Message from the Chair

Dear Prospective Graduate Student,

Thank you for your interest in graduate study in Economics at the University of Washington (UW). In this letter I hope to convey to you some of the many facets of our program that contribute to our reputation for excellence. We offer an academically rigorous program leading to the Ph.D. in Economics for students interested in doing original research using advanced learning methodologies. This program develops professional economists for a variety of careers in teaching, in government, in industry, or with international agencies in the United States and abroad.

Much of our reputation rests, ultimately, on the quality of our faculty. We have recently hired five new faculty members—three at the full professor rank—in addition to the four new faculty members who joined us last year. These nine new hires join an outstanding and collegial group of researchers and teachers, many of whom enjoy an international reputation in his or her specialty. Our faculty strengths are many, including quantitative finance, econometrics, macroeconomics, international economics, industrial organization, environmental economics, development economics, and microeconomic theory.

A distinctive and important feature of our program is the willingness of faculty to involve graduate students in their research, providing an environment that nurtures scholarship and leads to collaborative research efforts culminating in joint papers written with faculty. Consequently, our students often graduate with completed research papers that are well advanced in the publication process. What is more, our program is highly successful in training productive scholars, fine teachers, and skilled professionals. Recent academic placements in the US include the University of Chicago, the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, the University of California at Riverside, Virginia Tech, and the University of Kansas. Other graduates have taken positions with the International Monetary Fund, the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, and Resources for the Future.

In the quantitatively demanding first year of our program, we emphasize the core material of micro, macro, and econometric theory—an emphasis that provides the solid foundation needed for subsequent course and research work. In the second year, students choose from our extensive elective course offerings. Doctoral students go on to take a number of research seminars that organize and direct their dissertation research.

We offer a number of opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration with other departments and research centers at the University. Doctoral students routinely interact with faculty in Foster School of Business, Department of Statistics, Evans School of Public Policy, the School of Fisheries, Department of Global Health, the Department of Health Services, the Center for the Study of Demography and Ecology, the Center for Social Science Computation and Research, the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies and the new College of the Environment, which was established at UW in 2009.

For students whose career goal is teaching at the university level, our program is an excellent fit. Many of our graduate students teach their own courses, reinforcing their understanding of basic principles and requiring them constantly to organize, analyze, and communicate their ideas. Each year we award several fellowships, as well as an annual prize for outstanding graduate teaching assistant, and all students receiving departmental financial aid are assigned offices. As advocates for graduate students across campus, the UW Graduate School offers additional funding and fellowship opportunities, with particular emphasis on students from under-represented minority groups.

Founded in 1861 in one building, our campus today is like a small city. Old brick and new “green” buildings are set among graceful paths and carefully landscaped grounds on one of the most beautiful campuses in the U.S. A well-respected and internationally-known institution, UW was recently ranked 4th among public research universities—13th overall—by the Center for Measuring University Performance, and 16th in the world according to the Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities. Additionally, UW is the top U.S. public institutional recipient of federal research dollars.

An urban city of over one million that is consistently ranked as one of the best places to live and work in the U.S., Seattle is a cosmopolitan, globally connected metropolis offering extraordinary cultural and recreational opportunities. Home to industry-defining global companies like Boeing, Microsoft, Amazon, Starbucks, Costco, and many others, Seattle nonetheless boasts a vibrant entrepreneurial spirit and has launched hundreds of successful startups. Seattle has a well-deserved reputation as one of the “greenest” cities in the country, and is also one of the most walkable, well-read, and friendliest. All of these elements make Seattle an outstanding place to go to graduate school.

I hope that what our program has to offer matches your interests and needs. I welcome your questions about our program.
and look forward to receiving your application for graduate study in the UW Department of Economics.

Cordially,

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Professor and Chair, Department of Economics

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