

**COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PLANNING & RESOURCE ALLOCATION (CAPRA)**

Wednesday, April 22, 2015

9:00 – 10:30 am

KL 362

[UCMCROPS/CAPRA1415/Resources](#)**I. Chair's Report – Anne Kelley****II. Consent Calendar****Pg. 1-2****Action requested:** approval of minutes from April 8 meeting.**III. Campus Review Items****A. Revised Economics CCGA Proposal****Pg. 3-31**

Economics has submitted a list of revisions in response to Senate standing committees' comments on the original proposal in fall 2014. The revisions that correspond to CAPRA's comments are on page 15 of the agenda packet.

*Proposal available at UCMCROPS/CAPRA1415/Resources/Review Items – Campus.*

CAPRA and COR are asked to review the revisions.

**Action requested:** CAPRA to review the revisions and vote on approving the proposal. Comments will be sent to the Senate chair today.

**IV. Hiring Plan**

Discussion: per the Provost/EVC's request on April 8, CAPRA submitted a proposed six-year campus hiring plan in response to the Provost's draft plan. The Provost responded with an alternative plan and CAPRA then submitted a counter proposal.

**V. Request from Provost/EVC Peterson**

Discussion: formulation of explicit guidelines/formulas for space allocation and reallocation. (Per the Provost/EVC's request.)

**VI. Other Business**

**Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation  
(CAPRA)**

**Minutes of Meeting  
April 8, 2015**

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation met at 9:00 am on April 8, 2015 in Room 362 of the Kolligian Library, Chair Anne Kelley presiding.

Attendees: Anne Kelley, Josh Viers, Jan Wallander, Cristián Ricci, Marilyn Fogel, Mukesh Singhal, and Daisy Figueroa. Absent: Danielle Bermudez.

I. Chair's Report

Chair Kelley updated CAPRA members on the following:

--April 7 UCPB meeting:

--Governor Brown and UC President Napolitano hope to finalize the budget before the Governor's May Revise.

--March 19 Division Council meeting. Chair Kelley provided Division Council members with an update from the Project 2020 debrief meeting following meetings held between the three short-listed developer teams and members of Division Council and CAPRA. AVC for Real Estate Abigail Rider attended the debrief.

II. Consent Calendar

**ACTION:** The March 11, 2015 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

III. Campus Review Items

--Public Health CCGA Proposal

CAPRA members discussed the reviews previously submitted by two CAPRA members. CAPRA agreed to endorse the proposal but will suggest that the Public Health group more specifically articulate its space needs.

**ACTION:** CAPRA to send memo to the Senate Chair, endorsing the Public Health CCGA proposal.

--MIST CCGA Proposal

CAPRA members discussed the reviews previously submitted by CAPRA members. Members discussed the high costs of expanding the number of faculty in the program, the low expected student to faculty ratio, and unclear mechanisms for support of graduate students. Committee members also pointed out the difficulty of judging the sustainability of this new graduate program until it sees the Master's program proposal.

**ACTION:** CAPRA to send memo to the Senate Chair, stating that it will defer its vote on the PhD proposal until the committee is given the opportunity to review the Master's proposal.

--Revised Economics CCGA Proposal

CAPRA began to discuss the Economics group's response to CAPRA's comments on the original proposal.

**ACTION:** Due to time constraints, further discussion and a vote on the revised Economics CCGA proposal will be conducted via email.

IV. Consultation with Provost/EVC Peterson

Confidential. No minutes taken.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 am.

Attest:

Anne Kelley, CAPRA Chair

Minutes taken by: Simrin Takhar, Senate Analyst

## Graduate Council Comments

**Comment 1:** The executive summary is missing and should be written for a general academic audience, i.e. a faculty reviewer who does not necessarily have expertise in the specific field.

**Response:** We have added an Executive Summary.

**Comment 2:** Reviewers are unanimous in their assessment that projections for faculty growth in the short-term are unreasonable, since these projections are based on unusual recent faculty growth in ECON to stabilize the program and fail to acknowledge the current embargo on faculty hiring for AY 2014-15. In addition, the proposal narrative overstates the level of FTE support indicated by the SSHA Dean, and also contradicts the Dean's contention that the graduate program can be initiated with only the eight current faculty lines. Thus, the discussion of both the projections and the minimum number of faculty for launch must be revised.

**Response:** Our target of having 11 faculty by 2016-17 stems directly from the letter provided by Dean Aldenderfer. In this document he stated that it was reasonable to expect that we would be at 11 faculty by the Fall of 2016 and 16 faculty by 2020. If we consider the projected growth for the institution and assume a uniform distribution in growth across disciplines we would be at 14 by 2020. We completely understand GC's concern regarding our projections but it is not possible for the Dean to commit lines to our program. Therefore, we are left to determine what is an acceptable level of growth given that we currently have a freeze on hiring. For the purposes of the proposal, and to be conservative regarding our projected growth, we have elected to reduce the projected growth to only one new faculty line a year. This seems exceptionally reasonable given the projected growth in the campus at large and still places us one faculty member less than what would be expected if the growth is uniformly distributed across all disciplines at UCM. Furthermore, this delays our projected growth to 16 faculty to the 2023-24 academic year (see revised Table 1). We have also pointed out in the proposal that we are adding two additional LPSOE lines this year (approved by the Provost) to facilitate the execution of our undergraduate program. This further strengthens our ability to execute the graduate program with existing faculty.

**Comment 3:** The proposal makes no reference to the Social Science IIGP and how ECON fit within this group. While we understand that this is likely because there are no current students and no new students will be accepted, this is important history on graduate ECON at UC Merced that bears both explanation (including, perhaps, why it was or was not a success, how the new program compares) and is necessary background/context for some allusions in the text. Inclusion of this information is also critical to expedited WASC approval of the proposed program (see, in particular, comments from ALO Martin).

**Response:** We have added this information to our graduate proposal (see section 1.3) and pointed out the weaknesses of the Social Science IIGP and the reasons why we were not able to effectively utilize this program for our graduate students.

**Comment 4:** The proposal is inconsistent with respect to programmatic and faculty support for non-academic careers (e.g., this is specifically called out as a goal early on in the proposal, but subsequent sections either ignore this altogether or are presented in

such a way that such commitment on the part of the program appears very weak). Since this may be considered an important distinction of the program within the system (given the focus on “new” economics and relevance to policy), such mixed messages must be resolved.

**Response:** The training for students who wish to pursue non-academic careers is not different from those who wish to pursue an academic appointment. Therefore, the programmatic and faculty support required to train students for either appointments does not need to be differentiated. Our focus on “new economics” is referencing our desire to train students who wish to do applied research in areas that will inform policy. This may seem to imply that we are focusing on training students for non-academic careers, but that is not true. The fields we have selected to focus on are all applied fields in high demand (see job market demand section of proposal). We have added some additional language to the proposal to point out the academic and non-academic expectations for our students and to better highlight our programmatic focus.

**Comment 5:** Related to #2, the obvious reliance on lecturers to staff core undergraduate courses in ECON—thereby freeing up ECON faculty to teach in the graduate program — is troubling. This suggests that the program is not self-sufficient and sacrifices the undergraduate program to initiate the graduate program. The teaching rotation should clearly distinguish ladder-rank faculty (core and affiliate), LPSOE/LSOE, and Unit 18 lecturers so reviewers can accurately assess the ability of the ECON faculty to deliver both programs and the potential impact on both graduate and undergraduate programs in ECON. As part of these revisions, it is recommended that the rotation be revised so that core courses are taught every year so students receive the necessary foundation for the first-year exam and that elective courses are offered at least every other year rather than every 2-3 years so students can progress through the program in a timely manner.

