Department of Economics News

A Summer of Economic Discovery

By: Ngan Tran

Ngan Tran: first row, fourth from the left

2024-2025

Inside

This past summer, I attended the Price Theory Summer Camp hosted by the Becker Friedman Institute for Economics at the University of Chicago. As a fourth-year PhD student focusing on labor and trade, I found the camp to be a valuable setting to revisit fundamental models in price theory and examine their broader implications for policy and research.

The week-long program brought together PhD students from across the globe to study the principles of price theory and their applications to policy and market issues. Led by distinguished faculty from the University of Chicago, each session emphasized both theoretical rigor and the importance of questioning assumptions and exploring diverse perspectives.

What resonated with me most was how the camp provided new ways to think about foundational concepts like supply, demand, and gains from trade.

Beyond the academic content, the camp encouraged exchanges between participants, allowing us to discuss research challenges and insights informally. I was grateful for the chance to connect with peers who are working on innovative research across various fields. The camp also included social activities that helped us connect outside of the classroom; one highlight was the Lake Michigan Fireworks Dinner Cruise where we enjoyed an evening of networking against the Chicago skyline and fireworks display.

Overall, the Price Theory Summer Camp provided a thoughtful and focused approach to economic theory that I believe will benefit my future research. The experience has helped refine my approach to empirical work and broadened my view of price theory's relevance to complex economic issues.

Letter from the Department Head

Greetings from the Department Head

As we near the end of another eventful year, we are delighted to present the latest edition of our Economics Department Newsletter. This publication is designed to keep you updated on the exciting developments, achievements, and opportunities within our department. Whether you are a current student, an alumnus, or a supporter of our programs, we hope you find this newsletter informative and engaging.

We are thrilled to welcome a new member to our faculty this year. Starting in January, Professor Laura Bakkensen will join us as the Mikesell Professor of Environmental and Natural Resource Economics. The chair, established in 1998 through a generous gift from former faculty member Professor Raymond F. Mikesell (1913-2006), was first held by Professor Trudy A. Cameron until her retirement in Spring 2021.

Professor Bakkensen, an environmental economist, employs applied microeconomics and econometric techniques to study the economics of natural disasters. Her research focuses on identifying current and future risks, as well as evidence of adaptation to damages and fatalities worldwide. Her work informs policy on insurance regulation, post-disaster aid, warnings and risk information, and public adaptation projects. Professor Bakkensen holds a Ph.D. in Environmental and Natural Resource Economics from Yale University, an M.Sc. in Environment and Development from the London School of Economics, and a B.A. in Economics from Whitman College. In 2017, she received a National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Gulf Research Program Early-Career Research Fellowship. She has also been a visiting researcher at the Euro-Mediterranean Center for Climate Change in Venice, Italy, and received a Fulbright Teaching Grant to South Korea. Originally from Portland, she looks forward to returning to Oregon with her family this winter to join the UO.

Over the past year the department had continued to invest in our students and faculty through curriculum revisions, innovative courses, and expanded research support. And this year, we are anticipating a successful hiring season as we seek to fill an assistant professor position in industrial organization.

Thank you for your continuing support which enables us to achieve far more than we ever could alone. From all of us in the economics department, we wish you a wonderful holiday season and Happy New Year!

Shankha Chakraborty, Department Head

Faculty Notes

Bruce Blonigen continues in his role as the Edward Maletis Dean of the Lundquist College of Business

Alfredo Burlando is a development economist who primarily studies financial instruments available to people in low- and middle-income countries. He is returning from a year-long leave of absence which he spent with his family in Milan, Italy. In the past year, he started three randomized control trials on consumer finance products in Eastern and Southern Africa and published a paper exploring the role of peers in spreading health messages during the COVID-19 emergency in the *Journal of Development Economics.*

Jose Carreno-Garcia had a baby girl in the previous year. The family has already three kids: Gabriel, Sofia, and Lucia, with the ages of 4, 2, and 10 months. Jose keeps working on his research on empirical macroeconomics, navigating in between submissions, resubmissions, finished drafts and ongoing projects.

