

**Some Useful Information for the
Incoming Students**

in the UConn Economics Department

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Some Information for Our Incoming Students

This document aims to provide some useful information to incoming graduate students in the Economics Department at the University of Connecticut. In what follows, you will get some information on how to get to the main UConn campus at Storrs, CT, grad life in Storrs, our department and the Association of Graduate Economics Students (AGES).

1. How to get to Storrs?

There are several options:

By Air:

(a) You can fly directly to Hartford, CT (**Bradley International Airport**) and then take ground transportation to Storrs. Ground transportation is available at the airport. It takes about 45 minutes (35 miles) by car to get to campus from the airport. For more information, go to the airport website at: <http://www.bradleyairport.com> .

(b) You can fly to one of the **New York airports (JFK or LaGuardia)** and take ground transportation to Hartford, CT and then to Storrs.

John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK), New York is around 141 miles away from Storrs. It takes around 2 hours and 45 minutes by car to get to campus from JFK. Ground transportation is available. Information is available at:

http://www.panynj.gov/CommutingTravel/airports/html/ken_transportation.html .

Typically, new students who are coming to Storrs from JFK (for the first time with their luggage) use the Connecticut Limo (<http://www.ctlimo.com/>) to get to Hartford, CT (Union Station). Students then have to make their own arrangements to get to Storrs from Hartford. There is Peter Pan bus service available from Hartford to Storrs. To check the Peter Pan bus schedule, go to the Peter Pan website: <http://www.ctlimo.com/>. Right now (March, 2008), there are only two buses coming to Storrs from Hartford every day.

LaGuardia Airport, New York is 136 miles away from Storrs. It takes around 2 hours and 40 minutes to get to campus from the airport. One can take the CT Limo from the airport to get to Hartford.

(c) Fly to **Boston airport (Logan International)** and then take ground transportation.

Logan Airport, Boston, MA is 88.38 miles away from campus and it takes around 1 hour and 35 minutes to get to the campus from the airport. For information about the ground transportation from the airport to Storrs, go to:

http://www.massport.com/logan/getti_typeo.html .

By car: Storrs is 35 minutes (27.14 miles) away from Union Station, Hartford. For directions from Hartford to the Economics Department at Storrs, please check MapQuest at;

<http://www.mapquest.com/maps/1+Union+Pl+Hartford+CT+06103-1490/341+Mansfield+Rd+Storrs+Mansfield+CT+06269-9015/> .

By Train: The nearest train station to Storrs is at Union Station, Hartford, CT. You can take the Peter Pan bus from Hartford to Storrs or contact someone who will pick you up from Union Station.

Currently (April 2008), the UConn Department of Parking and Transportation Service is providing shuttle service from Union Station, Hartford to Storrs and Bradley International Airport to Storrs. To see if the services are going to be available when you intend to arrive in Storrs, contact the department directly for current information. The department's contact information is available at:

<http://web.uconn.edu/parking/ContactUs.html>

The following two links provide some information about how to get to the Storrs campus and moving around on campus:

Maps and Directions: <http://uconn.edu/campuses/storrs.php>.

On Campus Interactive Map: <http://admissions.uconn.edu/virtualtour/search/>.

2. Housing Information:

On- campus Housing:

Typically, graduate students (especially those who do not have a car) who are new to the University and the town live on-campus. For information about on-campus housing, please check the UConn Residential Life website at:

http://www.reslife.uconn.edu/graduate_housing.html.

There are different types of on-campus housing available, which differ in terms of size and cost. The Graduate Residences is the closest to the Economics Department building (Monteith). From the Grad Residences it takes 4 to 5 minutes to walk to the department in good weather (with the snow it takes a little longer), about 2 minutes to get to the Homer Babbidge Library, 2 minutes to get to the UConn Co-op and People's Bank and 3-5 minutes to get to the UConn gym.

