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## Reflections on the Economics Program

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## Reflections on the Economics Program

# Reflections on the Economics Program

It has been another good year for the economics program. Students continue to learn and enjoy remarkable achievements, and faculty members place top priority on good teaching and one-on-one interaction with students.

There seems to be less uncertainty in the world. The real economy is finally growing and hopefully, for our seniors, the labor market will soon begin to create jobs. To me, there is a strong possibility that a prosperous and more secure future will emerge from the ashes of September 11 and the hostilities in Afghanistan and Iraq. I am also confident that our students will play important and constructive roles in producing a safer and more prosperous world.

While the world changes around us, there is certainly stability in the economics program. For example, Bob Leekley and Margaret Chapman have had an important role in constructing the strong program that we have today through decades of tireless curriculum development and an unending willingness to mentor and guide students. I am especially thankful to Bob Leekley who assumed additional administrative duties last spring when I was on sabbatical leave. Margaret Chapman is famous around here for the incredible diversity of courses that she teaches. These courses range from Money and Banking, to Urban Economics to Industrial Organization, to History of Economic Thought, just to mention a few. Her remarkable ability and willingness to teach these courses has added greatly to the richness of our curriculum.

Iliaria Ossella-Durbal and Diego Mendez-Carbajo, who have been with us for five and four years respectively, have added energy to the department and bring expertise in international economics and macroeconomics. Both Diego and Iliaria have been making major contributions by leading teams in the interdisciplinary International Studies Program and by serving on important university committees. They add energy to our program and have done a terrific job in the classroom.

Risa Kumazawa is finishing her second year with us as a Visiting Assistant Professor. Risa has a Ph.D. from the University of Texas and is a 1994 Illinois Wesleyan graduate. Did you know that she also was a founding editor of *The Park Place Economist*? She served as Editor-in-Chief in 1993/94! Thus, the journal that you are now reading is, in large part, her legacy.

Speaking of *The Park Place Economist*, I am tremendously pleased with the efforts of Alexis Manning, the current Editor-in-Chief, Robbie Gallagher, the Technical Editor, and the rest of the staff in putting together a fine issue. *The Park Place Economist* is one of the best traditions in our program. Being entirely student edited, the journal provides an excellent opportunity for students to encourage peers to do quality work, and demonstrates the value of editing and revision in good research. Finally, a project of this magnitude is an opportunity for editors to develop leadership skills, time-management skills, and teamwork. Also, a special thanks to Bob Leekley who has served as faculty advisor for the journal for many years.

The Economics Society, under the leadership of Ana Maria Romero, has had another active year. In addition to their regular social and educational activities, the Economics Society Executive Board members have given us terrific input in faculty search processes and helped us to promote the program through their special PowerPoint presentations to Econ 100 classes. I have had new economics majors tell me that they were impressed by these presentations. So, my special thanks go out to President Ana Maria Romero, Vice President Mahi Garg, Secretary Andrew Tarman, Treasurer Mandy Thorson, Activities Chair George Coontz, Publicity Chair Meg Howe and (last, but certainly not least) Webmaster Robbie Gallagher.

Some economics seniors have taken the lead this year to build the framework for a new on-line journal, the *Undergraduate Economic Review (UER)*. Mahi Garg is Editor-in-Chief for the new journal. She has received assistance from Sayed Iftekhar Ahmed, Ranmali Abeyasinghe, and Robbie Gallagher. The *UER* will be a nice complement to *The Park Place Economist*. It will set up a network of Associate Editors at other

universities and will solicit articles from the best undergraduate economics students around the world. To date, editorial policies have been written, an organizational structure conceptualized, and web pages created. My special thanks to Mahi for her remarkable work as the founding Editor-in-Chief, and to Iftekhar, Ranmali, and Robbie for their assistance.

As always, the department is well represented with research honors projects this year. Six economics students are working with their faculty committees toward research honors this year. The six students are: Ranmali Abeyasinghe, Mahi Garg, Conor Howard, Will Irwin, Satish Lohani, and Alexis Manning. This continues a long tradition in the department. In the ten years since 1994, economics students have successfully defended a total of 52 research honors projects, and we are confident that we will add six more to the total this year. To even qualify for research honors, a student must have at least a 3.5 GPA in the major and a 3.2 GPA overall and, of course, successfully defend the project before the faculty committee. We also will have a number of students presenting their research at the John Wesley Powell Research Conference later this month.

Mahi Garg, Satish Lahoni, and Alexis Manning were invited to present research honors projects at the annual meetings of the Midwest Economics Association Meetings in Chicago. Illinois Wesleyan University has been very well represented over the past three years. Mahi, Satish, and Alexis did an excellent job. We were pleased that we presented more papers at this prestigious conference than any other university. These same students plan to present their research later this month at the Carroll Round Conference at Georgetown University. Special guests at the conference will include John Nash, Jr. and a number of other well known economists.

The department relies heavily on the tutoring and research assistance from our outstanding majors. I would be remiss if I did not thank them for their remarkable contributions. Tutors include Syed Iftekhar Ahmed, Ana Maria Romero, and Adrienne Ingrum. The webmaster is Robbie Gallagher and research assistants/editors are Mahi Garg, Alexis Manning, Ranmali Abeyesinge. The work that these students did was invaluable to our program. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

The economics program continues to attract some of the university's top students. This is reflected in honors that our students receive. Also, a number of seniors have been accepted to quality graduate programs, including several who are law school bound.

We also continue to initiate a large number of economics students to Omicron Delta Epsilon, the national honorary in economics. This year's 16 new initiates are: Xun Bian, Jennifer Dawson, Erica Ford, Kathleen Frawley, Mahi Garg, James (JR) Glenn, Adam Gray, John Haugen, Eric Hellman, Adrienne Ingrum, Satish Lohani, Sean Moran, Nii Amaah Oforu-Amaah, Elizabeth Planas, Amanda Thorson, and Joshua Tieman. The future of our program is dependent on the quality of our students. The future looks good.

We enjoy receiving e-mail and regular mail from alumni. This helps us to keep our web page up to date. Check it out at [titan.iwu.edu/~econ/](http://titan.iwu.edu/~econ/). The site provides news about the department and alumni.

Best wishes to all economics students and alumni,

Michael C. Seeborg, Chair