Shankha Chakraborty's research spans multiple areas in macro-development. He has recently been working on gender norms, resource allocation within the family, and the marriage market returns to female education in developing countries. During the past year, he published research on economic epidemiology and female labor force participation. He has served on the selection committee of an international conference, and continues to serve as specialized co-editor at *Economic Inquiry* and associate editor at *Macroeconomic Dynamics,* and on the editorial board of two other professional journals. This is his third year as the Department Head.

Mark Colas continues his research on labor, public, and urban economics. This year, Mark's work was published in the journal *JPE Micro.* Mark's recent work focuses on solar panel subsidies and the funding of community colleges.

Jonathan Davis had a productive year, with papers accepted at the *Journal of Quantitative Criminology, Management Science,* and the *Review of Economics and Statistics.* This year, he is excited to be working on a couple of projects exploring local policy interventions, including a study of the Eugene and Springfield police departments' partnerships with CAHOOTS, a program that deploys a non-uniformed mental health worker and a medic instead of police for certain 911 calls. He has also started collaborating with Lane County to evaluate the effectiveness of various homelessness prevention services. This summer, Jonathan led the Economics Department's SAIL summer camp, which introduced approximately 25 underrepresented high school students to economics and college life.

Tim Duy is teaching economic forecasting and monetary policy while providing economic outlooks to community groups in the state.

George Evans has two co-authored papers forthcoming: "Social Learning and Expectational Stability," with Bruce McGough, which will be published by the *Journal of Economic Dynamics and Control* in a Special Issue in honor of Jasmina Arifovic; and "A Unified Model of Learning to Forecast," with Christopher G. Gibbs and Bruce McGough, which is in press at the *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics.*

Faculty Notes

Ben Hansen had an exceptionally great 2024. He published research on youth suicidality and school calendars in the Journal of Human Resources. His work on drug trafficking continued to receive media attention and was the focus on article in the Economist. He went to several conferences, including in the International Workshop on the economics of education in Valle Nevado, Chile hosted by University de Andes. Finally, his economics principles class went viral on TikTok as students attempted to solve the prisoners dilemma and coordinate 400 people NOT taking the final due to the class curve. The TikTok discussion received over 4m views. They ended up taking the final.

Van Kolpin's research examines both strategic and cooperative behavior in contexts of asymmetric information, discontinuous preferences, heterogeneous populations, and adaptive regulatory policy. His paper "The Perverse Equilibrium Effects of State and Federal Student Aid in Higher Education," coauthored with UO alum Mark Stater, was published in the *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*. Continuing research projects include analysis of cost/resource sharing; equilibrium selection in indeterminant environments; and constrained optimization theory.

Michael Kuhn continued as Director of Graduate Studies last year, where he recruits new PhD students to join the department and supports current students along the path to their careers as economists. With Professors Alfredo Burlando, Silvia Prina (Northeastern), and Brock Wilson (Alaska), he received additional funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to continue his work on rehabilitating delinquent digital loan borrowers in sub-Saharan Africa. Michael traveled to conferences in Chile, Colorado, and Portland to present his work on digital credit delivery speed and gender differences in college major choices. He also discussed the fiscal stimulus value of SNAP and the potential impact of SNAP work requirements in a forum for Congresswoman Andrea Salinas (OR-6).

Bruce McGough: I am currently on administrative leave, as it were: I am serving as Divisional Associate Dean of Social Sciences. My new responsibilities have provided me many opportunities to learn about the exciting work my colleagues in other departments are doing, and about the many professional skills I need to further develop. Of course, I remain, at heart, a professor of economics. My work on bounded rationality in macroeconomic models continues, with recent publications in *Journal of Economic Dynamics and Control* and *American Economic Journal: Macro*; and I look forward to teaching when my tenure as an administrator is concluded.

