

# UCR Economics Newsletter

September  
2018



## Chair's Welcome

The Department of Economics is pleased to launch its inaugural newsletter. We hope to stay in closer touch with our alumni, emeriti faculty, and friends.

The Department has grown tremendously in recent decades without sacrificing the quality of the education that we deliver. When I arrived at UCR over twenty years ago, we only had 200 economics majors. We now have 1200! We provide our students with a first-rate education, and prepare them for rewarding careers and graduate school. Our Ph.D. program is strong, and our students continue to get good jobs and publish high quality research. We have hired many outstanding faculty in recent years, and are proud of the contributions they have made to our teaching and research missions.

In these pages, we are excited to share our good news with you, and plan to do so on a regular basis from now on. Please stay in touch with us, and let us know how you are doing.

Steven M. Helfand



## Special Thanks to Aman Ullah and David Malueg



**Professor Aman Ullah** stepped down as Chair of the Department of Economics in June, 2017, after having served for nine years. The faculty, staff and students in Economics are grateful for his dedication and skill in guiding the Department during this period. It was a decade marked by turbulence due to the Great Recession, and a changing of the guard in the Department—nine Full Professors retired and more than a dozen new faculty were hired. During this time, Professor Ullah continued to be an exceptionally productive scholar. In the past decade, he has published two edited books and more than three dozen refereed journal articles. He has

also been recognized for the many outstanding contributions he has made to our profession. Recently, he was named as a Fellow of the Indian Econometrics Society in 2016, a Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society in 2012, and had Volume 36 of the book series *Advances in Econometrics* dedicated to his work: "Essays in Honor of Aman Ullah." We are honored to have him among our ranks, as he is an inspiration for us all.

**Professor David Malueg** retired after 10 years in the Department. As a colleague, he was the proverbial good citizen who performed every administrative duty assigned to him with good grace, diplomatic skill, fairness, and wisdom. As a teacher, he ably managed the graduate microeconomic theory sequence, and taught his own courses with admirable precision of thought and articulation. As a supervisor, he introduced thesis students to the art of building sound and simple models and to the science of analyzing their properties, and was consistently supportive. As a researcher, he was an internationally recognized expert in applied mechanism design theory, including the design of contests to elicit effort and the design of charitable contribution mechanisms to maximize revenue. His friendship, decency, wit, and consummate professionalism will be sorely missed. We wish him all the best for an active, healthy, and fruitful retirement.



Chancellor's  
Distinguished Speaker  
Dr. Raj Chetty



On December 1, 2017, the department was honored to welcome the Chancellor's Distinguished Speaker, Dr. Raj Chetty, Professor of Economics at Harvard University. Dr. Chetty spoke to a standing-room-only audience in the University Theater about his work on the relationship between college attendance and income mobility. Many students at UCR are from families in the lowest quintile of the income distribution in the United States. Dr. Chetty's research finds that UCR is one of the most successful universities in moving a relatively large fraction of these students into the highest income quintile 15 years after graduation.

Before Dr. Chetty's visit concluded, the Department was fortunate to talk with him in a smaller setting. The discussion revolved around extensions of his earlier talk on income mobility, and also touched on upcoming projects related to social media. As the winner of the John Bates Clark Medal (awarded annually to the best economist under 40 years old), Dr. Chetty was able to provide unique insight and advice to faculty and graduate students in the Department.



**Associate Professor Ozkan Eren, 2018**

Dr. Eren received his Ph.D. from Southern Methodist University in 2007. His research lies at the intersection of labor economics, education and crime. His work has been published in top journals such as the *Journal of Labor Economics*, the *Journal of Applied Econometrics* and *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*. At UCR, he will be teaching Empirical Research Methods and the Economics of Education.

**Assistant Professor Ruoyao Shi, 2017**

Dr. Shi is an econometrician who received her Ph.D. from UCLA in 2017. She has published in *Econometrics*, and is working on topics related to the estimation of nonparametric models, and estimators that are robust to misspecification. In her first year at UCR, she taught Econometrics to both undergraduates and first-year graduate students.

**Assistant Professor, Sarojini Hirshleifer, 2016**

Dr. Hirshleifer is a development economist who received her Ph.D. from UCSD in 2016. She has published in *The Economic Journal*, and does research on incentives, firms, human capital accumulation and productivity in developing countries. At UCR she teaches Development Economics to graduate and undergraduate students.

**Assistant Professor, Carolyn Sloane, 2016**

Dr. Sloane is a labor economist who received her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 2016. She does research on wage inequality, persistence of nonemployment, and the effects on Congressional staff of restrictions on lobbying employment. She has taught classes on Women and the Labor Market for undergraduates and Labor Demand for graduate students.

