

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

NEWSLETTER: WINTER 2014



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

ISSUE: WINTER 2014

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POINTS OF INTEREST

- Professors Church, Oxoby, Schlenker and Tracey win dept teaching awards
- Dept welcomes Merrit Penny to the main office as Graduate Program Administrator



Message from the Head

By Dan Gordon

Our Newsletter provides the opportunity to highlight the changes, comings and goings, and successes achieved by our faculty and students during the last academic year. I am pleased to write a few words on the Department of Economics for the academic year 2013-14.

With 34 faculty members, economics is one of the larger departments in the Faculty of Arts. In terms of student numbers we teach about 10,000 students per year and for the current academic year we list 762 majors and 30 honours students. Our graduate program has registered 47 PhD and 22 MA students. Our PhD program is young compared to other economic departments in Canada but as measured by the market we have been very successful in placing our graduates at universities, government and industry.

Our department has made huge strides in the last ten years and is now ranked fifth amongst economic departments in the U15 group of Medical Research Universities in Canada. (January 2014, <http://ideas.repec.org/top/top.canada.html>) (For comparison, the department of economics, University of Alberta is ranked 11th among U15 departments.) However, over all economic institutions ranked in Canada including business schools and federal government agencies Calgary ranked 9th out of 58 agencies scored. It is clear to me our department is well organized and going in the right direction but we must continue the fight in climbing the academic ladder.

During this reporting period we lost to retirement three long-serving Professors in our department; Elizabeth Wilman, Bob Mansell

and Jim Gaisford. Elizabeth is an environmental economist and we are lucky that she has agreed to continue to teach, at least in the short run, the undergraduate environmental economics course. Bob is a policy economist and once retired from the department moved full time to the School of Public Policy. Jim is an international trade economist but has for some time been attached to the Dean's office as Associate Dean Student Affairs. Jim retired from the department to take the Dean's position at Thompson Rivers University in British Columbia.

We are pleased to include four new faculty members to the line up, their introduction follows. We have also added two new limited term instructors, Marian Miles and Doug McClintock to our teaching team. In addition, we have appointed a new Adjunct Professor, Matt Ayres to the department. Matt is an expert on electricity regulation and brings enormous strength to our teaching program in Applied Energy economics. Finally, in conjunction with the Eyes High program at the University of Calgary, we have two Post Docs attached to the department this period, Matt Webb and David Johnson. Matt is part of the energy cluster headed by Professor Scott Taylor and David is a member of the experimental economics group headed by Professor Rob Oxoby.

I would like to highlight a few of our many successes in the department this last year. Scott Taylor, Canada Research Chair in International energy and Environmental economics is the co-leader of the national Economics and Environmental Policy Research network. This network is an ambitious initiative bringing together over 70 leading researchers from across the country to study and develop innovative policies for protecting Canada's environment while simultaneously building a stronger economic future. Aidan Hollis is Vice-President and a Director of Incentives for Global Health, a non-profit that proposes a new way of paying for pharmaceutical innovation by incentivizing the development and delivery of new medicines through pay-for-performance mechanisms. Joanne Roberts is Canada Research Chair in the Economics of Organizations and Associate Editor of the Canadian Journal of Economics. Jared Carbone is a Non-resident Fellow at Resources for the Future (RFF). RFF is an environmental economics and policy research institute in Washington DC. The fellowship is given to leading researchers in academia as an honour and to facilitate collaboration with researchers at RFF. Rob Oxoby is Associate Dean Research, Director of the University of Calgary's Behavioural and Experimental Economic Laboratory, and research fellow of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research and IZA.

Finally, my three-year term as Head of the Department of Economics ends June 30, 2014. The job of Head has been somewhat interesting, occasionally challenging and has forced me to engage in work I thought I would never do. I have had some victories and successes in dealing with senior administration but many lost opportunities. I much appreciate working with the department Manager and Staff during my time in the Big Office. I want to thank the members of the department for working with me the last three years in moving our department forward. I pass the baton and wish my successor the best. Thank you.

Our Newest Faculty Members



Pamela Campa joined the Economics Department in September 2013. Pamela moved to Calgary from Italy through Sweden. She holds an MSc in Economics from Bocconi University and a PhD in Economics from Stockholm University. She is trained as a Political Economist and a Labor Economist, and she does research on issues that span these two fields, and has branched out into the field of Environmental Economics as well. Pamela's research is focused on two topics: She studies what motivates firms to be environmentally responsible. Pamela is also currently studying how gender quotas for the election of local politicians affect the participation of women to politics, their access to position of formal and substantial power, and public expenditures decided by local governments.

