

IUPUI GAC Reviewer Form

Reviewer:

School:

Department:

Email:

Date Reviewed: February 20, 2009

Documents Reviewed: Proposal for PhD in Economics at IUPUI

Summary of Proposal:

This is a proposal for an Indiana University Ph.D. degree in Economics to be offered on the campus of Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) and administered by the Department of Economics in the School of Liberal Arts. The rationale for this proposal is based on two compelling reasons: first, there is a substantial need for health economists who can work in collaboration with physicians and other health scientists on the design and implementation of more efficient and effective health care systems; second, there is a need for nonprofit economists who can work in collaboration with researchers from other fields who are trying to understand connections between altruism and philanthropy, and to understand how government tax and expenditure policies impact this sector. The establishment of a Ph.D. program in Economics with concentrations in these two areas will help to meet the need, both locally, in the state, and nationally. A minimum of 90 credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree is required for the doctoral degree. The 90 credit hours is divided into coursework in Economics (32 credit hours), Field courses, workshop/seminar (19 credit hours), Minor (9-12 credit hours), and Dissertation (26-29 credit hours). The Economics Department currently has 15 full-time faculties and the Department has the authorization to fill four more new or replacement positions.

1. Are the goals clear and achievable?

The purpose and the scope of the program are clearly stated. Given the fact that currently there is adequate faculty strength, resources for graduate students are clearly identified and the strength of the program (number of PhD students) over the next five years is reasonable, the goals are hence achievable.

2. Is the program academically sound?

The program is academically sound. However, it is noted that 12 out of the 21 courses that are part of the proposed program are new and need to be developed. There is no timeline indicated when this will occur. This will be a major undertaking for developing the program.

3. Are faculty resources available to offer this certificate without undercutting other key missions of the unit?

The proposal indicates that there are sufficient resources already present in the Department, with a current strength of 15 full-time faculty and an additional four new hires immediately. The plan is to reorient support from the M.A. program toward the Ph.D. program without impacting support for M.A. students. The Department will continue to rely heavily on part-time instructors to deliver education in economics to undergraduates.

4. Is there overlap, either real or potential, with any other unit that could harm the program or be exploited to help the program?

There seems to be no overlap with any of the existing programs at IUPUI. However, there is an excellent opportunity to collaborate at both course and curriculum levels with the School of Informatics' Health Informatics Program. This may lead to mutual benefits to both programs.

5. My recommendation, comments/concerns regarding this proposal...

- a) The request for an Economics PhD with concentrations in Health and Nonprofit/Philanthropic Economics is well justified. Especially, the Health concentration is timely, and will be an integral part of the Campus' and State's emphasis in health sciences. The concentration on Nonprofit/Philanthropic Economics could be unique in the country, and may bring significant visibility to the Department, School and the Campus as a whole.
- b) The resources identified to support the program are adequate to develop the program. Even though there are significant course and curriculum efforts that will be involved for a timely implementation of the program, the faculty resources should be sufficient to carry out this major effort.
- c) The justification that is given regarding the demand for the program is not really convincing. The data provided is based on feedback from past and current MA students and based on needs that are present within various campus entities. An external survey at both local and national levels would have been more convincing and desirable.
- d) It is a well-known fact that PhD programs are expensive to sustain. Classes with low enrollment and the need to sustain such low-enrolling classes will be a major issue unless these graduate classes, current and new ones, are geared for both MA and PhD students. There is no information provided regarding such issues.

Overall, this reviewer believes that the proposal to implement a PhD program in Economics is well justified and it should be approved. Focusing on two concentration areas is especially convincing, and it is indeed a very strong aspect of this proposal.