The What, Why, and How of the Committee on Studies

The Department of Economics requires that all students select a Committee on Studies after their first year of studies. What is a Committee on Studies and why is it so important?

**What:** According to the UNM Catalog “The basic role of the committee is to plan, with the student, an integrated individual program of study and research meeting general University and specific graduate program requirements.”

**Why:** For Ph.D. student in Economics this means three basic things:

1. **Advisement:** After your first year, the Chair of the Committee on Studies becomes your advisor, replacing the Graduate Director. The Chair of your Committee on Studies will approve your classes and will advise you on what coursework is appropriate for your degree.

2. **Research Requirement:** The Committee on Studies is the group of faculty that you will be working with on your research requirement. This requirement is one of the most important parts of the program because it may be your first opportunity to do research. By learning about the research process and enhancing your research skills, you will be better prepared to work on your dissertation. Completing your research requirement early, will increase the probability of having publications when you go on the job market.

   To be considered 'on-track', your field paper requirement should be completed by the end of your third year.

   To complete this requirement, you must: write a research paper that is approved by your Committee on Studies; present your research in a departmental seminar; submit your paper to a journal and have it sent out for review.

3. **Testing the waters:** Working with the committee on studies gives you a chance to work with a number of the faculty before choosing a dissertation committee and advisor. This will be one of the most important decisions you make as a PhD student. Working with your committee on studies will give you a sense of both which faculty you share research interests and with whom you work well.

**How:**

The first step is to find a faculty member whom you believe would meet all of the above criteria. Once they have agreed to work with you they can help you select additional committee members based on your research interests.