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Alumni Notes

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Alumni Notes

What areas of Economics are most interesting to you? Which specific field(s) are you pursuing in your studies?

I'm most interested in theory as a field. Theory basically means microeconomic theory, i.e. modeling decision-making behavior, and this basically means game theory (game theory has been the dominant analytical tool in economics for the last 20 years or so). Specifically, I'm interested in repeated games, and even more specifically I'm interested in reputation effects, bounded rationality, and how compelling a solution concept Nash equilibrium is.

What do you plan to pursue after graduation?

I want an academic job. Roughly 50-60% of new economics Ph.D.'s stay in academia. My current inclination is to take a job at a research university (more like UW and less like IWU). At a school like UW, research is emphasized, and teaching is relatively unimportant. To do this, however, I would have to be relatively happy with how my research

was going and be convinced that it would satisfy me for the foreseeable future. If this isn't the case when I go on the job market, I'm certainly leaving open the possibility of teaching at a liberal arts school like IWU. I would rather do the latter than go to a below-average university. I'm not a big fan of following "life plans" though, and so I will wait until the time comes to make a decision on what to do upon leaving UW.

Do you have any advice for undergraduate students who are interested in pursuing a graduate degree in Economics?

Take math classes, particularly in analysis and probability. Take advantage of any opportunities to work with faculty in any capacity, but especially to do research together. Also, know that a Ph.D. program is only for those who want to do research in economics. You basically spend 4 out of 5 years doing research, and the expectation is that you continue to do research upon leaving.

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Nimish Adhia '03

Nimish is currently in India spending his time gardening, learning to cook, and playing with his new dog. He plans to join the Economics Ph.D. Program at University of Illinois in Chicago in Fall 2004. His advice to economics majors; "there is economics in everything; you just can't get away from it! So deal with it."

Kory Blumer '03

Kory is currently working at Ernst & Young in Chicago as an auditor. He works with clients across several industries, interacting directly with their upper management team. Kory finds that a thorough understanding of microeconomics and macroeco-

nomics is essential in order to effectively communicate with both his clients and his co-workers. He also uses the knowledge he gained as a student of economics in trend/fluctuation analysis. Kory advises business students to take as many economic courses as possible, because "you will use economics in any business field, guaranteed!" He reminds students to have fun in school, because there is more to life than working.

Desislava Hristova '03

Desislava is working on a Ph.D. in Mathematics at Boston University. Her advice to economics students is to appreciate and take advantage of the wonderful economics faculty members who are so

available outside of class to discuss economics, careers, or simply life.

Awo Tiwaa Osei-Anto '03

Awo is currently working at Hewitt Associates as a business analyst. Even though she does not use her economics major directly, she feels it has given her a better understanding of Human Resources. Her advice to economic students: You cannot escape economics in the real world. Even if you end up not working in the field of economics, you will still face economic decisions in your day-to-day life. You will need economics to manage your personal finances and to understand current business affairs. Therefore, approach the study of economics as a life skill rather than a mere subject you need to graduate.

Bharat Pardasani '03

Bharat is currently working in the property accounting department at Equity Office Properties, the nation's largest real estate investment trust. He has found his knowledge of economics very useful in understanding the trends in the real estate market and the strategies undertaken by his firm to enhance shareholder value. His advice to current students: attend class, learn good research skills, and never challenge Dr. Seeborg in bowling.

Patrick Spangler '03

Pat, a fulltime student at Chicago-Kent College of Law, will be working as a judicial extern for Magistrate Judge Sidney Schenkier in the United States District Court for Northern Illinois. His knowledge of economics has helped him understand the theoretical principles of utilitarianism, efficiency, and cost-benefit analysis imbedded in modern legal scholarship. Pat reminds us that policy concerns involving law often reflect legal theories based in economics. His parting advice to current students is: "Don't let economics turn you into a nerd like Kory Blumer."

Jeremy Sandford '02

Jeremy is currently enrolled in an economics graduate program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He successfully passed his first year exams, and he is

currently completing his second year. He is particularly interested in the field of theory, and his field paper will involve game theory. Following graduation, Jeremy hopes to secure employment in academia.

