

# The Marginalist

A PUBLICATION OF THE ECONOMICS STUDENT ASSOCIATION  
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale  
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## Letter from the Director



Greetings from Carbondale! Hope you are doing well. So far, 2022 has provided a return to normalcy as courses in spring returned to in-

person instruction after two weeks of online teaching. Fall courses are meeting regularly throughout the semester – at least, that is the plan. Let's hope we don't see a setback.

Economics at SIU continues to do well although we continue to find ways to improve. The Economics undergraduate program finished with 44 majors in spring 2022, higher than in several years. Unfortunately, we more frequently need to replace majors than do other programs. Many majors come as transfers from community colleges or from other departments on campus. We remain encouraged that we can appeal to those in other programs. However, greater reliance on transfers means that these students are with us for only a couple of years, necessitating more frequent recruitment to increase numbers.

A pleasant surprise has been the

initial reception to our new Quantitative Economics major which just kicked off this fall. Students can still take the 'traditional' Economics major. The QE major puts greater emphasis on math and computer programming to complement an economics foundation. Specifically, the QE major replaces some economics electives with computer science and math courses, providing the quantitative skills that many employers increasingly seek. When this major was first proposed pre-Covid, we anticipated that the QE major would draw most interest from international students who would appreciate the immigration benefits of a STEM degree. However, domestic students have also shown interest and we already have five majors. Of course, we hope that we can increase our number of international students now that traveling restrictions due to Covid have eased.

Together, the Econ and QE majors have 40 majors, again higher in early fall than in recent years. Continued growth in undergraduate enrollment

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remains our top priority.

The masters and doctoral programs remain our strength. We have 47 graduate students this fall, 35 of whom are doctoral students. These numbers continue the high enrollment we have enjoyed the previous three years. We are funding 19 students this year through assistantships. The remainder are Fulbright students, receive support from host governments, finance their education out of personal funds, or are funded through other units on campus. Four of our students received Dissertation Research Awards from the Graduate School – more than in any other year since I arrived 24 years ago!

Two new faculty members allowed us to teach courses we have not been able to teach in a number of years, including Environmental and Labor Economics for undergraduates. After an absence of several years, we again offered the Macro-Money concentration for the PhD program, joining the Development and International concentrations. Each year, we teach two of these three fields.

A college-level initiative looks to restart the mentorship program where an alumnus gets paired with an undergraduate. This mentor

can offer advice about the 'real world' while also providing a resource away from SIU that some students might find preferable when concerns arise. Students can reach out to someone away from campus. If anyone would like more information about becoming a mentor, please contact me. This is an invaluable program that can boost retention and help some students that might not otherwise graduate.

Finally, the Vandever Public Lecture will resume this fall. The Vandever Chair currently held by Sajal Lahiri regularly brings to campus a globally renowned scholar for a public lecture. This year, John Conley of Vanderbilt University will give a talk on Cryptoeconomics on November 10<sup>th</sup>. These public lectures provide great visibility for Economics at SIU and we are glad they can now resume.

As always, please feel free to ask questions about the program or drop me a line if you just want to chat.

With Saluki Pride,

Kevin Sylwester  
Professor and Director

## Scholarships and Awards

### **Thomas and Chany Chung Scholarship**

#### **Undergraduate**

Isaac Brown	Evan Bryant
Kacy Clarkston	Tristan Fox
Kaelee German	Cade Joiner
David Jones	Amy Jordan
Ryan Jurich	Crystal Kendzior
Thabang Makau	Joshua Moore
Layton Paloutzian	Vishal Patel
Gustav Persson	Dana Pietrusiak
Brandon Reeves	Clayton Richardson
Jack Rigoni	Matthew Rosenkoetter
Jillian Smith	Matthew Steidl
Paris Walsh	Emily White

### **Glenn W. and Cornelia Y. Miller Scholarship**

Crystal Kendzior  
Joshua Moore

### **Garrett E. and Susan J. Pierce Scholarship**

Kaelee Germain  
Crystal Kendzior

### **Outstanding Junior    Outstanding Senior**

Layton Paloutzian    Kaelee Germain

### **Elizabeth Goyak Scholarship**

Evan Bryant

## Alumni Profile — Lakshila Wanigasinghe



Being a transfer student all the way from the small but majestic island of Sri Lanka, SIU was my very first adventure in the United States. Back in Fall 2015 when I first stepped foot on campus, I had no idea of how big a role SIU would play in my life.

Looking back now,

after nearly 5 years in Carbondale I can gladly say I have met some amazing people and made great memories on this campus. Having graduated a few years back, I'm grateful to still be in touch with my professors and the colleagues who I get to call some of my best friends even today.

Since moving back home to Sri Lanka I have been working as a researcher at the Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka (IPS) - a leading economic policy think tank in the country. Currently my work mainly focuses on poverty and social welfare. Working at IPS has given me the opportunity to contribute towards the formulation of policies that benefit the Sri Lankan population as a whole, especially the poor and vulnerable. Unfortunately, poverty levels in Sri Lanka have been on the rise following COVID-19 and the economic crisis the island is currently undergoing. Although the pandemic reversed poverty alleviation globally and the world is currently moving towards recovery, Sri Lanka is experiencing a continuous reversal. This has increased the importance and necessity of research focusing on inclusive policies and stronger social safety nets. Hence my work lately has largely focused on ways to develop stronger social safety nets, overcoming pandemic induced adversities, and supporting the vulnerable through the economic crisis.

