

**NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY**  
**Department of Economics**

**Chair's Annual Update**

Date: October, 2006

To: Graduate Alumni and Alumnae

From: Robert Porter, Chair

I am writing to provide you with an update about the state of the department, and to thank you for your continued support and interest.

As you are no doubt aware, times remain financially challenging for many universities. Northwestern is no exception. The University nevertheless has made a commitment to improve the quality of our department. For example, President Henry Bienen has committed new resources so that our graduate fellowships can remain competitive. I hope that you are pleased by the support that the University has given us. In return, the department asks for your support to help make us an even more exciting place to study economics and do research. Your insights on how we can accomplish this goal will be deeply appreciated.

This past year, we hired two new tenure track faculty, both Assistant Professors. **Mirko Widerholt** is a macroeconomist who we hired from Humbolt University in Berlin. His PhD is from the European University Institute in Florence. **Todd Sarver** is a microeconomic theorist who recently received his PhD from Boston University. We also hired one person with outstanding teaching qualifications as a member of our lecturer faculty. **Steffen Habermalz** is a labor economist. His PhD is from the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, and he previously taught at the University of Nebraska.

We said goodbye to three faculty members this summer. Kim-Sau Chung has moved to the University of Hong Kong. Charles Zheng is now at Iowa State University. Hassan Arvin-Rad has moved to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign after serving on our lecturer faculty.

Congratulations to **Joel Mokyr**, who has been awarded the 2006 Heineken Prize in History by the Dutch Royal Academy. I am also happy to report that **Joe Ferrie** has been promoted to the rank of full Professor. In addition, **Lillan Kamal**, **Hilarie Lieb** and **Eric Schultz** were elected to the ASG Faculty Honor Role, in recognition of their outstanding teaching. **Ron Braeutigam** was also elected to the ASG Honor Role for his administration of the WCAS Office of Studies. Ron became Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education in September.

The Nemmers Prize in Economics has been awarded this year to **Lars Hansen** of the University of Chicago, and Lars will visit the department in the fall quarter of 2007. We will host a conference in honor of Lars next fall, with many leading macroeconomists discussing developments in the field.

The department will have a number of other visitors this year. **Eric French** of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago will visit in the spring and teach a graduate course in public finance. We are continuing our series of two week visits by distinguished faculty in the areas of international trade and development, econometrics, theory, macroeconomics, applied micro and economic history. In addition to presenting papers in regular seminars, each visitor will deliver a series of lectures to our graduate students.

This year marked the end of the long tenure at Northwestern of the Econometric Society, whose offices have been housed in the department since 1975. **Bob Gordon** and **Julie Gordon** retired as Treasurer and Secretary to the Society, respectively. Bob and Julie are to be congratulated for their many years of service to the Society.

Our entering graduate class consists of 28 new students. The first year students come from a wide variety of countries, thereby maintaining the international flavor of our program.

Congratulations to **Federico Bugni**, who has been awarded the Department's Robert Eisner Graduate Fellowship. **Tomasz Strzalecki** won a University Presidential Fellowship, the highest honor NU can award a graduate student.

Our PhD students had an outstanding year on the job market. Even though overall demand remained weak, our students were offered positions at many excellent institutions. Our placements include Chicago, NYU, University College London, Maryland, Illinois and UBC. Our student **Jakub Kastl** and our new hire **Todd Sarver** both participated in the Review of Economic Studies tour. **Aviv Nevo** will serve as our placement director this year, and he welcomes inquiries concerning students on the market this year.

**Chris Taber** is our new Director of Graduate Studies, and **Igal Hendel** our new Director of Graduate Admissions. We are indebted to their predecessors, **Joe Ferrie**, **Asher Wolinsky** and **Rosa Matzkin**, for many years of valuable service.

Our staff is now directed by a new Department Assistant, **Margene Lehman**. Margene previously held a similar position in the Religion department. Our previous DA **Lynette Horn** left Northwestern to start her own business. **Sara Gasbarra** earned a well deserved promotion and moved to a position in the medical school. **Brian Hernandez** returned to Texas to enroll in a Masters' degree program in music. We welcomed new staff members **John Affrunti** and **Charles Nash**.