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TO: Undergraduate Economics Majors

FROM: Lawrence Goulder

DATE: February 1, 2010

RE: Summer 2010 Undergraduate Research Assistant Program in Economics

Under the sponsorship of the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, The Department of Economics has secured funding to employ undergraduates to serve as Research Assistants (RAs) for faculty on the Stanford campus during the ten-week period from Monday, June 21 through Friday, August 27, 2010. The principal goal of the Program is to provide students with a deeper understanding of the nature and methods of academic research and to stimulate students' interest in pursuing research projects of their own. Participation will allow students to integrate their economics courses and apply what they have learned to a topic that interests them; most participants will go on to write an honors thesis in Economics in their senior year. Preference in admissions will be given to students who have declared the economics major and are completing their junior year, although sophomores with exceptionally strong academic records are also welcome to apply. In any event, students should be on track to meet the Economics Department's GPA threshold requirements for Honors (that is, achieving a GPA of 3.5 or higher for the courses required of an Economics major).

In a mailing that goes out in parallel to this one, Economics faculty are being polled to determine who wants to work with an Undergraduate RA during the summer. Some faculty may be looking for help in locating sources of data and others will want to undertake data analysis using elementary or sophisticated statistical models. (Such faculty will have a strong preference for students who have already taken econometrics courses such as Econ 102B.) Other faculty who are embarking on new research directions may value a critical assessment of the literature on a given topic. In all instances, faculty must commit to providing substantive supervision and training for his or her Summer RA. The goal is to increase the learning experience of undergraduates and, in particular, to acquaint them with the practice of undertaking Economics research so they are better prepared to do their own research (as in an Honors thesis) in the future. The Program Coordinator will provide students with guidance in approaching faculty after applications have been received. It is fully acceptable for students to approach individual faculty with whom they are already acquainted and to inquire in advance about their availability as research supervisors. However, these students still need to go through the application procedures outlined below.

Each RA will work forty hours per week, including twenty hours of explicit research work for a faculty sponsor, plus an additional twenty hours devoted to organized program activities and to exploring independent research topics. Admitted students are expected to commit to a 10-week period, for which they will receive a stipend of \$5,600 (reduced *pro rata* if the period of work is less.) Students will be eligible to purchase on-campus housing, and to take part in a variety of university-wide research activities during the course of the summer. Under the direction of the Program Coordinator, all RAs will be required to attend and participate actively in two organized events – a seminar and a luncheon -- every week. Each seminar will be led by a different member of the Public Policy or Economics faculty who will give students insights into his or her ongoing research. Each luncheon will feature brief research presentations by students participating in the Program; every RA will be required to give at least one presentation about their own work during this luncheon series. All RAs will provide the Program Coordinator with brief weekly reports describing their research progress, as well as a longer written account at the end of their research appointment.

If you are interested in applying for this program, please follow the instructions on the following page. (More copies of this document are available outside Room 249 in the Economics Building.) The completed application form and transcript should be given to Mrs. Dru Scott (dscott@stanford.edu) in Economics 252. Professor Mark Tendall will serve as Program Coordinator. Questions should be addressed to Prof. Tendall at tendall@stanford.edu. Note that the deadline for applications is 12:00noon Friday, February 19; early submissions are welcome.

I encourage students to take advantage of this program. Summer Research Programs have been in place for several years now and student evaluations of them have been very positive.

**Application for the 2010 Summer Undergraduate Research Assistant Program
Department of Economics**

On separate paper, please provide the following information:

1. Your name, Student ID number, and contact information (including campus address, phone, and e-mail).
2. Your expected graduation date.
3. Your particular areas of research interest within Economics.
4. Specify the beginning and ending dates of your availability this summer, and summarize any major time conflicts you may have.
5. In a brief statement (no more than one typed page), discuss why you are interested in participating in this program. In this statement, you may expand upon some of the information you have included above, such as your particular interests within Economics, areas of research you would like to explore, and/or a description of the Economics (or related) courses here at Stanford that you have found most interesting. If you have already spoken with a particular faculty member about a research topic for the summer, please describe.
6. An unofficial printout of your Stanford transcript.
7. A brief resume.
8. A list of any other on-campus research programs to which you are applying (used for informational/planning purposes only).

Remember that this program is intended for students who will have declared the Economics major, and who are interested in writing a senior honors thesis in the future. All program participants will be expected to work forty hours per week, including attendance at weekly seminars and research luncheons. After all applications have been received, you may be contacted with a request for further information, and/or to help you locate a faculty sponsor.

Return all application materials to Dru Scott (dscott@stanford.edu) in Economics 252 (or via e-mail, including all indicated documents as attachments) by 12:00noon Friday, February 19. Early submissions are strongly encouraged, and will facilitate the student-sponsor matching process! If you have any questions about the program, contact Prof. Mark Tendall (tendall@stanford.edu).