8-23-2016

Fall 2016 Economics Newsletter

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FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome back to fall semester! Every year we seem to start earlier than the previous, with classes starting on August 22 and the last day of classes scheduled for December 9. There are always tradeoffs, although I would be willing to trade a few more days of August vacation against the frigid days of December. In preparation for the new school year, Stewart Hall got a face lift with new carpeting and paint, along with some structural improvements in the windows and siding. Sorry, but same old chairs.

We are returning this semester with a full faculty lineup. Monica Garcia Perez is returning from sabbatical serving as a Research Fellow at the Roy Wilkins Center – Humphrey School of Public Affairs. Along with her teaching responsibilities she will be serving as Director of the Faculty Research Group on Immigrant Workers and Director of the SOPA Survey Center this academic year. Rich MacDonald will be serving as the interim Director for the SOPA Research Institute. David Switzer will be serving as the Assessment/Tk20 Coordinator, School of Public Affairs and the Faculty Assessment Director for the University. Ming Lo is currently on leave and chairing the economics department at Metro State.

Starting this year the department is moving to a process called “direct declare” where students will be directly admitted to the major when they are accepted at SCSU. We took this opportunity to update the Degree Audit report to help students better navigate the major requirements. The first milestone on the report includes the principles courses in economics and the math requirement. The second milestone includes the intermediate theory courses in economics and the statistics requirement. The milestones are followed by additional required courses and elective courses, concluding with senior seminar. Hopefully the milestones will motivate students to take these courses early in the major. You may be required to get access codes from your advisor in the near future before registration, that’s just part of the direct declare process.

The Winter Institute is scheduled for February 23 & 24 at SCSU and 912 Regency Plaza. This year’s theme will be “Ideas and Innovation.” We hope to have a great alumni attendance, so please mark your calendars.

Have a great year! Patricia

MEET THE PROFESSOR

Professor Ken Rebeck joined our Economics Department in 2001. He continues to focus his research on creating nationally-used standardized tests for K-12 economics and personal finance teachers, college professors and researchers in economics and financial education. Over the last few years he has experimented with flipped classes and other teaching techniques to expand the variety of delivery methods he incorporates in the classroom. Ken’s wife Tomoko recently earned her Minnesota teaching license specializing in early childhood development. His two daughters are now 5 and 8 years old with a variety of interests, unfortunately none being fishing with Dad.
**EVENTS**

**Minnesota Economic Association (MEA) Annual Conference**

The 2016 MEA Annual Conference will be held on Friday, October 28, 2016 at Hamline University. The Heller Distinguished Lecture will be delivered by Steven Durlauf of the University of Wisconsin at Madison. The luncheon speaker will be Chris Farrell of American Public Media’s Marketplace Money.

Further information may be obtained by visiting the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis website at https://www.minneapolisfed.org/mea/.

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**ALUMNI**

**Randika De Mel**, a 2013 graduate of our former Public and Nonprofit Institutions graduate program, has been accepted into the 2016-17 Princeton Africa Fellowship in International Development at Princeton University. He will be working with the Sustainable Health Finance Team at Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) in Pretoria, South Africa for one year. Randika worked as a Research Intern for Amherst H. Wilder Foundation. At Wilder Research, he worked on monitoring and evaluating projects focused on early childhood education, community legal needs, public health, and youth social entrepreneurship. He also cofounded and worked as a Research Associate for an evaluation collaborative in Minneapolis called Arete Evaluation Collaborative that focused on providing cost effective research and evaluation consulting services for local nonprofits and universities. Furthermore, his work experience includes monitoring and evaluating research projects in the U.S., Kenya, Philippines, and Jamaica with non-governmental organizations, local nonprofits, and higher education institutions. With over three years of experience in program evaluation, Randika considers himself an evaluator and researcher focused on public health, education, and business and economic development. Randika completed his second masters in International Development (MDP’15) at the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs at UMN.

**Keith Hovland**, a 2016 graduate, is currently working for Rise, Inc. as a Coordinator of Vocational Services.


You can watch a time-lapse video of the project at http://santannicustomhomes.com/custom-home-timelapse-video/

Scott graduated in 2000 with a Bachelor’s in Economics and enjoys life in Roseville with his wife Renee (also a 2000 Economics graduate) and two sons.
### Graduates

#### Spring 2016
- Reeta Ale Magar*
- Cheick Camara*
- Terry Carper
- Zachary Carter*
- Jesse DesMarais
- Joseph Falde
- Alexander Franta
- Jess Fuller
- Farhan Guled
- Abdullahi Hassan
- Mitchell Horras
- Keith Hovland
- Christelle Mputu*
- Thomas Osterberg
- Teddy Pare*
- Joshua Pfohl
- Paul Ryan*
- Samba Sacko
- Kyle Schramel
- Collin Swanson

* indicates graduate student

### Dean’s List

#### Spring 2016
- Jesse DesMarais
- Kaitlyn Durham
- Christopher Fuchs
- James Harstad
- Keith Hovland
- Jennifer Hughes
- Kristopher Klein
- Taisiia Stanishevska
- Mengting Su

### Winter Institute

#### Save the Date!

The 2017 Winter Institute will be held on Thursday, February 23rd and Friday, February 24th at St. Cloud State University and 912 Regency in downtown St. Cloud.

The Winter Institute is a two-day conference celebrating economic education. 2017 marks the 55th year of this seminal event. This year’s Winter Institute theme will be “Ideas and Innovation.”

Please mark your calendars now. Look for more details and registration information as the date approaches.

You may check for updated information at [www.stcloudstate.edu/winterinstitute](http://www.stcloudstate.edu/winterinstitute)

If you would like more information or if you would like to get involved, please contact Cindy Fitzthum cjfitzthum@stcloudstate.edu or Lynn MacDonald lcmacdonald@stcloudstate.edu

### Graduate Assistants

We welcome graduate assistants **Arati Bista, Shehram Khan, Azat Nurmukhametov**, and **Kejie (Jack) Ruan** to our Applied Economics master’s program.
Professor David Switzer has spent the last year serving half-time in SCSU’s Office of Strategy, Planning, and Effectiveness (OSPE) as the Faculty Fellow for Assessment. His duties include overseeing assessment of Our Husky Compact and providing guidance to departments for assessment of their programs. He defines assessment as “anything we are doing to determine how well our students are learning” but also includes making changes and improvements whenever they are needed.

For example, how do we know if students are learning what we hope they learn in our Economics programs? In the last few years, the Economics department clarified its Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and established the courses and assignments that are used to assess student performance. Last year, three instructors teaching Senior Seminar (ECON 481) performed an assessment of each student’s final paper to determine strengths and weaknesses. As a result of this assessment, our department determined students needed more statistical and econometric work before undertaking the course. Our department will soon require students majoring in Economics or Business Economics to complete either Economic and Business Forecasting (ECON 470) or Introduction to Econometrics (ECON 485) before they may register for Senior Seminar. We believe this requirement will allow students to more easily, confidently, and correctly run the statistical analysis of data which is so crucial to the course.

Over the summer, 15 SCSU faculty members from a wide variety of disciplines scored student papers and presentations as part of assessment of Our Husky Compact’s “Communicate Effectively” dimension. Dr. Switzer collected the scores and analyzed the results, and reported the results to campus at a Convocation Week session entitled “Our Husky Compact: Results from the First Year of Assessment.” Results indicate that performance along all dimensions of Written Communication and Oral Communication improve significantly between lower-division and upper-division courses, and that performance by seniors is above the national average for senior papers scored using the same rubric.