Professor George Hall Named New Chair of the Economics Department

Despite my efforts to keep my head down and focus on research and teaching, the Dean tracked me down, and I was appointed Chair of the Economics Department this summer for a three-year term. All kidding aside, it is a privilege to serve the department, the University and the larger Brandeis community in this new role. I am fortunate to work with thoughtful and energetic colleagues, bright and eager students, and a diligent and caring staff. I enjoy showing up to work everyday.

Our undergraduate program continues to flourish. Economics remains the most popular major on campus. Last year, 119 economics majors and 40 economics minors joined the ranks of our illustrious alumni. Our courses are in high demand. To no one’s surprise, Mike Coiner continues to be a "rock star" professor on campus. Last year, 600 students (that is 1 out of every 6 Brandeis undergraduates) took a course from Professor Coiner.

Unlike most years, this fall there were no changes to the department faculty and staff. This does not mean we have been sitting on our hands. As you will see below, the faculty have been hard at work conducting cutting-edge research and teaching fascinating courses. As anyone who has been in Sachar-Lemberg recently and has spoken with our students or our faculty knows, there is an enthusiasm for economics in the building that is contagious.

If you would like to learn more about the Economics Department today, I invite you to check out the department’s website, where you can find information about the current Economics faculty (in many cases with links to their personal homepages and downloads of their latest papers), the department blog, course syllabi for recent semesters, and much more.
Of course, stay in touch. If you are engaged in something that might be of interest to our undergraduates, please tell us. We want to hear about it. But whatever you are up to, keep us posted.

Economics Department Updates

Events From the Past Year

"Affordable Care Act" Discussion Panel put on by Economics UDR's

Economic Department UDR's Peter Walton, Sara Shahanaghi, and Felix Liu Ku organized a Q&A panel on U.S. Healthcare, with a focus on the Affordable Care Act. Panelists included Professor Mike Coiner, Professor Darren Zinner, Professor Dominic Hodgkin, Economics major Felix Liu Ku, and HSSP major Noah Newberger. Moderated by Economic Department Chair Katy Graddy, panelists were asked to respond to questions such as:

"What is the impact of the ACA on a patient's ability to make choices about their healthcare? Is choice overrated?"

"The U.S. faces higher average healthcare costs than any other country in the world. Does this meant that U.S. citizens are receiving the highest average level of care as well? If not, where does this money go?"

Responses were well-informed by facts on healthcare in its current state and its evolution over the past decade. Attention was given to how patterns in healthcare provision and costs have evolved due to the ACA. Panelists also provided insight into what may become of U.S. healthcare in the coming years.

Alumni Updates

Spencer Ackerman '09 (right) is an Actuarial Analyst at Delaware Life Insurance in Wellesley, MA. He is happily engaged to a brilliant Bowdoin alum and looks forward to his wedding in August 2015.

Nageeb Ali '99 returns to Boston for a year as a Visiting Researcher at Microsoft Research to continue his research in microeconomic theory. He looks forward to taking his family to visit the Brandeis campus, and introducing them to his many friends in the Boston area.

Eli Appelbaum '05, MA '06 was appointed in March of 2014 to the Board of Directors of Gordon Brothers Japan - a joint venture between Gordon
Brothers Group and the Development Bank of Japan.

Dmitriy Arkannikov ’07 has been pinned Sergeant E5 at MA National Guard in December 2014. Hired by the Dracut Police Department in May, he is currently going through the Lowell Police Academy and will be a patrolman upon graduation in November.

Arthur Attal ’09 is entering MIT Sloan's MBA program in September of this year.

After teaching English at the Medical School in Montpellier, France for 2 years, Geoffrey Cohen ’10 will begin a Masters in Commerce of Wine at the Université de Montpellier in September.

Steven Dupree ’04 is VP of Marketing at SoFi, based in San Francisco, CA. He travels to Boston regularly and is always on the lookout for new adventures.

John Farr ’08 is living in Washington, DC and working as a strategy consultant for Booz Allen Hamilton.

Jessica Fialkoff ’10 (left) is a Senior Analyst on the finance team at Ralph Lauren in New York, NY. Jessica is engaged to be married to Zack Kuperwaser in the fall.

Ezra Fishman ’10 finished his second year of the PhD program in Demography at UPenn and is now a PhD candidate! His research focuses on population health in the U.S. This summer he will be doing research at NIH, in the Laboratory of Epidemiology and Population Science. His wife Nicki Brodie ’09 just completed her first year of a pediatrics residency at Drexel and is loving it! He recently had coffee with Sam Ackerman ’08, who also lives in Philly, and Zach Seeskin ’08, who was in town for a friend's wedding. "It was a nice Brandeis econ alumni reunion."

Mohit Gourisaria ’09 is an Associate at Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen, and Katz in New York City, where he has worked since completing law school in 2012.

