Chair’s Message

Congratulations to the Class of 2022!

It was great to see all graduates in person at the Boston Convention Center for graduation after three years of remote celebrations. It always is refreshing and brings an upbeat mood to see graduates in one place filled with joy with family and friends. This year’s graduation feels and looks different in a good way. The graduates spent the past two years taking classes remotely, you all know what that means, so you deserve a big congratulations. Family and friends who supported you through these challenging times deserve commendations. You deserve special recognition for your achievement since you have succeeded under such difficult circumstances. You show courage and determination and set the bar high for students that come after you. Congratulations!!

Despite the challenges during the remote modality semesters and the transition to face-to-face, I am happy to report that the department awarded almost the same number of degrees both in the graduate and undergraduate programs. Specifically, the department awarded 97 BA degrees in Economics and eight MA degrees in Applied Economics during AY 2021/22. Twenty-one students also graduated with a minor in Economics. Special thanks to our dedicated faculty and staff for their continued support and encouragement of the students during the transition back to the face-to-face teaching modality.

As always, the Department has been very active on all fronts despite the Pandemic. On the faculty front, one piece of exciting news is that the Department has hired one tenure track assistant professor, Dr. Ilaria D’Angelis, in the field of labor and gender economics. Dr. D’Angelis earned her Ph.D. degree from Boston College in 2022, and she will be joining us straight out of graduate school. In the fall semester, Dr. D’Angelis will be teaching Introduction to Macroeconomics and Gender and Economics courses. You can see Dr. D’Angelis’ brief bio in the following section of this newsletter.

I should also tell you one personal note. After serving the department as a chair for the past seven years, I am looking forward to passing the baton to Professor Michael Carr, our incoming chair. I would like to thank all faculty and staff for making it possible for me to run the department as smoothly as possible for the past seven years. It would be impossible to manage a department without the genuine and wholehearted support of its faculty, staff, and colleagues in the Dean’s Office. I am grateful for the support and cooperation I received from members of the Economics Department and the Dean’s Office Staff.

There are several other noteworthy accomplishments and activities that the Department faculty, staff, and students undertook throughout the year. This year’s newsletter shares some of these departmental accomplishments, faculty updates, and many more activities. For regular updates, please follow us on our Department Facebook page (do forget to like us!) and Twitter @UMASSBostonEcon.

Happy Fall 2022!
Department News

Department faculty members have appeared on the media (or their work has been cited) to share policy implications of their research findings.

During this past academic year, faculty members of the department shared their research findings with the public through both print and digital media as well as radio and television. Media solicit inputs from the faculty on topics of relevance for policymaking and current events. The faculty discussed topics ranging from the wealth gap and the Pandemic to housing prices and the economic impacts of inflation. The faculty made real impacts on issues gripping the nation and the state (of Massachusetts) and have made influential statements to the media for the betterment of the citizens of the country in general and that of the state in particular.

Here are some of the topics discussed and the media that the faculty members appeared on this past academic year:

Professor Emerita Randy Albelda on the long-run effects of Temporary Disability Insurance on labor market outcomes, such as earnings stability and labor force participation. Her work was supported by an Equitable Growth
Professor Anne Fitzpatrick has been featured on the USAID “stories and news” column for her work on finding and evaluating policies to improve the quality of health and education in developing countries that spans a wide variety of topics, including health insurance, maternal mortality, substandard medicines, the private sector for antimalarial drugs, and COVID-19.


Professor Dania Francis’ works on the wealth gap, racial and economic injustice, the effects of the Pandemic on service workers and office employees, and the effects of the New Deal-era policies and programs on Black Americans have been cited by Boston Globe, Yahoo News, and the Washington Post.

https://www.bostonglobe.com/2022/05/04/business/how-harvard-could-spend-that-100-million-unwind-its-legacies-slavery/

Professor Keren Horn on how short-term rentals are affecting New England’s affordable housing market (Boston Globe, Boston.com, and Globe.com).

https://realestate.boston.com/buying/2021/12/15/2022-forecast-for-buyers-renters/

Professor Marlene Kim on how new laws in states and cities across the country are pressuring businesses to share salary information with job applicants.

https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2022/02/03/jobs-salary-range-pressure-pay-transparency/6637509001/?gnt-cfr=1

Professor Emeritus Arthur McEwan shared his view on the recent hike in interest rates by the Fed.

Dr. Ilaria D’Angelis will be joining the department in Fall 2022

To fill the department’s needs in the areas of gender and labor economics, the department hired Dr. Ilaria D’Angelis as a tenure-track assistant professor. Dr. D’Angelis will be joining us starting Fall 2022. See his brief bio below.

Ilaria D’Angelis is a labor economist, whose current research predominantly focuses on young workers’ labor market outcomes, on the determinants of gender inequality in wages, and on secular transformations in the United States labor market. She holds a Ph.D. in Economics from Boston College.

