Northwestern University - Department of Economics

Graduate Connection

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Graduate Connection
Department of Economics/NU

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News

Summer Funding

This summer will be the second year that The Graduate School (TGS) will be providing summer funding for second through fourth year students. (Funding for the summer at the end of the first year will continue to be based on the student's admission offer letter.)

Our funding budget from TGS assumes that a proportion of eligible students will obtain summer Research Assistantships. If insufficient people obtain RAships, then we will have to ration our allocated fellowship slots among eligible students, beginning with fourth year students who have indicted that they will be on the job market. Consequently, you can obtain certainty in your summer funding by seeking out RAships. The best way to go about obtaining such a job is to advertise! Prepare a one-page resume introducing yourself to faculty, emphasizing the useful skills (computer experience, etc.) you have. Be sure to include faculty in the KSM departments of MEDS, Finance, and Management and Strategy in your search. Kellogg faculty are often long in research funding and short on students to spend it upon.

To be eligible to apply for a Summer University Fellowship, you must (a) have been eligible for departmental funding for the current academic year, and (b) intend to register next fall quarter. The fellowships limit you to a maximum of 120 hours of paid work outside of NU between June 15 and September 15, and you cannot take more than three weeks of "vacation" or non-research time away from campus (but, it is permissible to be absent from campus to conduct research).

The application form for summer funding can downloaded from our web site,

and should be submitted between May 1 and May 15. You will receive an e-mail on May 1 to remind you.

Visitors

The Department has a large number of visitors during the Spring Quarter. The Center for the Study of Industrial Organization has three visitors. **Jeremy Fox** from the University of Chicago will be here for the entire quarter, **Estelle Cantillion** from the Université libre de Bruxelles will be here for the month of April, and **Gautam Gowrisankaran** from the University of Arizona will be here for the first two weeks of May and the first two weeks of June.

We also welcome econometrician **Christian Bontemps** from the University of Toulouse for the first two weeks of April, political scientist **Etienne Wasmer** from IEP in Paris for the whole month of April, and macroeconomist **Narayana Kocherlakota** from the University of Minnesota will return for the week of April 20.

Finally, **Mathias Dewatripont** from the Université libre de Bruxelles will be here to present the Spring Department Wide seminars on May 20 and 21 (see listing in the "Events" section).

Computer Lab

This summer, as part of our routine replacement of computers in the Computer lab, we will be retiring the eight older machines. As in the past we will schedule the installation of new machines during the quiet period of late July and early August. Full details including the possible auction of the existing four-year-old machines to interested graduate students will be circulated closer to the time.

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Placement Report

Professor Aviv Nevo, Director of Graduate Placement, reports that the downturn in the economy has impacted the market for new PhDs. By some estimates demand was down by 30%. Despite this, at the time of writing, all but one student had one or more offers. The following students have already decided among their various offers:

Andrei Barbos - University of Southern Florida

Yi-Chun (John) Chen - National University of Singapore

Jonathan Gemus - Uppsala University,

Jonathan Huntley - U.S. Congressional **Budget Office**

Cosmin Ilut - Duke University

Kai Chung (Wallace) Mok - Academia Sinica, Taiwan

Emiliano Pagnotta - New York University, Finance Department

Niels Pedersen - Pimco, Newport Beach

James Roberts - Duke University

Sojourner - University of Aaron Minnesota, Business School

Marianne Hinds Wanamaker University of Tennessee

Siyang Xiong - Rice University

In addition our two students from last year who were caught up in the collapse of Lehman Brothers have found alternative positions:

Federico Bugni - Duke University Reinout DeBock - IMF

Students who intend to be on the job market next year, or are just curious about what it entails, are encouraged to attend an orientation on Wednesday May 13 (see in the "Events" section below).

TA Duties in Other Departments

The Department relies on the generosity of other Departments in hiring Economics students as Teaching Assistants to ensure that we can fund all of our eligible students.

However, we have a understanding with other Departments that they must approach us first when they have vacancies. This is partly to ensure that only students who are making appropriate progress in their studies are funded, and partly because the Department must ensure that our own faculty and classes receive first priority.

