

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

NEWSLETTER: WINTER 2015



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

ISSUE: WINTER 2015

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Message from the Head	1
2014 Student Awards.....	3
Job Market Success	5
Faculty Honors	5
Alumni News.....	6
Spotlight on PhD Student Research	6
Department Events.....	8

IMPORTANT DATES

- March 6, 2015 - Distinguished Lecture: John A. List, University of Chicago
- March 6, 2015 - Graduate Program Open House



Message from the Head

By Ken J. McKenzie

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the most recent Newsletter for the Department of Economics. This is my second time in the “big office”, having previously done the job for three years from 2007-2010, and I can tell you that in the intervening four year period things have changed a lot.

Already one of the strongest research departments in the country, the Department has continued in its quest to move further up the rankings. In this regard, we welcomed four new assistant professors to the department last year; they were highlighted in the previous Newsletter. This group has already made a huge impact in the department and we anticipate more of the same in the future. We are also in the enviable position of being able to hire three new faculty members at the associate level this year. As of the writing of this Newsletter, the department is hard at work in this regard, as we seek to fill positions in the following fields: macroeconomics, environmental economics, and applied microeconomics.

2014 also saw some departures from the department. We were sorry to see Jared Carbone leave us for a position at the Colorado School of Mines. Ron Kneebone has been seconded on a full time basis to the School of Public Policy, but we still see him kicking around the halls on the fourth floor from time to time. Also, long serving department member Chris Bruce retired from the Department on January 1 of this year. Chris joined the department way back in 1973 (when Tony Orlando and Dawn were at the top of the hit parade) and we wish him all the best in his well-deserved retirement.

We were also saddened to hear of the death of Frank Anton. Frank was one of the original members of the Department of Economics at the University of Calgary, and served as its first department head.

We have continued to grow our program at both the graduate and undergraduate level. At the undergraduate level we have 851 economics majors (27 of which are honours students). We have 52 Ph.D. students and 33 M.A. students enrolled in our graduate program, which is emerging as one of the larger programs in the country. Our graduate students continue to be well placed in the job market, as is highlighted later in the Newsletter.

Finally, I would like to thank my predecessor, Dan Gordon, for all of the work he did in his three year stint as department head. The department was in very good shape when he finished his term. I can only hope not to make too big a mess of things during my time in the job.

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

- **Our Department** is a vibrant, research focused environment for both faculty and students. Our Faculty have published in the very top journals in the field, including the American Economic Review, the Journal of Political Economy, and the Review of Economic Studies. Many have served in elected offices in the Canadian Economics Association and other professional societies within the discipline and as policy advisors to government. Many faculty members have served on prominent editorial boards, including those for the American Economic Review, the Canadian Journal of Economics, and Canadian Public Policy.
- We have a large **Undergraduate Program** with over 7000 undergraduates enrolled in courses offered by the department, making economics one of the most popular majors at the University of Calgary. Undergraduates also frequently participate in research projects supervised by the faculty in the department.
- **Our Graduate Program** offers both Thesis-Based and Course-Based MA Degrees and a PhD degree. In a typical year, we enroll approximately 20 students to our MA programs and 10 students to the PhD program. Our programs draw an extremely diverse group of students from across Canada and around the world.
- **Our curriculum** is consistent with the level of rigor and the design of leading economics graduate programs in North America. However, our smaller program size affords our students more attention from faculty and more opportunities to pursue their particular research interests.
- **Our PhD program** graduates have had high success rates in terms of obtaining tenure-track academic appointments - including, among others, the University of Alberta, Queen's University, University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, and Georgia Tech. Many graduates of **our MA Program** have gone on to PhD study in the world's leading Economics Departments in Canada and the United States. They have also gone on to find prominent positions in government, banking, and industry.

OUR STUDENTS

2014 James D. Gaisford Research Prize

By Akio Yamazaki



I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the research activity committee members for selecting my paper for the James D. Gaisford research award. I am truly humbled and honored to have been chosen for this award knowing that there were many qualified papers. I cannot begin to describe how much I appreciate support from faculty members, peers, and my wife, especially my advisors, Jared C. Carbone and M. Scott Taylor.

The idea for this paper was stimulated by many conversations I had with Jared Carbone while I was his research assistant in my 2nd year. During the fall term, I had an opportunity to compose a research proposal for one of my field courses. Even though the research idea was not formulated entirely at that time, this opportunity pushed me to think about how to turn this idea into a paper. By the summer, I had enough results to present my paper at the departmental seminar and apply for conferences. Presenting my paper in front of different audience was challenging, but it enabled me to improve the quality of my paper. I strongly believe that taking advantage of our very collegial environment in the department made this success possible in my research career.

