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## Durbal Becomes Newest Addition to the Department

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*By Babs Marcus*

After living in such exotic locales as Fiji and Pakistan, how does someone end up in Bloomington, Illinois? This is one question frequently asked of Illinois Wesleyan University's newest addition to the Economics Department, Dr. Ilaria Ossella-Durbal. When questioned why exactly she chose IWU, we economists can only expect to hear that the benefits of her decision exceeded the costs.

A small university does draw many faculty and students who seek personal attention and a studious environment. But how could the calm, languid atmosphere of IWU compete with the excitement of global travel? While she was growing up, Ossella-Durbal's father served in the United Nations Development Program, traveling in underdeveloped countries and establishing programs for enhancing economic factors ranging from education to agriculture. The Ossella family spent only 2-3 years in each country, and Durbal resided in Fiji, Pakistan, South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, and Burundi. As a result of her extensive travels, Durbal is trilingual-speaking English, French, and Italian, her father's native language.

Influenced by her father's work from a young age, Durbal pursued a Bachelor of Arts Degree in both Economics and Mathematics from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. She returned to Cornell for graduate studies and recently earned her Ph.D. in August, 1999. She followed her international interests and researched the economy of India, focusing on identifying the leading sectors in the Indian economy that would accelerate "the turnpike growth factor" the most. Representative sectors included agriculture, infrastructure, and manufacturing. Analysis was performed using micro-economic tools such as a Turnpike Property and an Input Requirement Matrix. Through model

usage and data manipulation, Durbal was able to support her thesis. She found that the growth rate of optimal output for all sectors converge in the long run to a common value.

Durbal then identified the sectors for which an improvement in productivity generated the greatest increase in long-run growth. "From this, we were able to establish the importance of infrastructure in the Indian economy," says Durbal. The significance of her studies is vital to such countries as India, which has opened up her borders since 1990 in a continuing attempt to become a world power.

Durbal's contributions to the Economics department at IWU stem from her educational experience as well as her travels. This year alone she taught International Trade, Development, Microeconomics, and Statistics. She adjusts well to almost any atmosphere, including the private environment at Illinois Wesleyan. As a young student, Durbal frequently moved around between international schools.

"We found it easy to integrate as international students. People were very open to us and no one was concerned exactly what clique we fit into because we were all in the same situation."

Durbal's openness and friendliness are apparent while conversing with her, and have already earned her a positive reputation among students. "Her enthusiasm for what she does becomes contagious, and after just one class with her you feel comfortable enough to ask the most complicated questions" states statistics student Tricia Blachinsky.

Dr. Durbal is optimistic about her career at Illinois Wesleyan. Her strong economic background, as well as her travel experience, characterizes her as a diverse contributor to the Economics department.