



2019

# Faculty Updates | Celebrating Dr. Ilaria Ossella-Durbal's 20th year at IWU

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## Faculty Updates

### Celebrating Dr. Ilaria Ossella-Durbal's 20th year at IWU

*Heidi Luu*

2019 marks the 20th year that Dr. Ilaria Ossella-Durbal has taught at Illinois Wesleyan University. Motivated and inspired by her teaching assistant experience at Cornell University, where she earned both her undergraduate and Ph.D. degrees, Dr. Durbal came to IWU knowing she would enjoy working closely with students at a small liberal arts institution. With a strong academic background in development economics, microeconomics, computational mathematics, as well as professional research experience and publications on the topics of international trade and efficient resource allocations in poor economies, Dr. Durbal took on teaching classes such as *Statistics*, *Intermediate Microeconomics*, and *Economics of Developing Countries*. Out of all the classes that she has taught, *Economics of Developing Countries* is her personal favorite (although she likes all of them), since it allows her to expose students to an area that she cares strongly about. The most fulfilling part about teaching this class, to her, is that she gets to see students become engaged in the topics of the class and eager to learn more.

Although Dr. Durbal remains humble when she is asked about her teaching style, the fact that she is able to engage and excite students in her classes says a lot about how she teaches. Dr. Ghosh is especially impressed by her energy and passion. To Dr. Seeborg, on the other hand, Dr. Durbal's commitment to spending an extensive amount of her time to work one-on-one or in small review groups with students is what he admires about her. He describes her as a professor who, with her commitment to helping students and a keen analytical mind, would point out errors in the students' reasonings to help them truly learn and become better resources in the process. Dr. Ghosh and Dr. Oberg agree with this viewpoint, stating that her consistent student-centric focus over the last 20 years has helped the students in their studies tremendously.

As a colleague to the other professors in the Economics Department, Dr. Durbal has been extremely helpful and constructive, but also friendly and approachable. Dr. Mendez appreciates her reliable input and feedback during the Department meetings although they have very different views and opinions on economics education. Dr. Oberg values her detail-oriented attitude, as well as how she is always willing to seek feedback and have open dialogues to improve the learning experience for the students, even with the classes she has taught for over 10 years. Dr. Seeborg, on the other hand, appreciates her leadership style during her time as Department Chair. To him, the way she always tried to develop consensus before reaching important decisions for the Department made each of her colleagues feel that they had an influence.

The Economics students and faculty would like to congratulate Dr. Durbal on her 20th year at the University and thank her for all her dedication and service. Her passion of working with students to help

them excel in their studies and research endeavors, as well as her dedication to the Department and her colleagues have left an immeasurable impact on every faculty member. As for the Economics students at IWU, she has been and will always be the professor whom getting an A from is certainly not easy; but if achieved, it will be one of the most memorable accomplishments in their four years at the University.