I am currently working on the extension of my 2nd year paper, investigating the effect of British Columbia's carbon tax on business performances. I hope to continue researching various environmental policies to better inform the public about the consequences and help designing the future environmental policies.

2014 Graduate Student Teaching Award

By Yutaro Sakai



It is such an honor to receive this award. I was very lucky to have supportive, friendly, and engaged students and to have the generous support of Marian Miles, the instructor of the course. If there was anything that made me a good instructor, it was my attempt to get to know my students.

Before the semester began, I met with Ms. Miles to discuss the objective of the course and to learn about the student profile. In the first class, I gave students an anonymous mini test to get an idea of how much they remember basic statistic concepts and math. I also spent some time reviewing basic material as it turned out students had forgotten almost everything. I also decided to give review questions in every class to emphasize important points from the previous classes, which many students seemed to appreciate.

I think when instructors make an effort to understand their students' needs, students appreciate the effort and the classroom becomes a very productive space for both students and instructors.

Vanier Scholarship: A Game Changer

By Gustavo Caballero



Almost two years ago I received some very exciting news: I had been chosen to be one of the Vanier Scholars by the SSHRC. I was ecstatic and honored. This meant not only great financial support, but also recognition of my research agenda on understanding the reasons for persistent extreme poverty.

I come from Colombia, and until three years ago I had spent most of my life there. My country is a developing country which has seen significant reductions in the incidence of extreme poverty. However, we still have more than 10% of our citizens living in very difficult conditions. As advances in the fight against extreme poverty become harder and Colombia's level of economic development approaches that of the developed world, the question remains as to whether there is a cap on the possible reduction of extreme poverty. In Canada and US, more than 10% of the citizens are extremely poor to certain degree; though slightly different from the extreme poverty of the developing world, many still live with hunger, without a home and lacking basic capabilities.

With the hope that my country continues its process of becoming a developed country, I am now narrowly focused in understanding the determinants of redistribution in developed countries in order to embrace the possibility of fully overcoming the problem of extreme poverty.

"The Vanier Scholarship has been a game changer for me. It has allowed me to exclusively focus on my research, to widen my academic network and to present my preliminary work outside of the University of Calgary."

The Vanier Scholarship has been a game changer for me. It has allowed me to exclusively focus on my research, to widen my academic network, and to present my preliminary work outside of the University of Calgary. It has also given a boost to my Academic and personal motivation. I hope my story serves as motivation for my peers to also apply and to stop by my office anytime for help with their applications.

Gustavo Caballero is a Ph.D. Student at the Department of Economics.

Economics Job Market Success in 2013-2014

After years of dedicated hard work, studying and conducting graduate research, our PhD students enter into an exciting and pivotal part of their graduate studies experience: the job market. Our graduates have been very successful in finding excellent academic and non-academic jobs. Our students have found Assistant Professor Positions at schools such as Queen's University, University of Alberta, Georgia Tech, University of Wisconsin, Nanjing University, and the University of Leicester, while others have pursued careers in the private sector, think-tanks and government. In 2013/14, we had another strong group of candidates who interviewed widely, and had a number of excellent fly-outs to good universities (University of Waterloo, Carnegie Mellon).

In the end, all of our candidates got tenure track positions:

Liang (Charles) Chen: Assistant Professor Wuhan University, China

Rui Wan: Assistant Professor Nanjing University, China

Fatih Yilmaz: Assistant Professor ADA University, Azerbaijan

Congratulations to you all! It is great to see your hard work pay off. We are proud of your accomplishments and hope you stay in touch and visit often!

OUR FACULTY

Faculty Honors



Scott Taylor became a Fellow of The Royal Society of Canada in November 2014. The Citation that was read as Scott crossed the stage to add his name and signature to the role of Canadian scholars who have received this great honour in the last 150 years reads as follows:

“Scott Taylor has contributed more to our understanding of the international trade dimension of the sustainability issues that we face than anyone in the world, seeking answers to questions like the following: Is international trade good or bad for the environment?

How do we measure and assess the environmental impacts of globalization? How will the burden of climate change be shared? Answers are incomplete, but much of what we do know about them is attributable to Scott Taylor's research.”

In the course of putting this nomination together the following list of Scott's 15 most important contributions was compiled. All of these pieces can be accessed at <http://econ.ucalgary.ca/profiles/m-scott-taylor>. Congratulations Scott!

