March 30, 2015

Kristjan Sigurdson
2-300 Dovercourt rd.
Toronto, ON, Canada,
M6J3E3

NBER Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp Selection Committee
Cambridge, Massachusetts, US

Dear Selection Committee Members,

Please find attached my application to participate in the 2015 NBER Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp (ERBC). As a PhD student of Strategic Management at the Rotman School of Management just now completing my first year, I believe that I am at the ideal juncture to participate in the ERBC. Professor Ajay Agrawal is my academic supervisor and has written my letter of recommendation, which is submitted as part of this package.

The remainder of this PDF file contains: 1) a two-page essay that explains my interest in attending the ERBC and includes a brief description of my current and future research trajectory, 2) my Curriculum Vitae including a list of all current and completed PhD courses, and 3) Professor Ajay Agrawal's letter of recommendation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kristjan Sigurdson
PhD Student, Strategic Management
Rotman School of Management
University of Toronto
Phone: 647 926 8633
Email: k.sigurdson@mail.utoronto.ca

**ERBC Application Essay – Kristjan Sigurdson**
March 30, 2015

There are three main factors contributing to my interest in attending the NBER Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp (ERBC). First, the preliminary line-up of presenters includes many of the top researchers in the field of entrepreneurship economics and entrepreneurial finance. I value the opportunity to learn face-to-face from these exceptional scholars and to discuss some of the most important papers in their fields of expertise. Second, the ERBC brings together a group of highly motivated PhD students who share many overlapping interests in the study of entrepreneurship. I see my participation in the ERBC as a way to initiate and nurture relationships with the PhD student participants who will become my academic peers and co-authors in the years and decades to come. Third, while I am still at an early stage in my doctoral studies, I am relatively advanced for my year in terms of research and feel that that now is the right time to attend the ERBC in order to strengthen this dimension of my work. Overall, I believe that participation in this year's Boot Camp will benefit me in terms of learning and academic networking, and by strengthening knowledge base on which my current and future research will grow. The remainder of this letter provides brief elaboration of each of the three reasons listed above, including descriptions of my current and future research direction.

This year's Boot Camp boasts a roster of some of the most important scholars in the fields of entrepreneurship economics and entrepreneurial finance. I anticipate that the experience of listening to and engaging in discussion with these individuals will be among the defining moments of my doctoral studies. Some of these researchers have already made a lasting mark on me as a scholar. For instance, Josh Lerner and Antoinette Schoar, in their paper with William Kerr titled *The Consequences of Entrepreneurial Finance: Evidence from Angel Financings,* first introduced me to many of the nuances of the angel financing world. Since reading their paper, I have spent substantial time thinking about the problem of identifying angel investors as a population to be studied, and exploring possible sources of exogenous variation that might be used to identify their effects on the ventures they support and the communities and economies in which they are most active.

Another ERBC presenter whose work I am very familiar with and from whom I am eager to learn directly is Scott Stern. This year I was the teaching assistant for a new course taught at the Rotman School by Joshua Gans titled "Entrepreneurial Strategy." My understanding is that much of the content of the course comes from joint work with Professor Stern and I am eager to learn in greater depth his views on this topic and how certain concepts he has developed in entrepreneurial strategy might be empirically testable. While in mentioning the work of Lerner and Schoar, and Stern, I have provided only two examples of the areas of expertise I am interested to learn from, I am certain that every presentation and my interactions with all of the presenters will contribute powerfully to my academic preparation. I anticipate that entirely new doors and ways of looking at entrepreneurship research will be opened.

In addition to learning from researchers in entrepreneurship on whose work I hope to model my own academic identity, participating in the ERBC presents a unique opportunity to meet fellow PhD students with similar interests and from a variety of

institutions and backgrounds. This past November I had the opportunity to attend the annual Roundtable for Engineering Entrepreneurship Research (REER) hosted by the Georgia Institute of Technology. While I did not present and therefore participated only as an observer, the experience was highly valuable. First, it opened my eyes to the types of research being done by upper-year PhD students in areas related to entrepreneurship. Getting a sense of what others are working on, and of the methods, approaches to identification, data collected, and the calibre of contributions being made by these young scholars was eye opening and inspiring. In addition to watching these other students present, I spoke with many of them during breaks in the conference and at the social events that took place in the evenings. My conversations with student presenters including Abishek Nagaraj (MIT), Sandy Yu (NYU), and Sabrina Howell (Harvard) built the foundations of what will be lasting relationships with these talented individuals. I anticipate building even stronger relationships with the peers I will encounter at ERBC, and this is a powerful motivator underlying my interest in participating.

