The Essence and Evolution of the Davis PhD Program
The Davis “Brand”

• Rigorous and compulsory requirements in quantitative methods and microeconomic theory
• A course in formal dynamic analysis has been offered from the earliest days of the program
• Producing researchers and faculty for land-grant universities and premier institutions here and overseas
• A thesis that usually includes:
  • policy motivation
  • microeconomic theory
  • innovative quantitative methodology
  • empirical analysis
The Social Structure of the PhD Program

• The combination of tough standards and a supportive culture both amongst graduate students and between graduate students and faculty

• Personal friendships forged between students during the Davis PhD programs continue throughout their professional careers

• A critical component of the supportive culture comes in the graduate coordinators we have been very lucky into long-term coordinators namely Barbara Huffine and Christy Hansen.
Barbara Huffine
Christy Hansen
Old parties
More Parties
Number of PhD Graduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Number of Graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965-1969</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1974</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-1979</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1984</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-1989</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1994</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-1999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2009</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2014</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Evolution of PhD courses and Thesis Research Topics

• Over the past 40 years is been steady trend of increasing student interest in resource environmental economics and development economics
• The trends in dissertation topics suggests that students interests are a leading indicator of faculty areas of specialization.
• These trends are influenced by hiring in agricultural economics departments that may reflect changes in agricultural policy.
Changes in Field Requirements

• 1960s-70s  Required courses –
  Macroeconomics-Agricultural Policy with a policy prelim exam. A foreign language requirement was dropped by the late 60s- econometrics was taught in the Econ dept, and Statistics in the math dept.

• Late 1970s – Joint offerings with the Econ dept of micro economics, econometrics, and development

• 1994  Applied micro (ARE202A-B-C) introduced in first year-second macro economics dropped, and elective fields reduced from three to two.

• 1997 - Three course sequences introduced for each of the primary fields- Development economics, agricultural economics, and natural resource and environmental economics

• 2001  Core specialization-joint listing but- microeconomics (Econ), development (ARE), Econometrics jointly taught.
Funding and the program

• In the first 10 years of the program funding and financial support came from stable and predictable sources of experiment station funds catch grants and cooperative agreements.

• In 1985 the economic research service professionals stationed at Davis were recalled to Washington and with them close relationship between ERS funding and PhD students.

• Gianinni foundation funds are now focused more on student support than publications- mini-grants are an important and predictable funds.
Funding Cycles

• In the late 1970s a downturn in the California economy led to substantial budget cuts
• This pattern was repeated in the late 1990s
• Out-of-state tuition is gone from $1,000- $15,000. In-state tuition and fees are now $13,000
• Funding PhD students has grown increasingly costly, but faculty have cultivated alternative sources and types of re-research grant and have evolved to tap into different funding opportunities.
IT and Library Support

- The IT unit started as a “full service” system that ran regressions for faculty members
- Evolved into a support system for faculty and graduate students.
- IT staff have downsized from five to three
- With the rise of online journal articles the library has gone from three full time employees to one part time employee.
The IT Support group
Faculty Research Product

• 1. Journal articles
  • Most have a half life of five years
  • Readership is concentrated in specialized fields

• 2. Graduate Students
  • Many have a half life of 15 to 20 years
  • Branch out and develop alternative paths of research

• Davis faculty take great pride in following the career paths of PhD students which were, in part, launched by the social and intellectual structure of the Davis PhD program.