The Department wants to make it very clear that it is inappropriate for graduate students to conduct private arrangements to TA for faculty in other departments. If you are approached in this way, direct the faculty member to contact our Associate Chair. The Department has a long history of amicably working with other Departments to the mutual benefit of all parties.

Honors

Congratulations to Elie Tamer on his election as a Fellow of the Econometric Society.

Events

Open Day

The annual Open Day for prospective PhD students will be held on Friday, April 3. Graduate students who would like to assist in welcoming prospective students should contract Mercedes Thomas, or Professor Igal Hendel, the Director of Graduate Admissions. The day will culminate in a reception to which all the graduate students and faculty are invited. The reception will start about 5:30pm and will be held at a new location this year. It will be in the lobby area of the Ford Motor Company Engineering Design Center, which is at 2133 Sheridan Road, which is immediately south of the Technological Institute.

Schwartz Lecture

The annual lecture series organized by the Kellogg School of Management to honor the late Nancy Schwartz will be at 5:00pm on Wednesday, April 15 in Leverone Hall G40. This year's lecturer is Drew Fudenberg of Harvard University. Professor Fudenberg's work is in game theory.

Bies Lecture

This will be the second year of the annual Susan Bies (PhD, 1972) departmental lecture on economic policy. The lecture will alternate between macro and micro-oriented lectures.

This years speaker will be **Preston** McAfee from Cal Tech who is currently a Vice-President and Research Fellow at Yahoo! Inc. His lecture is titled "The Economics of Internet Advertising and Public Policy." The lecture will be on Tuesday April 21, at 5:00pm. Check the weekly pink sheet for the lecture location. The lecture will be followed by a reception.

Second & Third Year Orientation

Professor Elie Tamer, the Director of Graduate Studies, will be holding mandatory meetings for the second and third year students on Wednesday, May 6. He will cover important deadlines, degree requirements, and funding availability. He will also answer your questions. The meetings will be held in Andersen 3245.

Second year students should attend from 5pm to 5:30pm, and third year students from 5:30pm to 6pm.

Job Market Orientation

Students who are thinking about going on the market next year should attend an introductory meeting scheduled for 5:00pm on Wednesday, May 13 in Andersen 3245. Professor Aviv Nevo, the Director of Graduate Placement, will provide an orientation for those considering going on the market in the fall. However, any student in the third year and beyond who is curious about the job market process is welcome.

Department Wide Seminar

The next distinguished visitor in our Department-wide seminar series is Mathias Dewatripont from the Université libre de Bruxelles. He will be visiting and giving two talks on Wednesday and

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Thursday May 20 and 21. Both talks will be at 3:30pm in AAH 3245.

Field Course Meeting

An orientation session for students entering their second year will be held on Monday, September 21 from 1pm to 4pm in Andersen 3245. The session will discuss the 501 requirement, funding criteria, and include presentations on each of the field course sequences that you can take in both the Economics Department and KSM. Prospective second year students who also expect to be Teaching Assistants will need to return to Evanston the previous week for mandatory training (see "Formal Announcements" section).

Teaching

Next Year's Course Schedule

We are still working on the teaching schedule for next year. The schedule of courses will be posted on our website at the start of Spring Quarter.

This Quarter's Course Descriptions

The Department has a policy to avoid excessive awarding of incomplete grades. Please see our web site for a complete statement. Report any problems to the Director of Graduate Studies.

Economics 412-2

Economic Theory and Methods Professor Pavan TTh 9-11 AAH 3204

The course aims at introducing students to recent developments in the theory of contracts and mechanism design. The material is organized in two parts. The first is dynamic mechanism design, including: efficient and revenue-maximizing mechanisms with non-stationary types, generalized envelope theorems for dynamic settings, renegotiation-proof optimal contracts, ratcheting, and applications. The second is

multilateral contracting, including: common agency, competing mechanisms, contractual externalities, privacy, and sequential vs simultaneous contracting.

Evaluation will be based on a final (take home) exam.

Economics 416-2

Advanced Macroeconomics Professor Christiano MW 9-11

AAH 3204

No description received.

Economics 425-2

Theory of Economic Development
Professor Matsuyama
TTh 6-8p AAH 3245

This is the second course of the twoquarter sequence on macroeconomic growth and development. However, it can be taken independently of the first course taught by Professor Doepke in Winter 2009. Topics include: (1) endogenous technological change, innovation and diffusion; (2) credit market imperfections; (3) inequality and development; (4) nonhomothetic preferences and structural change; and (5) globalization and development.

