Lan Dinh
3011 Jenkins Nanovic Hall
Univeristy of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, IN 46556
(574)298-8131
ldinh@nd.edu

NBER Entrepreneurship Working Group March 26, 2019
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Dear Selection Committee,

I am writing to express my interest in the 12th Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp hosted by your organization. I am currently a third year graduate student in the Economics PhD program at the University of Notre Dame, specializing in the firm dynamics and entrepreneurship fields.

During my graduate training, I have conducted research in understanding the impact of increasing market concentration on firm entry rate in the U.S. I am also studying market distortions that entrepreneurs face in developing countries. In the future, I wish to study economics of entrepreneurship even further.

Because of my current projects and future research direction, I would like to attend the entrepreneurship research boot camp to widen my knowledge on this topic by learning from leading researchers in the field. I believe that the boot camp will make a significant contribution to my future research accomplishments. It is my sincere hope to attend this wonderful opportunity.

As part of my application, Professor Benjamin Pugsley, who is my current academic advisor will submit a letter of recommendation on my behalf.

I look forward to hearing from you. Should you have any questions, please contact me at via phone (574-298-8131) or via email (ldinh@nd.edu).

Thank you for your time and for your consideration.

Lan Dinh

LAN HOANG DINH

March 2019

University of Notre Dame
Department of Economics
3011 Jenkins Nanovic Hall
Notre Dame, IN 46556

E-mail: ldinh@nd.edu
Phone: +1(574)298-8131

EDUCATION

University of Notre Dame

Ph.D., Economics, Expected May 2021.

Fields: Firm Dynamics, Entrepreneurship, Growth.

Bowling Green State University

M.A., Economics, 2014.

University of Mount Union

B.A., Economics, Finance and Accounting, 2013.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

2019-2024	Special Sworn Status researcher at U.S. Census Bureau
2018-2019	Research Assistant, Prof. Benjamin Pugsley – University of Notre Dame
2017-2018	Teaching Assistant, Prof. Byung-Joo Lee (Econometrics) – University of Notre Dame
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2013-2014	Teaching Assistant – Bowling Green State University

OTHER EXPERIENCE

2016 Finance Business Partner – Bank for Investment and Development of Vietnam, Hanoi, Vietnam

- Analyzed the bank's large dataset to suggest to Treasury Department potential customers.
- Used SQL to maintain the multi-dimensional profitability database of the bank.
- Managed Service-level Agreement and Lean project proposal.

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AWARDS

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Excellent Tutor Recognition – University of Mount Union

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List of Completed Courses

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Essay for the 12th Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp

Answers to some of the most important economics questions boil down to understanding in economics of entrepreneurship. Therefore, I have been studying this field since my second year paper and planning to explore this area further for my future research. In this essay, I am going to briefly describe my current research and future research direction to explain why they are good reasons for me to attend the boot camp.

An important result in economics is that technological progress is the most important driver of long-run growth. An important determinant of such technological progress is the process of creative destruction, in which inefficient firms are replaced by more efficient ones. Therefore, most my young research career has been directed toward studying factors that could distort the entry decisions and growth potential of entrepreneurs. In my second year paper, I start to study the effect of the recently observed increasing trend in market concentration on firm entry rate in an imperfect competition model. I hypothesize that when market concentration is high, a potential entrepreneur could face lower expected profit; therefore, certain groups of entrepreneurs may avoid entering the market. I then quantitatively estimate how much this mechanism can explain the decline in firm entry rate in the U.S.

In addition to studying entrepreneurship in the U.S., I am also interested in studying distortions that entrepreneurs in developing countries may face. Understanding in this area can help to explain the differences in average firm size across countries. Specifically, using a combination of reliable data on average number of employees in manufacturing sector across countries and survey data on entrepreneurship; I study how limited market size can explain the slow life cycle of firms in developing countries. Answers to this problem matters because it distinguishes between the kind of distortions that lower allocative efficiency among firms and distortions that make it optimal for firms to stay small.

In the future, I would like to study how recent cohorts of entrepreneurs' growth dynamics can contribute to macroeconomic outcomes. In recent years, a subset of startups has experienced very rapid growth due to fast cash burning rate to quickly capture market share. I would like to study how these growth dynamics are different

from the past and what implications this may have to firms innovation and the nature of competition.

