The Economic Growth Centre in the Division of Economics School of Humanities and Social Sciences, NTU cordially invites you to a seminar by Ms Ching-Mei Chen

**Speaker:**
Ms Ching-Mei Chen  
*Ph. D. Candidate in Economics*  
*Cornell University*

**Topic:**
"From Bonding to Bridging: Neighborhood Context Effects on Voting Behavior in California"

**Chairperson:**
Associate Professor Chris Sakellariou  
*Division of Economics*  
*School of Humanities and Social Sciences*

**Date:**  
Tuesday, 24 January 2006

**Time:**  
10:30 am - 12:00 noon

**Venue:**  
Executive Seminar Room 8 (Block S3.1-B2-07)  
Nanyang Business School (Southspine 3)  
Nanyang Technological University

**About the Speaker:**
Ms Chen is a Ph. D candidate at Cornell University. Her research interests are in Public Economics, Applied Econometrics and Development Economics.

**Abstract:**
This paper empirically tests for the effects of community context on voters' preferences for public education in California. In the 2000 General Elections, voters in California were faced with a ballot proposition, Proposition 39, also known as the Smaller Classes, Safer Schools and Financial Accountability Act. I establish that a vote in support of this proposition can proxy the support for higher spending on public school facilities at the cost of potential increases in property taxes. Using data from the 2000 California Statement of Vote and the California State Census, I estimate the probability of voting "Yes" on Proposition 39 given the context of the census tract in which the voter resides. Contrary to a large number of empirical studies that find a strictly negative relationship between ethnic diversity and public spending, my results show that preferences for public school spending falls, but then rises after a certain point, with the level of racial fragmentation. This finding is robust to both parametric and semiparametric estimation methods.

**Reservation:**
Admission is free. Please reply to Christina, mailto: achristina@ntu.edu.sg or Tel: 6790-5689 to confirm your attendance.