations and that will be discussed in the next departmental meeting in September 2021.*

Priority Recommendation #2: *As a result of* **Priority Recommendation #1** *we would investigate renaming our program from Bachelor of Arts (International Economics and Finance) to Bachelor of Economics and Finance.*
Rationale: *In the early 2000's the Bachelor of Arts (International Economics and Finance) program had 15 required courses whose content was international or finance in nature, in addition to 12 required economic theory and quantitative courses. Over the years we made 8 of these required international or finance courses electives. This was due to the recommendations made by the Peer Review Team for the 2006-2007 Periodic Program Review and as a result of harmonizing with the 1st Arts common platform in 2012. Thus, the international economics and finance nature of the initial Bachelor of Arts (International Economics and Finance) program has been watered down over the years. In addition, if we wish to include concentrations and have a required curriculum suitable for having double majors we would need to make a number of these required international or finance courses, electives. Thus, the program name would not be reflective of the new curriculum. Therefore, the Department would investigate renaming our program from Bachelor of Arts (International Economics and Finance) to Bachelor of Economics and Finance.*
Implementation Actions: • *Review with faculty* • *Implement approvals process for changing the program name* • *Work with Admissions on marketing*
Timeline: (What are the estimated timelines for acting on implementation of the recommendation?) *2020-21 academic year with submission of proposal to VPA by June 30, 2021; commences Fall 2022*
Responsibility for **a) leading initiative:** *Program Chair/Director* **b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:** *Faculty Dean, Registrar, ASC*
Status for 1-year Follow-up Report *The department had several discussions regarding the change in the program's name. There was an agreement to drop "International" from the title, but the department decided to wait until we had a firm proposal for the curriculum change with Concentrtions before setting on a change in the program's name.*

Priority Recommendation #3: *Change the admission requirements to the Bachelor of Arts (International Economics and Finance) program by raising the entering average from 70 percent to 75 percent.*
Rationale: *For almost two decades the high school entering average has always being around 77 percent (the second lowest in Ryerson). This average would have increased if we had kept our first-year intake to about 90 students as in 2009-2011. Instead, the registrar's office increased admissions to our program over the years and it is now 175 students for Fall 2021. This low entering average has resulted in poor student retention after two years in the program which is later reflected in poor graduation rates. From Fall 2012 to Fall 2016 there was always a much higher correlation between our first-year students' Winter CGPA and their entering average*

grade than with the grade on any high school math course. The Department has co-responsibility with TRSM for the Economics and Management Science major in the Bachelor of Commerce in Business Management. The students in this major take the same core economics courses as those in the Bachelor of Arts (International Economics and Finance). Yet there is no problem with retention or graduation rates with Economics and Management Science students as their high school entering average is at least 84 percent. Therefore, the Department would like to change the admission requirements to the Bachelor of Arts (International Economics and Finance) program by raising the entering average from 70 percent to 75 percent and collaborate with Admissions in implementing an aggressive promotional campaign to attract students with higher high school averages to the program.

Implementation Actions:

- *Review with faculty*
- *Consult with the Registrar's Office*
- *Work with Admissions on designing appropriate marketing for the program*

Timeline: (What are the estimated timelines for acting on implementation of the recommendation?) *2020-21 academic year with submission of proposal to VPA by June 30, 2021; commences Fall 2022*

Responsibility for

a) leading initiative: *Program Chair/Director*

b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring: *Faculty Dean, Registrar, ASC*

Status for 1-year Follow-up Report

The department performed an in-depth analysis on student retention using microdata provided by the University Planning Office. As discussed in point 1 in this report, the analysis did not find any patterns relating students' high school entry averages with their likelihood of being retained in the program or their Academic Standing after one or two years in our program. As a result, the department has decided not to ask for a change in the minimum entering average to be admitted to the program. Through a focus group with students prior to the pandemic, the department did learn, though, that the programs low cutoff grade for both Mathematics and English of 65 percent gave prospective students the false impression that the program was "easy" and not technically challenging. The Department has recently consulted with Admissions on this issue, and it has been determined that the minimum grade 12 Mathematics grade can be increased from 65 percent to 70 percent, which will result in incoming students having better mathematics preparation, although perhaps lower overall averages (since the admissions target number is not being reduced to compensate for this). This should help to avoid giving prospective students the (false) impression that the program is less mathematically-challenging than other programs such as Business Management. Nonetheless, with the absolute number of students admitted continuing to increase year after year, there is little reason to be optimistic that the program will admit a larger proportion of well-qualified students going forward.

Priority Recommendation #4: *The remaining reviewer's recommendations involve obtaining extra resources that are critical for maintaining the high standard in all of our programs.*

Rationale: *A number of program weaknesses identified in the self-study involved resources in general, faculty size and offices. Since September 2008, we had a net increase of six tenure-stream faculty. Three new faculty were needed for the PhD in Economics program launched in September 2010, as it has twelve required PhD level courses like many other comparator programs. The remaining three new faculty were required to teach an extra 5,792 students (this enrollment growth was mostly due to the growth in the number of students in the Economics and Management Science major that we are co-responsible for with TRSM). Since three tenure-stream faculty cannot teach 5,792 students, it led to many CUPE 1 or 2 sections and very large class sizes.*
Implementation Actions: • *Review with faculty* • *Consult with the Dean of Arts and Vice-Provost Planning* • *Work with Admissions on marketing*
Timeline: (What are the estimated timelines for acting on implementation of the recommendation?) *2020-21 academic year with submission of proposal to VPA by June 30, 2021; commences Fall 2022*
Responsibility for **a) leading initiative:** *Program Chair/Director* **b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:** *Faculty Dean, Vice-Provost Planning, Provost*
Status for 1-year Follow-up Report *The department hired one new faculty member in 2020 but lost another one that year, and then hired two new faculty members in 2021 (the total faculty count is now 25). There will be no new faculty members hired for 2022. However, the number of program students and students taking courses in economics has continued to increase at a fast rate. For example, the number of students admitted to the Bachelor of Arts (International Economics and Finance) program grew from 154 in Fall 2020 to 175 in Fall 2021. It is unlikely that the net growth of 2 new faculty members since 2019 has even offset the growth in enrolment numbers during that period, and most certainly has not addressed the shortage that already existed. As a result, the number of CUPE sections continues to increase dramatically. For the 2021-2022 academic year, there are a total of 57 CUPE sections, plus another 6 taught by a LTF, <u>leaving less than 50% of all undergraduate sections taught by tenure-stream faculty</u>. There is, unfortunately, no reason to think that the faculty-student ratio will improve in the near future.*