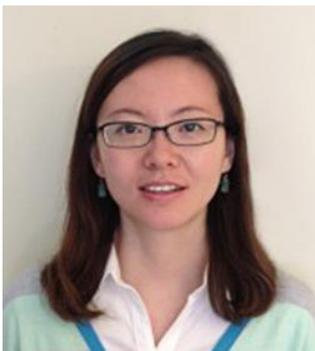


Rob Oxoby was awarded the Killiam Annual Professorship – an award given to only five University of Calgary faculty members. This award is given to professors who have demonstrated excellence in teaching and researching for a minimum of 10 years while still serving their academic discipline and community outside of the university. Rob received the award for his interdisciplinary research between economics and psychology, his expert research and teaching in applied micro and behavioral economics, and his volunteer work for children with special needs. We are very proud of you Rob!

OUR ALUMNI

Spotlight on Ph.D. Student Research: Pollution and Trade

A thesis by Economics Graduate Rui Wan



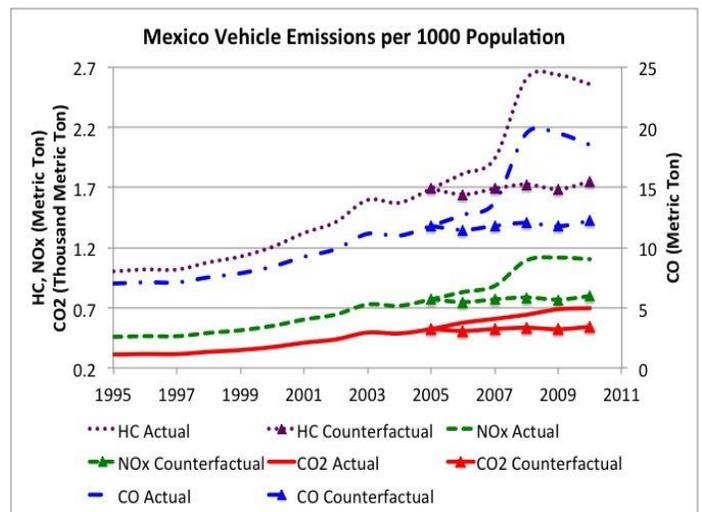
The UofC Economics Department has a strong commitment to fostering the development of original and high quality research by its graduate students. Rui Wan (supervised by Dr. Scott Taylor) convocated this summer after defending her PhD thesis entitled "The Pollution Haven Hypothesis Revisited."

Rui's thesis utilizes cutting theoretical and empirical methods to analyze the effect of trade (driven by countries' differences in environmental regulations) has on the local and global environment when pollution is generated from consumption. She uses a mathematical model of trade in the automotive sector including cross border movements of new and

used automobiles.

The model identifies three channels through which used-car imports can affect aggregate emissions in exporting and importing countries: changes in fleet size, changes in fleet composition, and emission intensity differences across countries. She then employs empirical techniques to decompose estimates of aggregate emissions into these three channels.

Using a simple two county case, Rui finds that the country with relatively lax environmental regulations imports dirty used cars. Importing used cars enlarges the fleet size in this country and shifts the consumption towards older cars. But this trade also has a channel to lower car emissions in this country, since



imported cars are cleaner than the domestic cars they replace. She then examines these conclusions using data from the United States and Mexico. Mexico imported 6 million used cars from 2005 to 2010, which raised car emissions of CO₂ and other major pollutants (CO, HO, NO_x) from Mexico by over 20%. This was mainly due to a larger fleet size, and the effect of which dominated the replacement effect discussed above.

Rui Wan has accepted a position as an Assistant Professor, Business School, Nanjing, China. Rui received her Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Calgary in 2014.

An Update from the (not so) Far North

By Jevan Cherniwchan



After the job market last year I often joked that I travelled 30,000 km just to end up 300 km away, but at that time I don't know if I could have imagined a better landing spot. Not only is the Alberta School of Business a great business school, it is home to a number of economists with research interests that overlap my own, making it an incredibly stimulating work environment. There are also many economists in other departments on campus, meaning there are lots of opportunities to talk about research. Teaching has been great too; this semester I am teaching a course on International Business in the MBA program. All in all, I've really enjoyed my first few months at the University of Alberta.

The transition from graduate student to faculty member has been relatively seamless.

“Whether it has been starting new research projects or prepping for courses, the advice and guidance that I received during graduate school from my advisors and other faculty has proved invaluable. This foundation has contributed to a great start in my new career.”

While my new colleagues in the business school at the U of A have really helped me to get settled into my new position, I also think that the training that I received while I was at the University of Calgary has made the leap much less painful than it could have been. Whether it has been starting new research projects or prepping for courses, the advice and guidance that I received during graduate school from my advisors and other faculty has proved invaluable. This foundation has contributed to a great start in my new career.