Student Research Highlight

Not just faculty but also students were very active in their research work during this past academic year. Below we highlight the research work of one of our graduate students who graduated this year.

School Modality and Parental Labor Force Participation

Leonardo Vasquez
Applied Economics MA Graduate, Class of 2022

In early 2020, the COVID-19 Pandemic created a disruptive situation for parents in the United States as schools were shut down, forcing children to learn remotely, leaving many without their primary source of childcare. Heading into September of the 2020 school year, schools across the United States had different modality settings offering different levels of support for a parent’s aspirations to stay attached to the labor market. Early studies indicate that compared to men, women have accepted greater responsibility for childcare duties usually accepted by schools when operating in person. This project examined how changes in school modality throughout the 2020 school year impacted parents’ labor force participation rates in the United States and whether outcomes are different for mothers and fathers.

The importance of the link between school modality and parental labor force participation is focused on potential adverse effects on gender equality in the labor market. There has been an expressed concern that mothers are more adversely impacted than fathers resulting in mothers being less likely to return to the workforce post-COVID. Much of the existing literature finds that mandatory school closures impacted mothers more adversely than fathers because
mothers were more likely to take care of their children. Therefore, it is crucial to see whether specific modality settings support mothers’ aspirations to stay in the labor force.

Panel data is constructed using monthly Current Population Survey data, the primary source of labor force statistics in the United States, from September 2020 through May 2021. The sample was restricted to prime working-age parents (25-54) with school-age children (5-17). Individuals were assigned either a remote, in-person, or hybrid school modality at a metropolitan area level.

The following estimation equation can help us determine the impact of school modality on labor force participation (LFP):

$$PR (LFP)_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Modality}_{mt} + \text{Month Fixed Effect}_{t} + \alpha_i + \epsilon_{it}$$

The empirical approach is a linear probability model on labor force participation using individual-level fixed-effects. All variables are noted by the level at which they vary: i for individual, m for a metropolitan area, and t for time (in months). Alpha is the unobserved individual-level fixed effect that gives an individual a fixed value across repeated measures. \(\epsilon\) represents the error term within an individual and over time. Variation is captured only for individuals with varying modalities and labor force participation status.

The results show a gendered penalty of remote schooling on mothers’ labor force participation. A mother with a school-age child in a remote setting is 2.5 percentage points less likely to participate in the labor force than a mother with a child in an in-person setting. For fathers, this impact is essentially zero. Also, the adverse impact of remote schooling on mothers’ labor force participation is unique to mothers with school-age children. The same analysis was done for mothers with a youngest child 0-4, and no statistically significant impact was found between those in remote settings compared to those in in-person settings.

These results implicate that there should be a push to keep in-person school operations open (with safety measures) during future public health emergencies to support mothers’ labor force aspirations. Changes in school modality, primarily in-person to remote, cause a shock to mothers due to changes in their source of childcare. While COVID-19 restrictions are loosening and remote schooling is becoming less prevalent, it is important to establish that schools are vital sources of support for mothers. Knowing the importance of childcare support can lead to a push to enact policies that encourage mothers to stay in the labor force even if they occur within individual firms and not at a government level (i.e., a push towards remote work).

**Faculty Updates**

**Faculty updates**

As usual, faculty members have been busy with teaching, scholarly activities, and much more. See what they have been up to by clicking the link below.

Alumni Update
Brian Chavez, UMass Boston Economics, Class of 2014

You may recall that Brian Chavez graduated from UMass Boston with a BA degree in economics in 2014. Right after graduation, he (with his father) opened a restaurant that serves pizza in the neighborhood where he grew up. See the news here: https://www.dotnews.com/2015/goal-fill-pizza-void-fields-corner

Fast forward to 2022, Brain (and his brother) are preparing ground works to open two cannabis dispensaries in the same neighborhood. See more details here: https://www.forbes.com/sites/jacquelinebryant/2022/03/23/cannabis-multi-state-operator-c3-partners-with-equity-licensee-brian-chavez-to-open-massachusetts-dispensaries/?sh=33dacf6b6655

Departmental Award recipients
Departmental Award Winners Annual Honors Dinner

This year for the first time in three years, we recognized our top students in person. The well-deserved recognition for the hard-working and bright students graduating this year is one of the highlights of the activities we do in the department. We want our students to know that we are here to help them and, when they do well, to commend their achievements and appreciate their hard work through events and prizes. The department gave out four named departmental awards to four outstanding students and recognized four students for distinction in economics. Winners of the Spitz Scholarship Award and Joanne P. Stewart Scholarship awards were also announced at this event. From the graduate program, the department also awarded two departmental prizes for Excellence in Applied Economics and for the Arthur MacEwan Award. Listed below are the award winners:

