September 17, 2004

TO:  Students in ARE 433 and ECG 748 going to Washington

FROM:  Barry Goodwin

RE:  Washington Trip Details

The purpose of this memo is to outline some guidelines for our trip. There will be approximately 30 students on the trip so it is important that we are all aware of expectations before we leave. You should be able to use this letter for instructors of other courses as evidence that this trip is a sanctioned University activity. I am grateful for the understanding of other instructors as you will be missing their course at least one time. Please encourage them to call me at 515-4620 should they have questions.

My expectations for this trip are as follows:

1)  I expect you to read this material and understand the schedule.

2)  I expect you to be at each location on time.

3)  I expect you to be courteous and inquisitive to each of our speakers. This means that you should ask questions and show interest in all topics. There likely will be points of view and perspectives presented that you may disagree with. You are to be respectful and considerate of the views of our presenters. Remember that these are very busy professionals that have taken time out of their schedules to make this visit.

4)  I expect you to dress appropriately for the meetings (ties and coats for the men and comparable business attire for the women).

5)  I expect you to use good judgment so that we will have a safe trip (travel in groups at night).

6)  I expect you to have fun and learn!

I hope that the trip will provide you with some further insights into U.S. agricultural policy and how it is made. Also remember that the University is paying for part of this trip. The University expects you to attend all meetings and be on time. If you are sleeping or are absent from any of the meetings you may be asked to pay for the full cost of the trip. I would encourage us to work together to make sure everyone is on time for meetings (i.e., make sure that your friends are up on time and ready to leave with the group).

The schedule is challenging. We begin with speakers at 8:00 am on Thursday morning. You are to proceed to the meeting locations and rooms on your own. Directions will be provided to you once the details are finalized. While you are on this trip, please inform me immediately if there are any problems! I will have my cell phone on at all times—919-740-1028. I need to know of any problems or concerns.
Please keep the extra security issues of DC in mind. This means the less metal you have on you to go through security the better. It also means that we will have to leave earlier than we may like. You should plan on leaving the hotel for the subway at 7:15 am on both Thursday and Friday. As the schedule develops, I will give you additional details.

Our train (Train # 80) leaves Raleigh at 11:20 a.m. on Wednesday, September 29 and arrives at Union Station at 5:20 p.m. We depart Friday at 4:35 p.m. (Train 91) and arrive back in Raleigh at 10:21 p.m. There is limited parking at the Raleigh train station (located downtown on Cabarrus Street). I inquired about the safety of leaving cars there and was told it is relatively safe, but with no guarantees. If anyone does not have transportation to and from the station, let me know ASAP. The trains have a little more space than an airliner for carryon baggage. If you want to check anything, you need to be at the station 45 minutes early. In any case, you should be there by 10:45 or so.

We are staying at the Washington/Chevy Chase Holiday Inn in Chevy Chase, MD (5520 Wisconsin Ave., phone 301-656-1500). The hotel is supposed to be within two blocks of the Friendship Heights Metro Station. This is on the red line (Shady Grove direction). The red line runs to Union Station so getting to the hotel should be easy. I have no idea about the quality of the hotel and I am hoping that the fact that it is a Holiday Inn will guarantee some minimum quality standards. This is supposed to be a very nice part of the city and you will be only a few stops from Dupont Circle on the metro. You may want to study the metro map (you can find a copy at http://www.wmata.com/metrorail/systemmap.cfm). Your hotel room is prepaid by the university. We have 9 rooms for 19 males and 10 females. I propose 5-6 rooms to be shared by males and 3-4 rooms to be shared by females. You will be rooming with up to three other students so you may want to bring a sleeping bag. I’m going to propose that you submit roommate requests to me by email and then I will allocate your room assignments accordingly.

A few of you are considering flying into BWI and taking the MARC down. This is a good way to go but you are on your own. If you do this, you will exit the Southwest terminal at BWI and look for the MARC station bus sign. The station is a 5 minute ride over from the terminal. You can buy your ticket at a kiosk in the station or at a ticket window. The latter is probably better as you can get advice about the best train to take. Amtrak and MARC trains run into Washington every 30-45 minutes. You will need to cross over to the far side of the platform (over the tracks) to get the Washington trains. The MARC trains are cheaper by a few dollars. Be sure you get on the right train—you could end up back in Raleigh. A schedule is available at http://www.mtamaryland.com/services/marc/schedulesSystemMaps/Penn_sch.pdf. Once you get into Union Station, you will take the red line metro toward Shady Grove.

Most of your metro rides will cost $1.20. This should get you to most sightseeing points and to our meetings. In addition, taxis are reasonable in Washington. Most taxi rides will cost around $5. Those who take in some nightlife should strongly consider a taxi for the return – the Subway shuts down at midnight. You do not want to be walking in the city late at night—be smart and never go anywhere alone. You will have a few hours Friday afternoon for sightseeing. You will need to be back to the station in plenty of time for our 4:35 train.

Your expenses for this trip will include the following about $15/day for taxis and metro and about $20/day for meals. I am working on getting some reimbursement in the form of a per-diem. There should be some funds available for this, but we will have to wait and see. There may be other details that we need to cover before the trip.

Above all else, remember that you are representing NCSU on this trip. Leaving a bad impression with any of our speakers could have important negative consequences for the university. I’m excited about the trip and this group—so I have no concerns on this.