Welcome to the Graduate Program in the Department of Economics at Iowa State University!

We are pleased that you will join us beginning fall 2016. By this time you should be receiving information from a variety of University offices. New student information can also be found online on the Economics Department new student website.

Items covered in this letter:

- Math Camp
- Orientation Week
- Housing
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- Students on Assistantship
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- Contacting other Economics Students
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- Registering for Classes
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**Math Camp (August 1 – August 12)**

This is an optional class for new Ph.D. and M.S. students. There is no credit offered and no fee charged. It is an opportunity to brush up on math skills for the upcoming semester. We strongly encourage attendance by all new students. In the past, even students with unusually good math backgrounds have found math camp helpful. Math camp will be from 10:00 a.m. – 12 noon and from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. on Monday, August 1 – Friday, August 5 and Monday, August 8 – Friday, August 12.

On **Monday, August 1st**, we will hold a welcome meeting for all students attending math camp. At noon, we will have a lunch and distribute information about your office assignments and keys. At 1:00 p.m. you will break into small groups with current graduate students who will help you get your University ID card and fulfill a variety of other tasks.

During the first week of math camp, international students will attend a check-in orientation with the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) that will cover getting your IDs, completing I-9 forms, and information about social security numbers. International students cannot sign-up for payroll until after this check-in is completed.

For information on housing options during math camp, please see the housing section on page 2.

**Orientation Week (August 15 – August 19)**

This is a week of orientation meetings at the department, college, and university level for new students. If you have not yet done so, students will get IDs, e-mail addresses, keys, and students on assistantship will sign up for payroll. International students will be able to take the Graduate English Placement Exam and the Oral English Certification Test, and receive information from the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO). A detailed schedule of the week’s activities will
be sent to you later this summer. However, it is advised you block off the entire week as there will be activities on most days. This is especially true for international students. The first day of classes for the fall semester is Monday, August 22nd. Dates and deadlines for the academic year can be found here.

**Housing**

*On-Campus Housing* - The [Department of Residence](#) offers several different types of housing on campus.

*Off-Campus Housing* – There are many apartments and houses for rent/sale throughout the Ames community. Please see the [Housing](#) section on the new student website. We have also compiled a “Housing Recommendations” handout and have posted it on the website for some tips and thoughts from current graduate students.

**Options for housing during Math Camp (August 1 – August 12)**

1. For students living in on-campus housing during the school year information about early move-in options is available from the Department of Residence.
2. Off-campus housing options may have leases beginning on August 1st. Check with your landlord or management company to see what day your lease begins.
3. International students who need to move early can find temporary housing information from the [International Students & Scholars Office](#). They can also contact the [International Student Council](#) to see if they can provide any assistance.
4. Hotel/motel. Prices vary depending on where you stay. For information about Ames area hotel/motel options click [here](#).
5. Stay with friends/relatives/other students.

**E-mail**

You should have received a letter from the university with information about establishing your ISU Net ID and e-mail account. To register for e-mail, go to this [website](#) and follow the instructions. If you do not have a University ID number (for students on assistantship your University ID number is located on your letter of intent) you can e-mail me and I will send it to you. **When you establish your Iowa State e-mail address, please let me know what it is.**

**Students on Assistantship**

You will receive information on how to [sign up for payroll](#) during one of your orientation sessions. You will need to provide a federal or state photo ID/Driver’s License and Social Security card or certified birth certificate or a passport that establish identity and employment eligibility. You will also want to bring bank deposit information. Paychecks are directly deposited into your bank account on the last business day of each month. For students who sign up for payroll prior to August 10th, your first paycheck should be issued at the end of August. It will be pro-rated to include your stipend for part of the month (August 17-August 31). Students who sign-up for payroll after August 10th will receive their first paycheck at the end of September. In this case, your September paycheck would include your pay for August 17-September 30. Please be prepared financially to cover expenses until the first paycheck arrives. International students will need to apply for a social security number two weeks after you arrive in the USA. **International students must attend a check-in session with the International Students Office prior to signing up for payroll.**
Health Insurance
Students on assistantship will be covered by the Student and Scholar Health Insurance Program (SSHIP). You will enroll on Access Plus after you have signed up for payroll. International students who are not on assistantship will need to purchase the health plan or provide proof of health insurance to the SSHIP Office.

Contacting other Economics Students
You can find us on our Facebook page called Iowa State University Department of Economics. I will also be updating the list of new graduate students as new student information becomes available.

The Economics Graduate Student Association (EGSA) is going to assign a current student to be your mentor as you transition to Iowa State. The current student will contact you by e-mail. Feel free to ask them any questions you might have about traveling to Iowa State, getting an apartment, what the classes are like, how to get around Ames, etc.

International Students
For information on international groups on campus, travel information, and various other information for international students click here.

All international students need to check-in with the International Students and Scholars Office. For those students who attend math camp, we will have an early group check-in. This will be scheduled for you. You do not need to sign-up for an early check-in time. Students who do not arrive until orientation week will check-in during that week. Specific dates will be sent out by the International Students and Scholars Office later this summer.

All international students should plan on taking the English Placement test. Students who have a degree from a U.S. institution can have the test waived. Information about how to sign-up online can be found here. International students who are on assistantship will need to sign-up for the Oral English Certification Test (OECT). Plan on taking the OECT as early as possible after your arrival. Students must preregister in advance online. More information about the OECT is available here.

Registering for Classes
For fall semester 2016, most students admitted to the Ph.D. program will be required to take Econ 600, 601, 671. Students admitted to the M.S. program or the M.S. track of the Ph.D. program will take Econ 500, 501, and 502. You may register for Econ 600 and 671 (or Econ 501 and 502) online through Access Plus. You will register for Econ 601 (Econ 500) during orientation week after you have talked to your advisor. Department permission is needed to register for Econ 601 (Econ 500), so you will not be able to register for that course online.

Registration instructions:
1. Go to Access Plus.
2. Follow the login instructions provided by the admissions office. If you have any questions visit this website.
3. Select the student tab on the top right of the page.
4. From the menu on the left side of the page select Class Registration
5. Click continue
6. Select the Fall 2016 term and click agree/continue
7. Under Add Class you will want to select the Economics department and register for Econ 600 and 671 (or Econ 501 and 502).

Registering for these two courses now will put you “in the system” and speed up processes once you arrive on campus.

For more information about registration policies and the schedule of classes click here.

**Graduate College**
The Graduate College provides information about Academics, Campus Services, Finance/Tuition, Community Programs, and information for International students. Overall, the Graduate College website is full of information and it is recommended you take time to familiarize yourself with it prior to your arrival.

**Economics Department**
The Economics department is based in Heady Hall with the Graduate Studies office located in Room 260. This office is open from 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. during the academic year and 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. during the summer. Graduate students receive a mailbox in the Economics mailroom in 265 Heady Hall. All department policies and procedures are listed on the Economics graduate programs current students website. This is another site that you will want to be familiar with. Take time to look it over and always feel free to ask if you have any questions!

**Questions to answer**
Please send me your responses to these questions. If you don’t yet know your arrival date, please indicate that in your responses.

1. What e-mail would you like us to use to contact you this summer?
2. Can I release your e-mail address to other new students and put it on our website? If so, what email would you want listed?
3. Will you be attending math camp?
4. What day will you arrive at Iowa State?

**Things to do**
1. Sign up for an Iowa State email address and send your new email address to Amy
2. Register for classes on Access Plus
3. Send an email to Amy with the answers to the questions in the “Questions to answer” section

We look forward to you arriving at Iowa State University. Look for more information from us later this summer.

Regards,

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