

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

<http://www.unr.edu/business/academic-departments/economics>

Winter 2014

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Faculty and Staff

Tom Cargill, Professor, Ph.D., 1968, UC-Davis.

John Dobra, Associate Professor, Ph.D. 1980, Virginia Tech.

Federico Guerrero, Associate Professor, Ph.D. 2002, Maryland.

Tom Harris, Professor, Ph.D. 1981, Oklahoma State.

Theresa Moser, Administrative Assistant.

Sankar Mukhopadhyay, Assoc. Professor, Ph.D. 2005, U. Penn.

Mark Nichols, Professor, Ph.D. 1994, Florida State.

Ted Oleson, Lecturer, M.S. 1990, UNR.

Elliott Parker, Professor, Ph.D. 1992, Washington.

Mark Pingle, Professor, Ph.D. 1988, USC.

Kambiz Raffiee, Professor & Assoc. Dean, Ph.D. 1983, Oregon.

Kimberly Rollins, Associate Professor, Ph.D. 1990, Wisconsin.

Shunfeng Song, Professor, Ph.D. 1992, UC-Irvine.

Debra Stiver, Lecturer, M.B.A. 1989, UNR.

Michael Taylor, Asst. Research Professor, M.S. 2007, Maryland.

Mehmet S. Tosun, Assoc. Professor and Chair, Ph.D. 2001, Syracuse.

Jeanne Wendel, Professor, Ph.D. 1977, Southern Methodist.

Jingjing Yang, Assistant Professor, Ph.D. 2010, Michigan State.

DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

Letter from the Department Chair

It has been six months since I started my term as Department Chair. It is my pleasure to write my first letter to you in our department newsletter. These are exciting times for our department. We are currently in the market to hire two new faculty members. In addition to the position to replace Professor Eadington who passed away last year, we were also given a new position in the middle of the Fall semester to hire an Assistant Professor. Both searches are currently underway and we are looking forward to welcoming new faculty members to our department next Fall.

Our programs are expanding. We have more than fifty graduate students in our graduate programs. This gives us the second largest graduate student body in our College after the MBA program. We have an increasing number of PhD students that are reaching the dissertation stage of their studies. We are providing more graduate assistantship funding than ever before. We also had our first PhD student dissertation fellowship funded jointly by the City of Reno, City of Sparks and Washoe County.

Our Department is a sponsor of the Society for the Advancement of Behavioral Economics (SABE) conference that will be held in South Lake Tahoe in July. Prof. Mark Pingle is the organizer of that conference.



In Memoriam: Professor William R. Eadington

We are deeply saddened by the loss of our colleague Professor Bill Eadington who passed away on February 11, 2013. Bill joined UNR in 1969. He was a Professor of Economics and founding director of the Institute for the Study of Gambling and Commercial Gaming, which was founded in 1989. He also held the Philip G. Satre Chair in Gaming Studies, which was established in 2004.

Bill was inducted into American Gaming Association's Gaming Hall of Fame in 2011 and also received a Special Achievement Award for his contributions to gaming education. As his obituary that appeared in New York Times puts it he "was one of the first academics to study gambling, as both a force for economic development and a challenging social problem." He was indeed one of the most influential experts in gambling research and education.

We had one new faculty member, Professor Jingjing Yang, who joined our department in 2012. Professor Yang received her PhD from Michigan State University where she specialized in econometrics. Three other UNR faculty members were given Adjunct Faculty status in our department. They are Professors Thomas Quint and Ilya Zaliapin from the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, and Professor Frederick Steinmann from the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension.

It was also great to hear that the Faculty Media Impact Project by the Center for a Public Anthropology ranked our department first in faculty media engagement among economics departments in ninety-four research universities.

I would like to thank you all for your dedication and contributions to our department. I'm really proud of working with you. Let me end my letter by wishing you all a happy and productive new year.

Mehmet S. Tosun

STUDENT NEWS

Our graduate students and recent graduates had great achievements in recent years. Some examples are:

Dusty Casey (MA 2013) graduated with MA in Economics in August 2013 after completing his Master thesis under the supervision of Professor Tom Harris. He received the Best Graduate Student in MA-Economics Award by the College of Business in 2013.

Leandra Copeland (MS 2011) is now an economist with the Department of Employment Training and Rehabilitation.

