

December 2010

Happy Holidays to all our Alumni!

I'm writing to update you on recent events in the Department of Economics, which is continuing to grow significantly despite the challenging conditions of the economy in the past few years. Currently we have approximately 40 faculty members, and roughly 150 students are now working toward a graduate degree. We continue to be the largest major on Duke's campus with nearly 700 undergraduate economics majors this year.

Recruitment success continues to strengthen the department, and we have been very happy to hire the following young researchers in the last two years:

[Francesco Bianchi](#), a Princeton-trained macroeconomist whose focus is monetary economics, applied finance and Bayesian econometrics. Bianchi won the 2010 Zellner Thesis Award in Business and Economic Statistics.

[Federico Bugni](#), an econometrician currently focusing on partial-identification models, but whose interests include theoretical econometrics, inference, moment inequalities, missing data and stochastic processes. His skills, learned during his Ph.D. at Northwestern, are already being utilized by some of our labor economists with missing data problems.

[Haluk Ergin](#), a theoretical economist with specialties in both choice theory and matching theory. His latest research seeks an alternative to the standard rational model in decision theory; another line of work considers matching markets in school choice situations. He previously held positions at MIT and WUSTL. He received his Ph.D. from Princeton.

[Cosmin Ilut](#), a macroeconomist with interests in international finance and the economics of information. His recent research focuses on monetary policy, exchange rates, the role of expectations and how agents incorporate information. He received his Ph.D. from Northwestern.

[Nir Jaimovich](#), another macroeconomist who joined us after working at Stanford University and UC-San Diego. His research to date includes work on business cycles, unemployment and the causes of economic shocks. He received his Ph.D. from Northwestern.

[James Roberts](#), a microeconomist who focuses on industrial organization, auctions and applied microeconomics. Some of his recent work examines reserve prices in auctions and gender disparity in the urology profession. He also received his Ph.D. from Northwestern.

These professors' cutting-edge research, high enthusiasm and workshop participation is having a positive effect on the [Ph.D. Program](#). Students are involved in research and exposed to new ideas very early on in the doctoral program. The environment here is dynamic and collaborative, with many seminars and workshops happening each week during the school year. The Ph.D. experience and job placements are improving as a result of this setting. This year we have 21 [Ph.D. job market candidates](#),

The [Master's Program](#), under the leadership of Director and Associate Chair [Charles Becker](#), has boomed into a top destination for those wanting an excellent quantitative foundation before embarking on a Ph.D. as well as individuals seeking advanced research and analytical skills to enhance their professional career. More than 1,000 applications were received for both of our graduate programs this year, a department record.

We are also pleased to announce the new [Duke Financial Economics Center](#). The Center's goals are to broaden the range of finance courses and research opportunities offered to Duke students, to continue to hire world-renowned faculty in financial economics and to increase opportunities for active engagement between Duke students, faculty and alumni. The Center will also expand Duke's extracurricular educational activities for undergraduates, such as the competitions, visiting talks, and mentoring opportunities run by the [Financial Education Partnership](#).

Newly hired as the executive director of the Center is Wall Street veteran and Duke alum [John Caccavale](#), who brings a wealth of professional experience and knowledge. Combined with the academic and teaching leadership of Tim Bollerslev and Emma Rasiel, we expect the impact of the Center will be significant. Included in our expanded finance offerings is a finance minor for non-economics majors that became an option this Fall in order to facilitate access to finance education for Duke students from all disciplines.

In other undergraduate news, we were glad to see senior economics and mechanical engineering major Jared Dunnmon of Cincinnati

recently won a Rhodes Scholarship. More details in the [Duke press release](#).

Additionally, the [Honors Program](#), led by [Michelle Connolly](#), continues to expand to offer more students the opportunities to engage in meaningful and sustained research, culminating in an honor's thesis. Recent undergraduate research can be seen online in the [Duke Journal of Economics](#).

The faculty here continues to produce interesting new research which can be accessed via the [research page](#) of our website. There you will find links to working papers and stories on forthcoming research. Also, three faculty members published books this year: Rachel Kranton worked with Nobel Laureate George Akerlof to write "[Identity Economics](#)," Timur Kuran wrote "[The Long Divergence](#)," which explains how Islamic law has held back the Middle East's development, and Thomas Nechyba wrote a [microeconomics textbook](#) for undergraduates which includes an interactive learning component.

Finally, as you may have noted upon receipt of this email, the Department of Economics is working to increase communication with its alumni. We are interested in your news and happy to hear your suggestions about the department. Feel free to email me (patrick.bayer@duke.edu) or our communications specialist Melissa Eggleston (melissa.eggleston@duke.edu) at any time.

Throughout the year, we hope you will visit our website frequently to keep up with the work of our faculty and students. Please [visit our Facebook page](#) and "like" us to make it really easy to stay in the loop. We also have a [channel on YouTube](#) where you can see special lectures, faculty interviews and our Ph.D. job market candidates. We look forward to keeping in touch with you.

With best wishes for 2011,

[Patrick Bayer](#)
Chair, Department of Economics