Stefan Staubli joined the Department of Economics on January 1, 2014 as an assistant professor. Stefan grew up in Switzerland and did his PhD studies at the University of St. Gallen. Prior to joining the Calgary faculty, Stefan worked two years as an Associate Economist at the RAND Corporation in Washington DC. He has also held positions as a Postdoctoral fellow at the University of Zurich and as a visiting researcher at the University of Maryland. Stefan's research interests are in the areas of public, labor, and health economics. In particular, his current research focuses on the work disincentive effects of disability insurance programs, the impact of Social Security on labor supply and health and the interaction effects among different social insurance programs.



Trevor Tombe joined the University of Calgary's Economics Department in the summer of 2012 and previously held a position as Assistant Professor of Economics at the School of Business and Economics at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario. He received his MA and PhD from the University of Toronto and an undergraduate degree in Finance from Simon Fraser University. His research focuses on the macroeconomic aspects of international trade and, in particular, on the factors influencing a country's or an industry's productivity. His current work looks at the importance of trade in agriculture for poor countries, the effect of the WTO on internal migration flows in China, and the costs of trading between states and provinces within countries.

Atsuko Tanaka joined the Department of Economics as an assistant professor in July 2013. Her fields of study are labor economics and applied microeconomics. She was born in Hayato County, Kagoshima, the southern gateway to Japan. Growing up in Japan, whose labor market is often considered sexist (e.g. “The Economist” Aug 2nd, 2011), she became interested in discrimination in the labor market. She pursued this topic in her doctoral studies, and in 2012 she completed a PhD in Economics at University of Wisconsin-Madison. Statistical discrimination continues to be her major area of interest. She aims at providing a general estimation framework to the literature on statistical discrimination, where empirical work is scarce.



Lucija Muehlenbachs also joined the Department of Economics in January as an assistant professor in energy economics. Before Calgary she was a fellow at Resources for the Future (RFF), the oldest research institute focusing on environmental economics in Washington DC. While at RFF she worked on many energy and environmental policy issues, as well as worked for Obama's oil spill commission after the BP oil spill. She was born and raised in Edmonton and has always been interested in working on topics important to Alberta. She wrote her dissertation on inactive oil wells in Alberta at the University of Maryland's Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. Growing up an Edmontonian, amidst a strong Edmonton-Calgary rivalry, she is now working on calling herself a Calgarian.



Alumni – We Want to Hear from You!!

We want to get in touch with you. If there are any special events and news that you wish to share with your friends and fellow alumni, please drop us a line. Send us your news together with your contact information at econ@ucalgary.ca

For other ways of staying in touch, please check out our alumni website econ.ucalgary.ca/alumni

Post-Doctoral Research in the Department



David Johnson is originally from outside Raleigh, North Carolina. After High School he attended the University of North Carolina at Greensboro where he majored in Economics while wrestling for the university. After a short stint in Copenhagen, Denmark for study abroad he moved to Tallahassee, Florida to do a PhD in economics at Florida State University. After defending his dissertation in August of 2013, he moved to Calgary as an Eyes High Post-doctoral fellow, working under Professor Robert Oxoby.

Matt Webb joined the department this year as an Eyes High Postdoctoral Scholar. Matt is being supervised by M. Scott Taylor during his two year postdoc. Matt returns to the city of his birth after a nearly 30 year absence. He recently earned his PhD in Economics from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. Prior to living in Kingston, Matt lived in the Kitchener-Waterloo area, with short stints in London, Toronto, Montreal, and Gold Coast, Australia. He received a B.A. and a M.A. from Wilfrid Laurier University. Matt's primary interests lie in empirical labour economics and applied econometrics, and he has current research projects in both areas.



Undergraduate Student Awards

The Department is pleased to acknowledge the winner of the **Economics Society of Calgary Medal in Economics** for 2013, **Paul Lim**. This award acknowledges the graduating student from the undergraduate program with the highest distinction in scholarship. Paul is also the recipient of a **Program for Undergraduate Research Experience Award** this summer where he is investigating the relationship between income and environmental degradation. Paul was also awarded the **Hortz Betz Prizes** for Excellence in Microeconomics and Macroeconomics. In the fall of 2013 Paul will be pursuing his doctorate in economics at the University of Toronto.

The **Copithorne Memorial Scholarship** was awarded to **Xiao Dong Liu**; the **Frank Mink Scholarship** went to **Michelle Michelle**; the **40th anniversary scholarship** was given to **Jarett Henry** and the **Fadi Guirgis scholarship** was given to **Jehun Kim**

The Economics Graduate Association



The Economics Graduate Association (EGA) was founded on 1 March, 2013 with three broad objectives. First, to promote and assist the academic pursuits of the students enrolled in the graduate programs of the Department of Economics. Second, to support cultural, social and recreational activities as well as to create an environment to share ideas and thoughts among graduate students. Finally, to create an active network between current graduate students and alumni. The Graduate Students Association supports the development of department graduate associations, and with the continued growth of the economics department's graduate programs this is an

important and exciting step in our department's continued development.

