

ECONOMERTRICS LABORATORY  
*Institute of Business and Economic Research*

[DATE]

[NAME &amp; ADDRESS]

Dear [NAME]:

I would like to invite you to attend a special symposium sponsored by the National Science Foundation and the Econometrics Laboratory at the University of California, Berkeley. The general topic will be the problem of eliciting directly information about people's preferences. Our goal will be to bring together economists and psychologists who share an interest in this topic, but who do not necessarily use the same methods. This will be the fifth in an annual series of such symposia.

The symposium will take place from Tuesday, July 29 through Saturday, August 2, with presentations starting Tuesday afternoon. Happily, the conference begins on the sixtieth birthday of Daniel McFadden. So an additional theme of the symposium will be celebrating this special event. Although the schedule of presentations is not settled, we will probably begin on Tuesday afternoon with some remarks from friends and students and a keynote address from Dan.

We will schedule formal presentation of papers through Friday afternoon, and on Saturday we are planning a special event. In past years, we have taken symposium participants to Yosemite National Park for a weekend of camping and hiking. We want to do something equally fun, but on a one-day scale, leaving Saturday evening free. Our current plan is to take a comfortable bus tour of the wine country, winding up with an afternoon meal in either the Sonoma or Napa Valley.

Within the general topic of eliciting preferences, we are looking for papers related to the problems of direct elicitation and the related problem of how consumers process uncertainty. We are inviting researchers who conduct marketing experiments to get their insights. What does and does not yield useful information? We are also inviting researchers in experimental economics to hear about the effects of incentives and how much "non-money" incentives matter. Such questions are closely related to questions about framing, cueing, and the implicit assumptions that respondents make. Researchers who have worked on such issues are also invited.

The initial list of invited participants is enclosed. If you have suggestions for additional invitations, I welcome them with the understanding that budget constraints will prevent honoring every suggestion. Our goal is to create an opportunity for interaction among a diverse, but commonly focused, group of researchers.

Our funding for this symposium permits us to subsidize travel and accommodation expenses. We are hoping that some people will be able to cover their own costs, so that we can invite some junior researchers, who can then be granted special financial assistance.

Sincerely yours,

Paul A. Ruud  
Professor of Economics

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Enclosure