Readings include selected chapters from Acemoglu Introduction to Modern Economic Growth (Princeton U.P., 2008), and Aghion and Durlauf (eds.) Handbook of Economic Growth (individual handbook chapters can be downloaded from NU online library), as well as journal articles and working papers. Evaluation is based on a class presentation and a research proposal.

Economics 440-3

Economics of the Labor Market Professor Beaman TTh 1-3 AAH 3245

This course covers microeconomic issues in developing countries, with an emphasis on empirics. The core of the class will focus on the bread and butter issues of

micro empirical development: household economics; health; education; risk, savings, and credit (including microfinance); and land markets. Time permitting, it will also cover some current topics of interest, including political economy and corruption, informal institutions, and applications of behavioral economics in development.

Evaluation will be based on several referee reports, problem sets, and a short research proposal. Students will also be expected to present 1-2 papers each during the course of the quarter. It is not yet determined whether there will be a final exam. The readings will be from journal articles available online.

Economics 450-3

Industrial Organization and Prices
Professor Hendel
MW 1-3
AAH 3245

The course will cover papers in two areas: (1) testing theories of contracts, and (2) estimation of dynamic industrial organization models. The former will cover empirical attempts at testing contract theories, including hidden information as well as incentive models; in static and dynamic frameworks. The second part covers dynamic estimation methods and their application to industrial organization.

Economics 498-1

Advanced Topics Professor Moriguchi TTh 1:30-3:30

AAH 3204

This course will satisfy the Department's economic history requirement, and can be combined with 420-1 or 420-2 to form a field in economic history. This course examines economic institutions from comparative historical perspectives and explores the evolution of institutions and its implications for economic growth. It combines several theoretical and empirical methods, such as contract theory, new institutional economics, case studies, historical narratives, and econometric analysis.

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Topics include agricultural tenancy, indentured servitude, property rights, and labor unions. Evaluation is based on class presentation and participation, several written reports, and a research paper.

Economics 498-2

Advanced Topics Professor Strulovici MW 1:30-3:30

AAH 3204

Optimal Control for Economics. The course starts with a review of stochastic processes and the derivation and sufficiency of the Bellman equation under general conditions. It will discuss strategies to establish properties of value functions and optimal control. Main topics include: optimal stopping and the smooth pasting property, learning and experimentation, the relation with other concepts such as calculus of variation and Hamiltonian and, possibly, some elements of robust control. The theory will be illustrated by key applications to finance and economic theory.

Evaluation will be by problem sets, paper presentations or reports, and the submission of a research project or review paper.

MECS 460-3

Foundations of Management Economics Professor Kuzmics First class: T April 7 8-10:45a, then Th 9-12 (from April 9) LEV 586

This course is complementary to Economics 410-3 with a small amount of overlap. Topics include: rationalizability and localized versions of it, such as CURB sets and persistent retracts; Nash equilibrium and its refinements, including trembling-hand perfection, properness, and (Kohlberg-Mertens) strategic stability; games with communication / cheap talk; learning in games; evolutionary game theory (including evolutionary stable strategy), replicator and other dynamics. The main theme of the course is trying to provide answers to the following vague questions: "What do we really expect to

happen in a game, and under what circumstances?"

MECS 462

Decision Theory Professor Al-Najjar F 1-4

Location TBA

Alternative times are possible based on registered students' schedule. The course deals with the theory of individual decision making under uncertainty. The material covered falls into the following broad topics: (1) classical axiomatic foundations, (2) ambiguity, (3) intertemporal choice, (4) menu choice models, (5) learning, complexity and testing. Grading will be based on class participation, presentation of one of the papers on the reading list, and homeworks. The required text is David Kreps Notes on the Theory of Choice (Westview Press, 1988) and journal articles.

MECS 466

Social Choice and Voting Models Professor Loeper T 3-6 LEV 561

This course is an introduction to the modern tools of political economy and positive political theory. The first part of the class will discuss the theory of preferences aggregation (Arrow impossibility theorem, McKelvey's chaos theorem). The second part will look at voting models (median and representative voter theorems, the uncovered set) and their economic application (redistribution, public good provision, distributive politics). The third part will focus on voting and information aggregation (Condorcet jury theorem).