The 2013-2014 Executive of the EGA comprised of:

President: M. Jahangir Alum.

Vice-President Finance: Razieh Zahedi

Vice-President Social: Alaz Munzur

Vice-President Communications: Arezou Zaresani

Vice-President Academic: Kent Fellows



PhD Awards

This year we have two students in the spotlight: **Kent Fellows** and **Jesse Tweedle**. Kent received the **Economics Graduate Student Teaching Award** for his Intermediate Micro lectures last summer. Jesse won the first annual **James D. Gaisford Research** prize for his second year paper titled "How Does Capital Accumulation Contribute to Dynamic Gains from Trade?" Congratulations to both!

The 2013 Melissa Road Race & the 8th Annual McRae Cup



Each year, 5000 runners head up to Banff to participate in the Melissa's Road Race, with a 10K race for 3500 participants and a 21K race for the remaining 1500. Also each year, the University of Calgary's Department of Economics forms teams of two and competes in the 10K race; to the team with the lowest combined time goes the coveted McRae Cup. The department was well represented at the Race, with 12 participants in six teams. Despite the (very) cold weather, we had great runs followed by a lunch at the Juniper Lodge organized by Chris Bruce.

The eighth annual McRae Cup was awarded to Kunio Tsuyuhara and Waleed Al-Rabeh on September 28th, 2013. Their team clocked in an amazing combined time of 86 minutes and 31 seconds. Kunio (at 40 minutes and 58 seconds) came first among all participants in the department. Not only that, but he came in 22nd out of all 5000 runners and 10th in his age/gender category! He has to watch out though, as Trevor Tombe – his arch rival, whose drive to defeat Kunio is matched only by his inability to do

so – was only 2 minutes and 3 seconds behind. In third place for individual times was Waleed, at 45 minutes and 33 seconds! The best performance of any economics runner within their respective category was Julie Suffield. She ranked third, at 51 minutes and 38 seconds.

The runner up team was Jim Gaisford and teammate Fred, at only 7 minutes behind the leaders. We all look forward to Jim returning annually from BC to compete in future Melissa races. In third place, Jared Carbone and Yutaro Sakai clocked in 3 minutes later. Yutaro had a great run, despite an unfortunate computer glitch that left him without a chip-time; his trusty wrist-watch clocked him at 55 minutes and 11 seconds. A final honorable mention goes to Chris Bruce, who – thanks to his strategy of giving it his all on the downhill – placed 22nd in his category.

The ninth annual McRae Cup will be awarded following the 2014 Melissa's Road Race on September 27th, 2014. We anticipate more runners – and more friendly competition – than ever.



Rocky Mountain Empirical Trade (RMET) Conference



This spring, the Department of Economics is proud to host its 5th annual empirical trade conference in Banff Alberta, Canada – know as the Rocky Mountain Empirical Trade Conference (RMET). The conference will be held at the beautiful Banff Centre May 16-18, 2014.



This conference is part of a broader network of researchers conducting research at the frontier of empirical international trade. The network is called the Forum for Research in Empirical International Trade (FREIT). FREIT is an international organization dedicated to

furthering research in the field of empirical international economics (<http://www.freit.org/index.html>).

The conference brings together 25-30 researchers for 2 ½ days of paper presentations. Unlike larger conferences where there are multiple sessions and each speaker gets 15 minutes or so to speak in front of a few people – everyone attending the conference gives full attention to each paper presented and each presenter gets to spend one hour presenting and discussing their paper. This focused format means presenters get very good comments and discussion on their work and it advances their work considerably. One of the most important aspects of our conference is that we always pick the top graduate student paper and we cover that student's expenses for attending the conference.



The conference is organized jointly with colleagues from UBC, University of Victoria, University of Alberta and now University of Toronto. Come out and join us – you can register on the FREIT web site.

Consider Supporting the Department

With the support of alumni, friends, and benefactors the Department of Economics has successfully established a number of scholarships and student prizes over the last few years. These include the Economics Alumni Graduate Scholarship, the Stephen G. Peitchinis Memorial Graduate Recruitment Scholarship, the Horst Betz Prizes for Excellence in Economics, and the 40th Anniversary Undergraduate Alumni Scholarship in Economics.

The Department of Economics Annual Fund provides the Department with the flexibility to respond to opportunities and the ability to sponsor strategic initiatives that benefit students and the Department. For instance in both of the last two years the Department has provided a travel subsidy for economics majors who were selected to participate in the Rotman International Trading Competition at the University of Toronto.

Gifts to the Department of Economics Annual Fund and Contributions to the endowment for the Stephen G. Peitchinis Memorial Graduate Recruitment Scholarship can also be made online by credit card at the department website:

<http://econ.ucalgary.ca/donation>

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