

TO: Simon Bott, Chair  
Undergraduate Council

APPROVED APR 18 2012

FROM: Jerry Waite  
Academic Policies and Procedures Committee

SUBJECT: UC 11660 and 11736: Proposals for Changes to the Admission Requirements to the Economics Major

DATE: April 11, 2012

The Academic Policies and Procedures Committee met on Wednesday, February 15 to consider UC 11660, a proposal to change the admission requirements for the Economics Major. Participating in the discussion were committee members Leonard Bachman, Preston Broom, Bill Dupre, Tamara Fish, Richard Scamell, Kevin Simon, Steven Soutullo, William Munson, and Jerry Waite; Ruxandra Boul represented the Department of Economics.

The Committee provided Dr. Boul with suggestions for improvements to UC 11660 and, at Dr. Boul's request, tabled discussion on the proposal.

Subsequent to the February 15<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Committee received from the Department of Economics UC 11736, a second admissions-change proposal that compliments UC 11660. With Dr. Boul's consent, we combined both proposals into one, which is discussed below.

The Committee met on February 29 to consider the Economics Department's combined proposal. Participating in the discussion were Leonard, Bachman, Bill Dupre, Tamara Fish, Richard Scamell, Kevin Simon, Stephen Soutullo, and Jerry Waite; Ruxandra Boul again represented the Department of Economics.

The Committee supported the combined proposals, but again provided input as to the wording of the final catalog verbiage. Subsequent to the meeting, Jerry Waite synthesized the suggestions into a completed proposal and forwarded it to Dr. Boul for discussion at the Departmental Level. The proposal was returned with minor modifications by the Department of Economics and then Jerry Waite sent the final proposal to the members of the Committee for electronic approval.

At a full meeting of the Undergraduate Committee on March 21, committee members had concerns about the wording of bullet point four in the Admissions Requirements. So, Ruxandra Boul, Larry Williams, and Jerry Waite further refined the verbiage. The final requirements, shown on the next page, were approved by the Economics faculty and then by the UC Academic Policies and Procedures Committee unanimously on April 11, 2012.

### **Background**

The Department of Economics would like to change the requirements for declaring a major in economics. Changes in major declaration requirements and rules in Bauer College of Business and UScholars have substantially increased the number of students declaring Economics as their major (355 in Fall 2010 vs 518 in Fall 2011). The Department of Economics' academic advisor suspects that some of these students do not actually intend to major in economics and are simply hoping to increase their GPAs in order to move to the College of Business. In fact, some students do not enroll in any economics courses after declaring their major. Thus, they are not progressing towards graduation in their chosen major. This phenomenon sparked departmental discussion about our major declaration rules that has led to the following proposed changes.

### **UC 11660**

The study of economics requires strong quantitative skills and success in advanced courses requires a strong foundation in economic theory. Faculty in the Department of Economics want to make sure that students choosing to major in economics have acquired sufficient skills in these

areas. The faculty believe this will improve student performance in advanced courses and assist students in making the right decision in choosing their majors. Therefore, the faculty would like to require that all students who have completed 30 or more hours and want to declare a major in Economics enroll in, and remain enrolled in, one of the following courses: ECON 2304 Principles of Microeconomics, ECON 2305 Principles of Macroeconomics, ECON 3332 Intermediate Microeconomics, or ECON 3334 Intermediate Macroeconomics. These courses contain the fundamental economic theory and quantitative training that is so important to successful advanced study.

Even though this is likely to increase enrollment pressure in the intermediate courses (which are already at capacity), the faculty think that this proposal is important for student progress towards graduation and will also aid students in making certain the major is a good fit for them.

## **UC 11736**

The documented increase in the demand for the Economics major, in addition to the faculty's commitment toward high quality education, has also contributed to their request to increase the minimum GPA from 2.00 to 2.25 for students who wish to declare a major in Economics.

The faculty are aware that an increase in the minimum GPA will most likely result in a reduction of students in the short run. But, they anticipate that it will increase the quality of their students, will significantly decrease the time towards graduation, and will eventually increase the number of Economics majors that will meet their standards.

## **Proposal**

### **Admission to the Economics Major**

If this proposal is approved, the Department of Economics will add the following to the catalog language:

<http://www.uh.edu/academics/catalog/colleges/las/majors/economics/index.php>)

### **Economics Major**

#### **Admission Requirements**

To declare a major in Economics, the following must be met.

- First time in college students may declare Economics as their major if they meet the qualifications required for admission to the University of Houston.
- UH students who wish to change their majors to Economics must have a minimum 2.25 cumulative GPA on all coursework taken at UH.
- Students who transfer from other colleges or universities must have a cumulative 2.25 GPA in previous coursework.
- All students beyond their freshman year must have concurrent enrollment in one or more of the following four courses during the semester in which they wish to declare a major in Economics unless all four courses have been satisfactorily completed: ECON 2304 Principles of Microeconomics, ECON 2305 Principles of Macroeconomics, ECON 3332 Intermediate Microeconomics or ECON 3334 Intermediate Macroeconomics.

## **Recommendation**

The Committee voted:

- 9 "aye."
- 0 "nay."