Because of my research interest, I would like to attend the research boot camp to learn from leading researchers in the field. The boot camp is an excellent opportunity for me to learn and update on current issues, data and methodologies. A cohesive course on entrepreneurship will allow me to better understand the past literature and future direction of the field. This is especially important to me since a separate course on entrepreneurship is not taught at my institution. In addition, I am eager to meet and discuss ideas with other researchers, who share a common research interest. The insights I will gain from interacting with other researchers will help to deepen my knowledge on economics of entrepreneurship and widen my understanding and interest in other related fields. In addition, the boot camp is a great place to develop future collaboration opportunities with other fellow researchers.

In conclusion, I believe that entrepreneurship is the root of very important economics issues. I have focused on learning about the field since my first practical research experience, which is my second year paper. After studying the literature, I realize that there are potentially many unexplored grounds. I hope to invest in this area of research by attending the boot camp, and I strongly believe that it will provide me invaluable knowledge and ideas.

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College of Arts and Letters

100 O'Shaughnessy Hall Notre Dame, Indiana 46556
tel (574) 631-7085 *fax* (574) 631-7743 *web* al.nd.edu

March 27, 2019

Dear members of the selection committee:

I am writing to **enthusiastically recommend Lan Dinh** for this summer's NBER Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp. Lan is a smart and motivated student, and he shows great promise in the productivity/development side of entrepreneurship research. He would benefit enormously from the boot camp: both from the teaching and discussions, as well as the research connections he would forge with other students. Let me tell you a little about Lan and explain my strong recommendation.

Lan is now a 3rd year student in the Economics Ph.D. program at the University of Notre Dame. While as a 3rd year he does not officially have a dissertation committee, Joe Kaboski and I have been supervising Lan's research, and I expect we will both be members of his committee when it forms next fall. I joined the faculty in the fall of 2017, and shortly thereafter, Lan sought me out to discuss his research ideas. He was particularly interested in the now "hot" topic of the effects of market concentration on entrepreneurship and innovation/productivity. I gave him a long reading list and some early assignments to assess his seriousness and was impressed with his industriousness and intelligence. He has written a 2nd year paper that develops a Atkeson and Burstein 2008/2018 type oligopoly equilibrium model to examine theoretically the implication of rising TFP dispersion (of the type documented by Decker, Haltiwanger, Jarmin and Miranda 2018 and Kehrig 2016) on entry, markups and productivity. It was an interesting exercise, and now he will be testing its implications empirically using the restricted access Census data in the Annual Survey of Manufacturers and Economic Censuses. I take the Lan's work so far as a strong signal of his interest in the area and his promise for future work.

I should also mention that since the fall Lan has been my research assistant and only recently (last Friday!) was his Census Special Sworn Status approved and did he start work on my ongoing Census project with Sari and Bill Kerr. I can assure you that Lan will be well-trained empirically and an experienced consumer of the Census data before he graduates. I would not have made this significant investment in him if I had any doubts. This is a long term investment, and I expect Lan will be using the firm level Census data productively in his own work.

Lan is ready for the intense work in the boot camp week. He has finished all of the required coursework for the Ph.D. and excelled. Perhaps most relevant for the boot camp were courses in Economic Development with Joe Kaboski, which is a course on entrepreneurship and macro development as well as a course in IO that does not appear on his course list because he did not take it for credit. I plan to teach a PhD. Field course in entrepreneurship and firm dynamics that he will also take. He is ready for the papers and the workload of boot camp.

Perhaps more than others, Lan would benefit enormously from attending the boot camp. We have a small and still developing Ph.D. program at Notre Dame. Our very best students are strong, but they are still below the radar of many departments and potential collaborators. Attending the boot camp would be Lan's introduction to the frontier researchers and students in the field: a field where I expect Lan will soon make his mark. The only question that I think remains would be whether Lan and his boot camp cohort would be better served if he attended this summer or next summer. I believe Lan already has the intellectual maturity to make the most of it right now and reap its rewards over an additional year of graduate school.

On a personal note, Lan is a pleasure to work with, and I think he would be a welcome presence in the intense program. I hope you will share my assessment of Lan's promise and that you take him on as a student for this year's boot camp. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Benjamin Pugsley
Assistant Professor
Department of Economics
bpugsley@nd.edu