

**SELF-ASSESSMENT - SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES
UF ECONOMICS**

Condition #1: *The right people apply for doctoral study.*

Condition #2: *The right applicants are admitted as doctoral students*

Condition #3: *Students and faculty form productive working relationships*

Condition #4: *Students experience social support from fellow students*

Conditions	Goals /Activities	Timeline
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| 1 | One of the main concerns is that because we admit new students on an every other year cycle, potential applicants may not be aware of when our program is admitting students. There is also concern about attracting more American applicants (who often do better in finding interesting research topics and in placement). | |
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Proposed activities for program improvement:

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| 1. | Do more marketing to smaller liberal arts colleges in the US. This would involve sending a letter to economics and math departments at those schools with information about our program. We will review the files of students for past 10 years, and make contact with those undergrad institutions. Select regional small liberal arts colleges for new outreach. This would be done sometime in the Fall 2006 term. | Fall 2006 |
| 2. | When faculty present talks at other universities, they will try to arrange meetings with potential applicants. This has already started. For example, one faculty member while in India met with potential applicants at several schools. Modify brochure/develop talking points for all faculty to take. All faculty should have business cards to pass out to the students they meet. They should take the student's name and send a note when they return. Implement Fall 2006 and Spring 2007. | Fall 2006 & Spring 2007 |
| 3. | Analyze the Fall's recruitment process and applicants to identify trends and make a plan for the next cycle. Fall 2006 | Fall 2006 |

4. Send thank-you letters to the references of accepted students. Follow-up letter to these same professors at end of first year – this will help keep UF’s program in front of departments that have sent us successful students. Spring 2007.

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There are difficulties in determining what factors are the best predictors for successful completion of the program. The most difficult thing to predict is whether someone will be able to be creative in research. Some students fail who seemed to be sure successes and others who were marginal admits do very well. Did we make mistakes in the admission process or did we do the best possible given the information available is hard to determine.

We also lose top candidates to other institutions. It seems that the stipend is problematic, because we are never exactly sure what the current rate is due to our every-other-year admission cycle. The size of our program precludes us from offering a large number of options. If a student is unsure of what they want to specialize in, they tend to go to larger programs. However, a student who is clearly focused on a specialty usually joins our program.

Proposed activities for program improvement:

1. A retrospective review in depth at past students records to see if there was information not utilized to predict success or failure. Some initial evaluation has already been done but nothing definite has been found to explain either unexpected failures or successes. Fall 2006
2. In the admissions process more weight will be given to successful completion of a quality paper in an undergraduate or masters program. Also more weight will be put on getting information about the difficulty of an applicant’s undergraduate program, possibly by soliciting further information about what texts were used in key courses. Spring 2007
3. We will do focus groups of our existing students to determine what factors they feel made them Fall 2006

successful here, and what points we might want to consider emphasizing in our recruitment and admissions processes. We may also tap into their personal connections with previous classmates to find out what other successful programs are doing.

- 3 Given the relatively small number of both the faculty and graduate students, this has not been a major issue except for some cases relating to particular characteristics of some individuals.

Proposed activities for Program Improvement:

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| 1. | Trying to ensure that individuals who are admitted are aware of the faculty interests should facilitate productive interactions based on common interests. In addition, we recently began requiring that all students do a research project during their first summer. This should help students connect earlier with faculty in research activities. | Ongoing from Summer 2005. |
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- 4 The students do seem to interact with each other both in group studying and social activities. There does seem to be some tendency for international students, at least from some countries, to interact less with other students. This may be a language or cultural problem.

Proposed activities for Program Improvement:

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| 1. | In some courses, encourage collaboration on problem sets in place of grading them. | Fall 2006 |
| 2. | Department will continue to organize social events during the year to encourage students to interact with each other and with faculty. | Ongoing. |