

Transcript of Economics Department Information Session Powerpoint Presentation.

Slide 1:

Thank you for your interest in the Economics Department at UMass-Amherst. My name is Stephanie Babinski Brewer, and I am an Academic Advisor in the Economics Department. This presentation will give the basic information you need to decide whether a major or minor in economics is right for you.

Slide 2:

Many of the students that are interested in Economics as a major or minor have completed at least one of the introductory level courses here at UMass. If you have, it has hopefully given you a feel for the subject and the approach of our department. If you have not yet taken an economics course here, you are still welcome to join the major or minor. Many students are surprised that Economics is not part of the business school. We, in fact, are a part of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS), and a Bachelor of Arts degree.

As a social science, like political science or sociology, economists look at human behavior and why people, governments, and institutions make the decisions that they do. Unlike Resource Economics, which is an applied microeconomics department, we focus on both micro- and macroeconomic theory, market structure, economic development, and public policy. We encourage our students to be broad in their approach to education as they develop skills in critical thinking, data analysis, and civic engagement.

Although many students become interested in an economics degree because they are thinking about future careers in business, the economics major is not a business major. That said, many of our majors go on to careers in banking, finance, insurance, and other industries. For students interested in these career paths, we do have an option to use some Isenberg classes as part of their major, as I will discuss later.

We also like students to know that our major is considered math intensive. Students who pursue the Economics major should be prepared to complete two levels of calculus, two intermediate theory courses, and at least one statistics class by the end of their sophomore year. If you are joining Economics later in your UMass career, make sure to schedule an appointment with an advisor to discuss course planning.

Slide 3:

This slide shows the requirements for the economics major. Students are required to complete

- Introductory courses in micro and macroeconomics (Econ 103 and 104).
- Calculus 1 and 2 (either the 127/128 series or 131/132 series)
- A statistics class, with Stats 240 and ResEc 212 being the most common choices
- Intermediate theory courses in micro and macro economics (Econ 203 and 204)
- Econ 365, junior year writing, for primary econ majors
- And 4 upper level economics electives, including an IE course for primary majors

In addition to these courses, students will choose either Option A or Option B. Option A is 2 additional upper level economics electives. Because the economics department encourages our students to be broad in their academic pursuits, we created Option B, which replaces the 2 upper level classes of Option A with a second major, a minor, a certificate, or 5 Isenberg classes. About 60% of economics majors choose Option B. Ask an advisor how this option might work for your academic plans.

The final requirement for economics majors is either Global Education or International/Intercultural requirements. The requirement you complete as a major depends on when you first enrolled at UMass. If you began your first semester at UMass in Spring 2018 or earlier, you fall into the Global Ed requirements. If you began your first semester at UMass in Fall 2018 or later, you will complete the IIR.

Slide 4:

For students who began at UMass Spring 2018 or earlier, and you are planning on making economics your primary major, you will need to complete the 15 credit Global Education Requirements. If this applies to you, you are likely quite far along in your UMass career, so please contact an advisor to review your unique circumstances. At that time, we will discuss the Global Ed requirements in detail. Global Ed does not apply to secondary economics majors.

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For students that entered UMass in Fall 2018 or later (which is likely most of you watching this), you will be completing the International and Intercultural Requirements or the IIR. Unlike Global Ed, the IIR applies to both primary and secondary economics majors. The IIR is a 9 credit requirement that can be satisfied in the following ways:

- Three course selected from the IIR list of about 500 courses
- 9 credits of a single language (other than English)
- 6 credits of a single language plus one course from the IIR list
- A certificate program with an international emphasis (like the International Relations Certificate)
- A department approved study abroad program

Please talk to your advisor if you have specific questions about the IIR courses and how you might satisfy them.

Slide 6:

If you are interested in the minor in economics, you will need to complete roughly half of the requirements for the major. The required courses are:

- Both introductory level classes: Econ 103 and Econ 104
- A calculus class (either Math 127 or 131)
- A second math class, either statistics or a second calculus class
- One of the intermediate theory class: either Econ 203 or 204

- Two upper level economics electives of your choice

Please note, if you entered UMass in Fall 2018 or later, you may not double count the two upper level economics classes with your primary major. Ask your advisor if you have any questions about this rule.

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One frequent question that we are asked is about enrolling in courses. Because there can be high demand for some of our most popular courses, we initially restrict access to classes to primary majors only. Make sure you check the restrictions on courses in SPIRE when you are registering if you are a second major or a minor. The general rule is that 300 level courses will open to everyone after juniors register and 200 level courses will open to everyone after sophomores register. We do not overload classes without the explicit written permission of the instructor.

We have worked hard to increase the available seats in our most popular classes, so you will likely be able to take the classes that you want sometime before graduation, even as a second major or minor. If you believe you should be able to enroll in a class but are receiving an error in SPIRE or you have extenuating circumstances, you can submit an override request on the department advising page.

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The economics department encourages students to engage in opportunities beyond the classroom. We have a department Moodle where we share information on events, internships, and job opportunities, as well as an extensive resource list. We encourage students to take advantage of internships, both during the summer and semesters. We have had past students participate in SBS in Boston and SBS in DC programs. Economics majors have the opportunity to take upper level requirements during Study Abroad and Domestic exchange programs. We have a department research assistantship program that is available to juniors and seniors looking for hands on experience doing economic research with a faculty member. All majors and minors are encouraged to join the undergraduate economics club, which meets many alumni for networking opportunities and presents the spring undergraduate debate every year. We also publish the undergraduate journal of economics for students looking to see their own research in print.

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The question of whether this is the right major for you should be based on your personal interests and career goals. That said, economics is a flexible major that allows students to pursue additional academic interests as well as multiple post-graduate career paths. Our majors go on to work in the corporate world, non-profits, small businesses, and government. We encourage our students to talk with academic and career advisors to discuss the wide number of professions available to them.

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If you need more information to make your choice, we encourage you to look at our department website and speak with our advisors. If you choose to join our major, please take the time to look at the wealth of resources and information on our moodle when you are added.

Slide 11:

Thank you for your interest in the economics department and our major and minor. Hopefully this information session has answered most of your questions. If you are ready to add the major or minor after viewing this presentation, please complete the Application for Admission to the Economics Major or Minor that is linked on our department admissions page. If you still need a few more questions answered before making your final decision, please complete the form and indicate this and an advisor will be in touch with you shortly. We look forward to hearing from you soon.