

Letter Regarding the Department of Economics

February 26, 2003

Rev. Edward A. Malloy, C.S.C.
 Chairman, Academic Council
 400 Main Building
 Notre Dame, IN 46556

Dear Fr. Malloy:

This past month, public debate in the *Observer* over the proposed changes to the Department of Economics has caused concern among Notre Dame students. As student representatives, we write to share with you some of these concerns. It is our hope that as the future of this department is debated, the needs of its students remain the utmost priority.

In 1997, the External Review noted that many undergraduates believe the Economics major does not adequately prepare them for graduate schools. Having spoken with several Economics majors, we can say that this concern still very much exists. Given the dramatic rise in graduate school applications over the past few years, we are deeply concerned that our Economics majors will not only struggle with admission to the top economic programs in the country, but will also encounter difficulty when they enroll. In short, the Economics Department must be reformed in a way that will give majors the training they need in order to pursue positions in top businesses and graduate programs.

While it is necessary to ^{pursue} these improvements ^{within} to the Department of Economics, we also feel it is important not to lose sight of the fact that a well rounded Economics education also includes application to the real world. Thus, it is our hope that the modified major in Economics will continue to offer classes in which students pursue public policy topics. Furthermore, we are concerned that through this reorganization many talented professors will be lost. Just last year students voted to bestow the Frank O'Malley Teaching Award on Economics Professor Jennifer Warlick, clearly indicating that outstanding professors already exist in the Department of Economics. Consequently, we are concerned the proposed split will alienate current professors within the department and worsen an already problematic degree program.

We feel that the Economics department must be reformed to better serve its students. However, any restructuring of the department must be done in a way that will ensure the highest quality of teaching. It is our hope that the Academic Council will keep the members of Student Senate abreast of the situation in order to best serve the students we are elected to represent. We also hope that any future decisions regarding changes to the Department of Economics will include active student participation.

Sincerely,

Notre Dame Student Senate

