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An Interview with Professor Jennifer Rushlow

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An Interview with Professor Jennifer Rushlow

Welcome to IWU! Could you please introduce yourself a little bit, tell us about your background and how you joined IWU?

Thank you! I am an environment and natural resource economist. I finished my PhD in economics in August of 2021 at the University of Wyoming and started here in the same month. My current research focuses on the intermediaries in wild meat markets in low- and middle-income countries, and how these intermediaries - and other supply chain features - affect the locations and levels of wildlife harvests.

What has been the highlight of your first year here?

The highlight of my first year was working with students on research, both their own research and involving them in mine. Helping students learn about the process of research and how to develop a research question was fulfilling and enlightening.

How different was it from what you were expecting going into your first year?

Overall my first year went mostly as I expected, with the only significant deviation being the students. The students here far exceeded my expectations in curiosity and motivation. The genuine interest in learning and developing they displayed was impressive and far greater than I anticipated.

What was your favorite class you taught, and why?

My favorite class to teach was Environmental and Natural Resource (ENR) Economics because it is my field. Sharing my knowledge and interest in ENR economics, especially with students who did not enter the class already curious about the topic was very fulfilling. There are also many charismatic megafauna to show pictures of during class which is always nice.

What's your favorite concept/theory in all of Economics? And what's your least favorite? And how did that come to be?

Currently I am most fascinated by the theories emerging in behavioral economics such as prospect theory, which tells us that people value gains and losses differently. The changes in economics from assuming "econobots" to allowing for humans to have non-rational or myopic behavior make the field more interesting. As for my least favorite, any sort of econometric theory because it is a dry read.

Is there any research that you are working on currently that you'd like to share details of? Or any you've done in the past?

I am currently working on a simulation case study of a model of a bat supply chain in Sulawesi Indonesia to show how middlemen with different levels of market power can emerge in a market due to spatial characteristics, and can cause spatial variation in harvests, prices, and resource outcomes.

What are you looking forward to most about this year?

This year I am most looking forward to teaching Senior Project because I get to help guide students through their own research and I will inevitably learn a lot in the process.