The SIU Economics Department has played a very important role in helping me successfully perform in my current role as a researcher. I wouldn't be

where I am today if it wasn't for the skills I gained at SIU. All my professors have gone above and beyond to share their knowledge and support throughout. They have always been welcoming of any questions, ready to extend help, motivating and generous with life/career advice. When I first enrolled at SIU I didn't have a clue on what I wanted to study. Since I transferred as a junior, I had to declare a major quickly. All I knew was that I wasn't too keen on majoring in a subject that involved too much math or science. So, econ seemed like a good in-between option except for the slight problem that I wasn't a big fan of the subject. My very first encounter with the subject of economics was in high school. Being a not-so-attentive student back then, although concepts like demand, supply and equilibrium made sense to me, I wasn't very good at applying them or passing my exams. Thanks to the dedication and commitment of the professors who laid a strong foundation, economics soon became one of my favorite subjects. This is what convinced me to stay on at SIU and pursue an MSc in economics.

The opportunities I received while at SIU have contributed to shaping my career. From being a member of many clubs, the International Student Council (ISC) Representative at the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) and a teaching assistant in the Department of Economics as a graduate student; the opportunities have been endless. These experiences have equipped me with essential skills, tested my limits and helped push myself further than I knew I was capable of. For this, I will always be grateful.

SIU and the Department of Economics will forever hold a special place in my heart. I started my journey in Carbondale as a student unclear of what the future holds, but with big dreams to 'leave the world a little better than I found it.' Fast forward several years - I have obtained an undergraduate and master's degree in economics from SIU, I currently work as an economist and I love what I do, because at the end of the day I believe my work creates a positive impact on my country and this has always been my goal.

## Students' Perspectives



The Economic Students Association (ESA) is a student-run organization aimed at fostering social, academic, and professional relationships. By default, all Economics graduate students are members of the ESA.

Graduate school can be quite tasking and overwhelming, especially for first-year students. The ESA helps make graduate school an exciting experience through activities such as discussions on research interests, academic support, tips on navigating graduate school, and outings in Carbondale. Every fall, the ESA organizes its New Students Orientation where current graduate students share personal learning experiences, including how they survived the rigors of the first year of graduate school, how to prepare for qualifying examinations, and how to best manage time, which is essential for success in graduate school. As part of the ESA's effort to foster social interactions among faculty, staff, and students, every September and April, the ESA in partnership with the undergraduate Economics Club organizes a picnic at Evergreen Park, giving members the opportunity to unwind and interact less formally.

The Economics Program, now in the School of Analytics, Finance, and Economics, remains culturally diverse with students from Asia, Africa, Europe, South America, and North America.

Our alumni network is also vibrant and diverse with former students in academia, industry, and government. Through its Facebook page, the

ESA affords students past and present a way to connect. You are all urged to join the page and take advantage of its resources.

SIUC prides itself on being ranked as one of the foremost public research universities. The Economics program has in its faculty a team of seasoned academics who have been very supportive, consistently involved in innovative research and also nurturing a new generation of scholars and problem solvers. We benefit from an Economics lab equipped with advanced econometric and programming tools, including E VIEWS, SPSS, R studio, Python, and MATLAB.

Graduate school is a lot of work but is well worth it. Having a Master's or Ph.D. degree in Economics is one of the most rewarding career decisions a student can make. Economists by virtue of the training they get are much sought after problem solvers. For future students, I would caution that graduate school demands a lot of time and resources but also let them know to make the best of it. Make friends, relax, but – of course, study.

All at the ESA hope you are doing well. Please let us know if you are ever on campus as we would like to compare our journey with those coming before us.

Best regards,  
Adisa Olawale David, President, ESA





## Students' Perspectives



Kaelee Germain is a recent graduate from SIU with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and a Bachelor's of Science in Paralegal Studies with a Chinese minor. During her undergrad years, Kaelee participated in multiple student organizations such as the Economics Club, serving as president, and in the Organization of Paralegal Studies, serving as vice president.

During the summer of 2020 going into her junior year, Kaelee interned at Senator Tammy Duckworth's Carbondale Office where she gained valuable constituent experience as she assisted in casework and community outreach. Her background in economics became a useful skill as the office allowed her to write an office memorandum on which she chose to research collateral sanctions of returning individuals to society from prison.

After the internship Kaelee went on to pick up legal research writing courses along with Econometrics 463, which proved to be an advantage the following year when she interned at the Federal Public Defender's Office in Benton, IL for the southern Illinois federal district court. Having a background in stats allowed her to incorporate research articles into memorandums that she drafted for attorneys preparing for their factors of mitigation during sentencing hearings.