Joseph Crouse (PhD student) is now ABD and is currently in the job market. He is planning to defend his dissertation in Spring 2014. He recently presented one of his dissertation essays in a poster session in the National Tax Association Annual Conference in Tampa.

Shirley Diaz (MA 2013) graduated with MA in Economics in Spring 2013. She is now an Analyst at Goldman Sachs in Salt Lake City, Utah. She was also recognized as an inspiring Latina by the Cosmopolitan for Latinas Magazine.

Betsy Fadali (PhD 2013) graduated with PhD in Resource Economics in December 2013. She was hired as an Economist by the Nevada Housing Division.

Karl Geisler (PhD 2013) graduated with PhD in Economics in May 2013. He is our first PhD graduate since the PhD program was transferred to our department. He is currently working in the Center for Economic Development at UNR and is also teaching

classes in our department as temporary faculty.

Eugenia Larmore (PhD student) is the first recipient of the dissertation fellowship established jointly by the City of Reno, City of Sparks and Washoe County.

Atlas Malaekheh (MS 2013) graduated with MS in Economics in May 2013. She is a business data analyst in the Middle East branch of Sweetbeam in Dubai.

Grace Morris (MS 2013) graduated with MS in Economics in May 2013. She received two job offers upon graduation and accepted the one from ICF International which is a technology, policy and management consultancy firm based in Washington, DC.

Dimitra Papadovasilaki (PhD student) is working on her dissertation with Professor Federico Guerrero. She presented her dissertation work recently in three different international conferences in Canada, Greece and Spain.

Nicholas Saxon (MS 2103) graduated with MS in Economics in December 2013 after completing his Master thesis on sales taxes and business activity under the supervision of Professor Mehmet Tosun. He received the Best Graduate Student in MS-Economics Award by the College of Business in 2013.

Lennon Weller (MA 2008) is an economist in the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section. He specializes in the unemployment insurance system.

Hank Will (MS 2013) graduated with MS in Economics in May 2013 and started the PhD program in Economics at Washington State University in Fall 2013.

Rattaphon Wuthisatian (PhD student) is working on his dissertation with Professor Mark Pingle. He received the Best PhD student in Economics Award by the College of Business in 2013.

Dilek Uz (MS 2008) is working on her dissertation in the Ph.D. program in Agricultural and Resource Economics at the University of California, Berkeley.

Matt Van den Berg (MS 2006) started the PhD program in Economics at American University.

Did you know?

Our Department offers many options for study, including a Bachelor of Arts, a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, a minor in Economics, a minor in Economic Policy, a Master of Arts, a Master of Science, and a Ph.D.

According to the BLS, the average salary in the U.S. for economists was \$99,480 in 2012. These jobs often require graduate study, and economics majors go into many careers besides being an economist.

College pays in general. Unemployment rates were 8.3%, 4.5%, 3.5% and 2.5% for ones with High school diploma, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree and Doctoral degree, respectively. Over a working lifetime, increased earning power far exceeds the cost.



History of our Department

The Department of Economics & Sociology was created in 1911, as part of the College of Arts & Science. We awarded our first B.A. in Economics in 1919, after the end of the first World War. The name was changed to Department of Economics, Business & Sociology in 1922, and in 1924 we awarded our first B.S. in Economics.

The College of Business was born from this department in 1956. Our current department emerged as part of the college. We gave our first M.A. in 1966 and our first M.S. two years later. After more than hundred years since the foundation of our Department we are now offering Nevada's only Ph.D. degree. This program was created by the Department of Resource Economics and was run in collaboration with our department. When the university decided to close the Department of Resource Economics in 2010, the PhD program was transferred to our department. We started admitting students to our PhD program in Fall 2010. We now have close to 30 PhD students. With about the same number of Master students we have the second largest graduate student group in the College of Business after the MBA program.

FACULTY NEWS

Professor Tom Cargill was the first recipient of the Dean's Research Professorship, which was established to recognize outstanding research productivity in the College of Business. He organized and chaired a session, and presented a paper on central bank independence in the American Economic Association meetings in 2013.

Professor John Dobra was named Senior Fellow by the Fraser Institute, a leading public policy think-tank in Canada, in 2012. He published a paper recently on state mineral taxation and mining law in Resources Policy. He also published twelve short articles on the Fraser Institute's mining blog.

