

UCR Economics Newsletter

September
2019



Chair's Welcome

Steven M. Helfand

The Department of Economics is excited to follow up our inaugural newsletter last year with another one this year. We are proud to share some of the impressive accomplishments that our faculty, emeriti faculty, and graduate and undergraduate students continue to honor us with. The alumni network is growing, and we look forward to staying in touch with our alumni, emeriti faculty, and friends.

Happy 95th Birthday Mason Gaffney!

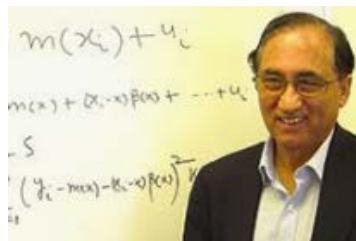
Congratulations to Emeritus Faculty Mason Gaffney who continues to be productive at the ripe young age of 95! While he may no longer be playing tennis, a career inspired by Henry George continues to attract attention (www.reed.edu/reed-magazine/articles/2018/mason-gaffney.htm).

The Mason Gaffney Reader: Essays on Solving the "Unsolvable" (2013) is available at <http://masongaffney.org/> and at Amazon. Nobel Prize winner Joseph Stiglitz commented: "This wonderful set of essays, written over a long and productive scholarly career, should be compulsory reading."

Happy birthday Mason!



Aman Ullah, Faculty Research Lecturer Award Recipient



In recognition of his many significant research contributions, **Aman Ullah**, Distinguished Professor of Economics, was honored to receive UCR's 67th Faculty Research Lecturer Award. On June 4th, Professor Ullah presented the lecture "In Search of the Unknown 'True' Model: Data-Based Nonparametric Econometrics". In his lecture, he discussed the motivation for his involvement in the development of nonparametric econometrics and showed the audience the role that nonparametric econometrics has in accurately predicting important economic relationships. His work has helped lead to a better understanding

of the effects of taxes on sales of goods and how education is related to earnings and variation in S&P 500 stock returns. Over his distinguished career, he has published ten books and more than 150 articles. Professor Ullah is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), Royal Statistical Society, and National Academy of Sciences (India). In addition to his exceptional research, Professor Ullah has inspired many graduate students as a supervisor for 58 doctoral students and a dissertation member of 82 others.

Dave Fairris Named Edward A. Dickson Emeritus Professor

Emeritus Professor **David Fairris** was named UCR's 2018-19 Edward A. Dickson Emeritus Professor. This award also provides financial support for his research project "Economic Policy When Society Holds Non-Consequentialist Views of the Good: The Case of the Minimum Wage." This academic senate award is presented annually to an Emeritus Faculty on the basis of a compelling project in teaching, research, or public service activities.



Hiroki Nishimura Awarded NSF Grant



Assistant Professor **Hiroki Nishimura** was awarded a three year National Science Foundation grant to study "Preference Structures". Professor Nishimura will work on developing an alternative model for describing individual preferences. By going beyond the classical approach to preference relations, Professor Nishimura hopes to "narrow the gap between decision theory and behavior economics and offer useful methods in a wide variety of practical contexts and applications."



Department News

Undergraduate Economics Major, Panel Discussion

In May, 2019, the Department invited recent alumni to return to UCR and talk with undergraduate students about how to navigate the major and the current job market. **Hadi Baghchehsarai** ('18) from California Steel Industries, Inc. and **Zaire Marin** ('18) from Webb Municipal Finance, LLC took questions from the audience of more than 80 students. They highlighted the importance of data skills, networking and perserving in a competitive job market.

Following the panel, the speakers had dinner with members of the Economics Honors Society, Omicron Delta Epsilon, and provided additional advice that should prove helpful for our majors. The department is grateful to Hadi and Zaire for dedicating their time to the current economics majors and look forward to more alumni gatherings in the near future.