Finally, in addition to my interests in research on populations of angel investors, and on entrepreneurial strategy discussed briefly in the paragraphs above, it is relevant to discuss both my work as a fellow of the Creative Destruction Lab (a startup accelerator program at the University of Toronto), and my ongoing research on the relationship between team composition and innovation and entrepreneurship. First, for the past two years I have worked for the Creative Destruction Lab (CDL), a program founded by Professor Ajay Agrawal at the University of Toronto. In supporting many aspects of the operations of the program, I have been fortunate to observe many of the often hidden factors leading to the growth or failure of entrepreneurial firms. I anticipate that this program will continue to be intertwined with my research and teaching on entrepreneurship throughout the remainder of my doctoral studies and beyond. Furthermore, I believe that my experience with the CDL positions me to make valuable contributions to the discussions taking place at the ERBC, in that I will be in a position to add insights grounded in the observation of real firms and their challenges.

In addition to my experiences and future research ambitions with the CDL, I am currently collecting data for a study on team composition and performance of aerospace engineering teams. The setting is the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics' (AIAA) Annual Design/Build/Fly Competition. While still in its formative stages, I am on track to make substantial progress on this research prior to the ERBC. This progress will include attending and speaking with participants and organizers at the 19$^{th}$ annual "Fly-Off" hosted in Tucson, Arizona on April 10-12, as well as collecting data on some 15,000 individuals on 1,000 teams that have participated since the contest was first launched in 1996. The timing of the ERBC is ideal in terms of its potential to impact this project, and I very much look forward to the chance to speak with the presenters and with my peers in attendance about this work and how I might improve it.

**KRISTJAN T. SIGURDSON**
PhD Student, Strategic Management
Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto

**Education**

| | |
|---|---|
| 2014-2019 | University of Toronto, Toronto, ON<br>Ph.D. Strategic Management (expected) |
| 2013-2014 | University of Toronto, Toronto, ON<br>Ph.D. Higher Education (transferred prior to completion) |
| 2012-2013 | University of Toronto, Toronto, ON<br>M.A. Higher Education<br>Thesis: "The Rise and Fall of the University of Toronto's Innovations Foundation: Lessons from Canadian Technology Transfer" |
| 2005-2008 | University of British Columbia, Okanagan, BC<br>B.A. International Relations and Spanish |
| 2002-2004 | Mount Royal College, Calgary, AB |

**Refereed Publications**

(1) "Looking under the street light: Limitations of mainstream technology transfer indicators," (with Creso Sá and Andrew Kretz) *Science and Public Policy*, 2015. doi: 10.1093/scipol/scu080

(2) "Pursuing scientific excellence globally: International research collaborations as a policy target," (with Creso Sá and Helen Lasthiotakis) *Higher Education Policy and Management*, 35(6), 2013, pp.612-625.

(3) "Techno-Nationalism and the construction of university technology transfer," (with Creso Sá and Andrew Kretz) *Minerva* 51(4), 2013, pp.443-464.

(4) "Accountability, performance assessment, and evaluation: Policy pressures and responses from research councils," (with Creso Sá and Andrew Kretz) *Research Evaluation*, 22(2), 2013, pp.105-117.

**Other Publications**

(1) "Research and the 'third mission' in light of global events," (with Creso Sá and Andrew Kretz) in Higher education in the BRICS countries, *Higher Education Dynamics*, Vol.44, Eds. S. Schwartzman et al., Springer, 2015, pp.379-398.

(2) "The State of Entrepreneurship Education in Ontario's Colleges and Universities," (with Creso Sá and Andrew Kretz) Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, 2014.

