

UCLA Economics Department Newsletter

Winter 2010

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1. MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Roger E.A. Farmer

Dear Alumni and Friends, let me introduce [myself](#). I took over as department chair in July. I have been at UCLA since 1987 and my field is macroeconomics with a specialty in the [Macroeconomics of Self-Fulfilling Prophecies](#). My research deals with the role of confidence and self-fulfilling beliefs in influencing business cycles and I intend to carry over some of the insights of that research to the job of running the economics department.

Since taking on the chairmanship, many of my friends and colleagues have not been sure whether to offer congratulations or commiserations. There is a widely held perception that this is a challenging time to be taking over the helm of what some perceive to be a sinking ship. Not so! I see this as an opportunity to regroup and to define our priorities for the next decade, and I hope that you will step in and help whenever possible.

Let me share some of things that we are already working on to regroup in the current environment. First, in response to a review of the department that concluded last year, the director of the Business Economics Program, [Andy Atkeson](#), has begun planning a complete overhaul of the business economics major. Our goal is to provide a liberal arts based business major in which students learn, not only quantitative and analytic skills from economics and accounting, but also the presentational and writing skills that are so essential to succeed in the real world. Andy already has the other social science chairpersons on board with this idea and we have the firm expectation that the new program will be attractive, not just to our undergraduates, but also to those of you who look to UCLA as a place to recruit smart well trained students for careers in business broadly defined.

Although our business economics major is important, business economics majors are currently only a third of our total economics majors of which there are approximately 750 a year. We are currently reviewing our undergraduate course offerings with the goal of providing the best possible undergraduate education and a learning experience that our undergraduates will be able to look back on with pride. I'll keep you posted on how that progresses as we move through the year.

The success of the Department is closely tied to that of the University at large and although the University of California is firmly committed to its role as one of the finest public research universities in the world, it is clear that the model by which we are funded will need to change in view of the permanent budget cuts that were handed down by the State. We are still firmly committed to remaining the world's premier public university, despite the funding cuts which may result in dramatic tuition increases in the near future.

UC researchers have won 55 Nobel prizes. Berkeley, UCLA, and UC San Diego were ranked first, third, and seventh amongst Public Universities by *US News and World Report* and the flagship campuses, Berkeley and UCLA were ranked 5th and 12th in *Newsweek's* annual ranking of the top 100 global universities.

To maintain the quality of the Economics Department's research and national competitiveness, fee increases will help, but they will not be enough to fill the gap between UCLA and our peer departments at Harvard and Michigan. In order to maintain our quality, the University and the Economics Department will be relying more heavily on alumni support in future years. During the summer, I met with the chairman of our Board of Visitors, [Kevin Albert](#), and I was fortunate to be able to personally welcome the newest member of the Board, [Silverio Foresi](#), who was a 1990 Ph.D. from UCLA and is now the head of Trading for the Quantitative Investment Strategies team at Goldman Sachs Asset Management. We are very grateful to Kevin and to all of the others on the Board and I want to say a very special thanks to all of you for your dedication and commitment.

I also want to reach out and thank all of you who have given resources to the Department through gifts that come to us from the Chancellor's Associates Program. Since the University changed the rules to allow donors to earmark gifts for specific departments, Economics has benefited financially from the generosity of many of our alumni. It is through your gifts that we are able to begin to compete with other private institutions to retain the best and the brightest talent. Thank you all.

In the summer, I attended the NBER summer institute where I met many of our former Ph.D. students. It was there that [David Lagakos](#), Ph.D. 2008, made a great suggestion that I plan to follow up on this year. He suggested that we host an alumni conference at which UCLA Ph.D. students can return to the fold for a weekend of networking, exchange of ideas, and intellectual stimulation. David has agreed to organize that conference in conjunction with his classmate [Guillermo Ordonez](#). Look out for a call of papers sometime in the new year.

I'm looking forward to an exciting year. If you plan to be at the Allied Social Science Convention in Atlanta this coming January, stop by and say hello at the UCLA reception. I look forward to seeing you there.



Roger E. A. Farmer
Department Chair

2. UCLA ECONOMISTS SPEAK OUT TO THE PUBLIC

In the past year, UCLA economists have actively voiced their opinions and ideas about our current economic conditions and policies; they have also made great efforts to make their ideas and research available to a broader, lay audience, by publishing through popular media outlets such as *Newsweek*, *The Financial Times*, *Economist.com*, *Forbes.com*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. The following is a sampling of the Department's public scholarship.

Prof. Roger E. A. Farmer, February 9, 2009:

[How to Fix the Banks](#) – FT.com

Prof. Lee Ohanian, February 2, 2009:

[How Government Prolonged the Depression: Policies that Decreased Competition in Product and Labor Markets were Especially Destructive](#) – The Wall Street Journal

Prof. Andrew Atkeson, March 16 2009:

[Featured Guest in Economist Debates: This House Believes that We Are All Keynesians?](#) – The Economist

To see more, please visit the [UCLA Economics Department Web site](#).

