

UCR Economics Newsletter

November
2021



From the Chair's Corner

Steven M. Helfand

The Department of Economics is excited to release our fourth annual newsletter. We are pleased to share some news and accomplishments. We look forward to staying in touch with you.

As we released last year's newsletter, we were six months into the pandemic. Little did we know that we would spend the entire academic year teaching and working remotely. Fortunately, Fall 2021 is different. Around 70% of our classes are being taught in-person, and we expect that this share will rise to over 95% in Winter, 2022. The return to campus has gone smoothly.

The start of a new academic year provides an opportunity to reflect on new developments in the department and on campus. We are excited to offer a variety of new undergraduate classes this year, including *Economic Growth and Unemployment* (ECON 137), *Rockonomics: Topics in Applied Microeconomics Through the Lens of the Music Industry* (ECON 150), and *Cost-Benefit Analysis with Applications to Public Policy* (ECON 152).

There is also a lot of exciting new research coming out of the department, some of which is highlighted in this newsletter. I bring your attention to four articles recently published by some of our Assistant Professors: [An Age Profile Perspective on Two Puzzles in Global Child Health: The Indian Enigma & Economic Growth](#) by Joe Cummins; [Global Financial Integration and Monetary Policy Spillovers](#) by Dongwon Lee; [College Majors, Occupations, and the Gender Gap](#) by Carolyn Sloane; and [What Time Use Surveys Can \(and Cannot\) Tell Us about Labor Supply](#) by Ruoyao Shi.

Finally, several construction projects reached completion while the campus was largely empty in 2020-21. I encourage you to look at the pictures of the beautiful new [Student Success Center](#); to read about a new building for [research on air pollution](#) resulting from a collaboration between UCR, the city of Riverside, and the California Air Resources Board (CARB); and to take a stroll down memory lane by checking out the redesigned and rebuilt [Barn](#).

Stay safe and healthy!



The Student Success Center

Department News

Associate Professor **Bree Lang** will continue to be a member of the Academy of Distinguished Teaching for 2021-2022.

Assistant Professor **Sarojini Hirshleifer** received a \$45,445 grant from the Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) at MIT.

Distinguished Professor **Aman Ullah** was elected Fellow of the International Association for Applied Econometrics. He was the keynote speaker at the Symposium on Econometric Analysis and Forecasting, DUFE, Dalian, China, and co-edited the Special Issue in Honor of A.L. Nagar at the Journal of Quantitative Economics.

Congratulations to Associate Professor **Hiroki Nishimura** on his promotion to Associate Professor with tenure and to **Gloria Gonzalez-Rivera** for her promotion to Full Professor Step VI.

In media, KVCR featured the work of Assistant Professor **Michael Bates** on "Good Jobs in the Inland Empire" describing employment trends before and during the pandemic.

Inaugural recipients, Billiter Family and Bruce McCormick Awards

Congratulations to **Esther Leme de Silva**, the inaugural recipient of the **Bruce McCormick Endowed Award for Excellence in Economics**. Esther is a 4th year economics major who transferred to UCR from Riverside City College. The selection committee was impressed by her outstanding grades and demanding course load during the 2020-2021 school year. Esther has an interest in economic policy and hopes to pursue graduate studies.

Congratulations to **Erik Chan**, the inaugural recipient of the **Billiter Family Endowed Internship Support Fund**. Erik is a 4th year economics/administrative studies major who spent his summer interning with Founder Legacy Partners, a private equity firm. The experience provided valuable hands on experience, especially in the areas of executive outreach and company valuations. Erik is interested in a career in investment banking or private equity.

Department News

Undergraduate Economics News

Congratulations to **Alyssa Fontaine** and **Lisa Onuselogu**, the first recipients of the Economics Department Undergraduate Student Support Fund.

Alumni headed to graduate school

Katherine Cheng – UCR Master's in Education

Adrian Cruz – M.A. in Economics at CSU Long Beach

Dylan Cruz – SDSU Master's in Economics

Precious Fasakin - two-year predoctoral fellowship in economics with the Ph.D. Excellence Initiative at NYU.