Alicia Lange '01

Alicia is currently working in the home equity and consumer loan department at BankFinancial in Burr Ridge, IL. She applies many of the practical analysis tools she learned while in the IWU economics program. She also uses the analytical, writing, presentation, and research skills she learned every day at work and in her graduate studies. She is attending graduate school at Saint Xavier University's graduate program to obtain a Masters of Education with a certification in Elementary Education, and she hopes to also earn a Reading Specialist Certification. Her advice to students is to participate in as much research as you can while you have access to the many resources at IWU. She recommends that students research topics that are meaningful to them.

Amanda Watson '01

Amanda is currently attending law school at the University of Illinois. After her bar exam in July, she will be employed in civil defense litigation at Quinn, Johnston, Henderston and Pretorius in Peoria. She feels that her economics major helped her a lot on the LSAT and gave her critical thinking skills that are essential in law school.

Otis Carter '00

Otis is currently in his third year of a JD/MBA program at Washington University and is pursuing a Finance and Managerial Concentration at the Business School. He has accepted a position with a large law firm in St. Louis in their corporate litigation and class action defense practice area. His advice is to take classes that will really challenge you, such as Econometrics and History of Economics. These topics will come into play in the real world, and you will be glad you took them.

Jennifer Van Dyke '99

In the fall of 2003, Jennifer entered the Economics Ph.D. program at the University of Illinois in Chicago where she is works as a teaching assistant. She is also consulting on a part-time basis for BearingPoint where she specializes in healthcare.

Bryan McCannon '98

Last July Bryan defended his dissertation and received his Ph.D. in economics at Penn State University. His main fields of interest are Industrial Organization and Game Theory. Bryan is currently an Assistant Professor of Economics at Elmira College, a small liberal arts college in upstate New York.

Lee Poehlman '97

After spending a few years as a group manager at Verizon in the Campaign Management department, Lee has started his own business, Centraspect Inc. He feels that economics is essential to his work in market analysis and campaign evaluation. He is also currently attending the University of North Texas where he is completing his final semester of a MS in Applied Economics. In addition, he will graduate with certificates in Mediation, Family Mediation, and Alternative Dispute Resolution. He feels the most applicable classes from his undergraduate studies were Microeconomics, Local Economic Development, and Statistics.

Brett Roush '97

Brett is currently employed as an actuary for Trustmark and is working out of his home in Tucson, Arizona. He feels that the method of thinking involved in economics—logical analysis, integration of math and social science, and a “big-picture” perspective—has attributed greatly to his success. His advice to economics students is to never lose sight of the implications, the significance, and the ability to explain the concepts involved as you dig into the numerical aspects of an economics problem or issue.

Ashish Vohra '97

Ashish is in his last semester of the MBA program at the Yale School of Management. He has not yet

decided on a job after the completion of the program.

Faizal Chaudhury '96

Faizal works in the Internal Audit Dept. of Stepan Company in Northfield, IL. He is currently involved in Sarbanes-Oxley Act, related compliance work, and implementation of corporate governance reforms. Last fall he began a MBA at the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business. Faizal advises students who plan to attend business school to acquire a strong quantitative background. Econometrics is a must!

Kimberly Ann Lawson '96

Kimberly is currently a senior project manager at Hewitt Associates aligned with their HRO Total Benefits Administration, specifically working with Health & Group Benefits (medical, dental, vision, and life plans). She feels her degree in economics is very valuable in the business world because of the emphasis on data collection and analysis. She recommends that students complement their economics major with a minor. This combination diversifies your skills, knowledge, and experience. She has found this diversification to be invaluable from both a career and personal perspective.

Gnanika Wijyaratne '94

Gnanika worked for ChevronTexaco until very recently when she became a fulltime stay-at-home mom. She also has graduate degrees in the fields of Human Resources, Management/Training and Development.

Yuet Wei Wan '93

Yuet Wei is currently working for Oaktree Capital Management in New York. Her position involves the emerging markets hedge, and she is responsible for the metals and mining, paper and steel sectors. Yuet Wei feels that since global macroeconomic factors drive commodities and foreign exchange markets, a background in economics is invaluable. She reminds students that a strong understanding of international economics is essential because we live in a very global economy.