October 29, 2026

Rob Shannon
National Bureau of Economic Research
1050 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear Rob,

My name is Ziyi Wang, and I am applying for the NBER Tutorial on Digital Economics and AI Tutorial on January 20 and January 21, 2027, at Stanford University. I am a third-year Ph.D. student in Economics at Cornell University, where my research focuses on the economic implications of artificial intelligence, particularly how increasingly autonomous AI systems reshape market competition, consumer welfare, and the organization of production. I believe this chance will allow me to interact with distinguished scholars that work on AI related research.

As a dual degree PhD/JD candidate, I have completed two years of coursework in my Economics PhD program at Cornell University from 2022 to 2024. I began my PhD in 2022 and have passed my qualification exams on May 2023. I then was enrolled in the JD program at Cornell Law School from 2024 to 2026. For Fall 2026, I am enrolled back to the Economics PhD program as a third year PhD student.

I previously attended the NBER Digital Economics and AI Tutorial in February 2025. That experience introduced me to frontier research in the economics of AI and helped shape my initial interests in the field. Since then, both the technology and my research agenda have evolved substantially. The rapid development of increasingly capable reasoning models and autonomous AI agents has shifted my attention from AI as a tool that augments human decision making toward AI as an economic actor capable of making decisions, executing transactions, and interacting strategically with other agents. I am particularly interested in how these developments challenge conventional assumptions in economic models of consumer choice, firm behavior, and labor markets.

My dissertation advisor is Professor Kaushik Basu. My current research focus is examining how advanced AI (potentially AGI) changes the allocation of tasks between human workers and machines. Building on the task-based framework of Acemoglu and Restrepo, I am interested in extending conventional models of automation to account for human verification, coordination, and the complementarities among tasks.

I would be particularly excited to return to the NBER Digital Economics and AI Tutorial at this stage of my doctoral studies. When I attended in 2025, I was primarily exploring the emerging economics literature on generative AI. Today, I am developing concrete dissertation projects that

address the implications of increasingly autonomous AI systems. The transition from AI as a productivity enhancing technology to AI as a potential decision maker in economic transactions presents a new set of theoretical and empirical questions. I believe that this shift makes the tutorial especially valuable to my current research.

Thank you so much for considering my application. I look forward to the possibility of participating in this tutorial and the NBER Digital Economics and AI meetings and contributing to the study of digital economics and AI in the future.

Sincerely,



Ziyi Wang

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