

# THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

Fall 2005

The University of Montana-Missoula  
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## NEWS

Welcome to the second annual departmental newsletter. This year began with a bang; actually more of a rumble since this past summer construction began on a new Journalism building directly to the east of the Economics Department. Along with the new construction, we have added some new faces, which is always exciting.

**Jennifer Alix-Garcia** arrived in August as our newest tenure-track Assistant Professor. She was hired after John Photiades retired last winter. We are excited to share Jen's energy, enthusiasm and expertise.

**Jeff Bookwalter** moved into the tenure-track Assistant Professor position that was vacated several years ago when **Ronald Dulaney** retired. It is great to have him in a tenure line, although we now worry more about his bike crashes.

**Yasin Janjua** is an adjunct instructor who will finish his Ph.D. at Kansas State University in December 2005. He is a very active participant in departmental activities with many ideas and a great deal of energy. ([Pakistan relief effort](#))

We hired **Joe Broach**, one of our former MA students, to help pick up the teaching load this academic year. He helped out last spring, and is a gifted teacher who draws majors to the program.

**John Photiades** retired at the end of Wintersession 2005 and has been dividing his time between Missoula and Greece.

**Dennis O'Donnell** has taken leave for the 2005-2006 academic year. We wish him the best of luck on his leave.

**Mike Kupilik**, **Jeff Bookwalter** and **Kay Unger** are heavily involved in the University Faculty Association. Mike serves as Union President and Jeff serves as the Student Complaint Officer. Kay Unger led the negotiation team that recently concluded our new contract.

**Brandon Fuller** left the University to join Aplia, a San Francisco company that provides on-line supplements to Economics courses. Brandon, who was always flexible, has adjusted well to corporate life.

This year we hope to search for a new tenure-track faculty appointment to begin next academic year. Between sabbaticals and leaves, we always seem to be down one or more people, so the administration is attempting to fund a position for us. We hope to send representatives to the American Economic Association Meetings in Boston in January to conduct interviews.

**Mike Kupilik** and Jack Holland won the annual Fall Final Exam Hall Bowling Championship.

## NEW FACES



Jennifer Alix-Garcia



Jeff Bookwalter



M. Yasin Janjua

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## FACULTY PROFILE: JENNIFER ALIX-GARCIA

*What brought you to The University of Montana?*

Who could say no to a job in such a collegial department located in such a great town?

*No fair answering a question with a question. What are your areas of specialty?*

I'm somewhere in between development economics and environmental economics. Thinking about ways that the tradeoffs facing poor households can be made less painful is important to me. I ended up with the development/environment mix because most poor families in developing countries depend upon farming for their existence, so there are strong and complicated links between resource conservation and households' well-being.

*Tell us about your education and background.*

I definitely took a winding road to economics. My undergraduate degrees are in French literature and ecology from the University of Michigan. Oddly, during my time in Ann Arbor I went to study tropical ecosystems in Ecuador, where I began to learn the Spanish that has now entirely displaced the French I once knew. After college I spent two years in the Peace Corps in El Salvador, where I attempted to promote agroforestry, integrated pest management, and soil conservation. Mostly I just improved my Spanish. I then did a master's degree at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, studying development economics and international environmental policy. Finally, I ended up at UC Berkeley, where I finished my Ph.D. in Agricultural and Resource Economics last year.

*What courses will you be teaching?*

This year I'm teaching introduction to microeconomics and development economics.

*What is your teaching philosophy?*

I'm not sure I have what you could call a teaching philosophy. Broadly, I hope that I am able to help students learn how to think critically. More specifically, one of my goals is to show them how economic tools can help both to explain current events and to design policies addressing a wide variety of problems.

*What research projects would you like to tell us about?*

I have a few current research projects. One project asks the question of how refugee inflows might affect communities located near refugee camps. I'm combining data from Tanzania on agricultural commodity prices, household spending and asset holdings to try to get a sense of whether households were helped or hurt by their associations with the refugee camps that resulted from the Rwandan genocide in 1994.