**Response:** Historically the ECON program has relied on lecturers to provide the undergraduate program. This is because we have had very few faculty in economics at UC Merced. The number was as low as 2 faculty in the Fall of 2013. We currently have 8 research faculty and 1 LPSOE and are adding two additional LPSOEs this academic year. This will bring us up to 8 research faculty and 3 LPSOEs by next year. This is a sufficient level of permanent staffing to meet the needs of our undergraduate program. Although we will still be using a few lecturers to provide a few of our courses, our reliance on these resources is substantially lower than before. Furthermore, in the near future additional hires will be made in MGMT (3 faculty in the near term) that will allow us to further reduce our reliance on lecturers as a majority of our lecturers moving forward are required to facilitate the MGMT undergraduate program. However, to date very few resources have been allocated to this program (3 research faculty who are not part of the Economics Graduate Group). The rotation has been altered so that we offer the core courses every year in the fourth year of the graduate program and so that field courses are offered every 1 to 2 years at this point in time. For the first four years the core will only be offered every other year and in the other years the field courses will be offered. The main reason we have elected to start the program this way is to ensure that we get the highest quality graduate students possible and to not overburden our existing faculty as our faculty grows over the coming years.

**Comment 6:** Many reviewers expressed concern about the numerous course and special requirements such as the 2nd and 3rd year papers since there is no clear indication regarding how and when some of this work will be accomplished. In discussion,

some GC members thought this might be addressed in part through comparison with (or letters of support from) other ECON graduate programs in the UC system to demonstrate that such requirements are the norm for the discipline (if that is indeed the case), although more detail is necessary about the 2nd and 3rd year papers in particular, including faculty advising or mentorship of students for such tasks. Clarification on what is meant by active engagement is needed as it implies internships or some other real-world experience.

**Response:** We decided to remove the 2<sup>nd</sup> year paper requirement in the proposal and focus on the 3<sup>rd</sup> year paper requirement. The 3<sup>rd</sup> year paper is a common requirement in many economics graduate programs and it was our intention to try and get them involved in research a bit earlier. However, by having the students complete their field course work in their second year this will actually accelerate the process as well. In addition, we have added some clarifying language in the document to better describe the nature of the student and faculty interaction expectations. We did not send the proposal out to other graduate programs in the UC at this time, but we will be doing so after it has gone through internal review.

**Comment 7:** Similarly, several reviewers expressed concern about the teaching requirement (see GC and Dean Zatz comments) for multiple reasons. First, the relevance of this requirement to students anticipating non-academic careers is unclear. Second, this requirement may preclude students from pursuing external sources of funding such as NSF graduate fellowships. Third, the notation that graduate students will be encouraged to teach their own upper division courses is contrary to UC systemwide policies for graduate Teaching Fellows, which allow such teaching only by special permission. Such teaching may also have implications for graduate student funding, since Teaching Fellows are covered under collective bargaining agreements. Finally, GC is concerned that the teaching requirement is being used to compensate for the shift in emphasis to graduate teaching by ladder-rank faculty, and this raises a further red flag with respect to necessary FTE to initiate and sustain the program.

**Response:** We have removed the requirement that our students have to teach, but we have retained the requirement that they serve as a TA for at least two semesters before graduating. This will be very easy for them to achieve because the dominant form of funding for Ph.D. programs in economics is TAs (we surveyed the other graduate programs in the UC System). As far as encouraging our graduate students to teach this is a direct response to economics market and not an effort to compensate for the shift in emphasis to graduate teaching by ladder-rank faculty. Currently, the market for economists rewards those who have done two things: (1) publish a paper before graduating, and (2) have teaching experience – sole instruction. The later is precisely why we want to be able to encourage students to teach. If they are discouraged from doing so this will only hinder their job prospects. This said, we were not aware of how difficult it is for our students to acquire this experience. Therefore, we have changed the language in the proposal to better reflect what we are able to have our students take on as graduate students. With regard to those students who are going to be seeking a non-academic position we still feel that is necessary for them to serve as TA before earning their Ph.D.. Being a TA develops a student's ability to articulate economic concepts to a broader audience, which will also serve them well in a non-academic position. As far as applying for graduate fellowships, this is not the norm in economics and very few students apply for funding. The standard model in economics within the United States is that students receive TAs or RAs that are funded by the department or the

university. In our survey of other graduate programs greater than 90% of the students are funded using internal (university-level) funds.

**Comment 8:** While reviewers were pleased to see acknowledgement of potential interdisciplinarity, many expressed concerns about the feasibility of students taking courses outside the ECON program to enhance an interdisciplinary perspective (e.g., see COR comments). ECON is encouraged to consider this issue in greater detail in the proposal (e.g., prerequisites for non-program courses, frequency of non-program course offerings, ability to take non-program courses given the high program course load) so that this option is realistically assessed and presented.

**Response:** Our discussion regarding the interdisciplinary nature of the program was supposed to reflect the fact that the creation of our program complements the existing and upcoming graduate programs at UC Merced. We have changed the language in the proposal to point this out. It was not our intention to require students to conduct interdisciplinary research, but to create some flexibility in the program so that if a student wanted to take a course in another discipline and they met the course requirements to enroll they could take the course. The suitability of the course is to be determined by the Graduate Director in consultation with the graduate student. Therefore, we do not see the need to more precisely outline the feasibility of our students enrolling in courses outside of economics because the completion of their degree does not rest on them being able to take courses outside of economics. We have highlighted that this is an option and by no means a requirement in the program within the document. All we wished to do was introduce some flexibility in the program to allow for interdisciplinary study if the graduate student wishes to do so. This said, many of the topics that economists research today are directly related to other disciplines (i.e., anthropology, biology, engineering, political science, public health, sociology, etc..) so we believe it is necessary for a graduate programming training economists today to have the flexibility for students to enroll in these courses when appropriate.

**Comment 9:** Reference to the undergraduate program in ECON and, especially, the undergraduate program in Management should be removed from the proposal. Undergraduate teaching (not number of majors in ECON or in programs that ECON supports through undergraduate courses) need only be referenced when (a) demonstrating that affiliated faculty can fulfill their teaching duties at both the graduate and undergraduate levels (i.e., Section 1.4), and (b) projecting how many TA will be needed and how this relates to graduate student funding, With respect to the latter, several reviewers expressed concerns about how TA needs were determined (see particularly Dean Zatz and CAPRA comments).

**Response:** We have removed the inappropriate references to our undergraduate programs in ECON and MGMT and retained them in the document where appropriate. With regard to the TAship needs and the issues raised, we have elected to use the same TAship calculations used in the other social science proposals (i.e.. Political Science) for the reasons that are highlighted in our response to Dean Zatz and CAPRA. It is not possible for us to look at our historical need for TAs because our program has been operating with very few resources (as low as 2 faculty in the Fall of 2013!) and it is only now that we are able to start to think about our needs for TA needs. In fact, we are currently conducting a wholesale evaluation of our undergraduate program and revisions to nearly all of our undergraduate CRFs because we now have sufficient resources (8 research faculty; 1 LPSOE and hiring 2 LPSOEs this year). We are hoping that the

changes to our undergraduate program will companion the launch of our graduate program.

**Comment 10:** The Student Demand section would benefit from a UC-specific analysis (e.g., applications vs. admitted, etc.) as well as evidence that the four concentrations are in demand (see Dean Zatz and COR comments). As per Point #6 above, mention of the undergraduate programs in ECON and Management also should be removed from this section.

**Response:** We conducted a survey of the other graduate programs to learn more about the demand for graduate studies in economics and also conducted some research on the importance of our selected fields. This information is contained in the revised proposal. We have also removed the inappropriate references to undergraduate programs.

**Comment 11:** Several reviewers (e.g., CAPRA, Dean Zatz, Provost/EVC) expressed concern about the proposed admissions strategy for the early years of the program (i.e., every other year admissions), the plan to recruit students, and the low faculty to student ratio). The ECON faculty are encouraged to reassess the admissions and student growth plan carefully in light of these comments and develop more realistic projections for faculty growth (see Point #2).

**Response:** We have altered our projections for faculty growth substantially and have chosen a more conservative path than that outlined in our letter of support from Dean Aldenderfer. Our faculty growth projections are lower than if all future hires were uniformly distributed across the university. Therefore, we believe that our estimates are highly conservative. We have also increased our anticipated enrollment by 20% and we now have a projected faculty to student ratio that is more in line with the ratios observed at the other UC campuses when our program approaches a steady-state.

**Comment 12:** GC and Dean Zatz both expressed significant concerns about the advising burden placed on the Graduate Group Chair during the first two years of residency by students under the current plan. Both recommend distribution of advising more fully among the faculty to ease this burden and also provide a structure that will allow the Graduate Group chair to more effectively deal with potential student grievances and conflicts with their advisor (i.e., having the Graduate Group Chair as advisor sets up a conflict of interest).