Professor Federico Guerrero received the Best Graduate Faculty in Economics Award by the College of Business in

2013.

Professor Tom Harris was named Fellow by the Western Rural Development Center at Utah State University. He also received an NSF-EPSCOR grant for a solar energy project.

Professor Mark Nichols hooded our first PhD graduate (Karl Geisler) in May 2013. He was the Senior Scholar Mentor for the College in 2013 for mentoring Olivia Pennell (BS, 2013).

Professor Sankar Mukhopadhyay received the Beta Gamma Sigma Researcher of the Year Award in 2012. He is also working on a funded project to analyze the Health Information Exchange in Nevada.

Professor Elliott Parker is now Director of Core Curriculum. He was ranked third in media outreach within faculty from UNR by the Faculty Media Impact Project

conducted by the Center for Public Anthropology.

Professor Mark Pingle was named Charles N. Mathewson Professor of Entrepreneurship in 2012. He is currently organizing the next Society for the Advancement of Behavioral Economics (SABE) conference which will take place in South Lake Tahoe in July 2014.

Professor Kim Rollins just heard of the approval of her promotion to Full Professor. She was also granted sabbatical for next year. She will be a Visiting Scholar at Environment Canada which is Canada's main environmental regulatory agency.

Professor Shunfeng Song will be on sabbatical during Spring 2014. He will be visiting Peking University through a Lincoln Institute of Land

Policy China Program fellowship. He will also be at Zhejiang University and Tianjin Chengjian University for research visits.

Professor Mehmet S. Tosun started his term as Chair in July 2013. He was the recipient of the Dean's Research Professorship in 2013, which was established to recognize outstanding research productivity in the College of Business. His IZA Research Fellowship was recently extended for another three years.

Professor Jeanne Wendel is working on a funded project to analyze the Health Information Exchange in Nevada.

Professor Jingjing Yang joined our department in 2012. She teaching econometric theory in the first-year econometrics sequence in our graduate program.

SELECTED RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY DEPARTMENT FACULTY

Cargill, Thomas F. 2013. "A Critical Assessment of Measures of Central Bank Independence," *Economic Inquiry*, 51 (1): 260-272.

Dobra, John and Matt Dobra. 2013. "State Mineral Production Taxes and Mining Law Reform," *Resources Policy*, 38(2): 162-168.

Fink, A. and M. Pingle, Forthcoming. "Kidnapping Insurance and its Impact on Kidnapping Outcomes," *Public Choice*.

Guerrero, F., and E. Parker. 2012. "The Effect of Federal Government Size on Long-term Economic Growth in the United States, 1791-2009," *Modern Economy* 3(8): 949-957.

Hendrickson, Jill, M., Mark Nichols, and Dan Fairchild. Forthcoming. "Bank Branch Location and Stability During Distress." *Journal of Financial Economic Policy*

James, J.J., R. Sheley, T. Erickson, Kim Rollins, Michael

H. Taylor, and K.W. Dixon. 2013. "A systems approach to restoring degraded drylands." *Applied Ecology* 50(3): 730-739.

Kim, M.-K., Zhu, E. J., Tom R. Harris, and J. Alevy. 2013. "Developing LP-SAM to Examine Regional Economic Impact: Regional Economic Impact from Wildfires". *The Review of Regional Studies*, 4:207-221.

Kobayashi, M, K. Moeltner and Kim Rollins. 2012. "Latent Threshold Analysis of Choice Data with Multiple Bids and Response Options," *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 94 (1): 189-208.

Li, Fanghua, Yihua Yu, Shunfeng Song, Xinye Zheng. Forthcoming. "Central Government's Infrastructure Investment across Chinese Regions: A Spatial Panel Analysis," *China Economic Review*.

Luitel, Hari and Mehmet S. Tosun. Forthcoming. "A Reexamination of State Fiscal Health and Amnesty Enact-

ment." *International Tax and Public Finance*.

Melkonyan, Tigran, and Michael H. Taylor. 2013. "Regulatory Policy Design for Agroecosystem Management on Public Rangelands," *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 95(3): 606-627.

Melkonyan, T. and M. Pingle. 2012. "To Believe or Not Believe...or Not Decide: A Decision-Theoretic Model of Agnosticism," *Rationality and Society* 24(4): 408-441.