**Undergraduate Awards:**

Leonard J. Kirsch Prize for an Outstanding Economics Graduate: **Xhovana Prenga**
Joann P. Stewart Award to an Outstanding Female Graduate: **Kylie Power**
Alice E. Trost Memorial Prize in Economics: **Rami Derbel**
David G. Terkla Memorial Prize: **Rachel Patten**

A distinction in Economics: **Jasmine Andrade, Sucen Chi, Mackenzie Schiavone, Claire Tang**

Joann Phelps Stewart Scholarship Award: **Zhiming Li**
The Spitz Scholarship Award: **Ianna Montilla**
**Graduate Awards:**

Arthur MacEwan Award for Excellence in Political Economy: **Michael Tedesco**  
Excellence in Applied Economics: **Mimi Tan and Leonardo Vasquez**

[https://www.flickr.com/photos/141902437@N08/52274804826/in/dateposted-public/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/141902437@N08/52274804826/in/dateposted-public/)

**CLA Convocation**

We recognized students who received departmental awards at the convocation organized by the CLA Dean’s Office. Family and friends were present during the CLA Convocation. Here are some pictures from the convocation.

(CLIA Convocation pictures here)  
[https://www.flickr.com/photos/141902437@N08/52273774977/in/dateposted-public/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/141902437@N08/52273774977/in/dateposted-public/)

**Other Departmental Activities**

**College of Liberal Arts Undergraduate Research Week**

Three students from our department participated in the CLA Undergraduate Research Week that the college organized for the fourth time. For the first time in three years, the research week was in person, and our students presented their research work at the poster presentation session. Two of these students presented research work from their senior honor thesis, and the other student presented work from the Independent Study thesis project.

Here are the titles of the papers and their supervisors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Supervisor</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chikwan Li</td>
<td>Prof. David Timmons</td>
<td>Electric Shuttle Bus Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire Tang</td>
<td>Prof. Dania Francis</td>
<td>&quot;Accessible&quot; also &quot;Affordable&quot;? College Attainment in Urban, Suburban, &amp; Rural Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daryl Villanueva</td>
<td>Prof. David Timmons</td>
<td>Economics of Air Source &amp; Ground Source Heat Pumps</td>
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(CLIA Undergraduate Research pictures here)  
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Graduate Capstone Presentations
Graduating Applied Economics MA students presented their capstone projects and defended their work in front of their classmates and faculty.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Advisor</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steven Clayton</td>
<td>Prof. YK Kim</td>
<td>Household Debt and the Business Cycle in the United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>Juliette Confer</td>
<td>Prof. Sripad Motiram</td>
<td>Does Garment Industry Employment Increase Bangladeshi Women's Intra-Household Bargaining Power?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max May Fowler</td>
<td>Prof. Dania Francis</td>
<td>Black-White Wealth Gaps and Reparations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Mailman</td>
<td>Prof. Joao De Souza</td>
<td>Fiscal Consolidation and Food Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaby Park</td>
<td>Prof. David Timmons</td>
<td>Green Roof Integration on Property Values in New York City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mimi Tan</td>
<td>Prof. Michael Carr</td>
<td>The 2014 Medicaid Expansions and Labor Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leonardo Vasquez</td>
<td>Prof. Keren Horn</td>
<td>Examining the Impact of Changes in School Modality on Parents’ Labor Force Participation Rates</td>
</tr>
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Some pictures related to this event are in the link below
https://www.flickr.com/photos/141902437@N08/52274769053/in/dateposted-public/

Department Seminars Series –
The department invited guest speakers to give talks on topics of interest to the department faculty, as well as the broader university community. During this past academic year (2021-22), we had guest speakers that discussed interesting topics ranging from social reproduction, local returns to public education, and more. See the pictures from some of the seminars

Fall 2021 Seminar Series
https://www.flickr.com/photos/141902437@N08/52274748426/in/dateposted-public/

Spring 2022 Seminar Series
https://www.flickr.com/photos/141902437@N08/52274748406/in/dateposted-public/

Other Departmental Events
For the first time in three years, the Department also organized events to bring together faculty, students, and staff. Pictures from some of these events are below. Enjoy!

MA in Applied Economics and Accelerated Master’s Program Info Session, March 24, 2022
https://www.flickr.com/photos/141902437@N08/52274748526/in/dateposted-public/

Honors Night, May 9, 2022 (pictures here)
https://www.flickr.com/photos/141902437@N08/52275010569/in/dateposted-public/

End-of-the-year department get-together, May 19, 2022 (pictures here)
https://www.flickr.com/photos/141902437@N08/52275010589/in/dateposted-public/
**New Addition to the Economics Department Family**

Last but not least, the department of economics family has one more family member. Elizabeth joined the family in February 2022. Congratulations to Anne and Dusty! Welcome to Elizabeth!