**Response:** We have changed the document so that the Graduate Group Chair serves as the faculty advisor for all students in only the first year of the program. After this time period regular faculty advisor assignments are implemented. Given that all graduate students will take the exact same courses in the first year and they have the same metric for performance (i.e., course grades, Comprehensive Exam) this should not be an exorbitant burden for the Graduate Group Chair. This should also preserve the Graduate Group Chairs ability to more effectively deal with potential student grievances and conflicts with their advisor.

**Comment 13:** Appendix F (Bylaw 55 unit proposal) should be removed from the document (e.g., see GC and CRE comments)

**Response:** We have removed Appendix F (Bylaw 55 unit proposal) from the document.



## Specific Review Comments (Pre-Review – CCGA Proposal Format Requirements)

**Comment:** There is no executive summary in the proposal.

**Response:** We have added an Executive Summary to the proposal.

**Comment:** Active engagement comment (pg. 1): This implies internships or some other real-world experience. Is this an accurate interpretation? Please clarify what is meant by "active engagement."

**Response:** This statement was not used to invoke an internship. It was used to point out that the students will be conducting applied and policy relevant research. This has been clarified in the document.

**Comment:** Recruitment of three faculty members in the coming academic year is a little bit over optimistic with the current embargo on faculty hiring. Should probably include mention of IIGP SS ECON track here. The dean's letter says nothing about "priority" hiring in ECON (i.e., over other disciplines), only his "continued support" for hiring in ECON.

Table 1: Eleven faculty for 2016-17 is not reasonable given no hiring in AY 14-15 (unless there is a holdover FTE from last year, which should then be identified).

p.3 Concerns about: Graduate recruitment every other year; the program cannot develop appropriate momentum. Faculty:grad ratio is and is intended to be substantially below mean target for university. In contrast, the program at UCR achieves 1:3 (UCM's target). This shortfall may be offset if students in the program graduate on average faster.

p.5 (Section 1.5) Relationship to (distinction from) other UC Economics programs is perhaps weak. Emphasize novel role within strategic vision? Info on undergraduate programs in ECON and (especially) Management needs to be removed – should highlight relationship to other grad programs

**Response:** The IGP discussion has been added to section 1.3. Our target of having 11 research faculty by 2016-17 stems directly from the letter provided by Dean Aldenderfer. In this document he stated that it was reasonable to expect that we would be at 11 research faculty by the Fall of 2016 and 16 research faculty by 2020. If we consider the projected growth for the institution and assume a uniform distribution in growth across disciplines we would be at 14 by 2020. We completely understand GC's concern regarding our projections but it is not possible for the Dean to commit lines to our program. Therefore, we are left to determine what is an acceptable level of growth given that we currently have a freeze on hiring. For the purposes of the proposal, and to be conservative regarding our projected growth, we have elected to reduce the projected growth to only one new faculty line a year. This seems exceptionally reasonable given the projected growth in the campus at large and still places us one faculty member less than what would be expected if the growth is uniformly distributed across all disciplines at UCM. Furthermore, this delays our projected growth to 16 research faculty to the 2023-24 academic year (see revised Table 1). As far as the targeted faculty/grad ratio, we have increased the projected number of graduate students upward by 20%. This combined with the adjustments made to the faculty growth generate a ratio of 1:3.1, which is on par with the University of California, Riverside and the University of California, Irvine. There may be more room for larger growth in the program later down the road but we weigh quality over quantity in the short-term. Lastly, we have removed the discussion of the undergraduate majors in section 1.4 and have added some

additional details regarding the programs role in the recent strategic focusing efforts as our program clearly falls under the “Entrepreneurship and Management” pillar (authors of the current graduate proposal were also authors on the School of Innovation, Management and Economics proposal).

**Comment:** No indication that feedback sought from other UC ECON programs yet. authors should be preparing to send proposal out to other UC Econ Programs.

**Response:** We were not aware that this is a requirement. We have contacted the Graduate Council and determined that the best time to circulate the proposal for comments from the other graduate programs (or letters of support) is after it has gone through internal review here at UC Merced. Therefore, we will send the proposal out to other UCs for comment at that time.

**Comment:** p.6 Replace Kello with Zatz.

**Response:** Oops...fixed.

**Comment:** p.7 Rather than "by Angela Krueger, the UC Merced ..." use "by the UC Merced ... (currently Angela Krueger)" or drop name completely to remove possibility of document going out of date during consideration. If names are important, add an appendix matching current positions with people?

**Response:** This has been changed in the proposal.

**Comment:** p.9 (table) Is 100% pass-rate (at whatever level) over simplistic? Aim also for %age with A (or similar higher level of achievement)? Consult with ALO on use of direct and indirect (especially surveys of current students, as such surveys may be intimidating) evidence, annual assessment. Need to review for clear support of non-academic careers. The “lines of evidence” tables are odd in that none of the assessments are tied to courses – they are all exams, papers, etc. not linked to a course (if I’m understanding the curricular map correctly). How is the success of the curriculum actually assessed? Finally, there seems to be some confusion (at a few points) between assessing the STUDENT and assessing the PROGRAM – this needs to be addressed, as it is the PROGRAM that is of interest here. This latter confusion may also be reflected in the range of mastery based on expected “higher levels of achievement...for more advanced students” listed in the curricular map (i.e., the COURSE content is either as the I, D, or M level, not the STUDENT mastery of that content). The curricular map should not include non-curricular (i.e., non-course) items.

**Response:** We have consulted with ALO about the suggested changes and made a number of changes to the PLOs and assessment plans.

**Comment:** What does "expected to generate additional research" mean? Help faculty with their research? In what context will this "expectation be either supported or made clear? What will happen if this expectation is not met?

**Response:** We have removed this statement from the document and have also changed the language so that it states “anticipate” versus “expect.”

**Comment:** p.16 Six core courses to be offered in first year, i.e. 1/4 of current faculty

teaching load. Plus another six courses recommended or elective, i.e. another 1/4 of current faculty teaching load. Is there sufficient capacity remaining for the undergraduate program? The teaching requirement – especially designing and delivering one’s own course – seems unreasonable and may discourage or disqualify students who have NSF or other fellowship funding. This also is clearly a bias toward students who intend to pursue an academic career, which contradicts the Intro section. Flexibility to define alternatives" is problematic and could be taken as evidence that the faculty are not committed to the four fields or could be spread too thin. How would such alternatives be supported by curriculum? In addition, such "flexibility" might result in problems re: transcript tracking of non-standard majors/minor fields. Courses taken toward a graduate degree at another institution cannot be transferred for credit toward a Ph.D. at UCM. However, a course requirement may be waived if a similar course was taken at another institution. ECON 209- This class is not included in the teaching rotation table. Who is going to teach it? At what stage in their program do students select their major/minor fields?

**Response:** We are currently hiring two additional LPSOEs this year, which will bring our total LPSOE count to three. The combined efforts of the LPSOEs and our existing research faculty are sufficient to meet our undergraduate demands. We have retained the TA requirement in the program as very few students enrolled in Economics Ph.D. programs are funded under grants. We surveyed the other Economics programs in the UC System and external funding for graduate students is very rare (<10%). The dominant model for funding students is TA positions. Furthermore, this requirement does not in any way discourage students from seeking NSF funding as nearly all graduate students in Economics serve as TAs for at least the first year or two of the program. This is because it takes students a couple of years to develop their research interests. This is sufficient time for them to meet the TAs requirements and still seek graduate funding at a later date if they wish. We have also removed ECON 209 from the requirements. We will revisit whether or not this course should be added to program at a later date.

**Comment:** It is not clear what kind of format the comprehensive exam will have.

**Response:** We have added the word "written" to clarify that it is a written exam.

**Comment:** p.18 "fourth" not "forth" & "each student's" not "each students" Comprehensive Exam- This time commitment (i.e., two exam committees) may ultimately prove burdensome to faculty, so the proposers may want to rethink this.

