To: All students eligible to register in ECON 490 during the 2021/22 academic session

ECON 490 is the capstone course of the Economics Majors program at the VSE. It is designed to introduce students to hands-on economic research, in a small-group setting, with close supervision from a faculty member. In order to accommodate a wide variety of student goals and needs, the VSE offers ECON 490 under three different modalities. Please familiarize yourself with the features of each type of ECON 490 offering in order to select the one most appropriate for your academic profile and learning objectives.

**Traditional format sections (003, 004, 011, 012, 013, 014, 015, 016, 017)**

Most sections of ECON 490 are offered in the course’s traditional format, with sections containing approximately 20 students. The first weeks of the course will include a brief econometrics refresher and a general discussion of research methods. Each student will then design and carry out an individual empirical research project, with guidance provided by the instructor in one-on-one meetings. Students usually then present their research projects to the class prior to submitting their individual final papers. Many traditional format sections have a predetermined theme (e.g. development economics, labour economics, international finance, etc.).

Students choosing to register in traditional format sections should:

a) Be comfortable with the material taught in ECON 326, and familiar with econometric software (STATA or R). A grade of 75 or above in ECON 326 is recommended.

b) Be interested in the theme of the section, and expect to conduct a project in that field of economics.

c) Be prepared to work independently, with occasional guidance from the instructor.

**Group learning section (018)**

In the group learning section, students conduct their research project in a small group setting (max 4 members), rather than individually. The instructor provides research direction and guidance on groupwork dynamics.

The group learning section will have a higher enrolment than traditional ones. However, their structure will allow the instructor to spend twice as much time meeting with a given group than would normally be available to an individual student in traditional format sections.

The group learning section features a more thorough review of econometric concepts and how to use statistical software at the beginning of the course. Students who feel they need a stronger refresher of the concepts taught in ECON 326, who are not comfortable with independent research, or who would like to build up their teamwork skills should strongly consider registering in the group learning section.
Community-based experiential learning sections (004, 005)

Two sections are offered under a community-based experiential learning format, in which students will conduct research projects to address real community needs, both local and international.

Please note that enrolment in section 004 is application-based. Follow the link in the ECON 490 course descriptions document for more information.

International/Remote Community Service Learning section (008)

Section 008 is a community-based learning section that incorporates an international or remote community service learning component. Students will study a specific research need connected to an overseas or remote community. They will then travel to the community to complete field research in Summer 2022, ahead of finalizing their research paper in August.

Students must carefully read the information in the section description, apply through the link provided, and additionally apply separately through the Office of Regional and International Community Engagement (ORICE). Grades will be posted in August 2022; students enrolling in section 008 will therefore not be eligible for graduation in May 2022. Questions may be directed to the session instructor, Prof. Catherine Douglas, at Catherine.Douglas@ubc.ca

Please refer to the Academic Calendar and Course Descriptions document for further details on the theme and modality of each section.