Jevan Cherniwchan is an assistant professor of Marketing, Business Economics & Law in the Alberta School of Business at the University of Alberta. His research primarily focuses on international trade and the environment. Jevan received his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Calgary in 2013. For more information on Jevan's research, please visit his website: <https://sites.google.com/site/jevancherniwchan/>

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 us and fellow alumni, or if you want attend any of our events 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: <http://econ.ucalgary.ca/node/1003>

OUR EVENTS

Inaugural 2014 Empirical Microeconomics Workshop



This spring the Department of Economics hosted its first annual Empirical Microeconomics Workshop. The conference was held at the beautiful Banff Centre on September 20-21, 2014. The aim of this year's workshop was to bring researchers together to present and discuss state-of-the-art methods and applications in the field of structural microeconometrics. For this inaugural conference, Professor John Rust from Georgetown University and Professor Victor Aguirregabiri from the University of Toronto were the

keynote speakers. The conference brought together some 50 researchers for the one and a half days of paper presentations.

2015 Distinguished Lecture – John A. List

March 6 – MacEwan Ballroom – 4:00 p.m.



Join us for the 7th Distinguished Lecture in Economics: “Using Field Experiments to Make the World a Better Place.” Each year we invite a top economist to Calgary to lecture on an important public policy issue. This year's lecturer [John List](#) is one of the world's leading experts on experimental economics. List has pioneered work using field experiments in which he developed scientific methods for testing economic theory directly in the marketplace. His work has provided insight on such issues as pricing behavior, market structure, the valuation of nonmarketed goods and services, the impact of environmental regulation, the economics of charitable giving, and the impact of incentives on education and weight loss. In his lecture, Professor List will showcase some of his recent field experiments that shed insights on why women earn less money

than men, why inner city schools continue to fail, why people discriminate, and how we can use field experiments to make the world a better place.

2014 Graduate Program Open House



Gillian Petit, Laura Dick, Rehana Begum, Kent Fellows, Michael Ata

On the 14th of March, the Department of Economics hosted the 2014 Graduate Program Open House. During this day-long event, prospective students learnt about our University and our Department, listened to presentations by our Faculty, and attended the Department of Economics Distinguished Lecture.

The 2015 Open House will take place on March 6th.

Inaugural Alumni Conference



Itzi Lazkano, Olena Ivus

On March 15, 2014 the Department of Economics hosted its first Alumni Conference. The conference included sessions on trade, climate change, intellectual property protection, and environmental policy. Economics alumni **Jevan Cherniwchan** (Alberta School of Business), **Olena Ivus** (Queen's School of Business), **Itziar Lazkano** (University of Wisconsin Milwaukee), and **Jennifer Winter** (The School of Public Policy, University of Calgary) presented their work to faculty and graduate students. Economics PhD students **Younes Ahmadi**, **Alaz Munzur**, **Yutaro Sakai**, and **Shan Wan** provided thoughtful comments.

Our Annual Christmas Party



Furzsina Mayer, Blake Shaffer, Omotooke Odeniyi, Gillian Petit, Qionгда Zhao, Junxiao Ma, Wei Dai



Eugene Choo, J-F Wen, Pamela Campa, Gabriel Wen, Curtis Eaton, Joanne Roberts, Jennifer Winter, Trevor Tombe

For the second year in a row the Department held its annual Christmas party at MacDonald Hall on the SAIT campus. Organized by Curtis Eaton and Members of the Economics Graduate Student Association (EGA), this year's party once again included great food and lots of fun. Our graduate students held an "awards ceremony" presenting fun and humorous awards to the faculty.

Consider Supporting the Department of Economics

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: (1) The Economics Alumni Graduate Scholarship, (2) the Stephen G. Peitchinis Memorial Graduate Recruitment Scholarship, (3) the Horst Betz Prizes for Excellence in Economics, and (4) the 40th Anniversary Undergraduate Alumni Scholarship in Economics.

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 by credit card at the department website: <http://econ.ucalgary.ca/home/giving> or by contacting the Department Head.

Contact Information

How to find us

Department of Economics
Social Sciences Building, [Room 454](#)
Phone: (403) 220-5857
Fax: (403) 282-5262
Email: econ@ucalgary.ca

Mailing address

Department of Economics
The University of Calgary
2500 University Dr. N.W.
Calgary, AB, T2N 1N4
Canada

Contributions

Editor in Chief: Dr. Eugene Choo
Editing: Julie Suffield
Formatting: Deniz Ferhatoglu