

February 23, 2001

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your impending participation in our new Pew-sponsored project on “The Moral and Social Dimensions of Microeconomic Behavior In Low-Income Communities.” This is an unusually exciting project and I am eager for our first opportunity to gather as a group. Our first team meeting will be held May 4-5, 2001, here at Cornell. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with a tentative program as well as some logistical details.

Program: Objectives and Participants

You have all received a copy of the full project proposal dated August 2000. Per that proposal, the objectives of this first meeting are threefold:

- (i) to agree on a division of labor among the team members and a publication strategy for the team’s collaborative output, plan participation in year three conferences, and ensure the pieces fit together as a cohesive inquiry
- (ii) to discuss the current state of the relevant literatures in order to identify opportunities for making significant advances
- (iii) to provide a forum for team members to present work in progress under this project

The tentative program below provides time for us to address each of these objectives. It will be a full two days.

The first order of business at the May meeting will be presentation and discussion of each team member’s project. I have allotted 30 minutes for each of these, in the expectation that each team member will give a 15-20 minute presentation, followed by or interspersed with 10-15 minutes’ discussion among the broader group. A standard overhead projector will be in the room. If you need any other audio-visual equipment, please let my assistant, Quinn Avery (qla2@cornell.edu, tel: 607-255-1406) know as soon as possible.

You will notice that the morning of the second day is set aside for general discussion of the current state of the literature, per objective (ii). If there are any particular readings – your own work or others’ – you think it important for the group to have seen in advance, please let me know. We can try to make copies available in advance of the meeting, perhaps through the project web site to be launched soon. The key conversation on the second day will revolve around achieving a consensus plan for the second year team meeting, the third year (2003) conferences at which we want to organize panels, and our ultimate publication plans. Sam and Larry have already raised the possibility of holding the 2002 team meeting at the Santa Fe Institute as a small conference. Any other ideas you might have are welcome either before or during our May meeting.

In addition to the twelve team members (Larry Blume, Sam Bowles, Michael Carter, Joan Esteban, Marcel Fafchamps, Andrew Foster, Ravi Kanbur, Glenn Loury, Jean Phillippe Platteau, Debraj Ray, Chris Udry, and myself), there may be a few others at the meeting. Dr. Kurt Berends, coordinator of the broader Pew Charitable Trusts program at the University of Notre Dame that is funding our group, will definitely join us. Kurt can perhaps help answer any remaining questions you might have about the broader, multi-disciplinary research effort into which our project fits as well as the interdisciplinary workshop in year three to which we will send some subset of our team. Given their interests in the general topic of behavioral economics and poverty, I am also inviting my Cornell colleagues Kaushik Basu, Bob Frank, Bill Schulze, and Erik Thorbecke to join the discussions if they are available. One or two graduate students will probably also attend and help out with on-site logistics.

Logistical/Administrative Issues

My assistant, Quinn Avery (qla2@cornell.edu), will be in touch with each of you very soon on transportation and lodging. If you arrange travel through our travel agent, Ms. Ursula Murray at Beam O'Rourke (umurray@a-znet.com, or telephone 1-800-257-6606), we can purchase your ticket directly from this end. Alternatively, you are free to arrange your own economy class travel and submit your airline ticket stub for reimbursement once your travel is complete. I encourage you to consider flying via Syracuse – which is an hour away and for which we can arrange a reliable ground shuttle – if flight schedules to/from Ithaca prove inconvenient or the fares are excessive, as is too often the case. Quinn has reserved each of you a room at the Clarion University Hotel (telephone 607-257-2000). All hotel room charges will bill directly to us. Meals on the program will be paid directly by the project. Once here, you will need to sign a travel reimbursement form to cover any ground transport, parking or meal expenses you incur.

We now have final contractual arrangements in place with almost everyone. If you have any questions about payments schedules, human subjects research clearance, etc., please get in touch with Quinn.

In closing, let me reiterate my enthusiasm about this project. This is an extraordinary group of creative minds. I am honored by your participation in this effort and very much look forward to our discussions in May.

Warm regards,

Christopher B. Barrett

Tentative Team Meeting Schedule

Thursday, May 3

Participants arrive in Ithaca

Taxi or hotel shuttle to Clarion University Hotel, 1 Sheraton Drive, Ithaca, 607-257-2000

Friday, May 4 (all in Warren 401 unless otherwise noted)

8:00 Hotel shuttle from Clarion Inn to Warren Hall

8:30 Opening remarks, Chris Barrett

9:00 Brief presentation and discussion of applied theory projects (Blume, Bowles, Loury)

10:30 Break

11:00 Brief presentation and discussion of applied theory projects (Esteban, Ray, Kanbur)

12:30 Lunch

2:00 Brief presentation and discussion of empirical projects (Carter, Foster, Platteau)

3:30 Break

4:00 Brief presentation and discussion of empirical projects (Barrett, Fafchamps, Udry)

5:30 Hotel shuttle back to Clarion Inn

7:00 Dinner

Saturday, May 5 (all in Warren 401 unless otherwise noted)

9:00 Hotel shuttle from Clarion Inn to Warren Hall

9:30 Group discussion of the general state of the relevant literature: What are the key gaps in the theoretical and empirical literatures wherein this project might contribute significant advances? What crucial bits are we missing? How useful is the burgeoning literature in behavioral economics to those with interests in poverty and economic development?

10:45 Break

11:15 Continuation of the morning discussion

12:30 Lunch

2:00 Group discussion of (i) second year workshop/conference (spring 2002 in Europe or fall 2002 in Santa Fe or Ithaca?), (ii) third year conference panel plans (ASSA, AAEA, WEAI, Pew), and (iii) publication strategies (journal(s) – JEBO or JDE or JEP?, book)

4:00 Meeting closes

6:30 Dinner for those who do not depart Saturday afternoon

Dress is casual for all activities