**Response:** Fixed in the text.

**Comment:** Not sure about the policy "The graduate group chair will serve as the student’s faculty advisor until the beginning of the third year. At the beginning of the third year, in consultant with the faculty, the graduate group chair will assign each student a faculty advisor". Seems overwhelming, unless this is the minimal level of advising re. course load etc. Doesn't speak to mentorship. Does the student get any say on who is their advisor? Such choice is likely critical to the success of the student. Additional 2nd year paper requirement: In what context is this paper prepared (e.g., Directed Research, Directed Reading, on their own)? If on one's own (i.e., outside of class), how do faculty expect a student to prepare such a paper while carrying a full three-course load?

**Response:** We have changed the time period when the shift occurs from the Graduate Group Chair to the faculty advisor to occur at the beginning of the second year. This is a sensible time to transition as the course work is constant for everyone in the first year and there is no real research advising occurring until the second year. We have also added language to point out that the Faculty Advisors will be appointed following consultation with the faculty and the graduate students. As far as the 2<sup>nd</sup> year paper requirement we have removed this requirement from the program. We have retained the 3<sup>rd</sup> year paper (moved the timing up slightly) and acknowledged that the development of the paper will be executed under the guidance of the student's Faculty Advisor.

**Comment:** p. 27 And any special preparation for students outside of teaching? Please be advised advanced graduate students may only teach lower division courses by UCOP rules for Teaching Fellows. Such students can only teach upper division courses with special approval from the Dean. Teaching requirement maybe be difficult/impossible with some external fellowships; unnecessary for students not seeking academic career?

**Response:** The fundamental requirement is that a student serves as a TA for at least two semesters. Given that the standard funding model in economics is that students receive TAs (see earlier comment) we do not feel that this requirement is overly burdensome. In fact, we anticipate that most of our students will meet this requirement within their first year. Therefore, this is not going to impact their progress or ability to seek external fellowships – which are also very rare in economics as well. Furthermore, we have surveyed the other graduate directors in the UC system and found that this level of TAs requirement is very minimal and is in line with the other graduate programs.

**Comment:** In-state, out-of state, etc. not provided; reference to undergraduate programs in Econ and Management should be removed; should note IIGP Econ program. Are there sufficient jobs, especially if focused on the academic track? Is there UCM-specific demand?

**Response:** Our pool of graduate students will predominately come from out-of-state, which is consistent with the other Economics Ph.D. programs. The primary factor attracting students to a Ph.D. program is the quality of the program not whether or not it is offered in their state of residence. We have added this to the discussion. We have also removed the discussion of the undergraduate program for motivation. We surveyed the other graduate programs in the UC system to get a picture of their applicant pool and have added that information to the text. This includes the placement at academic and non-academic institutions. It is impossible to estimate UCM demand as the graduate program does not exist and we have not had sufficient faculty to effectively utilize the IGP program. This said, despite our lack of advertising for our program we do receive a number of applications to the IGP program each year, which we have not been able to admit due to a lack of faculty.

**Comment:** Provide examples of non-academic careers. What are the placement records in the recent years in other UCs? There no mention of international graduate students and their employment. Pg. 29: Need to explain how Health Econ, etc., relate to "Labor & Demographic Economics" since this is the first time this terminology has been used

**Response:** We have added some information regarding placements at other UCs to our

proposal and the most common types of placements for students who have received a Ph.D. in Economics. We have also added some additional language that points out that “Labor and Demographic Economics” broadly encompasses a number of our fields of specialization.

**Comment:** Elective courses are offered every 2-3 years. 3 years is long gap. If a student missed one elective course in 2nd year, he or she can only take it in 5th year, if the elective is the student’s field course.

**Response:** We anticipate our field courses being offered only every other year for the first four years of the program. After this we expect the field courses to be offered every 1-2 years depending on student demand. We have altered the document to reflect the appropriate timing of the courses.

**Comment:** Pg. 41 The table does not demonstrate that ECON faculty can/will be able to "maintain undergraduate course offerings" since approximately half of the undergrad courses are identified as taught by lecturers. This issue needs to be directly addressed, since funds for lecturers are generally year-to-year (unless LPSOE or LSOE positions are sought, and if so, this will bear significant discussion). It would be more convenient to see this by semester or faculty member rather than by course.

**Response:** Our use of lecturers has been a requirement of our program for many years due to a lack of faculty (as low as 2 in the Fall of 2013). However, we have recently grown to 8 research faculty and one LPSOE. Furthermore, we are currently hiring two additional LPSOEs this year (2014-15). These resources will ensure that we are able to maintain our undergraduate course offerings when the graduate program is launched. Furthermore, two of the ECON courses are cross listed as MGMT courses (ECON 005, ECON 028) and are currently being taught using lectures to ensure that the MGMT demands are met with the limited number of MGMT faculty we have at UC Merced (3 at the current point in time – 1 in the SSM Bylaw until and 2 in the ENG Bylaw unit). There are still a few undergraduate courses that will be taught by lecturers but our program’s demands are not exorbitant and many of these duties can be absorbed by the incoming faculty and LPSOEs if needed.

**Comment:** Where is ECON 209?

**Response:** We have elected to drop ECON 209 from the course requirements.

**Comment:** Pg. 42 The lecturers (and faculty affiliated with other programs such as MGMT) should be identified as such for all relevant courses in this table (i.e., since lecturers are year-to-year, it may be more appropriate to have title rather than name). The proposers need to be up-front about how the undergrad program will be delivered if/when the grad program begins.

**Response:** We have revised the faculty rotation to differentiate the demands generated by the MGMT and ECON program separately. We have also added the new LPSOE hire that started this year and the two that we are hiring right now to the rotation. As far as lecturers, there are 2 lectures that we require to facilitate the MGMT program and 2 for the ECON program. Although this may seem like a fair number of lecturers it is important to note that these are two different undergraduate programs.

**Comment:** Overly optimistic for the faculty FTE in the coming academic year. Suggest avoiding the “need” to have three new faculty to “establish” the program (especially in light of the Dean’s letter), as it is extremely unlikely that those positions will be forthcoming on the schedule outlined in the proposal. AY 14-15 hiring is already out of date, since no new hires this year (unless FTE already allocated from previous search?)

**Response:** Our projected faculty growth was based on the predicted growth in faculty indicated in the Dean’s support letter. In that letter Dean Aldenderfer has indicated that he expects our research faculty to grow to 11 by 2016 and 16 by 2020. Given that there is a hiring freeze and the lines being allocated under the university’s strategic focusing initiated has yet to be determined we have elected to use a much more conservative projection in the proposal. In fact our projected growth is below the level that would be expected if the future hires within the university are uniformly distributed. Therefore, we believe our revised projections are highly conservation.

**Comment:** Pg. 45 The Dean’s letter implies this will be handled through startup, not flexible funding.

**Response:** The Dean’s letter does not imply that graduate computing costs will be covered through startup. Startup funds will be used to cover faculty computing costs not graduate computing costs. Faculty startup packages in economics are exceptionally modest relative to the sciences and they do not cover graduate computing costs. The Dean’s letter indicates that the laboratory space may be shared with other social sciences.

**Comment:** Pg. 43 What is the “additional graduate workspace”?

**Response:** This is graduate office space.

**Comment:** If the latter, how will reallocation affect support in existing programs? Describe any campus fund-raising initiatives that will contribute to support of graduate students in the proposed program.

**Response:** We surveyed the other Economics Ph.D. programs to determine what percentage of the graduate students are supported on Teaching Assistantships. Very few, if any, graduate students are funding on external grants. The dominate form of funding is TAships. We are currently not aware of any campus funding-raising initiatives that will contribute to the support of graduate students and we have been told that we are not supposed to independently pursue these resources.

**Comment:** Provide an estimate of the average per student support (from all sources) and compare the estimate to systemwide norms or other comparators.

**Response:** We anticipate providing the same level of TAship funding as all other graduate programs at UC Merced.

**Comment:** Please remove Appendix F. The Bylaw 55 unit does not exist; please revise mention of such Bylaw 55 Unit in the CCGA Proposal.

**Response:** We have removed Appendix F as well as the references to it within the proposal.

**Comment:** Please remove CPEC information as it is no longer required.

**Response:** The CPEC information has been removed from the document.



## CAPRA Review Comments

**Comment:** regarding Table 1, perhaps a better estimate of TA needs can be obtained by looking at how many TAs are currently required to serve the existing student population in these majors and then simply scaling the numbers.