Jenna (Glasenberg) Koppel ’11 is an analyst at the Advisory Board Company in Washington, DC.

Josh Hoffman-Senn ’13 is a Harvard Business School 2+2 Program member and co-founder of a tech startup.

Michael Klein ’80 presented research at a number of seminars and conferences in the last year, including the NBER International Finance and Macroeconomics Summer Institute, the IMF Annual Research Conference, the Bank of Israel, Hebrew University, ETH (Zurich), and the Brandeis Economics Department. He also presented, at a One Day University session in New York, a class on the Great Recession.

Siddhi Krishna ’12 will be beginning her PhD in mathematics at Boston College this fall.

Mai Le ’07 went on to work for NERA Economics Consulting in NYC after graduating from Brandeis and McKinsey in Hanoi. After moving to Tokyo to attend an MBA program at Hitotsubashi University for 1 year, she returned to Vietnam to direct her own wedding planning business (http://WedinStyle.net) which she founded with another Brandeis alumn (Yen Thieu, Heller School ’07). She is also managing her family’s travel business Eviva Tour Vietnam (http://www.evivatour.com.vn) which caters to travelers visiting
**Michelle Liberman ’09** and **Adam Eisenberg ’09** will be getting married in August. Michelle will begin her MBA at MIT Sloan starting in the fall and Adam is a Research Associate at Fidelity Investments. Michelle and Adam live in Cambridge, MA.

**Aaron Louison ’11** is working at Brandeis in the Office of Development and Alumni Relations while pursuing a part-time MBA from the Heller School for Social Policy and Management.

**Benjamin Luxenberg** is beginning a dual MBA/MPP program at Harvard Business School and the Harvard Kennedy School of Government in the fall of 2014.

**Leon Markovitz ’10**, co-founder of WikiBrains, is living in Tel Aviv, and has just launched [dadaviz](http://dadaviz), a feed to find cool ways to visualize data. If you are a data nerd and/or lover, you will want to check it out.

**Pia (Strother) McCusker ’92 (BA) and ’00 (MSF)** is a Managing Director and Head of Global Credit Research for FICC @ State Street Global Advisors. At home, she has two beautiful girls who love to play tennis and a wonderful, supporting husband to boot.

**David Milch ’08** received his MBA from Columbia Business School in May and is pursuing entrepreneurial real estate opportunities.

**Martin Milkman ’82** will be taking a group of Murray State University Students to study at Regensburg University in Germany in the fall 2014 semester. He continues to do research in Economics Education, and recently co-authored an article which appeared in the spring edition of the *American Economist*. He has another article forthcoming in the *Journal of Economic Education*.

**Arun Narayanan ’10** is living in Johannesburg, South Africa, and is producing his first feature-length documentary film, called “Taking Stock” ([www.takingstockfilm.com](http://www.takingstockfilm.com)). “I’ve been taking lots of pictures of the shoot, which you can feel free to download from [www.instagram.com/takingstockfilm](http://www.instagram.com/takingstockfilm) or [www.facebook.com/takingstockmovie](http://www.facebook.com/takingstockmovie).”

**Frank Ossino ’95** is a Senior Managing Director, Senior Portfolio Manager at Newfleet Asset Management in Connecticut.

**Amy Qiu ’10, MA ’11** is a financial advisor with Morgan Stanley in Boston.

**Andrew Reschovsky ’66** is conducting research on state and local government public finance at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy in Cambridge, MA, where he is a Fellow. He is also a Professor Emeritus of Public Affairs and Applied Economics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

**Karol Szwagrzak ’06** teaches economics in Denmark.
John Orr ’08 is currently working at Capital One Financial. He was previously working on the Capital Markets team in Washington, D.C., and is now working on the Partnerships M&A deal team in Chicago.

Matt Goldsmith ’98, MA ’02 is currently the National Operations Director for Telefund, Inc. which is a fundraising company working to raise money for progressive charities and political organizations. He is currently living in the North End of Boston with his partner of 3 years, Alan.

Pratyoush Onta ’88 is a historian at Martin Chautari, a public forum and research institute located in Kathmandu, Nepal. He has recently co-edited 25 Years of Nepali Magazine (2013) and co-authored The State of History Education and Research in Nepal (2014).

Scott M. Khourie ’98 is a Financial Consultant at Gateway Analytics in New York. He is also busy on the Long Range Planning Committee at The Market Technicians Association (www.mta.org), is a volunteer Event Coordinator and Strategist/Northeast Ambassador at www.Water.org, is a committee member of Brandeis Wall Street Committee (NY), is an external advisor for SEO (Sponsorship for Educational Opportunity), as well as Chairman of the newly formed (via the Brandeis Alumni Website) Brandeis Athletics Club (BAC).