3. UCLA ECONOMICS STUDENT WINS PRESTIGIOUS MARSHALL SCHOLARSHIP

Congratulations to Matthew M. Clawson, of Fort Collins, Colorado, on winning the prestigious Marshall Scholarship. Clawson, captain of UCLA's ski and snowboard team and dual political science and economics major, is one of three undergraduates with links to Southern California to win the prestigious scholarship, which pays for graduate study anywhere in the United Kingdom. He plans to use the award to complete a master's degree in international relations at Oxford University. At Oxford, Clawson hopes to study diplomacy, political economy, and globalism. After completing his studies at Oxford, Clawson plans to attend Harvard's Graduate School of Business Administration, to which he has been admitted for the fall of 2012. While he initially is setting his sights on a career in finance, he dreams of a career in politics.

The award caps a distinguished undergraduate career. While pursuing his degree on a rigorous honors track in both economics and political science, Clawson managed to serve for two quarters as a research assistant to Amy Zegart, a national security expert and associate professor of public policy at the UCLA School of Public Affairs. He volunteered for nearly two years with the Los Angeles branch of the Homeland Security Advisory Council on a project to improve the metro area's emergency preparedness.

Last fall, as a student in UCLA's [Quarter in Washington Program](#), he conducted research on transnational terrorist threats with the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. Last summer, he worked as a summer analyst in New York at the investment bank and securities firm, Goldman Sachs. He currently is serving as UCLA's student representative to the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress, a Washington, D.C., think tank.

Named for former U.S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall, the Marshall Scholarship Program began in 1953 as a gesture of gratitude to the people of the United States for the assistance the U.K. received after World War II under the Marshall Plan. Since the program's inception, more than 1,500 Americans have become Marshall Scholars, including Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, U.S. Rep. John Spratt Jr., former U.S. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt and three Pulitzer Prize-winning authors.

4. THE BUSINESS ECONOMICS PROGRAM – ANDREW ATKESON, DIRECTOR



Andrew Atkeson

The Business Economics Program at UCLA has recently made two major program enhancements with the overall goal of helping our students make the transition from college to the world of work.

First, the Department developed a new course—Career Development for Business Economics Majors (Econ 188)—that is specifically designed to help undergraduate students who want to pursue careers in the private sector after graduating. The new course, currently in session, aims to teach students practical knowledge and skills used to find jobs in the real world. It covers topics such as, “Resumes: Tools and Strategies to Differentiate Yourself”; Interview Workshop: Differentiating Yourself and Showing Passion”; and “Networking (Social and Internet): How to Sell Yourself.” The course also covers broader business-related topics such as financial markets, unemployment, banking crises, and market updates.

The course is designed and taught by Steve Ross, who has taught a similar course at a different university with great success and enthusiastic reception by its business students. Steve Ross is a retired lead portfolio manager from Nicholas Applegate Asset Management. Steve was not only responsible for all the stock selection and research for billions in U.S. stocks, but also a partner and executive committee member. Steve has been on CNNfn, *Investor’s Business Daily*, *USA Today*, and many other financial publications. In addition to Nicholas Applegate, Steve has worked for Merrill Lynch, T. Rowe Price, and Lincoln National. He has over 20 years of investment experience in many fields including portfolio management, sales, executive leadership, and others.



Katrina Davy

The Economics Department, in partnership with the UCLA Career Center, has also hired a career specialist, Katrina (Katie) Davy, to provide career counseling to economics students, to create undergraduate career programs geared towards preparing students for the professional world of work, and to coordinate the Sharpe Fellows Internship Program. Katrina Davy holds a BS in human development from Cornell University and an EdM in counseling psychology from Columbia University. Katrina is also currently working on her MBA degree with a focus in leadership. Prior to this

new position, Katrina worked as a career counselor at Pepperdine University in Malibu. In addition to creating and managing our undergraduate career programs, Katrina will help to develop better relationships with the top recruiters of our students.

The Economics Department hopes to more effectively prepare our students for careers in the private sector and increase their placement in some of the top firms around the country through these exciting program enhancements.

Thank you, Steve and Katrina, and welcome to the Department!

“Our Board of Visitors has played a key role in shaping these enhancements to our undergraduate program. As alumni, they bring the perspective we need to see how important it is for us to build a bridge for our students between the world of school and the world of work. We look to build on our partnership with the BOV to make further improvements to our programs in the years to come.”

Andrew Atkeson
Director, Business Economics Program

5. THE BOARD OF VISITORS – CHAIRMAN: KEVIN ALBERT



Kevin Albert

The UCLA Economics Board of Visitors, made up of distinguished alumni and donors, concluded another successful year. Under Kevin Albert, the Board focused primarily on implementing a strategy aimed at increasing private financial support of the Department and improving student services. Over the last several months, the Board worked with the Department to establish a committee made up of alumni and faculty aimed at overhauling the Business Economics Program. The committee released its final recommendations this past October and recommended a rethinking and restructuring of the current business economics major to make it less theoretical and more commercial without sacrificing the acknowledged benefits of a liberal-arts-based education. A special thanks to our alumni members who served including: Fulton Collins, Andy Demetriou, Michael Flynn, Glenn Goodstein, Brian Holmes, Scott Johnson, Patrick Reardon, Ron Richards, Brent Shoenbaum, and Seth Weingram. In addition, the Board also concluded another successful interview process for the Sharpe Fellows Program. Started as a Board initiative, the Sharpe Fellows are selected

during an intensive interview process by alumni interviewers with executive-level experience. Alumni interview and mentor candidates select the Fellows from the applicant pool. You can read more about the Sharpe Fellows later in this newsletter.

