In the fall of 2017, the Faculty of Social Sciences tested an e-mail campaign designed to promote the retention of first-year students. First-year students were randomly assigned to one of four groups; three groups received a series of positive encouraging messages, while the fourth group served as a control group that received no messages at all. Students in the first three groups received identical messages, but from different senders: one group received the messages from the Vice-Dean of Undergraduate Studies, another group received the messages from the Department Chair, and the third group received the messages from the Supervisor of Undergraduate Studies of their department. The objectives of the experiment were (i) to determine whether messages of encouragement helped students successfully complete their first semester, and (ii) to determine whether the identity of the sender of the message had any effect on student retention.

Since this experiment was repeated in the fall of 2018, there are now two years of data available to carry out a statistical analysis of the effects of the encouraging messages. This directed research project will involve analyzing the 2017 and 2018 data collected through this experiment. Descriptive analyses, regression analysis, and statistical tests will be carried out. The results of the econometric and statistical analysis will then be summarized in a written report. As the underlying data are confidential, the work will need to be carried out in the offices of the Vice-Dean of Undergraduate Studies, FSS 3001. Access to the data will be provided by Philippe Busser (pbusser@uottawa.ca), the Assistant to the Vice Dean.

**Required skills:**

- Descriptive statistics
- Introductory econometrics or equivalent
- Familiarity with an econometric software package, e.g., Stata
- Good writing skills, in either official language

**Supervisor:**

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