**Response:** Although we agree in principle that this would be a great way to determine TA needs, it is really not possible for us to do that because our program has been understaffed for many years (we had only 2 faculty in the Fall of 2013!). We now have enough faculty to teach the courses we need and are able to begin to evaluate our TA needs for the program. We are currently undergoing a number of revisions to our undergraduate program and are re-evaluating our TAship needs to better execute our undergraduate program. This will necessitate increasing our offerings of courses that currently have TAs as some of these courses are bottlenecks in our undergraduate major and the creation of new courses to expand our GE course offerings as we currently have few GE offerings.

**Comment:** page 4 lists current graduate programs but omits several including Physics and Chemistry & Chemical Biology. The proposal should either list all of the existing programs or else name only those with which it expects to have particular synergy.

**Response:** Thank you for pointing out that we have did not include either Physics or Chemistry and Chemical Biology. We have added this to the document.

**Comment:** The projections for growth to 16 by 2020 appear vastly optimistic given known faculty allocation plans. There is no recruitment during the current AY for new Economics faculty to start AY 2015/16. It appears that a viable program can be achieved with fewer additional faculty, and the proposal might be strengthened by pointing this out.

**Response:** The projections outlined in the proposal were based on the SSHA Dean's letter, which indicated we would be at 11 research faculty by 2016 and 16 by 2020. Given the lack of hiring this year and to be conservative regarding our estimated growth in the future we have altered our projections to be one line a year with no hiring in the 2014-15 academic year. Furthermore, we have added in to the document the one LPSOE we hired last year as well as the two LPSOEs that we are hiring this year.

**Comment:** basing faculty line allocations on past processes does not seem feasible given the Strategic Academic Focusing process to be implemented for the rest of the decade.

**Response:** Our response above indicates that we are not basing our expected allocations on past processes and have elected to use a more conservative estimate of growth. However, we should point out that the authors of the graduate program were also authors on the School of Innovation, Management and Economics proposal that has recently been highlighted as part of the Entrepreneurship and Management pillar by the Provost. We expect this decision to favorably affect our projected growth.

**Comment:** Will the size and quality of the applicant pool be adequate to admit ten new Ph.D. students per year in the first and third years of the program? What is the minimum practical cohort size if the program cannot achieve 10 PhD students?



**Response:** There is absolutely no way for us to know with certainty whether or not we will have an adequate pool of applicants until we actually begin recruiting. However, we surveyed other Economics Ph.D. program in the UC System and they all have sizeable applicant pools varying from around 150 to nearly 800 applicants. From these applications class sizes between 12 and 25 are being generated. Based on the demand within the UC System we anticipate having a sufficient applicant pool. We have added this information to proposal. As far as minimal practical cohort size, this would depend on the minimum number of students required to offer a course at UC Merced. That is the minimum size needed. Even though a stand alone Economics Ph.D. program does not exist we continue to receive strong applications every year from the Social Sciences program.

**Comment:** given that the proposal projects a growth in international students, the reliance on non-resident tuition (NRT) support needs further elaboration. Although currently NRT is paid for all Ph.D. students supported by internal funds, it is not clear that this will continue to be the case if there is rapid growth of the international graduate student population.

**Response:** We have not received any indication that our program would not be able to benefit from the current use of internal funds to cover NRT. This is the predominate funding mechanism used to fund non-resident tuition at UC Merced and we see no reason why we should not be able to equally benefit from the use of NRTs.

## **COR Review Response**

**Comment:** Resources - Currently, 7 faculty members are fully engaged in Economics, plus an eighth member joining in January, 2015. The distribution of research emphasis areas across the faculty is as follows: 4 in Economic Geography and Trade, 2 in Environmental and Resource Economics, 3 in Health Economics, and 3 in International Development. (Some faculty members conduct research in several of these emphasis areas.) By the time of the anticipated start date in Fall 2016, the program is expected to have 11 fully dedicated faculty members. The program is anticipated to recruit 10 graduate students during its first year (faculty/student ratio 1:0.9). The number of faculty and graduate students are expected to increase to 16 and 26, respectively, by 2020 (ratio 1:1.6). The members of COR are concerned that this growth rate is not realistic, given current hiring trends, and they would like to see further evidence that the SSHA Dean would support this growth rate given limited resources.

**Response:** Given that it is not possible to concretely obtain commitments regarding faculty growth beyond those articulated in the Dean's letter, we have altered our projected growth within the proposal to be substantially lower than earlier projected. We now have no new lines for 2014-15 and one additional line each year. This level of projected growth is lower than if future lines are allocated uniformly. Furthermore, one of the pillars identified by the Provost, Entrepreneurship and Management (builds on the School of Innovation, Management and Economics proposal our faculty submitted as part of the strategic focusing efforts), clearly will rely on growth in the Economics group for its successful execution.

**Comment:** Along with the concern above, the members of COR would like to see greater alignment between the letter of support from the SSHA Dean and the program proposal document with regard to the number of faculty needed to successfully deliver the program. The letter from the Dean states that 8 FTE are sufficient to run the program, but the proposal indicates that the minimum number of faculty needed to deliver the program is 11 FTE. If 8 faculty members are sufficient, please revise the curriculum and course delivery plan accordingly.

**Response:** We have changed the document to indicate that we can start our program with the existing 8 research faculty (as indicated in the Dean's letter) as well as altered our projected faculty growth. We have also altered the document to include the one LPSOE we hired last year and the two we are hiring this year.

**Comment:** Support letters from other graduate programs or units may be necessary to demonstrate that the proposed interdisciplinary research and coursework for graduate students can be provided.

**Response:** We have added language to point out that interdisciplinary course work is not required in the program. This is because we do not in any way want the ability of other programs to offer courses to impact students making due process in our graduate program. Given that this is true we do not think it is necessary to obtain letters from the other disciplines to illustrate their ability to meet our course demands. This is an optional component of our graduate program and we have added language to reflect this in the document.

**Comment:** Library resources – The members of COR would like to see a justification for why the proposal does not include a consideration of the kind of large databases that are needed in the library by many economics programs.

**Response:** Many of the large datasets used by economists are publicly available (i.e., Census) or are confidential data sets that require the researcher to enter into a data use agreement with the data provider. Publicly available datasets are traditionally downloaded from agency websites so they do not require additional infrastructure. Private data sets are retained solely on the researchers office computer. Additional datasets frequently used by economists such as Compustat are already subscribed to by the Library to support the management program.

**Comment:** The members of COR suggest eliding Appendix F (Bylaw55 in Economics) as being potentially distracting and confusing to CCGA, which is solely interested in graduate program design.

**Response:** This has been removed from the document.

**Comment:** Four major research emphasis fields in economics are proposed, and interdisciplinary research involving the combination of these fields makes the proposed program distinct from other existing programs on UC campuses. The members of COR would like to see evidence that these specific emphasis fields have increasing demand and might successfully sustain the program by recruiting graduate students and attracting extramural funding. Evidence can involve job opportunities in related areas or increasing funding opportunities in these areas. In particular, the members of COR would like to confirm that there is enough demand for Health Economics, which is not offered on any other UC campus.

**Response:** We currently reference the importance of these fields in the economics job market. We also surveyed the other UC Campuses to get a picture of the anticipated demand for our PhD program and the results from this are contained in the proposal. Given that health economics is a growing field in economics it is very difficult to obtain tangible evidence that there is enough demand for health economics. However, if we let the job market indicate the current demand we can see that the demand is large. The American Economic Association maintains the Jobs for Economists website where many institutions post their jobs. Of all the jobs listed approximately 10% of them are individuals trained in health economics or related fields of economics (defined as Health, Education and Welfare on the AEAs job website: <https://www.aeaweb.org/joe/>).

**Comment:** Close interaction with faculty and the development of critical thinking skills are described as unique features of this proposed program. However, details concerning how these features will be successfully delivered to students are not provided in the proposal. A larger faculty-student ratio is just one of the components of a successful program, and it does not necessarily mean that there will be a close interaction between students and faculty.

**Response:** We have added some additional language to clarify this objective in the proposal.

**Comment:** The proposed program encourages students to take courses in other existing programs, such as Biology, Engineering, Cognitive Science, and Public Health.