Keaton Miller is an Associate Professor specialized in industrial organization. In the past year, he has worked with economists throughout the state to evaluate the economic effects of climate change for Oregonians. His public reports on the subject can be found at https://oregonforce.org/.

Kathleen J. Mullen continues her research on intersections between health and work. This past year, she fielded new data collection on cognitive, physical, psychosocial and sensory abilities related to occupational requirements in a representative sample of American adults, and she presented preliminary findings at the annual meetings of the Society of Labor Economists and American Society of Health Economists as well as at a workshop on health and disability among working age adults hosted by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine in Washington, D.C. (cont. on page 5)

Faculty Notes

She also presented new research on the economic costs of job-related burnout at the 2024 Pacific Northwest Labor Day Workshop at the University of Washington in Seattle. Finally, she submitted research papers to academic journals on the following topics: the prevalence of functional limitations in the U.S. workforce; implications of disability determination methods for disability insurance beneficiaries; a new method for measuring work capacity using harmonized data on functional abilities and occupational requirements; and the effect of unconditional cash transfers on the labor supply of workers with permanent partial disabilities.

Anne van den Nouweland specializes in economic theory, with a focus on farsighted stability, equilibrium in public good economies, and axiomatic approaches to coalitional problems. She is an associate editor of the *Journal of Public Economic Theory* and of the *Journal of Dynamics & Games*, and serves on the program committees of several conferences. In the past year, Anne presented her work in the Public Economic Theory conference and at Tilburg University, and visited Erasmus University, the University of Edinburgh, and the Paris School of Economics. Jointly with a recent UO PhD student, Anne published a paper on adaptive play in *Economic Theory Bulletin* that was selected as the lead article. During her visit to Erasmus University, Anne observed their implementation of Student Activated Learning and she is exploring incorporating what she learned into her classes at the UO. Anne volunteered in the Summer Academy to Inspire Learning, which helps to create a path to a college education for young people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

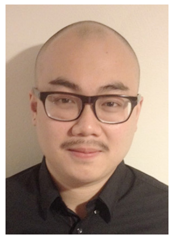
Jeremy Piger's recent research focuses on understanding how to best measure the dynamic effects of policy actions on macroeconomic variables like real GDP and inflation. He was recently appointed as the managing editor of *Studies in Nonlinear Dynamics and Econometrics* and continues to serve as an associate editor for the *Journal of Money, Credit, and Banking*. Inside the department, he is in his fourth year as the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

Ed Rubin made significant strides in his research and professional contributions over the past year. He taught spatial data science at a summer school organized by the European Association of Environmental and Resource Economists, sharing his expertise with emerging scholars in the field. He presented new work at conferences for both the American and the European associations. He also had papers accepted for publication on topics related to strategic local geography of U.S. electricity generators, customer-based discrimination in the workplace, and the impact of strategic air quality monitor shutdowns. Additionally, he is awaiting a decision on a revise-and-resubmit manuscript examining the relationship between glyphosate use and human health. Beyond research, Ed hosted approximately 70 participants in Portland for the TWEEDS workshop, fostering collaboration at the intersection of environmental economics and data science.

Glen Waddell continues to pursue research in the various intersections of labor, health, public, and education, and is looking forward to leveling up on his labor-economist credentials by going on strike with the rest of the UO faculty this spring.

Faculty Notes

Woan Foong Wong continues her research on international trade, focusing on trade and transportation, as well as trade policy. Her recent projects investigate the economic and environmental implications of disruptions and improvements within the container transport network that span multiple modes, historic sail travel time and routes for worldwide ports, as well as the long run employment effects of export opportunities on foreign and domestic firms. Her research on the global trade network has been published in the *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics* this year while her work on the estimation of historic sail travel time and routes for worldwide ports has been accepted in the journal *Cartography and Geographic Information Science*. She teaches the graduate level international trade field course for PhD candidates as well as international trade and intermediate micro courses for undergraduates. She presented her research at several invited seminars including University of British Columbia Sauder Business School, Grinnell College, National University of Singapore, and Kiel Institute in Germany. She was also invited to present her work at the International Trade and Macro Workshop organized by the Federal Reserve Bank of St Louis. Her research on quantifying public transit improvements was awarded $99,854 by the California Department of Transportation this year. Additionally, she was appointed Associated Editor of Journal of International Economics in 2024 and Economic Inquiry in 2023.



