Greetings from the Department of Economics! My heartfelt thanks go out to those of you who contacted us last summer to ask if any faculty or students had been affected by the wildfires. All of us are OK, and now that the fire threat has passed, we have an even deeper sense of gratitude for the community that cared for us, including our friends and alumni.

We are also sustained and inspired by our students, many of whom have impressive accomplishments. One who deserves special recognition is the president of the Economics Club, Kellen Wittkop. Kellen has maintained a 4.0 GPA while double majoring in economics and English, and double minorin in business and political science. She has a truly impressive record of community service, including an appointment as chief justice of the CSU student senator council supreme court, senator to the College of Liberal Arts student council, president of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, founding president of Sigma Alpha Lambda, head editor of Spiritus Mundi Honors Literary Magazine, volunteer for the Campus Corps programs, and others. Kellen is also the recipient of the Gladys Eddy Scholarship for 2012-2013, a prestigious award that she fully deserves. I know that I speak for everyone on the faculty when I say that we feel very lucky to work with students such as Kellen. She has a very bright future, and it makes me proud to know that our department has helped her to achieve her goals.

We do our best to support our students and to honor their accomplishments. For example, this year we will begin to offer two $8,000 research fellowships to our best Ph.D. students. This award, which will be made to two different Ph.D. students each year, is meant to recognize their high-quality research and to reduce their teaching loads so that they are able to pursue undergraduate and graduate students on a variety of different research projects. The students not only get a hands-on opportunity to do original research, but they also come to see that any new research endeavor is a learning experience for both the student and the professor.

I teach my students that learning never stops and that they play an important role in my learning process.

Teaching Philosophy

I believe that teaching is a two-way street: as students learn in the classroom, the professor is learning with them. Students offer fresh and original perspectives on material that enriches the class from the standpoint of other students and the professor. I teach my students that learning never stops and that they play an important role in my learning process. I support my belief in the two-way street by working with undergraduate and graduate students on a variety of different research projects. The students not only get a hands-on opportunity to do original research, but they also come to see that any new research endeavor is a learning experience for both the student and the professor.

Research

My research has primarily centered on the use of time series techniques and computable general equilibrium models. I have used these methods to examine issues in macroeconomics, banking, international trade, and regional economics. Current research topics include examining the factors that cause changes in the distribution of household income, household migration patterns, and various measures of productivity changes and the impact of different tax regimes.

My research has helped local and state governments formulate policies for sustainable economic growth. I frequently consult with local city and state officials on a variety of issues related to growth. For example, I have advised Fort Collins policymakers on decisions to allocate undeveloped land for either manufacturing or retail purposes and the impacts of increasing the local sales tax rate. At the state level, I have evaluated the economic impact of HB 1365, which mandated utilities to transition from coal-generated electricity to electricity generated by natural gas. I have also interacted with state officials on state tax policy and have received grants to evaluate the impact of renewable energy in the state.

Selected Recent Publications


their research agendas. These fellowships were made possible by the generosity of alumni like you. We want you to know that your donations are being used to support our most deserving undergraduate and graduate students.

Just as we support our students, we also do our best to support our faculty and to recognize their remarkable accomplishments. In this regard, I am very pleased to announce that Professor Sammy Zahran has been appointed as a Robert Wood Johnson Health and Society Scholar at Columbia University in New York City. This prestigious award will allow Professor Zahran to continue to develop his highly productive research agenda (eight refereed articles just in 2011) and to work with other renowned scholars in health economics from around the country.

Although we do not currently offer a Ph.D. field in health economics, we are hoping to do so once Professor Zahran returns in two years. Some of you may recall Professor David Mushinski, a highly skilled econometrician who has spent the last few years building up the skill set he needs to specialize in health economics. Professor Mushinski has been attending conferences and publishing papers on employer-sponsored health care in small business and other applied topics in health economics. He and Professor Zahran are looking forward to working with graduate students who have an interest in this crucially important field of study (one of Professor Mushinski’s former Ph.D. students, Dr. Jan Breunig, is now on a postdoc at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy). It is a great example of the continuous efforts of our faculty to keep developing and improving their skills, and to offer courses and fields of study in subjects with a clear benefit to the larger community.

In ways large and small, we strive to go beyond the confines of a traditional academic department … to be a “learning community” that supports … intellectual development and professional aspirations.

We always look for opportunities to use our professional skills to benefit the larger community, consistent with CSU’s land-grant mission. For example, last year, several members of our faculty, including Professors Daniele Tavani, Ramaa Vasudevan, Eliisa Braunstein, and Alexandre Bernaschi, organized several panel discussions on the dramatic increase in economic inequality. Dubbed “Inequality Matters,” these faculty conversations brought hundreds of local residents together to learn about the causes and consequences of increasing inequality. By all accounts, it was a stimulating and informative discussion, and a great example of our department’s contribution to public debate in the local community.

Similarly, our regional economists are also working hard to help the state of Colorado develop strategies for economic growth. As one example, Professor Stephan Weiler was one of the key organizers of the recent inaugural summit of the Colorado Innovation Network (see coloradoinnovationnetwork.com). The summit brought together state and community leaders from business, government, and higher education to discuss innovation and the business climate in Colorado. Professor Weiler is one of the authors of a report presented at the summit that compares Colorado’s record on innovation to other states and discusses strategies for accelerating innovation and entrepreneurship.

In ways large and small, we strive to go beyond the confines of a traditional academic department. We want to be a “learning community” that supports the intellectual development and professional aspirations of faculty and students, and that contributes to the common good. We appreciate your support of our efforts.

We’d love to hear from you! You can stay in touch with us and find out more about the Department of Economics through our website at http://economics.colostate.edu.

Best wishes,
Steven Shulman
Professor and Chair

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