Mukhopadhyay, S. and J. Wendel. Forthcoming. "Evaluating an employee wellness program," *International Journal of Health Care Finance and Economics*.

Mukhopadhyay, Sankar. 2012. "The Effects Of The 1978 Pregnancy Discrimination Act On Female Labor Supply," *International Economic Review*, 53(4): 1133-1153.

Nichols, Mark W. Forthcoming. "The Impact of Visiting

Team Travel on Game Outcome and Biases in NFL Betting Markets." *Journal of Sports Economics*,

Nichols, Mark W. and Tosun, Mehmet S. 2014. "The Elasticity of Casino Gambling." in *Oxford Handbook of Gambling Economics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, U.K.

Song, Shunfeng, Chengsi Wang, and Jianghuai Zheng. 2012. "Industrial Upgrade, Employment Shock and Land Centralization in China," *Contemporary Economic Policy*, 30(4): 523-532.

Tosun, Mehmet S., Claudia Williamson and Pavel Yakovlev. 2012. "Population Aging, Elderly Migration and Education Spending: Intergenerational Conflict Revisited," *Public Budgeting and Finance* 32 (2): 25-39.

Yang, Jingjing. 2012. "Break point estimators for a slope shift: levels versus first differences," *Econometrics Journal*, 15(1): 154-169.

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The Idea Place

UNR's Department of Economics is on Facebook! Please "like" us and receive notice of our events.

Are you an alumnae who would like to be featured in an upcoming issue? Please get in touch with us. We would love to hear from you and highlight your accomplishments!

The Department of Economics at the University of Nevada, Reno is an "idea place" and seeks to become an increasingly creative and valuable resource as it conducts teaching, research, and service activities.

Through its undergraduate major and minor programs, as well as its graduate studies, our students learn to use conceptual models and econometric techniques to analyze business and policy issues. Through basic and applied research, the Department's faculty members create and develop ideas that push back the frontier of knowledge and assist public and private decision makers in practical ways. Through service to the community and to the economics profession, the Department seeks to be the "go to place" for creative and practical ideas that benefit the region, the state, and the nation.

We value our students and alumni. The alumni featured in this newsletter illustrate the various paths people have pursued with their economics training, and highlight the success of the individuals featured.

Are you an Economics Alum? We'd love to feature you and your accomplishments in this newsletter. Please contact us!

DEPARTMENT PROJECTS

The Economics Department at UNR is consistently looking for ways to challenge and support its exceptional students and dynamic faculty.

Alumni support and involvement makes a huge difference in our ability to deliver a program that will attract top students and outstanding faculty. We hope you will explore the following list of departmental projects and consider making a gift:

★ **Economics Seminar Series** We invite guest lecturers from all over the country to present their research to our faculty and students. Past speakers include economists from UC Berkeley, Stanford, University of Chicago, Brown, USC, UC Davis, UC San Diego, the University of Michigan, the Federal Reserve Banks in San Francisco and St. Louis, the University of Texas, Dallas, Virginia Tech, and the University of Maryland, among others. Topics have included the education levels and wage growth in US cities, consumer spending, debt, and tax rebates, Nevada State finances, the economic consequences of war, education and later-life mortality, and return migration of skilled workers. Most speakers do not require a fee, but do need their transportation provided. Our goal is to have \$4,000 annually to fund this series. Go to <http://www.unr.edu/business/research-and-outreach/economics-seminars> for a current schedule and the archive.

★ **Undergraduate and Graduate Scholarships** Currently we have three active and one planned scholarships:

- ◇ The Mike Mitchell Memorial Scholarship, was created by faculty and friends in honor of the late Professor Mike Mitchell.
- ◇ The Larry Larsen Scholarship continues to be generously funded by Professor Emeritus Larsen, who retired in 1992.
- ◇ The Armstrong Economics Scholarship was created and funded by Ross Armstrong, a recent graduate of the department.

In addition to these, we are currently in the process of establishing the William R. Eadington Memorial Scholarship. These scholarships provide much needed funding to our economics majors. If you would like to establish a scholarship, in your name, the name of a loved one, or in honor of a favorite instructor, please contact Mitch Klaich at mklaich@unr.edu.