



Executive Summary

Economics Program Review (2022-23)



External Reviewers:

- Dr. Jean Eid, Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Wilfrid Laurier University
- Dr. Kelly Foley, Associate Professor, Department of Economics, University of Saskatchewan

Site-visit Dates: November 16-17, 2023**Report Date:** January 18, 2024**Senate Review:** TBD**Overview**

In providing a peer review of the undergraduate programs in economics within the Sobey School of Business at Saint Mary's University (SMU), we, the external reviewers, had the opportunity to attend a two-day virtual site visit and to review the self-study document and the Dean's response. During the visits, we were able to meet with the Interim Vice-President, Academic & Research, the Interim Dean of the Sobey School of Business, the Acting Chair of the department, full- and part-time faculty, and student support professionals from the library, international student services, and academic advising. Additionally, we met with one recent alumna and one current student. We were also provided with background material including the documents and reports from the 2015-16 review, and recent graduation and enrollment data. We found that all site-visit participants were forthcoming and transparent. The internal chair, Dr. William Kay, in particular, was instrumental in answering all our questions and providing any additional information we requested in a very timely manner. As a result, we were afforded an excellent opportunity to gain a fulsome impression of the functioning and outcomes of the Economics (Undergraduate) program and the context within which it operates.

The Economics Department, a constituent unit of the Sobey School of Business, encompasses a comprehensive array of academic programs designed to cater to diverse student needs and interests. The programs offered include:

1. Economics Minor
2. Concentration in Economics (available for BA degree only)
3. Economics Major
4. Economics Honours
5. Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Applied Economics
6. Master of Applied Economics

For the purposes of our evaluative analysis, we will focus our attention on the first four options.

Upon careful scrutiny of the data provided by the University, it has come to our attention that, on average, the department has conferred degrees upon approximately 31.5 students annually from the Economics Major program during the period spanning 2015-2023. Additionally, the Honours and Minor programs have seen an annual graduation rate of approximately 3.1 students over the same time frame.

On balance, our impression is that Saint Mary's University continues to deliver undergraduate economics programming that is of good quality and would compare favourably with similar institutions. In particular, we note that the students and alumni, from whom we heard, benefited from their experiences and thought their instructors facilitated their learning. They also enjoyed the opportunity to attend small classes. We further noted that the part-time faculty were very engaged and invested in maintaining high-quality programs. It is a strong point of the department that SMU can attract part-time instructors with relevant work experience, such as experience in the provincial government.

We have several recommendations that we offer to contribute to the objective of continuous program improvement.