(Considering the fact that the proposed program includes a Health Economics emphasis, the members of COR suggest highlighting potential collaborations with the Health Psychology program on campus, as well.) Such diverse coursework can certainly lead to unique interdisciplinary research in economics, but any details or realistic plans (clear explanations) concerning how the program will facilitate/encourage students to take these courses are missing from the proposal. Also, graduate courses in the natural sciences and engineering may be tough for students who have a limited background in these fields. Finally, the sample program (section 2.11) does not seem to reflect this proposed plan.

**Response:** The way the proposal was previously written was a bit misleading regarding this topic. It was our objective to point out that our program will complement the existing programs at UC Merced and that our graduate program is flexible enough to allow students to take courses in other disciplines if it will contribute to their research. We are not going to encourage all students to do this and they do not need to take any courses outside of economics to meet our programmatic requirements. We merely wanted to offer the students the flexibility to take these courses. We have added some additional language that we believe better clarifies this fact and that points out they do not need to take courses in other disciplines in order to graduate and they have to meet the course requirements for these courses before enrolling. This is why we have elected to not include this in the sample program.

**Comment:** The members of COR noted that the early years of the proposed graduate program involve both extensive coursework and substantial research expectations. The proposal would be strengthened by providing some evidence on the ability of students to meet these demands. Such evidence might be found through a comparison to economics graduate programs at other institutions.

**Response:** We have made some changes to the program so that the first year is focused on the core curriculum, the second on taking the field courses and the remaining years on the development of their research. This is a nearly uniform standard for how Economics Ph.D. programs are delivered within the UC and at other peer institutions. We have removed the 2<sup>nd</sup> year paper as it may have been a difficult task to conduct your course work and write the paper at the same time. Assigning research papers later in the program is consistent with other economics graduate programs.

## **CRE Review Response**

**Comment:** CRE's primary comment was our inclusion of the revised Bylaw 55 unit in the proposal.

**Response:** Appendix F has been removed from the document.

## **Institutional Assessment Review Response**

**Comment:** As noted above, the Economics Ph.D. and M.A. degrees are eligible for expedited review (i.e., Fast Track) by WASC. In order to comply with the stipulations of that approval, it will be necessary to include language stating that the Economics emphasis has been incubated as part of the IGP, with a very brief synopsis of its history up until this point. This information could be included at the beginning of Section 1.3.

**Response:** We have added this information to Section 1.3.

**Comment:** WASC requires separate proposals for the M.A. and Ph.D. degree. With this in mind, Table 1 (p.7) will need to project enrollments for both M.A. and Ph.D. students. Alternately, a separate table dedicated to M.A. students may be included. Example spreadsheets, including the specific projections WASC requires, are attached as Appendix A. We are happy to help the program complete this table, if that would be helpful.

To determine the fraction of Ph.D. students who will choose to receive the M.A. en route to the Ph.D., previous programs have found it helpful to contact other UC programs. Political Science estimated that approximately 80% of their Ph.D. students would earn an M.A. This percentage might be a similar for Economics, but it would be important to confirm. Political Science's projections are provided in the attached sample spreadsheet.

**Response:** We conducted a survey of the other graduate programs in Economics within the UC and found that an estimate of 80% is appropriate for the percentage of students who are enrolled in the Ph.D. program that receive a M.A. in route to the Ph.D. or that leave the program with a M.A. instead of a Ph.D.. We have added an appendix to the proposal that captures this information and the data is referenced in the proposal.

**Comment:** The program has clearly crafted its PLOs to distinguish the learning expected of M.A. and Ph.D. degree recipients. To more precisely express these differences, the program might remove the terms "Ph.D. level" and "Master's level" understanding from the PLOs and, instead, add some prefatory language that describes the expectations for each degree more generally. For example, drawing on statements in the proposal, introductory language for the Ph.D. PLOs might read, "Recipients of the Ph.D. degree will demonstrate a thorough knowledge of a broad field of learning, and provide evidence of distinguished accomplishment and critical ability through an original contribution to the knowledge of their chosen field. Consistent with this goal, Ph.D. recipients will...[list Ph.D. outcomes]". An example of introductory language for the master's degree might be, "Recipients of the M.A. degree will demonstrate a thorough understanding of a broad field of knowledge and provide evidence of accomplishment in that field. In keeping with this goal, M.S. recipients will..."

**Response:** Thank you for this suggestion. We have changed the language in the document to your suggested language.

In order to make the PLOs more measurable, and to help clearly define program expectations for student learning, we encourage in the following:

a) Making the PLOs more specific. For instance, PLO 1 might be revised to emphasize the context in which students will apply their knowledge and level of performance: "Ph.D.

recipients demonstrate knowledge and proficiency in economic theory and econometrics at the level required to make a novel contribution to the discipline.” Similarly, PLO 2 could be reworded to emphasize how students will use the theories and methodologies: “Ph.D. recipients apply their knowledge of the relevant theories and methodologies used in the student’s major field of study to critically evaluate the literature and identify productive research questions.” The Graduate Guidelines for Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) may be of help crafting this language. The guidelines are available here:[http://senate.ucmerced.edu/files/public/Graduate%20CLO%20\\_%20PLO%20Guidelines%20Final%20May%202012.pdf](http://senate.ucmerced.edu/files/public/Graduate%20CLO%20_%20PLO%20Guidelines%20Final%20May%202012.pdf)

**Response:** Thank you for your suggestion we have elected to use your suggested language and rewritten the PLOs of the Ph.D. program.

b) Along similar lines, Ph.D. PLO 4 and M.A. PLO 2 describe communication learning outcomes in rather broad and general terms. It may be helpful to include additional language that explains how students will demonstrate their communication abilities and to which types of audiences (as developed through program curriculum). For instance, “Graduates are able to communicate verbally and orally in a clear and concise manner to expert and non-expert audiences.” Or, “Graduates will communicate clearly and concisely using oral, visual, and/or written means while addressing a broad range of audiences.”

**Response:** Thank you for your suggestion we have elected to use your suggested language and rewritten the PLOs of the Ph.D. and M.A. programs.

c) Finally, given that M.A. students will take the same courses as Ph.D. students, the M.A. PLOs might also include knowledge of relevant theories and methodologies (similar to Ph.D. PLO 2), which could be assessed via the rubric for the Second Year Paper.

**Response:** Thank you for the suggestion we have made some changes to the M.A. PLOs.

**Comment:** Historically, WASC has paid particular attention to our assessment plans. In anticipation of this, we recommend the following:

a) Revise the program’s assessment timeline by assigning each PLO to a separate year for review, for instance, PLO 1 in 2015-2016, PLO 2 in 2016-2017, PLO 3 in 2017-2018, PLO 4 in 2018-2019, etc. This is consistent with campus expectations that programs engage in assessment annually, assessing at least one PLO per year. If, however, the proposed structure of enrolling students in alternating years makes assessing more than one PLO at a time more useful to the program, it would be helpful to state that reasoning in the assessment plan.

**Response:** We have altered the timing for evaluating the PLOs so that at least one PLO is being evaluated each year of the graduate program. A number of the PLOs are evaluated in more than just one year as well to correspond with anticipated timing of the performance metric.

b) With respect to Ph.D. PLOs 2 and 3, grade-based assessment of “field course performance” should be included under indirect evidence rather than direct evidence as currently designated. The same applies to participation in Economics conferences (PLO

6). Useful sources of direct evidence for these outcomes include forms of student work like dissertation proposals, dissertation manuscripts, and defenses.

**Response:** We have altered the assessment of the PLOs are required.

c) It will be important to provide performance targets for TA evaluations as this will help make program expectations of student achievement of PLOs 4, 5, and 6 more transparent to faculty and to students.

**Response:** We have added a performance criteria for our TA evaluations for the PLOs 4, 5 and 6.

d) Section 1.7 mentions that the program intends to use institutional surveys of graduate students in its program assessment. These lines of evidence will need to be included in the assessment plan, under indirect evidence, even though information will not be available until the first students graduate.