(3) "Clark Kerr's Multiversity and Technology Transfer in the Modern American Research University," *The College Quarterly,* 16(2), 2013.

**Teaching**

| | |
|---|---|
| 2014-2015 | Teaching Assistant for Prof. Ajay Agrawal, Corporate Strategy, RSM2021HS, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON. |
| 2014-2015 | Teaching Assistant for Prof. Joshua Gans, Creative Destruction Lab (Entrepreneurial Strategy), RSM2029HY, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON. |

**Relevant Academic Positions**

| | |
|---|---|
| 2014-present | Research Assistant for Prof. Ajay Agrawal, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON. |
| 2014-present | Research Assistant for Prof. Mitch Hoffman, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON. |
| 2013-present | Research Fellow of the Creative Destruction Lab, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON. |
| 2013-2014 | Research Group Coordinator, Higher Education, Research & Innovation Lab, Ontario |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON. |
| 2012-2014 | Research Assistant for Prof. Creso Sá, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON. |

**Scholarships, Honors, and Awards**

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|---|---|
| 2014 | Ph.D. Fellowship in Honour of James Poapst (Rotman School) |
| 2014 | Director's Fellowship (Rotman School) |
| 2012 | School of Graduate Studies Conference Grant (University of Toronto) |
| 2011 | Invited Judge (Microsoft Partners in Learning Global Forum) |
| 2007 | I.K. Barber School Undergraduate Research Award (University of British Columbia) |
| 2006-2007 | Trek Excellence Scholarship (University of British Columbia) |
| 2003 | Jason Lang Scholarship for Academic Achievement (Alberta Government) |

**Graduate Coursework (Methods)**

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|---|---|
| RSM3001H | Research Methods in Strategic Management |
| RSM3091H | Models and Methods |
| RSM3090H | Econometrics I (reading course) |
| ECO2408H | Econometrics (MA) |
| TPS1820H | Quantitative Research Process & Design |
| TPS1820H | Case Study Research Methods |
| LHA1851H | Survey Methodology |

**Graduate Coursework (Topics)**

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|---|---|
| ECO2060 | Microeconomic Theory II (PhD) |
| ECO2060H | Microeconomic Theory (MA) |
| RSM3091H | Innovation and Technology |
| RSM3005H | Strategic Management Workshop |
| RSM3002H | Strategy and Organizations |
| SOC6517H | Culture and Cognition |
| TPS1806H | Systems of Higher Education |
| TPS1846H | Internationalization of Higher Education in a Comparative Perspective |
| TPS1803H | Recurring Issues in Postsecondary Education |
| TPS1826H | Comparative Higher Education |
| CIE1001H | Introduction to Comparative, International and Development Education |
| LHA1852 | The Entrepreneurial University (reading course) |
| LHA3852H | University Technology Transfer (reading course) |

**Presentations**

| | |
|---|---|
| 2014 | "The state of Entrepreneurship education in Ontario postsecondary education," (with Creso Sá and Andrew Kretz) Policy Research Projects Symposium, Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, Toronto, ON. |
| 2014 | "The impact of university technology transfer indicators on science policy-making in Canada and the European Union," Comparative and International Education Society Annual Conference, Toronto, ON. |
| 2013 | "Benefits for mentors: A case study of formal mentoring for general staff in a university," (with Cynthia Field) Association of for the Study of Higher Education Annual Meeting, St. Louis, MO. |
| 2013 | "The use of performance indicators in Canadian university technology transfer," (with Creso Sá and Andrew Kretz) Association of for the Study of Higher Education Annual Meeting, St. Louis, MO. |

2013 "A comparative analysis of Canadian and American university technology transfer," Joseph P. Farrell Student Research Symposium, Comparative International, and Development Education Centre, Toronto, ON.

2012 "International exposure effects on the institutionalization of university technology transfer and research commercialization activities," (with Creso Sá and Andrew Kretz) Association of for the Study of Higher Education Annual Meeting, Las Vegas, NV.