Lastly, the Board of Visitors welcomes its newest member, Silverio Foresi. Foresi is the first member since Bill Sharpe with an academic background. He earned his Ph.D. in Economics at UCLA where his work is highly respected and continues to be used. Currently, Foresi is a senior investment manager at Goldman Sachs's New York office. Foresi is excited about the Board and plans to use his unique combination of experiences to guide the Board of Visitors in its projects ahead.

6. WILLIAM F. SHARPE FELLOWS

The Sharpe Fellows Program is now in its third year and continues to build upon its reputation for showcasing the Department's best and brightest students. Started by members of the Economics Board of Visitors and named after Bill Sharpe, former UCLA professor and Nobel Laureate, it provides alumni-mentoring to students wishing to pursue careers in the private sector and provides alumni with an opportunity to interact with the Department's most promising students. Students majoring in economics or business economics are encouraged to apply in the fall for paid summer internships at financial and business firms in California and New York. Applicants are screened through a rigorous process that includes interviews by alumni who make the final selections.

This year's interviews took place on campus in December and produced another distinguished class of Fellows. We had record participation from alumni who both interviewed candidates and are helping to find paid internships for them at their companies. If you would like to be a part of the program, please contact Katrina Davy at kdavy@career.ucla.edu for more information.

Additional information about the program can be found at:

<http://uclaeconblog.com/2008/09/26/william-f-sharpe-fellows-program/>

7. NEW PEOPLE

We are happy to introduce two new members to the Department: Assistant Professor Connan Snider and Chief Administrative Office Nancy Blumstein.



Connan Snider

Connan Snider joined the department in July of 2009 after completing his Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota. Prior to attending Minnesota, he received bachelor's degrees in economics and mathematics from the Ohio State University.

Snider is an industrial organization economist with particular interest in understanding how we should do competition policy, regulation, and market design in environments where firms and consumers interact strategically and over time. His recent research has studied allegedly predatory practices in the airline industry and the impact of regulations forcing airports to make gate space more available to potential entrant airlines.



Nancy Blumstein

Nancy Blumstein came to the University seven years ago looking for a new challenge after a long career in theatre, film, and television. She has bounced from South to North Campus, twice in that time, as she has learned the ins and outs of University policy and finance. From Microbiology to Political Science to Chemistry she has finally landed here and she tells us it's great to be back in Bunche Hall. "The walk through the sculpture garden is a great way to begin and end any day."

Welcome Connan and Nancy to the Economics Department at UCLA!

8. PH.D. JOB PLACEMENT

All eight of our 2008-2009 Ph.D. job market candidates were successfully placed in various research, policy, and academic institutions around the world:

[Simeon Alder](#) – Assistant Professor of Economics, University of Notre Dame

[Stella Chan](#) – Assistant Professor of Economics, Grinnell College

[Anna D’Souza](#) – Research Economist, Economic Research Services, US Dept. of Agriculture

[Pei-Ju Liao](#) – Assistant Research Fellow, Institute of Economics, Academia Sinica, Taiwan

[Jairo Rendon](#) – Assistant Professor of Economics, Los Andes University, Colombia

Sergio Rodriguez – Economist, Finance Department, International Monetary Fund

Cesar Serra – Economist, International Monetary Fund

Daisuke Miyakawa – Senior Economist, Research Institution of Capital Formation, Development Bank of Japan Inc.

Congratulations!

9. GIVING BACK

Gifts to UCLA make a lasting contribution – to students, communities and the world. By investing in the promise of human potential, UCLA’s alumni, faculty and friends demonstrate confidence in the power of knowledge to improve people’s daily lives.

The impact of such philanthropy is measured in problems solved, innovations sparked, diseases cured, and lives enriched. Gifts to UCLA of every size enable transformations in the department. The University of California faces new state-budget-drive challenges next year, but support from alumni and friends like you make a difference in the life of the UCLA Economics Department.

We encourage you to consider a gift to the UCLA Economics Department. Alumni and friends who are, or wish to become, Chancellor’s Associates may now direct their annual gifts to the UCLA Department of Economics and retain all of the benefits that have traditionally been given to Chancellor’s Associates. For information, visit

<http://www.uclafund.ucla.edu/leadership/index.html>

Alumni interested in making a gift to the UCLA Economics Department by endowing a scholarship, supporting faculty research, making a planned gift or other gift, should contact Eric Nakano in the development office at (310) 825-8633 or email at enakano@support.ucla.edu. Thank you for supporting the work and many achievements of the UCLA Economics Department.

10. WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Do you have any ideas or suggestions that can make our newsletter even better? Want to get involved with the Department or reconnect with UCLA? We're always looking to get our enthusiastic alumni involved and we'd love to hear from you. You can contact Eric Nakano for questions or comments at enakano@support.ucla.edu.