**Assistant Professor, Yang Xie, 2016**

Dr. Xie received his Ph.D. from UCB in 2016. He has broad research interests in comparative, political and public economics, as well as in the Chinese economy. He has published in the *Journal of Comparative Economics* and the *Journal of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists*. He has taught Microeconomic Theory to graduate students and Comparative Economics to undergraduates.

**Assistant Professor of Teaching, Joab Corey, 2016**

Dr. Corey is a public economist who received his Ph.D. from West Virginia University in 2009. He spent 7 years at Florida State University before coming to UCR. He currently teaches Introduction to Microeconomics and Macroeconomics, as well as World Economic History. He has published in *Economic Freedom of North America* and has a chapter in the *International Handbook on Teaching and Learning Economics*.

**Assistant Professor of Teaching, Bree Lang, 2016**

Dr. Bree Lang is an urban economist who received her Ph.D. from UC Santa Barbara in 2010. After six years at Xavier University, she has taught Introduction to Microeconomics, Intermediate Microeconomic Theory and International Trade at UCR. Her research specializes in subsidized housing and has been published in *Regional Sciences and Urban Economics*, *National Tax Journal* and *Journal of Housing Economics*.

**Assistant Professor of Teaching, Matt Lang, 2016**

Dr. Matt Lang is a health economist who received his Ph.D. from UC Santa Barbara in 2010. Following six years at Xavier University, he has taught Introduction to Econometrics, Health Economics and Introduction to Macroeconomics at UCR. His research on mental health, crime and education has been published in *Health Economics*, *The Economic Journal* and the *Southern Economic Journal*.



# Department News

## 2018 Ph.D. Student Placements

Neha Agrawal  
Assistant Professor  
University of Otago, New Zealand

Ali Bagherpour  
Data Scientist  
Fannie Mae

Miroslav Grabovski  
Assistant Professor  
University of Hawaii-Manoa

Sungjun Huh  
Assistant Professor  
Marquette University

Jonathan Kurzfield  
Visiting Assistant Professor  
Bates College

Tasneem Raihan  
Financial Economist  
A2F Consulting

Evan Wigton-Jones  
Assistant Professor  
Husson University

Hao Xu  
Economist  
Ford Motor Company

Zhi Zhao  
Assistant Professor  
Southwestern University of Finance  
and Economics  
Chengdu, China

## Undergraduate Spotlight Hadi Bagchehsarai ('18)

Hadi Bagchehsarai graduated from UCR in the winter of 2018 with a degree in Economics. He currently works as a Business Analyst at California Steel Industries, Inc. in Fontana, California. Half of Hadi's typical day is spent learning about changes in the steel market. Hadi also investigates world trade data from the US Census, Department of Commerce or Customs and Border Protection. Using SQL coding, he builds reports that help explain trade trends, discover foreign material in the market or how tariffs and quotas will affect quantity and price. When asked about how his economics training applies to his current job, Hadi said, "All the tools and data I use have one main purpose: To help make better decisions. I realized the point of my work is not about just grabbing information to keep in a spreadsheet, but to help others make an informed decision, whether they are an account representative or the president of the company."

## Patrick Billiter ('93)

On May 16th, Patrick Billiter (UCR Economics, '93) gave a talk to over 50 students entitled "From UCR Economics to the Pinnacle of Global Finance." He shared advice on how to leverage their economics degree into a successful career in business. Following his presentation, Mr. Billiter met with a small group of graduating seniors. His timely advice was immediately used by the graduating seniors as they begin to navigate the job market.

## Future Graduate Students

Pete Pridanonda, Johns Hopkins, MS

Chandler Reilly, George Mason, PhD

Henry Santiago, Cal Poly, SLO, MS

## 2018 Academic Excellence Award

Each year the department recognizes one student in each program that has excelled in academics and research. In 2018, the department recognized:

Chandler Reilly, Business Economics

Elizabeth Gillete, Economics-Administrative Studies

Wesley Leary, Economics

Katrina Uyehara, Economics/Law and Society

## Economics Orientation Guest Speaker

On May 9th, the Economics department held its second-annual orientation for undergraduates. The keynote speaker for the orientation was Dr. Elaine Shen from the South Coast Air Quality Management District. Dr. Shen took students through the process of evaluating the benefits and costs of improved air quality. Her talk helped everyone--from curious first-year students to graduating seniors--to see how economics can be used in an important real-world setting.



## Thanks to Tanya Wine

Tanya served as the Financial & Administrative Officer for the Departments of Economics and Political Science for over ten years. In the summer of 2018, she accepted a position as Academic Resources Manager in the CHASS Dean's office. Prior to Economics, Tanya had worked in the Bourns College of Engineering and was then the HR/AP manager for the UCR School of Business. While in Economics, she was appointed as a Subject Matter Expert on the finance team that prepared the campus for conversion to the new payroll/personnel system UCPath. Tanya did a superb job as the administrative and financial leader of our department. We will miss her greatly, and wish her the best of luck in her new position.

## Department Contact Information

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