Evaluation will be by several problem sets and a final exam. The text book is Austen-Smith and Banks *Positive Political Theory* (University of Michigan Press, 2000 and 2005).

MECS 468-2

Selected Topics in Economic Theory Professor Rogers W 2-5 LEV 561

This class will explore topics related to the function, design, formation, structure and efficiency of social and economic networks. The first part of class is devoted to studying the strategic aspects and incentives of network formation, where the focus is on understanding the relationship be stable networks and their efficiency properties. The second part of class introduces random graph-based model of network formation and overviews empirical regularities of real-world large networks. Behavior and games on networks will be explored. Topics here include diffusion, opinion formation and learning. The emphasis throughout will be on recent theoretical results in the various fields.

Evaluation is by several problem sets and a research proposal. Readings for the course will be primarily from Matthew Jackson *Social and Economic Networks* (Princeton U.P., 2008).

MECS 471

Economics of Organization Professors Hubbard and Li M 10:30-12

LEV 619

The course is intended not only as a review of some of the literature, but also as a forum for training students to conduct high quality research in applied organizational economics, as theorists, empiricists, or both. A central goal of this course is to help students transform from class-takers to scholars.

MECS 485

Empirical Issues in Business Strategy Professor Greenstein Time and location TBA

E-mail the professor with your time availability. The course will analyze the use of basic empirical economic methods to study how firms make decisions and

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interact in markets. The course exposes students to empirical work covering a variety of topics. The emphasis is on critically reading papers that use mainstream econometrics to address interesting research questions. This should help prepare students understand the majority of empirical research in business economics and in strategic analysis.

Students will be expected to read required papers and contribute to the discussions. Students should read papers ahead of time and come prepared for discussion. In addition, each registered student must choose two papers from the list of "optional" papers for presentation in class. These presentations will last half an hour. Students will also be required to write a short (approximately 15 pages) paper describing an empirical topic. The paper should review the state of the literature and discuss how contributions might be made to this literature.

OPNS 470

Operations Economics Professor Lariviere T 1:30-4:30

LEV 561

This course examines applications of the tools of economics to issues in operations management. Where traditional research in operations management has assumed a single decision maker controls the entire system more recent work has examined issues of coordination and competition. By incorporating concepts from economics, researchers have considered both how the self-interested behavior of agents impacts the system and how contracts and incentives can be structured to minimize any efficiency loss. This course is primarily paper-based. The topics covered can be classified along two dimensions, the economic issues that are highlighted and operations setting involved. Along the former, the course will consider vertical restraints, agency theory, pricing, and strategic customer behavior. For the latter, at the risk of oversimplification, one may say that many models in operations can be categorized into one of two camps: (1) make-to-stock material systems a.k.a.

inventory theory; (2) make-to-order service systems a.k.a. queuing theory.

OPNS 520-6

Contemporary Topics in Operations Management Professor Ata Time and location TBA

No description received.

Finance 486

Seminar in Corporate Finance Professors Fishman and Krishnamurthy Time and location TBA

The general topics include corporate financing and investment decisions; optimal financial contracting; financial intermediation; and law and finance. In the context of these topics, the course will examine the implications of incentive problems, asymmetric information, taxes, and product market competition. The course requirements will include problem sets, referee reports, and a final exam.

Finance 520-0

Seminar in Finance Professors Eberly and Eisfeldt T 2-5 AAH 4214

The course is designed to introduce research ideas and develop tools for advanced graduate students. The first half of the course (Professor Eberly) introduces corporate finance and asset pricing models This section addresses with capital. optimal investment with various types of capital frictions, such as adjustment costs and irreversible investment, under uncertainty, and includes real options models. Equilibrium (for macroeconomics and asset pricing) topics include production-based asset pricing, multi-sector models, capital liquidity and reallocation, and equilibrium approaches to real options, including empirical applications and testing.

The second half of this course (Professor Eisfeldt) will explore the relationship

between financial markets and the macroeconomy. Topics include market liquidity; modeling, measurement, and implications of aggregate investment opportunities; dynamics of firm financing and financial constraints; capital reallocation and restructuring; and the measurement and valuation of organization capital.

