

**New Program Proposal  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Economics  
Clemson University**

Clemson University requests approval to offer a new program leading to the Doctor of Philosophy in Economics to be implemented in Fall 2009.

The Clemson Board of Trustees approved the proposal on April 17, 2008. The Program Planning Summary was submitted to the Commission in May 2008, and it was reviewed and voted upon favorably by the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs on July 17, 2008. At this meeting, the representative from USC-Columbia, which currently confers the state's only Ph.D. in Economics, supported the proposed program. The full proposal was received by the Commission on February 23, 2009.

According to the proposal, the purpose of the program is to recognize existing academic and career tracks taken by graduate students in the existing program leading to the Ph.D. in Applied Economics offered jointly through Clemson's Department of Applied Economics and Statistics and the Department of Economics. The proposal states that students in the existing program choose faculty supervision from one of the two departments, and that the differing research focus of the supervising faculty in the two departments leads to two different academic paths for the students. However, since students in both supervisory tracks receive the same degree, the distinction in academic focus between the two paths taken to the degree is lost. Clemson states that the proposed Ph.D. in Economics program will more accurately reflect the theoretical nature of the course work of students currently supervised through the Department of Economics. Given the continued demand for the Ph.D. in Applied Economics program, Clemson does not intend to terminate that degree program and states in the proposal that "every Top 20 institution that offers a Ph.D. in either Agricultural or Applied Economics also offers the Ph.D. in Economics." The proposal includes a letter of support and a positive evaluation from Dr. David B. Mustard, Associate Professor and Graduate Coordinator in the Department of Economics at the University of Georgia.

The proposal presents four main benefits from the proposed program: more competitive student recruitment against such institutions as North Carolina State, the University of Georgia, the University of North Carolina, and the University of Virginia; increased department reputation leading to enhanced graduate job placement; additional functionality with no additional costs; and increased national reputation of the university. Clemson indicates that the graduates from the proposed program will be better credentialed for careers in the academic workforce because of the more appropriate degree designation.

USC-Columbia and Clemson are the only state institutions to offer master's degrees in Economics. USC-Columbia offers the state's only doctorate in the field, the Ph.D. in Economics. From Fall 2003 to Fall 2007, the USC program carried an average enrollment of 9.2 students, far fewer than the proposal's predicted 53 students for Clemson's proposed Ph.D. in Economics program. Over the same period, Clemson's existing Ph.D. in Applied Economics program enrolled an average of 67.8 students.

The admissions criteria for the proposed program are: 1) a completed undergraduate degree; 2) successful completion of advanced coursework in economics; 3) a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.40 or higher; and, 4) a score of 700 or more on the quantitative portion of the GRE Exam. Students will require approximately four years to complete the program with the first three years focused on economics course work (approximately 60 credit hours) and the fourth year focused on the dissertation.

Students must complete an evaluation process at the end of their first year to assess learning in the critical areas of econometrics and economic theory. Those students demonstrating an inadequate command of these two areas may be required to retake first-year course work and the end-of-year evaluation in order to remain in the program.

If the proposed program is approved, the current population of 71 students (Fall 2008 enrollment) in the Ph.D. in Applied Economics will be divided into those staying in the existing program and those moving into the new program leading to the Ph.D. in Economics. The proposal states that 53 students will move to the proposed program. Based on current admission, attrition, and graduation patterns in the existing program, Clemson anticipates that it will maintain the current enrollment level of 53 students (18.5 FTE) throughout the first five years of the program and beyond. The proposal states that the institution does not intend to increase the size of the program, but instead plans to increase quality of the program with the new degree. If the enrollment projections are met, the program will meet the Commission's program productivity standards for enrollment and degrees awarded.

The proposal states that in the first five years of the program no new faculty, administration, or staff members will be hired to support the program. The proposal further states that due to the existence of the program leading to the Ph.D. in Applied Economics, the institution's existing library holdings are sufficient to support the proposed program. No new physical plant facilities or equipment are required for the proposed program. According to the proposal, there is no specialized accrediting body for the proposed program.

The proposal states that since the proposed program uses an existing track within the Ph.D. in Applied Economics program to create a new program that better reflects the

focus of graduate students earning their degrees under the supervision of Clemson's Department of Economics, there will be no new cost to the institution in its implementation. In addition, the proposal explicitly states that there will be no increase of enrollment levels beyond the current enrollment level of 53 (18.5 FTE) students, and therefore no additional costs to the state.

In summary, Clemson University is proposing a new program leading to the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Economics. The proposed program will draw its initial students from currently enrolled students who are working toward the Ph.D. in Applied Economics under the supervision of the Department of Economics. The proposal states that there is no program growth planned above the current enrollment level of doctoral students being supervised by the Department of Economics. The Ph.D. in Applied Economics, offered through the Department of Applied Economics and Statistics, will continue to be offered. There will be no expansion of existing programs and no new costs to the institution or state to implement this program.

### **Recommendation**

The staff recommends that the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing commend favorably to the Commission the program leading to the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Economics at Clemson University to be implemented in Fall 2009, provided that no "unique cost" or other special state funding be required or requested.