Upon graduation, Kaelee decided to take a gap year before going further in her education. Right now, she is undecided on whether to pursue an M.B.A. or a J.D. During this time, Kaelee is working once again for Senator Duckworth's Office where she now serves as the Northwestern Regional Community Outreach Coordinator out of the Rock Island Office.



## Faculty News: Accomplishments in 2021-2022

### **Dr. Chifeng Dai**

➤ "Optimal risk sharing with ex post private information: Rules vs. discretion," *Southern Economic Journal*, forthcoming.

### **Dr. Scott Gilbert**

➤ "The Role of Research and Development in Shaping Agricultural Labor and Land Productivity in Colombia: 1981-2016", by Juan Taramuel, Wanki Moon, Scott Gilbert, and C. Matthew Rendleman, *Agribusiness* 39(1), 65-84, February 2022.

### **Conference Presentations**

➤ "Stationarity and Forecasts of Real Medical Price Inflation," National Association of Forensic Economics, Annual meeting (online), January 2022.

### **Dr. Hundanol Kebede**

➤ "Risk aversion and gender gaps in technology adoption by smallholder farmers: Evidence from Ethiopia" *Journal of Development Studies*.

➤ "The Pass-Through of International Commodity Price Shocks to Producers' Welfare: Evidence from Ethiopian Coffee Farmers" *World Bank Economic Review*.

### **Dr. Sajal Lahiri**

➤ "Efficiency Spillovers from FDI and Domestic-exporting Firms: The Case of Ethiopian Manufacturing," *Journal of International Development*, 2020 (with Melaku Abegaz).

➤ "Do politically and economically similar states in the U.S.A. trade more with each other?" *Economics Bulletin*, 2021 (with Nawaraj Paudel).

➤ "Is the Internet Bringing Down Language-based Barriers to International Trade?", *Review of International Economics*, 2022 (with Erick Kitenge).

➤ "Has International Trade Increased Carbon Dioxide Emission in Asia?", chapter 1 in: Chandrima Chakraborty and Dipyaman Pal, eds., *Environmental Sustainability, Growth Trajectory and Gender: Contemporary Issues*

*of Developing Economies*, Emerald Publishing., 2022 (with Nneamaka Ilechukwu).

### **Dr. Ali Mehrabani**

➤ "Weighted Average Estimation in Panel Data" with Aman Ullah (2022), *International Journal of Statistical Sciences*, Vol. 22(1), pp 47-78.

### **Dr. AKM Mahbub Morshed**

➤ "Gender Bias in Education Expenditure in Iraq: Evidence from Household Socio-Economic Survey," (with Erfan Kareem). ASSA Conference, Poster Presentation, Virtual, January 2022.

### **Dr. Kevin Sylwester**

➤ "Mobile Phones, the Internet, and Emigration to OECD Countries." *Telematics and Informatics*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.teler.2021.100002>, forthcoming. (with X. Xu).

➤ "Expected mental health care costs of military involvement. *Preventing and treating the invisible wounds of war: Combat trauma, moral injury, and psychological health*." Cary, NC: Oxford University Press, 2021. (with J. McDaniel, R. Stapel, T. Ting, and D. Albright)

➤ "Export Diversification and Growth of Total Factor Productivity: Evidence from MENA Countries." *Empirical Economics Letters*, 20 (7), 1131-1137, 2021. (with A. Eldarassi)



## Master's and Ph.D. Graduates

### Academic Year 2021-2022

Jack Colquhoun (M)                      Fall 2021

Korede Ajogbeje (Ph.D.)      Spring 2022

Josue Soto (M)                      Spring 2022

Ling Zhang (Ph.D.)                  Spring 2022

Chase Pierce (M)                  Summer 2022



## Economics Student Association



The Economic Student Association is a non-profit, student-led association with a mission of enhancing the educational as well as social experience of economics students through mentoring, guidance and providing academic related information.

The Association takes the responsibility of publishing this Newsletter and assists in organizing lectures and seminars. ESA also helps the faculty of the department, by giving a venue for students to voice concerns and thereby helping faculty to improve their teaching. Each semester new entering students express their appreciation to the invaluable advice and mentoring provided by senior members.

Members of the Economics Student Association are graduate students in the Department of Economics seeking a Masters or a Doctorate degree. The ESA is organized by the ESA Officers (see current list below), all of whom are graduate students. The officers are elected by fellow graduate students to perform unique duties for the organization. All graduate students are encouraged to join and get involved with the department activities.

Membership is FREE, and you can find a place to belong and to have fun! You can discuss concerns and have questions answered by other students, fellow graduate students who have "been there before." Participation is a great way to meet people and make new friends.

### 2022-2023 ESA Officers

#### President:

Olawale Adisa

#### Vice-President:

Hope Muronga

#### Secretary/Treasurer:

Sumaiya Binta Islam

#### Entertainment Committee

#### Representative/Public Relations Officer:

Adebukola Adeleke

#### Computer Committee Representative:

Collins Anosike

#### Faculty Recruitment Committee

#### Representative:

Wafa Binmahfuth

#### Graduate Studies

#### Committee:

A.M. Muhib Morshed Ami

#### Graduate and Professional Student

#### Council Representative:

Lyndrison Lincoln