2019 Academic Excellence Awards

The Department recognizes one student in each program that has excelled in academics and research every year. Congratulations to the 2019 Excellence Award winners:

- Alex Enriquez**, Economics
- Ariya Haghighat**, Economics, Law and Society
- Phillip Liu**, Business Economics
- Kim Reyes**, Economics-Administrative Studies

Graduate Student Honors

Deepshikha Batheja
Dissertation Year Fellowship Award, Blum Award and funding from the International Growth Center (LSE)

Dissertation: *"The Effect of Gender Diversity in the Workplace on Worker Productivity: Evidence from Indian Call Centers"*

Opinder Kaur
Selected to participate in NSF sponsored Mentoring Workshop for 3rd Year Female Economics Students (Stanford, 9/2019)

Seolah Kim
Dissertation Year Fellowship Award and Outstanding TA Award

Dissertation: *"A Systematic Development of Nonparametric Hypothesis Testing"*

Ali Mehrabani
Outstanding TA Award

Dissertation: *"The Large-Sample, Small Disturbance and Asymptotic Conditions of Dominance of an Efficient Shrinkage"*

Ekaterina Seregina
Outstanding TA Award

Dissertation: *"Graphical Models and Machine Learning in Financial Econometrics"*

Department News

Ph.D. Alumna **Shruti Kapoor** ('09) was recently named one of the 100 Most Influential People in Gender Policy in 2019, by Apolitical.co (<https://apolitical.co/lists/gender-equality-100/>). Dr. Kapoor is the founder of Sayfty, which educates and empowers women and girls in India against violence.

Ph.D. Alumnus **Farhan Majid** ('13) recently gave a Tedx talk at Rice University titled "Busting Myths About Health and Wealth". In the talk, Dr. Majid discusses his findings on the fetal origins of health and wealth.

Assistant Professor **Sarojini Hirshleifer** was made a faculty affiliate of the Center for Effective Global Action at UC Berkeley. She also received a grant from the Center for Economic Policy Research.

Introduction to Microeconomics (ECON 003) was one of the Top 3 Favorite Breadth Courses at UCR and Professor **Joab Corey** was named the Favorite Instructor in CHASS.

Congratulations to Associate Professor **Urme Khan**, and Associate Professors of Teaching **Bree Lang** and **Matthew Lang** on their tenure and promotion.

2019 Ph.D. Student Placements

Jianghao Chu
Economic Data Scientist
Ford Motor Company

Yi Mao
Assistant Professor
Azusa Pacific University

Hanbyul Ryu
Associate Research Fellow
Korea Institute for International Economic Policy

Yun Luo
Quantitative Model Analyst
US Bank

Hien Nguyen
Assistant Professor
California Poly University – Pomona

Shiyun Zhang
Postdoctoral Fellow
Aarhus University

Distinguished Professor Richard Sutch

It is with a heavy heart that we share the sad news that Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Richard Sutch passed away in September, 2019. Professor Sutch was one of the founders of the All-UC Group in Economic History in the early 1970s. Among many contributions, he was the author of the book *One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Impact of Emancipation* (Cambridge University Press, 1977), and one of the Editors in Chief of the *Historical Statistics of the United States*, Millennial Edition (Cambridge University Press, 2006). He will be greatly missed by all of us.

Special Thanks to Damaris Carlos

Damaris Carlos decided to retire at the end of the 2018-19 academic year. For over a decade, both faculty and visitors to the Economics Department have had the good fortune of working with her. She was the Administrative Assistant for the Department since 2008. Damaris worked in a number of different units on campus, and was an integral part of making UCR a better place on and off for 37 years. Although the Department will miss Damaris dearly, we are excited to hear about her adventures in retirement.

Welcome, Siyang Xiong

Dr. Siyang Xiong joined the Department as a Full Professor in July, 2019. He was previously at the University of Bristol in the U.K. He is a microeconomic theorist who is an internationally recognized expert in the areas of game theory and mechanism design.

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