

2015-2016 International Connections Grant Proposal
Promoting Research and Graduate Education between Lehigh University and NUI, Galway
Chad D. Meyerhoefer, Associate Professor, Department of Economics

Overview: This proposal describes the justification for a two week visit to the National University of Ireland, Galway in order to strength ties between the students and faculty affiliated with Lehigh's Ph.D. program in business and economics and NUI Galway's graduate programs in economics. Both Lehigh's Ph.D. program and the master's and Ph.D. programs at Galway are focused on health economics. Most students choose health economics as their primary field of study, and the majority of core faculty in these programs are health economists. Moreover, Galway's master's program is formally an MSc in health economics. Given the clear potential for collaboration between the graduate programs in economics across the two institutions, the objectives of my visit are to: 1) Develop a joint educational program (i.e. annual workshop) that would allow Ph.D. students from the two institutions to learn from one another and establish relationships that may lead to future professional and research collaborations; 2) Provide information about Lehigh's M.S. and Ph.D. programs to Galway's undergraduate and master's students in order to encourage future applications, and; 3) Explore future research collaborations between Lehigh's and Galway's health economics faculty.

Background: The economics departments at Lehigh and Galway have a long standing tradition of collaboration in undergraduate education through the "Lehigh in Ireland" summer program and other semester-long study abroad programs. In addition, students from Galway have visited Lehigh at several points in the past. Most recently, Lehigh and Galway have established a two-way exchange program for undergraduate students in the field of business information systems. These past collaborations have helped to lay the groundwork for what will be Lehigh and Galway's first graduate-level initiative.

Initial discussion about opportunities for graduate student collaboration took place about a year and a half ago between Prof. Thomas Hyclak and Prof. Ciaran O'Neill, when both gentlemen were serving as Dean of their respective Colleges. Professors Hyclak and O'Neill discussed tentative plans to establish a summer workshop for Ph.D. students that might rotate between Galway and Lehigh. They also both agreed that funding travel costs would be a challenge, but that further interaction between graduate program faculty and Ph.D. students, and possibly joint research projects, would be the first step towards establishing a formal program.

In order to move forward with this objective, I invited Prof. O'Neill to visit Lehigh for one week in Fall 2014. During this, his first visit to Lehigh, Prof. O'Neill had individual meetings with our Ph.D. students and faculty, and presented a research paper at the economics department's seminar series. In my capacity as Director of the CBE's Ph.D. Program in Business and Economics I discussed overlapping areas of interest between the Ph.D. students in Galway and Lehigh, and how future training opportunities might draw on the strengths of both programs. We also discussed potential research collaborations that make use of Irish data. Notably, Prof. O'Neill funded the travel and lodging expenses for this visit using NUI Galway grant funds.

Nature of Interaction / Itinerary: My visit will complement that made by Prof. O'Neill this past Fall. We will continue our discussion of joint educational opportunities for our Ph.D. students, with the objective of designing an initial workshop that is feasible with limited funding. One mechanism we will consider is the use of distance education technology in lieu of graduate student travel. I will also meet with individual faculty members to discuss potential research collaborations, and with Ph.D. students to provide them with feedback on their research and to learn more about their training and research

interests. These individual meetings will be scheduled throughout the first two weeks of my visit, between Monday, October 19 and Friday, October 30.

In addition to holding individual meetings with the faculty and Ph.D. students I will hold an information session for undergraduate and master's students about Lehigh's M.S. and Ph.D. programs in economics for the purpose of soliciting future applications. This session will be scheduled at the end of the first week of my visit, so that I can meet with interested students during the second week of my visit. I will also present a research paper during the second week to the economics department faculty and graduate students as part of the department's research seminar series.

Although the budget of this proposal is confined to a two-week period, I intend to remain at NUI, Galway an additional three days in order to present another research paper at a conference on "Frontiers in Healthcare: Improving Adherence to Health Producing Behaviors" being organized by Prof. Brendan Kennelly and hosted by Galway's College of Business, Public Policy and Law. Prof. Kennelly is one of the health economists at Galway, and has visited Lehigh several times in the past; most recently serving as a visiting lecturer from Spring, 2010 – Summer, 2011.

Expected Outcomes:

Short Term: Develop a plan for a joint educational event (i.e. workshop) between Ph.D. students in economics at Lehigh University and NUI, Galway; increase interest in Lehigh's graduate programs in economics among undergraduate and master's students at Galway; facilitate joint research projects in health economics between faculty at each institution.

Long Term: Establish a regularly held educational event between Ph.D. students in economics at Lehigh University and NUI, Galway; generate applications and subsequent enrollment of undergraduate and master's students trained at Galway in Lehigh's graduate programs in economics; conduct joint research in health economics leading to publications in top tier reviewed journals.

Hosts: Prof. Brendan Kennelly and Prof. Ciaran O'Neill, College of Business, Public Policy and Law, J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics.

Pre-trip Planning: I have been in contact with both Professors Kennelly and O'Neill concerning the dates and plan for my visit. Prof. O'Neill has helped me to identify suitable housing for my stay, and Prof. Kennelly has accepted my research paper for presentation at the research conference he is planning. Attached to this proposal is a formal invitation from Prof. Kennelly.

Follow-up Steps: Upon my return, I will write-up the results of my visit, and discuss the outcomes and next steps with the core graduate faculty in the economics department. I will also share my experience with others interested in international collaborations. I will then begin the next steps toward implementing the above described long term outcomes.

Budget (October 17, 2015 – October 31, 2015) *

Expense	Source	Cost
Lodging	Arus Grattan Apartments	\$977
Airfare (EWR – SNN)	United.com	\$1005
Car service/taxi	-----	\$240
Per diem for 14 days - Galway	U.S. Department of State	\$1568
Total		\$3790

*Excludes conference expenses

3-16-2015

Dear Chad,

I am pleased to invite you to visit the economics department in the J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics at NUI Galway in October, 2015. During your visit we look forward to engaging in discussions focused on strengthening ties between our two graduate programs and our faculty conducting research in health economics. This will include: 1) Planning a joint educational event between Ph.D. students at Lehigh and Galway; 2) Organizing an information session about Lehigh graduate programs in economics for our undergraduate and master's students, and; 3) Scheduling a seminar as part of our research seminar series for you to present one of your current research papers. Furthermore, I am glad to learn that you will be able to present another paper at the conference, *Frontiers in Healthcare: Improving Adherence to Health Producing Behaviors*, which we are hosting at the conclusion of your visit.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance, and we look forward to your visit.

Yours sincerely,



Brendan Kennelly

J. E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics,
NUI Galway