



College of Letters & Science
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Economics matters



News for Alumni and Friends of the Economics Department

Spring 2022



Students thrive on campus as in-person learning continues at UW-Madison.

ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT ON THE WEB



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Letter from the Chair



With the in-person spring semester well underway, there is continued excitement on campus as a record number of students are electing to participate in Department of Economics programs and events. Our department is thriving, and students are eager to take advantage of opportunities to connect and learn.

In this newsletter, you will read about our fall Welcome Back Kick-off event hosted by the Economics Department to provide students, many of whom had never even been in the Social Sciences building, the opportunity to meet one another as well as engage with their instructors outside of the classroom.

You will also read about the success of our undergraduate economics study groups. It was important for us to provide a resource to support students as they transitioned back to

in-person learning, and this has been a great way for students to practice study skills and discuss course materials with their peers.

This will also be a very bittersweet semester for me personally as my term as department chair comes to an end. Associate Department Chair Chris Taber has been with the department since 2007 and will take over as chair in the fall.

Since I started as department chair in 2016, we have increased doctoral student funding, started a new master's program in financial economics, grown by five faculty members, and added more than 11 new courses covering in-demand topics like data visualizations and machine learning.

However, the relationships I have built with alumni across the country has been a true highlight from my time as chair, and I will continue to stay in touch with alumni and friends of the department. Your ideas, your stories, and your generosity will continue to leave a lasting impact on our department. Thank you for your continued involvement and support.

On, Wisconsin!

Ananth Seshadri
Chair, Department of Economics
Todd E. and Elizabeth H. Warnock
Distinguished Chair in Economics

ECONOMICS MATTERS

is the alumni newsletter of the
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University of Wisconsin–Madison.

William H. Sewell Social Sciences Building
Department of Economics
1180 Observatory Drive
Madison, WI 53706-1393

Website: econ.wisc.edu

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Thank you!

On the cover: Students enjoy a warm spring day on Bascom Hill near the Park Street pedestrian bridge at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

PHOTO BY BRYCE RICHTER/UW–MADISON

Alumni Career Chat Series Supports Career Exploration and Builds Confidence

Students recently explored career options from UW Economics alumni through Zoom. The Economics Department's Career Office arranged eight virtual Alumni Career Chats, featuring two alumni in each session from distinct industries including supply chain, risk management, Wall Street, policy research, the Federal Reserve System, and economic consulting.

In addition to providing an opportunity for students to explore careers and gain industry insider information, the Alumni Career Chat series showcased a diverse representation of alums. More than two-thirds of the alums

were women, and more than half were people of color, which provided our current economics students role models for future career prospects. The fall 2021 first-year class at UW–Madison was the most racially and ethnically diverse in the university's history, and the Economics Department strives for young students to see a community for themselves in economics.

"Representation and role models have shown to be critical in recruiting, retaining, and graduating students, especially those who have been historically underrepresented within economics and higher education," explains Ilsa May, career and outreach

coordinator with the Economic Career Development Office and organizer of the series. "Bringing in alumni to share their expertise with current students is one way the Economics Department can cultivate affinity and community within the major, as well as increase confidence in pursuing exciting career fields," she adds.

Profiles of the featured alumni, as well as recordings of the series are available at econ.wisc.edu/careers/careerchats. If you are interested in participating in a future Alumni Career Chat series or connecting with our students, please email Ilsa May at ilsa.may@wisc.edu.

Alumni Guest Speakers

econ.wisc.edu/careers/careerchats



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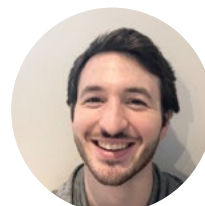
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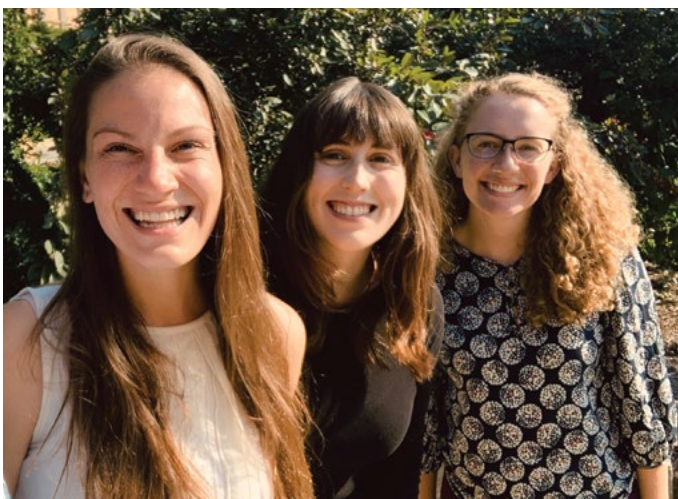
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Welcome Back Kickoff Event

After semesters of online learning, Econ students were together in person at the fall 2021 Econ Welcome Back Kickoff event.

This outside-on-a-sunny-day event, hosted by the Economics Department, was for all current and exploring economics majors who wanted to connect in person. Re-making friends, meeting professors face-to-face (for the first time for most!), and enjoying the warmth of togetherness made this event successful.

More than 200 students attended, and they were welcomed with (metaphorical) open arms by our student organization leaders, faculty, and staff. The Economics

Department deeply values community, and this event set the tone for a successful semester of personal and academic growth.

The fall 2021 semester continued with informational events about our new certificate program—Certificate in Economic Analytics—as well as virtual events including an Economics Honors in the Major educational session, an International Student Success workshop, and a Stress Management and Health Awareness seminar. The Economics Department strives to help students understand their graduation requirements, as well as discover themselves along the way.



Photos clockwise from top:

More than 200 students attended the Econ Welcome Back Kickoff event.