Dan Willey ’12 is currently working as a Summer Associate at Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr. He will be entering his third year at Boston University School of Law.

In Memoriam

Gustav Ranis

The Brandeis economics community would like to note the loss of accomplished alumnus Gustav Ranis ’52 H’82 on October 15th, 2013. Among his many achievements, Gus was valedictorian of the University’s inaugural graduating class, as well as the first alumnus to earn a PhD in economics. He went on to become a Professor Emeritus at Yale University while remaining very involved in the fund raising efforts here at Brandeis and the Alumni Association. For the full BrandeisNOW article click here.
Catherine L. Mann Appointed Chief Economist for the OECD

We are proud to share the news that Professor Catherine L. Mann has been appointed Chief Economist for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. In her new role, Catherine will be on the front lines addressing many of the world’s most pressing economic problems: reigniting global economic growth, fighting poverty, and maintaining well-functioning and stable financial markets.

She will be the first American and the second woman to hold this prestigious position, and will begin her new role in Paris, France next month.

We will all miss Catherine’s presence at Brandeis. She is a devoted teacher, a world-renowned researcher, and a high externality colleague. We wish her all the best as she takes on this new and exciting opportunity!

Congratulations to Professor Davide Pettenuzzo on being awarded the “Kermit H. Perlmutter Fellowship Award for Teaching Excellence.” This award was created in 1987 by Louis Perlmutter ’56, former chair of the Board of Trustees, in honor of his father. The Perlmutter award is designed to support a junior faculty member who has both excelled as a teacher and made a significant contribution to the quality of student life on campus.

Professor Raphael Schoenle, together with Simon Gilchrist from Boston University, was awarded an NSF grant for researching “Inflation Dynamics During the Financial Crisis.” He also recently spent his sabbatical visiting the Philadelphia Fed, the New York Fed, and Columbia University.

Professor Kathryn Graddy finished her appointment as Department Chair and has
started a new project that looks at whether the death of an artist's relative or friend is correlated with change in value of the work of the artist or the number of works produced. She continues work on her project that looks at auction guarantees by the auction houses Christie's and Sotheby's, and will continue to serve as an editor of the Journal of Cultural Economics.

Professor Elizabeth Brainerd will be a Visiting Scholar at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard University in the spring. She will be researching the effectiveness and pronatalist policies in raising fertility rates in the former Soviet Union.

Emeriti Faculty...

Rachel McCulloch just returned from a six-week "busman's holiday" in Bologna, Italy. She was teaching an accelerated intermediate micro course for entering students in the master's program in international relations of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS).

SAIS is based in Washington, DC, but about half of the master's students spend their first year of the two-year program at SAIS's Bologna Center. The Bologna Center, a small teaching and research facility, is located next to the giant (85,000 students) University of Bologna, founded in 1088. Many of the Bologna Center courses are taught by moonlighting University of Bologna faculty members, but a few, like Professor McCulloch, are recruited from abroad.

This was her third visit to SAIS Bologna Center. Her link to the Center is through its current director, Michael Plummer. Before marrying an Italian and relocating to Italy, Professor Plummer was a professor at Brandeis IBS and director of the Lemberg Master's program, as well as Professor McCulloch's occasional collaborator. Professor Plummer has also recruited Professor Peter Petri to teach at the Bologna Center and continues to collaborate with him on work relating to the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

In addition to the chance to teach micro to highly motivated students, Professor McCulloch enjoyed the opportunity to eat plenty of tortellini, mortadella and gelato, and to improve her Italian. It was a great place to learn more about European political and economic trends.

Adam B. Jaffe is a Brandeis Research Professor and is currently serving as the Director of Research at the Motu Institute for Economic Policy in Wellington, New Zealand.

Henry Kim is now Associate Professor of Economics and PhD Program Director at Suffolk University, and is also Associate Professor of Economics at Sungkyunkwan University of Seoul, Korea.

Michael Plummer is now Director of Johns Hopkins University SAIS Europe in Bologna, Italy.
John Capei is a Portfolio Manager at Arrowstreet Capital in Boston.

Graduation 2014

Commencement 2014

Economics continues to be one of the largest and most popular majors at Brandeis. Our commencement ceremonies in May put forth another extraordinary group of graduates. Below are some of those students awarded for their academic excellence.

Brandeis Economics Chair George Hall presented the departmental awards for outstanding academic achievement to three deserving graduates in the Class of 2014:

Carol Ann Steinfeld Memorial Prize in Economics
Rebecca Lan Zhang

Morris and Anna Feldberg Prize in Economics
Isaac Jonathan Rabbani

Sydney S. Cohen Award in Economics
Sara Shahanaghi

Stay in touch!

If you would like to be included in the Alumni updates, submit a picture, or have suggestions/interests for the alumni newsletter,
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