2012 "The institutionalization of university technology transfer in Canada," (with Creso Sá and Andrew Kretz) Consortium of Higher Education Researchers Annual Conference, Belgrade, Serbia.

**Relevant Professional Positions**

2014-present Consultant, Thalmic Labs, Waterloo, ON.

2012 Consultant, Department of Human Development Education and Culture, Organization of American States, Washington, D.C.

2008-2011 Program Officer, Office of Scholarships, Training and Capacity Development, Department of Human Development Education and Culture, Organization of American States, Washington, D.C.

2008 Intern, Educational Portal of the Americas, Department of Human Development Education and Culture, Organization of American States,

2006-2007 Co-owner, Elbow River Landscaping, Calgary, AB.

2004-2005 Foreman, Commercial Landscape Construction Division, ULS Landscaping and Maintenance, Calgary, AB.

1999-2002 Consultant, HomeLAN Federation (multiplayer videogame startup), Freemont, CA.

**Community Involvement**

2008-2011 Volunteer for the Secretariat for External Relations (organized focus groups and otherwise contributed to overhaul the organization's website, social media strategy, and magazine), Organization of American States, Washington, D.C.

2009 Volunteer organizer, Inter-American Forum on Governance E-Conference, hosted by the Centre for International Governance Innovation, Canadian International Council, and Organization of American States.

2007-2008 Vice-president, UBC Okanagan Political Science Course Union.

**Other Information**

Languages: English (native), Spanish (fluent)

Citizenship: Canadian

Cheer for: Calgary Flames (hockey), Manchester United (soccer), Toronto Blue Jays (baseball), Michigan State Spartans (college football & basketball)

Joseph L. Rotman School of Management
University of Toronto

Rotman

March 28, 2015

Re: Recommendation Letter for **Kristjan Sigurdson** - NBER Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp

Dear Selection Committee,

I am writing in support of Kristjan Sigurdson's application to participate in the ERBC. I am the Peter Munk Professor of Entrepreneurship at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management, a Research Associate at NBER, and will deliver a seminar on the geography of entrepreneurship at the ERBC again this year. I have known Kristjan since he approached me for feedback on his Masters' thesis on university technology transfer in June, 2013. In September 2014 Kristjan began his PhD at the Rotman School in the Strategic Management area. His performance in the program so far has been strong. As his academic supervisor, I am happy to provide a reference for his application to the ERBC. Kristjan is an excellent candidate for the summer boot camp.

Prior to joining our doctoral program, Kristjan completed an MA thesis consisting of an extensive historical case study of technology transfer and academic entrepreneurship taking place at the University of Toronto from 1980 - 2006. He develops a taxonomy of three business model regimes employed over a quarter century at Canada's largest research institution and offers a path-dependency oriented explanation for the evolutionary development of each regime. His master's thesis research not only demonstrates skills in archival data collection, multi-modal data analysis, and scholarly writing, but also a deep interest in and understanding of technology entrepreneurship.

In his doctoral research, Kristian turns his attention to the relationship between team composition and innovation and entrepreneurship. He chose the AIAA Aerospace Contest as his empirical setting. So far he has collected about 15,000 observations of individuals (students and advisors) who participated in the contest. His preliminary analysis indicates there is significant

variation in team performance and in team characteristics such as size, institution quality, gender ratios, advisor experience, and other dimensions. He is developing a theory linking team composition to performance (innovation) and several entrepreneurial outcomes. He is visiting the fly-off contest in Tucson AZ this April in order to search for ideas concerning sources of exogenous variation for the purpose of causal identification. I am optimistic that this line of inquiry will be fruitful.

Overall, Kristjan is a hard worker and a high potential young scholar who I believe will benefit greatly from the opportunity to participate in this year's ERBC. Furthermore, Kristjan is friendly, generous, and genuinely interested in entrepreneurship as evidenced by his outstanding contributions to our applied entrepreneurship program at the Creative Destruction Lab. He will make a significant contribution to the intellectual and collegial atmosphere typical of this annual gathering. Thank you for considering his application.

Sincerely,



Ajay K. Agrawal
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