Members of Econ student organizations were on hand to answer questions. Student organizations included Economics Student Association, *Equilibrium*, Federal Reserve Challenge, Global Economic Forum, and Women in Economics.

The Econ Academic Advising Office team: Alicia, Madison, and Carly.

Econ Student Honored with Award

Economics senior **Willem Weigel**, lead special awards analyst for the Office of Student Financial Aid, earned third place as UW–Madison Student Employee of the Year. With nearly 9,000 students working in thousands of roles across campus, this prestigious honor represents the appreciation for the invaluable work completed by students each day.

Hometown: Waukesha, Wisconsin

Major: Triple majors in economics, political science, and history

Graduation: May 2022

After graduation Willem will be continuing his education at UW–Madison by pursuing a Master of Public Affairs (MPA) at the La Follette School.

Other campus involvement: Willem is involved with the peer student mentorship program Lead@Econ as well as ProGov21, a searchable digital library of progressive policies and practices for local government.

What is your favorite part of your job? Willem's favorite part of his job is collaborating and working with the Scholarship Support/WiSH team. Not only have they been supportive of his professional development, but they have provided a workplace environment that is lively, flexible, and a joy to be a part of.

What is the most important thing you've learned in your job? Working with scholarship administrators across campus has taught Willem how important collaboration can be in a largely decentralized environment. The work the team has done has allowed Willem to learn how a focus on inclusivity and holistic review of applicants is vital for the future of not only scholarships, but financial aid more generally at UW–Madison.



Willem Weigel, lead special awards analyst for the Office of Student Financial Aid, placed third in the UW–Madison Student Employee of the Year Awards.

2021 Honor Roll

Loyal friends of Economics make it possible for the department to provide a world-class education and carry out cutting-edge research. Through endowed faculty positions, graduate fellowships, need- and merit-based scholarships, and Annual Fund gifts, donors make educational excellence a reality and help Economics to sustain its consistent ranking among the best departments in the country. Thank you for your gifts!

Carillon Society members enjoy these benefits:

- Special invitations to Economics events and lectures
- *Equilibrium* magazine, a student-run journal
- A yearly investor's report on the Economics Annual Fund

For more information about the Carillon Society, please contact Torine Pasek at the UW Foundation at 608-572-2999 or torine.pasek@supportuw.org.

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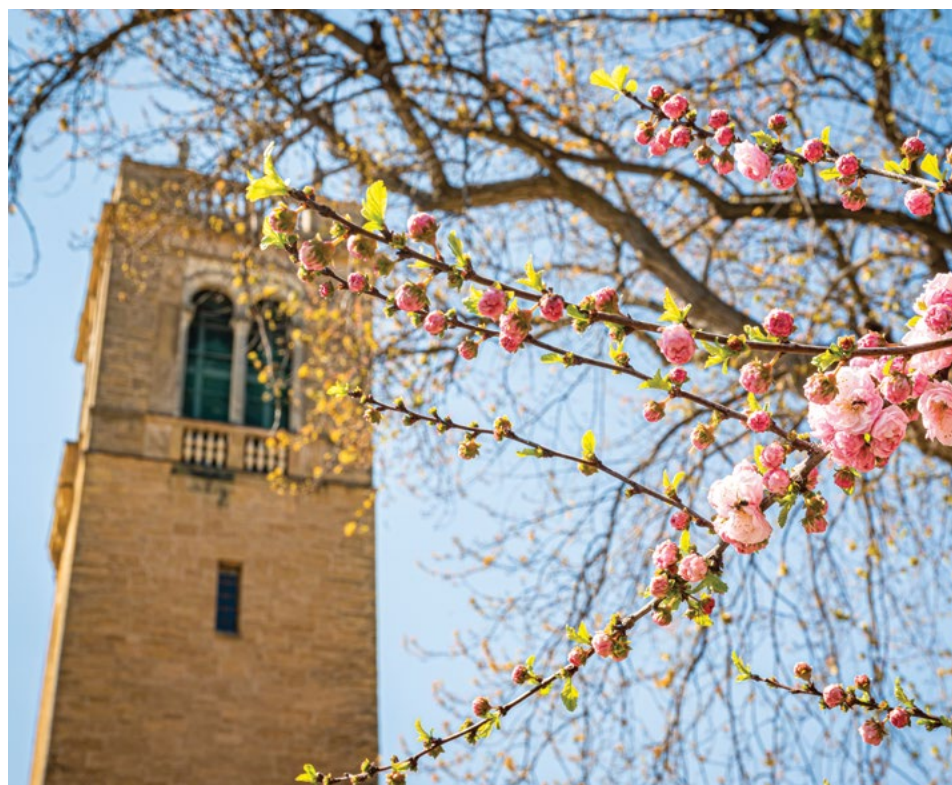
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Study Groups Grow in Popularity

The Economics Department implemented a study group program in fall 2021 to connect students with their peers who are enrolled in larger lectures (Econ 101, 102, 301, 302, and 310). The department recognized that some students struggle to reach out to peers they do not know, and the disconnect due to the pandemic has made connecting an even greater challenge.

Here's how it works

Each study group consists of four to six students who are enrolled in the same Econ class with the same professor. In these study groups, students review lecture notes and study for upcoming exams with their classmates. The Econ

Department reserves space in Social Sciences each week for students to meet. Students who sign up to participate can choose to meet in the reserved space or ask to be paired with students who want to determine their own meeting time and location. Students who missed the sign-up deadline can still participate in a study group but are limited to groups with availability.

Results are positive

In fall 2021, more than 129 students participated in a study group. For the spring 2022 semester there are 211 students officially signed up to participate, with more students anticipated to join as the semester continues.