Evaluation will be based on a research proposal, referee report, and (if time permits) a presentation.

Economics 501 Seminar

Third Year Students

The seminar will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the Spring Quarter at 11am in the Lecture Room (Andersen 3245). There will be one presentation and the seminar will last for fifty minutes including the question-and-answer period. Full practical details for the seminar are posted on our web site.

The schedule for the Spring Quarter was distributed in last September's newsletter. Pareto-improving exchanges are permissible, but should be coordinated with Professor Payan.

Second Year Students

Second year students should start to work on their first 501 paper which must be submitted for faculty approval by July 31. This paper will then be presented in the Fall. The second paper will be presented next Spring.

The presentation order for 501 papers has always been determined by a random number generator, and is conducted independently for the Fall and Spring. Here is the order for next year. The actual assignment to people to dates will be announced in the September *Graduate Connection*, as will the scheduled days and times.

Fall Ouarter

Patel, Ketan Taylor, Stuart Fu, Jia-Young (Mike) Parra, Álvaro Uetake, Kosuke Goodman, Joseph Prato, Carlo March 2009 Graduate Connection ■ 6

Bratt, Arin Patir, Assaf Contreras, Oscar Saito, Kota Nowobilski, Andrew O'Ouinn, Brian James, Alexander Johnson, Garrett Szydlowski, Martin Donna, Javier Luo, Guannan Yu, Jun Loualiche, Erik Gerew, Nelson Spitzer, Yannay Chang, Briana Ikeda, Daisuke Galperti, Simone

Spring Quarter

Prato, Carlo Luo, Guannan Contreras, Oscar Yu. Jun Szydlowski, Martin Patir, Assaf O'Quinn, Brian Uetake, Kosuke Donna, Javier Johnson, Garrett Patel, Ketan Bratt, Arin Nowobilski, Andrew Parra, Álvaro Taylor, Stuart Chang, Briana Loualiche, Erik Gerew, Nelson Fu, Jia-Young (Mike) Goodman, Joseph Saito, Kota James, Alexander Galperti, Simone Ikeda, Daisuke

Second year students may wish to attend some of this spring's seminars in order to get some idea of expectations for field papers.

2009-10 Quarter Dates

Spitzer, Yannay

Fall: **Tues** Sept 22 - Fri Dec 11 Winter: Mon Jan 4 - Fri March 19 Spring: Mon March 29 - Fri June 11

Formal Announcements

Funding Guidelines

The Department has formal rules for the allocation of funding for students in years two through five. This document is posted on our web site. Please read this document as the Department strictly enforces these funding criteria.

The cut off date for meeting the requirements for funding is July 31. In summary, funding requirements are:

Second Year: Passed two or more prelims at the June sitting and have passed the TSE test. (Details on rules for those who pass zero or one prelim in June are posted on the web site.)

Third Year: Completed all prelims, and submitted an approved field paper.

Fourth Year: Dissertation prospectus (includes completing course work and two field papers)

Fifth and Sixth Year: Committee chair certifies that you will be on the job market. (Funding is a combination of University Fellowships and TAships.)

Preliminary Examinations

The Department has rules on the number of times that students are allowed to take prelim examinations, and the conditions for such retaking. These affect whether some second and third year students will be allowed to continue in the program. The rules are posted on our web site. Please make sure that you are familiar with them.

One important implication is that each time the examinations are offered counts as an "attempt" irrespective of whether you attend. All first year students should make sure they are available to attend the September sitting, should that be necessary.

Dates for future prelim examinations have been set. The ordering of the three examinations will rotate each year. For the coming summer, the dates are:

Spring 2009 Sitting

Wed June 17 Econometrics
Wed June 24 Microeconomics

Wed July 1 Macroeconomics
All examinations will be held 1PM - 4PM.

Fall 2009 Sitting

Tues Sept 1 Econometrics
Wed Sept 2 Microeconomics
Thur Sept 3 Macroeconomics
All examinations will be held 1PM - 4PM.
Note that these dates are *before* Labor
Day.