Jiabin Wu's research focuses on evolutionary game theory, cultural transmission, behavioral game theory, experimental economics, and political economy. He teaches core microeconomics part I, core econometrics I and a course on culture and evolution for PhD students this academic year.

On The Market

Emily Arnesen is a PhD candidate in economics at the University of Oregon. Her research focuses on public policy, specifically school district finance reform, labor retention, and the effects of policy changes on crime. On the job market, she will be presenting her work on the impact of school finance reform on teacher retention. Emily holds a BS in economics from Gonzaga University. Her personal interests include cooking, running, and volunteering with high school youth.

Andrew John Dickinson is a PhD candidate in economics at the University of Oregon. His research focuses on applying econometric and data science tools to address problems in environmental, health, and labor economics practicing both causal inference and machine learning techniques. Prior to starting his PhD, he received his BA (2017) and MA (2019) in economics from San Diego State University. Outside of academia, Andrew enjoys running, climbing, and exploring the outdoors with his wife and dog.

Edder Martínez Lazo is a PhD candidate working in the areas of macro and development economics. On the job market paper, he will be presenting research on the implications of disclosure in financial markets with boundedly rational agents. His other research includes capital requirements and financial access in Mexico, and the distributional effects of stock return beliefs. Before entering the program, he spent several years working in financial services in his home country, Honduras.

Kyu Matsuzawa is an applied microeconomist with interests in labor, health, and public economics and economics of crime. His job market paper studies the effect of reducing minor police traffic stops on police behavior, racial disparities, and public safety. His other works focuses on wide range of topics including DUI checkpoints, Oregon's Measure 110 law, and sports gambling legalization. Outside of economics, he has a passion for baseball, hiking, camping, travelling, and exploring new food.

Puja Parmar is a PhD candidate in economics at the University of Oregon. She completed her MSc in economics in 2018 from India after which she worked for a couple of years in one of the Big 4 companies. Her research focuses on micro-developmental effects of savings group on household welfare in Uganda. Her broader research also includes studying topics in gender, and policy evaluations affecting profitability and productivity outcomes of farmers in India.

Emmett Reynier (né Saulnier) is a Ph.D. candidate in economics at the University of Oregon and an ORISE research fellow with the EPA Office of Water. His research interests are in environmental and public economics, with a job market paper that quantifies the differential effects of climate change across demographic groups. He has additional research on the health impacts of pesticides, the optimal design of residential solar panel subsidies, and water quality valuation.

On The Market

Mingyu "Kevin" Song is a PhD candidate in economics at the University of Oregon. Originally from South Korea, he achieved dual BAs in economics from Indiana University Bloomington and SungKyunKwan University, followed by an MA in economics from SungKyunkwan University. His fields of interest include growth, development, and international trade, with specific focus on demography and fertility behaviors. His broader research includes structural transformation patterns of nations, particularly in relation to trade in services.

Connor T. Wiegand is a behavioral economist and game theorist from the University of Oregon. His research includes elicitation and estimation of non-standard time preferences as well as remote experiments involving - - involving games and individual choice models. He is also an avid programmer passionate about problems in data and computer science. Originally from the greater Seattle area, Connor earned a double major in mathematics and economics from the University of Washington before his PhD program.

Micaela Wood is a PhD candidate in economics with interests in environmental economics and industrial organization. She received her bachelor's in economics from Valdosta State University in Georgia, where she was raised. Growing up in Georgia heavily motivates her research which focuses on how people adapt to climate change and natural disasters. Her personal interests include cooking and cycling.

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