**Response:** We have added the responses to the Graduate Alumni Survey to the program assessment goals.

**Comment:** WASC reviewers have also tended to scrutinize curriculum maps. Towards this end, it will be important to make the following revisions:

a) WASC expects that curriculum maps include all courses and activities required to earn the degree. Toward this end, ECON 200 will need to be integrated into the Ph.D. and M.A. curriculum maps, and the qualifying exam and dissertation defense to the Ph.D. map. If any other activities are required to earn either degree (e.g. annual committee meetings), these too should be added to the relevant map.

**Response:** ECON 200 has been removed from the required courses. However, we have added the Qualifying Exam, Dissertation Proposal Defense, 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Paper and Dissertation Defense to the Ph.D. map as they are required elements of the Ph.D. program.

b) In both the Ph.D. and the M.A. curriculum maps, indicate which courses and degree activities are required for the respective degree. Past programs have done this by putting an asterisk next to the required elements, or by putting the required elements in bold face.

**Response:** We have added asterisks to the curriculum maps to indicate required courses and activities in both the Ph.D. and M.A. program.

c) Section 2.4a states that there will be four fields of specialization. If specific courses are required for each specialization, these will need to be distinguished in the curriculum map. This might be accomplished by adding to the curriculum map headings for each specialization with the required courses listed beneath, or by including a footnote that indicates to which specialization the required course relates.

**Response:** We have added letters to the curriculum map to indicate the courses that are required for each of our four fields.



d) Both curriculum maps list a first year “preliminary exam” as a requirement, but the term does not seem to appear elsewhere in the proposal. It will be important to reconcile the map with the proposal narrative. Toward this end, we wonder if the preliminary exam is the same as the comprehensive exam?

**Response:** Sorry about this, we meant “Comprehensive Exam” and have made the required changes.

e) Ratings of Introductory, Developed, and Mastery are usually assigned with reference to the level of performance expected of students at the time of graduation. Consistent with this, the dissertation and dissertation defense are usually identified as expecting a mastery level of performance. In light of this, we wondered about the expectation that students achieve of a mastery level of knowledge on the preliminary exam. If students are expected to demonstrate mastery of core Economics concepts through the preliminary exam before they specialize and master the application of those concepts in their major field (as the [American Economics Association](#) indicates is the typical path of Economics graduate education), then it would be helpful to include a footnote explaining this distinction.

**Response:** We have added this information to the curriculum map.

f) On p. 16 of the proposal, Math for Economists is listed as ECON 209 while elsewhere in the proposal it is listed as ECON 200 (see Sample Program in Section 2 and course listings in Section 5). It will be important to ensure consistency in course listings in the body of the proposal, as well as in the curriculum maps, and in Section 5.

**Response:** This course has been removed from the graduate proposal.

g) Section 2.5.4, Advancement to Candidacy, lists the completion of ECON 205 as a requirement. It will be important to add this course to the required core course sequence referenced on pp. 15 and 16, and to indicate it in the curriculum map.

**Response:** This course has been removed from the graduate proposal.

Comment: WASC has specific expectations for syllabi, which they carefully review. Toward this end, a few adjustments are needed to the proposal’s example syllabi, particularly for ECON 201A and ECON 230. These include,

a) Ensuring that the syllabus communicates the number of units earned for the course, together with descriptions of how those units are earned in and out of the classroom. The latter can be met through a description of the class format, e.g. lecture, discussion sections, labs, and expectations for work outside of class.

**Response:** We have indicated on the syllabus that each course is 4 units and added a section that describes the course format.

b) Descriptions of the relationship between the course and program learning outcomes (PLOs). It will be important to include the ECON PLOs specifically.

**Response:** We have added a section to the sample syllabi that indicate their relationship with the PLOs for our Economics Ph.D. and M.A. programs.

c) Mention of library use, with a description of the library research expectations for the course.

This is only needed for Econ 230A.

**Response:** We have added the library use expectations to both ECON 230A and ECON 230B.

d) Grading policies, including how assignments are weighted.

**Response:** Grading policies are now indicated on all of the syllabi.

e) Faculty office location and office hours.

**Response:** We did not include this information in the syllabi before because office hours are selected by each faculty and change from semester to semester. Furthermore, we are most likely not going to still be in COB when the graduate program is launched. However, we put place holders on the syllabi for this information with the information indicated.

f) Policy statements on academic integrity and the services available to students with disabilities.

**Response:** All of the syllabi contain the same “Academic Integrity” and “Disabilities Statement” to reflect the need to incorporate this information.

**Comment:** WASC requires a rubric for the Qualifying Exam that addresses both the written and oral elements of the exam. This will need to be included in Appendix E. We are happy to help draft this rubric.

**Response:** The Qualifying Exam does not possess an oral component. We have added some language to our description of the Qualifying Exam rubric.

Along similar lines, the Dissertation Proposal and Dissertation rubrics might be revised to more clearly identify expectations for the oral elements of each defense. For instance, the program might include criteria describing how concisely students summarize their dissertation proposal/dissertation, or how clearly and convincingly they respond to questions during the defense. A sample rubric is attached as Appendix C.

**Response:** We have expanded the rubric for both the Dissertation Proposal and Dissertation to include a section where the committee can make comments on the student’s written and oral performance.

**Comment:** The Dissertation Defense Rubric seems to replicate expectations described in the Dissertation Proposal Rubric, both in the text preceding the rubric as well as in the rubric itself. (For instance, both rubrics are titled Dissertation Proposal Rubric.) It is important that the Dissertation Defense Rubric reflect expectations for a student completing this final stage of the degree.

**Response:** We have altered the Dissertation Defense Rubric and the Dissertation Proposal Defense rubric to more accurately reflect the expectations at that point in the student’s studies.

**Comment:** WASC reviewers have recommended that programs define the meaning of rubric scores for the purposes of helping students and faculty understand program expectations. For example, other UC Merced graduate programs have equated a score of Introductory or Poor with the proficiency expected of a B.A. recipient, or a Ph.D./M.A. student who has not acquired skills beyond the B.A. level. Expert or Excellent has been equated with the proficiency expected of an Assistant Professor (for a Ph.D. student) or a Ph.D. recipient (for a M.A. student). Along similar lines, it would be helpful to determine what a “Good” exam looks like. We recommend Barbara Lovitts and Ellen Wert’s *Developing Quality Dissertations in the Social Sciences* as a helpful resource for this purpose.

**Response:** We have added a section in the Appendix that defines the four levels of the rubric used for evaluation.

**Comment:** The program has thoughtfully designed its rubrics to reflect its PLOs. To improve the value of the rubrics to the program, we encourage a shift from three to four levels of performance. Adding a fourth level will help clarify differences in performance/achievement within the middle group (e.g. “Good”), thereby providing more useful information on which a program can act.

**Response:** We have changed all of the rubrics so that they use 4 levels versus the 3 we had before. In addition, we have added an appendix item that describes our expectations for each of the levels as suggested in your previous comment.

**Comment:** The biannual review meeting is an important source of information regarding student development and achievement. Toward this end, the program might find it helpful to add some questions to the Student Progress Report that address student achievement of the PLOs, as well as some evaluation of the extent to which students are meeting expectations for degree progress. A sample Student Progress Report is attached as Appendix D.

**Response:** We have added a section for the faculty to assess the student according to the 6 PLOs.

## Graduate Division Review Response

**Comment:** They have 7 full-time faculty, with an 8th joining in January. Five of the eight are assistant professors. They anticipate reaching 11 faculty by fall of 2016, and 16 faculty by 2020. I do not see a firm administrative commitment to these lines, leading to the question: If they do not achieve this level of growth, can they support the proposed program as well as their undergraduate responsibilities? As a related question, is the projected undergraduate growth more ambitious than is realistic? (This affects the number of students they can support with TA appointments).