Off-campus Housing:

There are some apartments around the campus. However, since not all of them are on the bus route, you either need to own (and be able to drive) a car or you need to make sure the apartment you choose is on the bus route. For some information on off-campus housing, go to:

http://www.reslife.uconn.edu/graduate_housing.html.

3. Getting around Storrs:

Bus Service: The Windham Region Transit District (WRTD) provides bus service to the towns of Storrs and Willimantic. The WRTD bus goes to some of the off campus apartment complexes and some grocery stores. For more information about the bus schedules, go to the WRTD website at;

<http://www.wrtd.net/> .

Car: Many graduate students get a car (unless they already have one) within the first two years of their grad lives. Storrs is a very quiet (but very beautiful) place to live. A car gives a lot of flexibility and allows you to freely move around.

If you do not have a U.S. driver's license and would like to obtain one, go to the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles (CT DMV) website for information on how to take the driving test and get a license: www.ct.gov/dmv/ .

Parking Services at UConn:

If you have a car, you will need to obtain a parking permit to park in any on-campus parking lot. For information about parking facilities at UConn, go to the UConn Parking Services website at: <http://web.uconn.edu/parking/>.

The closest parking lots to the Economics Department that are accessible to students (for an annual parking fee) are S-Lot (closest to CT-195) and Y-Lot (behind the UConn Co-op and McMahon Dining Hall).

On-campus Bus Service:

Bus service is available to transport students around campus. For information, go to: <http://web.uconn.edu/parking/> (same as above).

4. Things You Need to do When You Get to Campus (for the first time):

- **UConn ID:** You need to get your UConn id from the One Card office in Wilbur Cross Building (on campus).
- **Bank Account:** Most students open a bank account to handle local banking needs. The bank on-campus (People's Bank) is located in the UConn Co-op building. There are other savings banks in and around Storrs, but you need a car to get to them.
- **Meeting with our Graduate Program Coordinator:** Once you get to Storrs, you most likely will need to set up a meeting with Rosanne Fitzgerald. There

is usually some paper work for the new graduate students. Her office is Room 438 in Monteith Building.

- **DISP** - International students must report to the International Office once they arrive on campus. The office is in the Student's Union on the third floor (Room - 307). Here is the link to their website: <http://www DISP.uconn.edu/> .
- **Accounts Payroll** - Once you get to campus, if you are a graduate assistant, you may want to make sure that your payroll account is set up, so that you start getting your pay checks in a timely fashion. For that, you may want to contact the relevant person at the UConn payroll office (<http://www.payroll.uconn.edu/generalinfo/resource.html>). Ask Ms. Fitzgerald for the name of the person to contact.

5. Grad Life in Storrs:

Dining: Some grads have their meals at the UConn Dining Halls. The website for information about meal plans is: <http://dining.uconn.edu/> . If you want to make your own meals, here is a list of the nearby grocery stores:

1. Wal-mart Supercenter, North Windham, CT (about 9 miles from campus, 17 minutes drive).
2. BigY (about 6 miles from campus and is on the WRTD bus route).
3. Super Stop and Shop (about 8.5 miles, 14 minutes drive, on WRTD bus route).
4. Grand Union Family Markets (about 2.4 miles, 5 minutes drive, on WRTD bus route).

We have some fast food joints in the UConn Student Union and some restaurants (several international cuisines) around the campus. During the day, there are lunch trucks available around the campus, where students can stop between classes to grab a bite. To see the retail locations of the UConn Dining Services, go to:

<http://nutritionanalysis.dds.uconn.edu/location.asp>

Entertainment/ Recreational Facility on campus:

- **UConn Student Union:** The Student Union hosts a number of student activities during the year and has a student movie theater. For more information about the services provided by the Student Union, go to their website: <http://www.studentunion.uconn.edu/>
- **UConn Department of Recreational Services:** UConn has a gym on campus (near the UConn Student Union). For more information about gym hours, facilities etc., go to: http://web.uconn.edu/recreation/fi_schedules.php

Shopping Malls close to campus:

- The nearest shopping mall to campus is Eastbrook Mall on CT-195 (on WRTD bus route). The mall has an array of retail stores (good place for some winter clothes) and a movie theater.
- Another mall students tend to frequent (only when grads get the time to do so) is 'The Shoppes at Buckland Hills', which is about half an hour away from campus. It provides more options for winter clothes but you need a car to get there!

