To: All students eligible to register in ECON 490 during the 2022/23 academic session

As you prepare to register for the upcoming academic session, I would like to draw your attention to important details concerning graduation requirements and, especially, ECON 490.

**Prerequisites**

First, please note that it is your exclusive responsibility to verify that you meet the prerequisites for every course you register in. In particular, it is very important to note that UBC’s online graduation-check tools, as well as Arts Advising, will only verify whether you will satisfy your graduation requirements if you complete all of your courses successfully. They will NOT, however, check whether the order in which you intend to take those courses will cause a prerequisite conflict.

Suppose you need to take courses A and B to graduate. You register in course A in T1 and in course B in T2. Suppose that course B is a prerequisite for course A. In this case, the graduation check will say that you satisfy the graduation requirements. However, you will not be allowed to complete course A in T1, because you are missing course B as prerequisite. As a result, you will not be able to graduate on time. It is therefore essential that you verify that you will satisfy the prerequisites for each course you intend to register in, in the sequence you intend to take them.

Please also note that all upper-level economics courses have prerequisites, which have to be completed before starting the relevant course. Therefore, you may not complete any prerequisite at the same time as the relevant course – you need to satisfy them in advance. This is particularly important as you plan your ECON 490 registration.

All of ECON 301, 302, 325 and 326 are prerequisites for ECON 490. They must all be successfully completed BEFORE enrolling in ECON 490. They MAY NOT be taken concurrently with ECON 490. ABSOLUTELY NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

**ECON 490**

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, 006, 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, its structure allows 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 (002, 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 refer to the Academic Calendar and Course Descriptions document for further details on the theme and modality of each section.