

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

**Chair's Annual Update**

Date: November, 2002

To: Graduate Alumni and Alumnae

From: Martin Eichenbaum, Chair

Believe it or not it's been over a year since I last wrote to you about the state of the department. As the new chair I feel like I was thrust into a vortex of activity and responsibilities. Thanks to the efforts and cooperation of students, staff and faculty, the transition has gone smoothly. I am happy to report that the department is in good shape. I'm even happier to report that we are launching a variety of new initiatives to become even better.

Before reporting on concrete news, I urge you once again to write to us with your ideas about how to improve the department, especially the quality of the graduate program. The heart of any first-rate department is its graduate program. Please share your unique perspective with us.

Now for news about the department. This year, with President Bienen's help, we established a Center for International Economics and Development. Sergio Rebelo (Finance, Kellogg) and I are the current co-directors. Aside from funding conferences and visitors, the Center will provide at least one graduate fellowship a year. The first recipient is Levon Barshegyan who is studying the links between Japan's weak financial sector and its prolonged slowdown in economic activity. The Center will also provide smaller grants to students to fund travel and data gathering efforts. We will also have five visitors in International and Development Economics, each of whom will spend two weeks each at the department and deliver a series of lectures to graduate students. This year the visitors include Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas (Princeton), Fabrizio Perri (NYU), John McLaren (Virginia), Fabrizio Zilibotti (University College London) and Abhijit Banerjee (MIT). Other visitors include Wolfram Latsch, who is returning for a second year. Wolfram has a Ph.D. from the University of Oxford where he also served as a lecturer at Trinity College. His research interests include development economics.

Edward Prescott was announced as the next recipient of the Erwin Plein Nemmers Prize in Economics. This award is designed to recognize distinguished economists who have yet to receive the Nobel Prize. The recipient is expected to spend an extended period in residence on the Evanston Campus. Professor Prescott is at the University of Minnesota and his work has focused on business cycles and economic fluctuations. Prescott will visit the department in the Spring Quarter of 2003. He is the fifth winner of this biannual prize. Previous winners are Peter Diamond, Thomas Sargent, Robert Aumann, and Daniel McFadden.

A number of our regular faculty members are on leave this year: Marcus Alexis is continuing at Stanford University for the entire year, Kim-Sau Chung (Fall), Bruce Meyer (Spring), Eddie Dekel-Tabak (Winter), Alex Monge (Winter and Spring), Joel Mokyr (Spring), Chris Taber (Fall), Asher Wolinsky (Fall) and Charles Zheng (Spring).

Once again our grad students did very well on the job market last year. Placements included the University of Michigan, the University of Minnesota, Duke, Toronto, the University of British Columbia, Notre Dame, Princeton, the University of Hong Kong, the Department of Justice, the University of Texas at Dallas and Boston University.

On the faculty personnel front, we only had one turnover last year. After 16 years in the department, Joseph Altonji resigned and moved his family to New Haven. On the plus side, we hired a tenure-track Assistant Professor, Marciano Siniscalchi, who joins us from Princeton University where he was an Assistant Professor. He is a theorist with a Ph.D. from the Graduate School of Business at Stanford. His research interests also include decision theory and strategic analysis in dynamic games. Eva Nagypal, a macroeconomist with additional interests in labor economics, will be arriving in the Winter Quarter after a period in Sweden.

Congratulations to Gadi Barlevy, Wolfram Latsch and Eric Schulz on their election to the annual ASG Faculty Honor Roll. Over 1900 students voted online for the honor roll.

On the administrative front, Mark Witte and Joe Ferrie continue to do great jobs as Director of Undergraduate Studies and DGS, respectively. Mark was awarded the inaugural award for "Distinguished Leader in the Undergraduate Community." This award recognized his work as Director of Undergraduate Studies in Economics, as an advisor in Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences for his work with the Associate Student Government (ASG), and his many other activities on campus. Ethel King, our Department Assistant, was recognized as Employee of the Year for the Evanston Campus. This is truly an honor that is well deserved. Scott Zacher, our Undergraduate Secretary, received his Masters in Arts Management from Columbia College. A number of people went to see the play that he produced as part of his degree requirement.

We began the year with our annual fall buffet-reception, which was held at Norris Center again this year. The food improved but my jokes did not. An important part of the evening was announcing the recipients of our annual awards to the star Teaching Assistants. This year's winners are: Ran Abramitzky, Roc Armenter, Fabio Braggion, Mauricio Drelichman, Marc Fusaro, Etienne Gagnon, Maria Goltsman, Nir Jaimovich, Hemanshu Kumar, Wojciech Lyszkiewicz, Lyndon Moore, and Jeffrey Prince. Each received a certificate, a one-year subscription to *Econometrica* and the satisfaction of a job well done. We also handed out, for the second time, our Robert Eisner Memorial Fellowship, a full year's fellowship for a graduate student who has distinguished him - or herself in both research and teaching. The winner was Nir Jaimovich.