Dissertation Prospectus

Third years students should been thinking about preparing for their dissertation prospectus with marks the end of the taught course part of their studies, and the formation of a dissertation committee. Please familiarize yourself with the administrative procedures for the thesis prospectus, which are posted on our web page in the section on goals for second and third year students.

TA Periods in Residence

Each quarter that you are a TA, you are expected to be in Evanston on weekdays from the first day of classes until the Monday after examinations end (which is the day that grades are filed). Absences during this period require permission of the instructor. In the past people have left early and arrived back late, in some cases without informing the instructor. The Department will not tolerate this. You must arrange your vacation airline flights so as to be able to fulfill your duties. Failure to do so will be grounds for rescinding your TAship. For the remainder of this year the dates for which you must be in attendance are:

Winter: until Mon March 23

Spring: Mon March 30 - Mon June 15

Attention Next Year's TAs

If you expect to be a TA next fall you need to be aware of the following arrangements:

TA Preference Forms The forms that allow TAs to indicate their preferences for classes will be placed in your mailbox in the main office about

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September 9. They will also be available on-line for anyone who is away from Evanston. Completed forms have to be returned by September 16. Unfortunately, the allocation can only be announced late on Friday, September 18 because we do not know enrollment in 201 and 202 until enrollment closes that afternoon. Classes start the following Tuesday.

New TA Training The University runs a full-day training session for new TAs. It will be held on Tuesday, September 15 from 9:00am to 5:30pm, which is during the week before classes start. The Department regards your attendance as mandatory. If you believe that you will be serving as a TA for the first time next year, please arrange your schedules so that you are available in Evanston on that date.

Next Holiday Season All TAs will have to be in Evanston until Monday lunchtime on December 14 to complete grading duties. If you are making holiday travel arrangements, please ensure that you remain in Evanston until this date. In addition you will need to be back in Evanston by Sunday night, January 3 for the start of winter classes.

Office Allocations

The Department has space to provide carrel accommodations for 58 graduate students. Typically about 70 post-first year students seek accommodations. Therefore, some rationing and sharing is needed. Allocations for next year are based on long-standing priorities:

- 1. WCAS day-school instructors
- 2. Research Assistants
- 3. Holders of dissertation fellowships from NU or elsewhere
- 4. Teaching Assistants
- 5. SCS evening program instructors

Other advanced graduate students will be accommodated where space permits. This does mean that some incumbents who will not fall into the above categories next year may be evicted.

It is clearly in the interests of those students receiving Research Assistantships or outside funding to inform Professors Savage and Tamer. The new space allocations will be announced about Labor Day, and people move in and out between then and the start of classes.

If you are leaving us this summer, please return your keys to the Graduate Secretary when you depart, and leave us a forwarding address.

Graduate School Deadlines

April 3 for submitting the *Application for a Degree* to permit you to participate in the June Commencement ceremony and receive your diploma.

May 8 for submission of completed dissertation and all supporting materials to the Graduate School to receive a Ph.D. degree in June.

May 15 for submitting Master's Candidate Certification for students expecting a Master's degree in June.

Commencement Arrangements

Commencement will be held on Friday evening June 19 at Ryan Field. Late in April students expecting to graduate in June will receive information regarding ordering academic costume and information about Commencement, including ticket information.

The Graduate School also organizes a "hooding ceremony" at lunchtime on that Friday in Cahn Auditorium, where your PhD advisor will present you with your degree. If you are expecting to graduate this June, now is the time to ensure that your advisor is available and willing to attend. If he or she is unavailable then you should ask for one of your other committee members to substitute.

Funding Opportunities

Funding Web Page

The web page listing non-departmental sources of funding has been updated. You can connect to it from the page giving information for current graduate students. There is also information on how to obtain funds for research expenses and attending

conferences. The maximum one-time research grant is \$3,000, and there is funding for one conference a year that covers up to a maximum of \$700. Full details of the application procedures and links to application forms are on the funding web page.

Notes

Personal Copy Accounts

Graduate students can obtain a personal account on our copy machines. You will be billed at the end of each month at 6¢ a copy. To obtain an account please send an e-mail to the Associate Chair <ipsavage@northwestern.edu> with your name and a 5-digit number to be used as your personal access code (the number must not start with a 0).

Next Graduate Connection

Volume 15, number 1 will be published after Labor Day in the week of Sept. 7.