

## A strategy for enhancing expertise in economics within CLAS and across campus

Amie Kreppel  
Nigel Smith (Committee Chair)  
Leo Villalon

21 May 2004

It is in the interests of CLAS and UF as a whole to fortify economics research and teaching because it has so many linkages with programs, centers, and departments across campus. Currently these links are under-developed, with the result that the caliber and breadth of economics research and teaching at UF has yet to reach its full potential.<sup>1</sup> Several options can be considered for boosting the profile of economics research and teaching within the college and at UF in general.

One approach would be to concentrate economic hires in a single department, such as the Department of Economics in the Business School. The problem with this approach is that it might not meet all of CLAS needs. For example, the Center for African Studies would likely find more useful expertise in Food and Resource Economics within IFAS than the Department of Economics; the Center for Latin American Studies already has a long history of collaboration with Food and Resource Economics.

A variation of this approach would be to assign more faculty lines to the existing Department of Economics but make them joint appointments with centers, programs, and departments within CLAS. In this scenario all new hires would be jointly hired with 50% FTE assigned to the Economics Department and the other 50% in the partner department, center or program. In the case of joint appointment with center or programs tenure would be assigned within the economics department, in the case of a joint appointment with a tenure granting department special accommodations would have to be stipulated.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> As recognized by the current chair of the Economics Department in the College of Business—See letter from Larry Kenny, May, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> The ability of centers to grant tenure may need to be revisited as the number of joint hires with truly interdisciplinary approaches increases it may become problematic to rely solely on more narrowly defined departments for tenure decisions. Often those who best meet the needs of the interdisciplinary centers are not in the mainstream of their titular disciplines. As a result, despite significant achievements and contributions these hires may have a harder time successfully completing the tenure process. In the case of economics specifically, if the college does develop an independent program (see below) with an advisory board, such a board would be able to advise the Dean on the appropriateness of allowing a center to award tenure and/or promotion. Another vetting process could involve the social science council organized by

The primary weakness of these two options is that they might be overly restrictive since they would channel hires and resources to the Department of Economics in the Business School, and thus possibly marginalize the needs of some centers and programs within CLAS. For example, the Center for African Studies would be more likely to find faculty with relevant expertise and training in the Food and Resource Economics department in IFAS than amongst the faculty of the Economics Department in the Business School.

Another approach would be to spread hires among departments within CLAS and other units on campus with an emphasis on cross appointments with centers and programs. . This approach would once again focus on joint appointments with programs and centers, but would emphasize collaboration between these units and departments within CLAS that have an interest in building their programs to incorporate economics-related subjects. This latter option is explored here and some suggestions offered for long and short term strategies.

### **Long term strategy**

Economics is important to so many areas of research and teaching within CLAS, from environmental impact issues to conservation and management of natural resources, urban and industrial development, trade and foreign policy, yet the number of hires and resources in this field is far short of what is needed. Furthermore, the current requirement that CLAS majors in economics take most of their courses in the College of Business, forcing them to balance the requirements and regulations of two colleges, limits the appeal and efficacy of the undergraduate CLAS economics program. Thus, from at least two perspectives it would make sense to have a Department of Economics within CLAS. This could be accomplished by creating a new department from scratch or by inviting the Department of Economics in the business school to relocate to CLAS. While the latter would be easier and less costly, it would not be unproblematic.<sup>3</sup> Although creating a wholly new economics department within CLAS might be the ideal strategy, it is unlikely to be a viable option in the short term due to the high cost.<sup>4</sup>

### **Short term strategy**

Given that the creation or incorporation of an Economics Department within CLAS is an unlikely proposition in the short term, one strategy would be to

---

Associate Dean Akers; this council which meets periodically is composed of social science chairs and directors.

<sup>3</sup> Aside from the possible conflicts with the Business School that might arise, such a move would be problematic for existing students in the Business School and would require the significant restructuring of a number of existing degree programs.

<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that neither approach would preclude other departments within CLAS from making economic hires, but they would be joint appointments.

elevate the profile of economics within CLAS to the program level through a number of hires. An economics program within CLAS would have an advisory board to guide growth in courses and future hires<sup>5</sup>. A program would also provide a framework to attract more majors and minors, as well as organize conferences, workshops, and training sessions.

To accomplish this short term strategy, which we believe will facilitate the eventual creation of a full-fledged Department of Economics within CLAS, it will be necessary to create a cohort 4-5 economics hires within CLAS. Ideally, the search for these hires would occur during the 2004-2005 academic year. These positions could be spread among the area centers (Africa, Asia and Europe) as well as the Lueci program and possibly others. The hires would be joint-appointments with departments within CLAS (such as anthropology, geography, history, sociology, geology, and botany) or potentially other departments outside of CLAS where appropriate. Regardless of the location of their appointment these faculty members would be expected to work together to develop the Economics Studies Program within CLAS.<sup>6</sup> The successful implementation of this plan would provide a tangible boost to economics research and teaching within CLAS and at UF as a whole, raising its stature and facilitating the future development of an Economics Department within CLAS.

---

<sup>5</sup> These hires, in the absence of an Economics Department, would be joint hires between existing departments, centers and programs (as described above). Some of these could be joint with the current Economics Department in the Business School, but their assignment within CLAS would include participation in the CLAS Economics Program as well.

<sup>6</sup> It might be worthwhile to consider at least one search at the Associate level which would include appointment as director or head of this program to insure the necessary level of leadership and organization.