Ruihong Huang – MSBA Program at University of Rochester

Amelia Mazer – Master's Information Systems at Santa Clara

Xuexing Ong – Ph.D. Economics at Michigan State University

Edward Segura – M.A. in Economics at Claremont Graduate School

Suleyma Vergara-Tapia – Ph.D. Sociology at CUNY

Yanlin Wu – Master's in Business Analytics at Northeastern University

Kenneth Zalke – MPP at the Harris School of Public Policy, the University of Chicago

Jiacheng Zheng – MPP at UCLA.



The Barn

Graduate Student Honors

Saman Banafit
Graduate Research Mentorship Program Award

Tao Wang
Dissertation Year Program Award

Zhuozhen Zhao
Dissertation Year Program Award

Deepsheeka Batheja (Ph.D. 2020) received the Best Paper Award at the Indian Statistical Institute's 3rd Annual Women in the Economy Workshop for her paper "Gender Peer Effects in the Workplace: A Field Experiment in Indian Call Centers". She also published a piece on her paper in the *Hindustan Times*. ([link](#)).

COVID-19 Research

Professor **Marcelle Chauvet**, "Time Series Modeling of the Covid-19 Recession."

Professor **Gloria Gonzalez-Rivera**, "[Expecting the Unexpected: Economic Growth Under Stress.](#)"

Assistant Professor **Sarojini Hirshleifer**, "Optimizing the Spread of Information on Social Platforms: A COVID-19 Field Experiment in Pakistan."

Associate Professors **Bree Lang** and **Matthew Lang**, "[Pandemics, Protests and Firearms.](#)"

Associate Professor **Victor Ortego-Marti**, "[Skill Loss during Unemployment and the Scarring Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic.](#)"

Distinguished Professor **Aman Ullah**, "Predicting COVID-19 using Nonlinear Modal Regression."

Graduate Alumni News

Congratulations to **Pallavi Panda** (UCR 2015) for her promotion to Associate Professor of Economics at SUNY Geneseo!

Hanbyul Ryu (Ph.D. 2019) will join Hanyang University, ERICA campus, South Korea, as an assistant professor of economics.

Deepak Singhania (Ph.D. 2017) has accepted an Assistant Professor position at the Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar.

Anaka Aiyar (Ph.D. 2016) has accepted a position as Assistant Professor at the University of Nevada, Reno.

2021 Ph.D. Student Placements

Chia-Lo Chen
Visiting Assistant Professor, Musashi University, Tokyo, Japan

Varlam Kutateladze
Economist, Amazon

Ali Mehrabani
Assistant Professor, Southern Illinois University

Mirewuti Muhataer
Senior Analyst, Citi Group

Ekaterina Seregina
Assistant Professor, Colby College

Xiaolu Zhu
Assistant Professor, Huazhong University of Science and Technology

Professor Emeritus Stephen E. Cullenberg

It is with a heavy heart that we share the news that Professor Emeritus Stephen E. Cullenberg passed away in February, 2021 at the age of 67. Professor Cullenberg served as Chair of Economics (1997-98, 1999-03) and Dean of the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (2006-14). He was an institution builder, and dedicated his life to making UCR a better, more inclusive and welcoming place. Professor Cullenberg was a Marxist economist with broad and multi-disciplinary research interests ([CV](#)). He served as Editor of the journal *Rethinking Marxism: A Journal of Economics, Culture and Society*, and wrote and co-edited numerous books. Professor Cullenberg was a highly valued and effective teacher, having been honored with UCR's Distinguished Teaching Award in 1998. An obituary written by his family can be read [here](#), and many deeply moving memories written by friends and colleagues can be found [here](#).

Bruce McCormick

We share the sad news that 1974 alumnus Bruce McCormick passed away in June, 2021. He had recently made a donation to UCR to create the McCormick Award for Excellence in the Study of Economics. Esther Leme da Silva will be the first recipient of the award in 2021-22.

Rockonomics

Created and taught by **Carolyn Sloane**, the Rockonomics class explores topics in microeconomics in the context of the music industry. Dr. Sloane would like to thank the AY 20-21 guest speakers: Rodvé Lewis, Rhett Miller (Old 97's), Rev. Moose (NIVA), Ashley Joyce & Shannon Sorensen (NMPA), Cory Phare (publicist, Itchy-O), and Marcello Ambriz (tour photographer, NKOTB).

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