**Response:** We completely understand the Graduate Division's concern regarding resource commitments. However, given that we do not definitively know what the future direction of hiring is going to be at this time we are left to our best estimate of projected growth based on the Dean's letter. This said, we have reduced our projected growth in the proposal to a more conservative and modest level that assumes our growth would actually be below the level we would achieve if future faculty growth were uniformly distributed across the campus. Furthermore, it is possible for us to launch our graduate program with the currently existing faculty so we have changed the language to reflect this fact. We would also like to note that we are currently hiring 2 LPSOEs to facilitate the execution of our ECON and MGMT majors that we are responsible for staffing. This will further increase our ability to meet both our undergraduate and graduate needs. This information has been added to the proposal as well. Finally, the Provost recently identified five pillars for the future of UC Merced. One of these pillars is "Management and Entrepreneurship." which includes a proposal submitted by the Economics group in collaboration with others on campus. The recent faculty discussion regarding this pillar clearly indicated that the creation of this pillar was extracted from the School of Innovation, Management and Economics proposal that our faculty wrote with faculty in Management as part of our recent strategic focusing initiative. Given this we expect that our projected growth will be greater than that outlined in the proposal.

**Comment:** How will graduate students be supported, beyond TA appointments? Do they anticipate supporting students on research grants? If not, why not?

**Response:** Our graduate students will use the same funding model as the other social science disciplines at UC Merced. We expect to use TAs to fund a majority of the graduate students. This is not only consistent with the other social sciences at UC Merced but with the other economics graduate groups with the UC System. We surveyed the other economics programs in the UC System and discovered that between 90% and 100% of the graduate students are funded using TAships. This said, we currently have faculty who are actively pursuing grants to fund graduate students so we do anticipate that from time to time we will have funds available for graduate students that are obtained from grants. We would also like to point out that the lack of Economics Ph.D. students at UCM have left Economics faculty unable to execute large funded research projects. With well-trained Economics graduate students available Faculty will now be able to seek external funding much more extensively. This will lead to significant additional revenue for the campus. Additional information has been added to the proposal to clarify this information.

**Comment:** The proposal indicates that they will focus in four key areas: (1) Economic Geography and Trade; (2) Environmental & Resource Economics; (3) Health Economics; and (4) International Development. Additional discussion of whether these

are distinctive foci in the national context (beyond simply our sister UC institutions) would be helpful.

**Response:** We have added additional discussion to the proposal to highlight the importance of these fields.

**Comment:** They anticipate interdisciplinary research and interaction with Biology, Cognitive Science, Ecology, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology and the proposed new graduate programs in the Management of Innovation, Sustainability and Technology and Public Health. I applaud this interdisciplinary engagement. However, it is not clear to what extent these programs, and particularly the Economics, MIST and Public Health proposals, all depend upon the same faculty. I suggest inclusion of letters indicating impact from the other affected existing and proposed programs.

**Response:** We do not completely understand your comment. Our program does not in any way rely on the existence of any of these programs for the execution of our program. Therefore, we have elected to not obtain letters from these respective groups. All we wished to point out in the proposal is that our program complements the existing programs and programs that are in development. The structure of our graduate program is such that a student will have the opportunity to take a course or two in other disciplines if they are interested in doing so, however this is not required. Therefore, we do not see the need to include letters indicating the impact from other affected existing and proposed programs.

**Comment:** A clearer discussion of their decision not to admit students in 2017 and 2019 would be helpful. My concern is that this may create confusion as to whether or not they are admitting students in a given year, resulting in reduced applications in years when they are admitting students.

**Response:** A discussion of our decision to not admit students in 2017 and 2019 is contained in Section 1.3. We have also added information that indicates we will post our admission cycle information on our department website to ensure that students are fully informed of the timing of our admissions.

**Comment:** Related to the above, the growth in faculty: student ratio is very slow, not reaching 1:2 until 2021, five years into the program. Thus it appears that they could support admitting a cohort of students each year.

**Response:** We have reduced our projected faculty growth and also increased our projected graduate student enrollment by 20%. As a result of this we will reach a 1:2 ratio in 2018-19 with a small reduction in the ratio in 2019-20. However, as the graduate program continues to grow we will reach a ratio of 1:3.1, which is on par with the ratios at the University of California, Riverside and the University of California, Irvine.

**Comment:** Page 8, please note that the current Graduate Dean is Marjorie Zatz.

**Response:** We apologize for this mistake and have fixed this in the document.

**Comment:** Please clean up typos (e.g, page 18, forth member instead of fourth; pg 44, Teach Assistantships instead of Teaching).

**Response:** Thank you for noting our typos, we believe we have addressed them in the revised draft.

**Comment:** Further discussion is needed for the decision to have the Grad Group Chair serve as faculty advisor for all students for their first two years, and then to appoint advisors. What is the rationale for these decisions? Advising all students in their first two years is a significant amount of work for the grad group chair, and the chair and students might be better served if other faculty assist in the temporary advisement of students. Also, this heavy mentoring responsibility is not listed in the chair's responsibilities.

**Response:** We have changed the faculty advisor assignments so that the Grad Group Chair is the advisor for only the first year. Given that all first year students take the same courses, the advisory role duties are minimal relative to the other years of the program. The only circumstance under which the Grad Group Chair will continue as advisor is if the pairing is the preferred faculty advisor assignment given the student's research interests.

## Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Response

**Comment:** Overall, this is a reasonably well-written proposal that articulates specific areas of emphasis for the planned expansion of the economics graduate program. My primary concern is about the relative size of the program proposed, compared to other graduate programs at UC Merced that similarly seek to expand during the course of our campus's growth.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments regarding our proposal. The relative size of our proposed program is on par with the size of the other social science graduate programs at UC Merced. Although this growth is modest, it is at a level where we feel we can obtain a solid foundation for future growth in the graduate program while maintaining a high level of academic quality that contributes to the distinction of our campus. We anticipate that as our faculty and university continue to grow we will be able to increase the number of graduate students.

**Comment:** The authors point out that UC Merced is the only UC campus exclusive of San Francisco that does not offer a PhD in economics. Given our small but growing size, I expect that there are a number of programs, both at the undergraduate and graduate level, that are found at all other UC campuses but not here at UC Merced. This is an unsurprising characteristic of the campus, and is not in itself an argument for starting a program.

**Response:** We definitely agree that there are other graduate programs present at other UCs that are not here at UC Merced and this fact alone does not justify the creation of our graduate program. This said, we do wish to be competitive with the other UCs in terms of academic reputation and our graduate student population. We also seek to leverage areas of excellence that have been developed on this campus to contribute to building a world-class research university. Given the focus of our graduate program and the fact that our fields of specialization are underserved within the UC System, we believe that our graduate program is uniquely positioned to excel at UC-wide, national and international levels. We have added some additional information to the proposal to highlight the uniqueness of our graduate program and the importance it will serve.

**Comment:** The graduate economics program is probably appropriate for this campus. However, the proposed student-faculty ratios are simply too low to be reasonably sustainable over the long-term. Careful re-analysis of the growth of faculty, as well as the planned growth in graduate students, should be considered. Some attention needs to be paid in the proposal to the probability that a much higher graduate student-faculty ratio is warranted, as well as a more realistic estimation of the anticipated number of TAs assigned to the program. Planning to support all graduate students on institutional funds, primarily TAs, is not realistic.

**Response:** Thank you for agreeing that a graduate program in economics is probably appropriate for this campus. To address your comment, as well as others made of a similar nature, we conducted a survey of the other graduate programs in the UC System. We found that our initial faculty to student ratios were a little bit too low and have increased our enrollment projections by 20%. As a result of this, as well as a reduction in our faculty growth projections, we will reach a faculty to student ratio of approximately 1:3.1 when the program reaches a steady-state. This is on par with the ratios observed at the University of California, Riverside and the University of California, Irvine. Our ratios are lower in the initial years of the program, but we feel this is necessary to ensure

that we are able to focus on producing a high quality graduate program. With regard to our use of TAs, we anticipate using the same graduate funding model as the other social sciences at UC Merced. In our survey of the other graduate programs in the UC System we found that between 90% and 100% of the students are funded using internal resources such as TAs. This is consistent with the other social sciences here at UC Merced and we anticipate being able to equally benefit as they have from the use of TAs. This said, it is worth pointing out that the selection of our fields are highly fundable and represent disciplines that can successfully obtain external funding. Furthermore, many of our faculty actively pursue external funding (one faculty has applied for three grants totaling over \$1.5M this year – this is uncommon in economics) so we anticipate that we will be able to provide more support for our graduate students using more external funds than many of our peer institutions in economics. We are also revising our major to incorporate additional large general education courses that will attract a range of majors and provide additional resources to TA positions. However, funding projections do involve a high degree of uncertainty.