6. The Economics Department:

The People:

The graduate program has students from different countries across the world like Benin, Chile, China, Columbia, Egypt, Greece, India, Korea, Lebanon, Romania, Russia, Turkey, the U.S. and others. Some of our recent graduates hail from Argentina, Bangladesh, Bulgaria and Lithuania.

We have a good deal of diversity on the faculty as well, with our professors coming from different countries of the world like France, Germany, India, Kenya, Scotland, Switzerland, Turkey, the U.S. and others.

Currently, we have three staff members who have a track record of being very helpful to the grads.

The First Year at School:

Students admitted into the PhD program typically take three courses per semester until they are finished with their coursework. Occasionally some students take four courses in a semester. It is advisable to talk to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) before taking such a step. Depending on the course it could be an overwhelming experience (excessive work pressure), especially during the initial stages of the program when students are getting used to the work pressure at school.

At the end of the second semester, first year students take the PhD Preliminary Examination in microeconomics and macroeconomics. Usually, there is roughly a forty day period between the last day of the second semester and the prelims (typically held sometime during the last ten days of June). Students use this time to prepare intensively for the examination. Often, first year students form study groups with their classmates, discuss the relevant concepts and solve past exam problems together.

7. The Association of Graduate Economics Students (AGES):

The AGES team is committed to efforts to provide a better working environment for graduate students and the department as a whole. Every year in April, we have the AGES elections, where graduate students elect the AGES officers for the next academic year. AGES has eight officers including a first year representative. Every economics graduate student is a member of AGES. While the AGES officers are responsible for organizing the AGES events, we welcome regular inputs from our fellow grads, faculty and staff. Over the years, AGES has been instrumental in organizing numerous social events in the department. Some of the events that AGES has organized in the recent years are:

- **AGES Distinguished Lecturer's Series:** These events (first initiated in 2005-2006) have brought notable economists to campus to give a public talk. Our first distinguished speaker was Dr. Finn Kydland (2004 Noble Prize winner in economics), who was Professor Christian Zimmermann's major advisor. Other speakers include Dr. Ariel Rubinstein, New York University and Tel-Aviv (2006-2007) and Dr. N. Gregory Mankiw, Harvard University (2007-2008).
- **AGES Life after UConn:** Every year a graduate from UConn Economics department visits the department and shares his or her grad school experiences with the current cohort of graduate students.
- **AGES Faculty Appreciation Party:** At the end of the academic year (usually in April), graduate students vote for their most appreciated faculty. This is followed by a party (organized by AGES) to thank our professors for helping us all year around.
- **AGES Picnic:** Every fall AGES organizes a department picnic.
- **AGES Graduate Student Seminar Series (GSSS):** AGES has been responsible for organizing a seminar series (distinct from the department 'Brownbag Series') for graduate students to present their work to an audience of fellow grads. Apart from presenting their own research, grads have also used GSSS to teach their colleagues about software programs, designing web pages and other tools that young economists (especially grads

aspiring to become economists) are encouraged to learn to carry out their research and prepare themselves for the job market. Occasionally, even professors participate in the seminar series to talk to students about their work or to just provide advice on some relevant topic (for example: learning how to write like a professional economist).

This information has been collated by the 2007-2008 AGES team to provide new students to the UConn Economics department with information that we believe (based on our experience as grads) to be useful. This document is not endorsed by either the Economics Department or the University of Connecticut.

Welcome to grad school,
Good Luck!

AGES, 2007-2008.