



Summer 6-1-2017

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Recommended Citation

University Communications, "Chang Selected for Economics Research Fellowship" (2017).
News and Events. 3584.
<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news/3584>

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Chang Selected for Economics Research Fellowship

June 1, 2017

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Hsin-Jou (Lily) Chang '18 (Tainan, Taiwan) has been selected for the [Mark A. Israel '91 Endowed Summer Research Fund in Economics](#). The endowed gift provides the opportunity for a student to spend the summer conducting independent research under the guidance of a faculty member.

Israel's endowed gift provides a \$4,000 stipend for the student. An [economics](#) and [international business](#) double major, Chang will investigate how refugees who have resettled in the United States perform economically in comparison to natives and economic immigrants, which is defined as those who leave their country because of bad economic conditions, not due to fear of persecution.

"The goal is to analyze whether refugees are disadvantaged when assimilating in the labor market of their destination countries when compared to the natives and economic immigrants," said Chang.

She said her interest in the topic of refugees can be attributed to two reasons. First, President Donald Trump's executive order has triggered global debates on the subject. Secondly, this past spring Chang studied abroad in Germany, a country who initially voiced strong support for refugees during the recent migration crisis in Europe. "During my time abroad, I had the chance to get better insights on the refugee crisis in the country and work with local economists on the subject," she said.

Her project builds on a paper she wrote in the "Labor Economics" course, where she focused on labor market assimilation comparisons between Vietnamese refugees and other immigrant groups in the U.S. Her results showed that Vietnamese refugees received lower wages in the first decade upon arrival in the U.S., but over time their earnings exceeded those of economic immigrants, as shown by data from 2010 to 2014.

Outside of the classroom Chang is active on campus, serving as vice president of Cross-Cultural Connections, co-editor in chief of the *Undergraduate Economic Review*, and member of Student Senate, Alpha Kappa Psi professional business fraternity and Kappa Delta sorority. After graduation from Illinois Wesleyan she plans either to attend graduate school for a degree in economics or law school specializing in corporate law.

She said the Israel research opportunity allows her to strengthen her research skills as well as her critical-thinking and problem-solving abilities and to prepare her for more advanced academic research and graduate-level coursework.

Chang's research mentor is Robert S. Eckley Distinguished Professor of Economics Michael Seeborg. Israel said working in close collaboration with Seeborg and other economics professors including Bob Leekley and Margaret Chapman to conduct "real, topical economic research" when he was a student was a highlight of his Illinois Wesleyan experience.

"Though this gift, I'm giving one student per year a chance to realize a similar experience, which just seems like the right way to pay something back for all that those experiences did for me," said Israel. Each year Israel, who holds a Ph.D. in economics from Stanford University, receives a copy of the student's final paper and provides feedback and other insights to students, according to economics faculty.



Hsin-Jou (Lily) Chang '18