My other research builds upon my dissertation, which focused on deforestation and policies to mitigate it in Mexico. First, I'm working on a paper looking at the causes of afforestation. Most forest-focused economic research at the moment is more concerned with deforestation, but a careful look at the data shows that forests in many areas are actually getting bigger, and I'm interested in finding out why. A second project, just in its early stages, looks at the effect of leadership on the provision of public goods and government programs in the same communities that own the forests that are the topic of the first paper. Both of these are basically empirical works - meaning that I think about some way that the decisions of interest

## FACULTY PROFILE: JENNIFER ALIX-GARCIA (CONTINUED)

might be made, and then I look at the data to try to test that theory. A third paper related to the work in Mexico is largely theoretical, and looks at how to manage payments for environmental services. These types of programs are common in both developed and developing-countries - think of the Five Valleys Land Trust - but no one has really considered what would happen if two different agencies were interested in buying the same piece of land. Once I figure out how agencies might behave in this situation, I hope to establish whether it's preferable to have a single land-buyer or multiple purchasing funds.

*Where did you grow up and what hobbies do you enjoy?*

I grew up in a little suburb of Western Michigan, a place with a lot of snow and no mountains (just the opposite of Montana). I spent most of my youth riding around on my horse and making her jump over large obstacles. In the winter, when I was not in the saddle, I was on the icy slopes of the local garbage dump, which is what one skis on in the Midwest. In the summer, in between horse shows I often found myself on family backpacking trips in places far away from Michigan. In fact, my first trip to Missoula was when I was junior in high school, when we flew through here to go lose ourselves in some wilderness area for a week. I still enjoy all of these hobbies, and would include playing with my son, reading, swimming, cooking, and watching movies up there on my list of favorite ways to spend my time.

*Thank you and welcome to the Department.*

## GRADUATE PROGRAM

Two students completed their theses this past year:

In May, Joe Broach successfully defended his thesis "Evaluating the Fiscal-Inflation Interaction as an Argument for Fiscal Rules in the European Economic and Monetary Union" which was supervised by Richard Erb.

In August, Andrew Pryor successfully defended his thesis "Empirical Analysis of an Augmented Becker Model of Criminal Behavior" which was supervised by John Wicks.

Joe is teaching for us as an adjunct instructor and Andrew is working for Martin Group in Missoula.

We welcomed four new students to the graduate program this Fall: Steve Cleverdon from Michigan (Central Michigan University), Ben Harris from Missoula (The University of Montana), Larson Silbaugh from New Mexico (University of Washington) and Brian Vander Naald from Ohio (Miami University of Ohio). They join Geoff Easton and Mike Miller who are continuing our program and Matt Slonaker and Kendal Ferguson who are working on their theses from a distance.

Larson Silbaugh was awarded the Swenson - Wicks Research Assistantship for the 2005-2006 academic year. Previous winners were Andrew Pryor, Joe Broach and Sean Murphy. Ben Harris, Mike Miller and Brian Vander Naald are serving as teaching assistants.



Joe Broach shortly after his successful defense

## UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

Our undergraduate major continues to thrive and last year we graduated 14 students: Andrew Bissell, Michael Dalton, Karen Gessaman, Benjamin Haag, Lindsey Haas, Benjamin Haugen, Chad Hooper, Cassandra Jergeson, Justin Johnson, Steven Johnson, Erin Lannon, Dmitri Murfin-Simmons, Evan Russell and James Thompson.

We also added to our list of recent Award and Scholarship winners. Dmitri MurfinSimmons was awarded the Outstanding Senior Award at Senior Recognition Day. The Kain/McKay Scholarship was awarded to Sam Schabacker and Andrew Bissell received the Outstanding Senior Thesis Award.

We implemented our senior thesis process two years ago and we have enjoyed the experience. Working closely with an individual faculty member, students spent the entire academic year researching and writing their theses.

Sixteen students completed senior theses last year. The students and their thesis titles were:

- Andrew Bissell – State Banking Regulations, Fiscal Policy and Income Growth
- Mike Dalton – The Effects of Regulation on Foreign Direct Investment
- Mark Freier – Immigrant Labor in Japan
- Ben Haag – Property and the National Parks
- Lindsey Haas - The Effect of Cigarette Excise Tax on Youth Smoking
- Ben Haugen – The Brown Trout: A Costly Benefit
- Chad Hooper – Financing the Nation’s Waterfowl Production Areas
- Cassie Jergeson – Electricity Deregulation and Utility Default
- Justin Johnson – A Cry for Mirth
- Steven Johnson – EU Regional Support: Impacting the Poor Four
- Karen Gessaman – Saving Social Security or Gambling with the Future?
- Erin Lannon – Immigration’s Effect on the Earnings of Native-born U.S. Workers
- Dmitri MurfinSimmons – Turkey: Joining the EU
- Gale Price – Modeling the Number of Applicants Based on Characteristics of Public Four-Year Colleges and Universities
- Evan Russell – Current University of Montana Students’ Response to Tuition Increases
- James Thompson – The Canadian Softwood Lumber Dispute Does Not Have a Major Impact on Montana Wood Products Industries

## FACULTY ACTIVITY

**Richard Barrett**, Professor, serves as co-chair of the Montana Conservation Voters. The other co-chair is John Tubbs a graduate of our graduate program in 1991. Last January Dick traveled to Honduras with Missoula Medical Aid and plans to return this winter.

**Jeff Bookwalter**, Assistant Professor, played a key role in the development and implementation of a new **minor** at The University of Montana in International Development Studies.

**Doug Dalenberg**, Professor, serves on the Faculty Senate and continues to fight against the depreciation of his tennis game.

**John Duffield**, Research Professor, continues to bring grants to the University and run Bioeconomics with the assistance of Chris Neher, and still travels and fishes in exotic places.

## FACULTY ACTIVITY (CONTINUED)

**Richard Erb**, Research Professor and Senior Fellow at the Montana World Affairs Council, continues to teach his European Union class each spring and has been tremendously helpful with supervising Master and senior theses. He continues to fight the Montana climate and raise hay. In December 2005 he will speak at an Asia Strategic Forum Conference in Bangkok Thailand on the relationship between Asian regional financial institutions and global financial institutions. The sponsors of the conference include Chulalongkorn University, University of Washington and the Foundation for Human Resource Development, Bangkok.

**George Heliker**, Professor Emeritus, remains hale and hearty.

**Mike Kupilik**, Associate Professor, is President of the University Faculty Association, in addition to teaching and performing research.

**Dennis O'Donnell**, Professor, won another university-wide award, this time for his distinctive service to international education.

**Thomas Power**, Professor and chair, is working with the researchers at the Property and Environmental Research Center (PERC), a Bozeman property rights think tank, editing a book on "The Wealth of Nature." Tom gave a talk to the Coeur d'Alene Chamber of Commerce on "The Economic Impacts of Natural Resource Development."

In addition, faculty members love to rib Tom, because there is a video clone of Tom at the Los Angeles Natural History Museum. Actually, Tom's research and writing on the Mountain West and Montana economies were featured as part of a major exhibition at the museum centered on Pulitzer Prize winning author Jared Diamond's new book: *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Survive*. Diamond led his new study with an analysis of the Bitterroot Valley and similar Mountain West economies drawing on Power's previous work. The exhibition features a life-size video projection of Power discussing the lessons for sustainability to be learned from the changes taking place in the Mountain West.

**John Photiades**, Professor Emeritus, enjoys the best of Greece and the U.S. in his retirement.

**Kay Unger**, Professor, continues her full teaching load and research. In July, she presented "Factors Contributing to High Teaching Evaluations" at the Western Economics Association Annual Meetings in San Francisco.

**John Wicks**, Professor Emeritus, remains active teaching his research seminar class and riding trains across the world.

## PUBLICATIONS

**Dalenberg, D.**, J. Fitzgerald, E. Schuck and **J. Wicks**, "How Much is Leisure Worth? Direct Measurement with Contingent Valuation," *Review of Economics of the Household*, 2, 2004, 351-365.

Howie, P., **J. Wicks**, J. Fitzgerald, **D. Dalenberg**, R. Connelly, "Mothers' Time Spent in Care of Her Children and Market Work: A Simultaneous Model with Attitudes as Instruments," *Applied Economics Letters*, forthcoming.

Oakes, E. and **M. Kupilik**, *Social Science Resources in the Electronic Age: Economics*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004.

**Thomas Power** has written a chapter entitled "The Economic Anomaly of Mining: Great Wealth, High Wages, Declining Communities" for a book entitled *Mining in New Mexico* to be published by the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology.

## HONORS & AWARDS

**Thomas Power** was appointed by the Montana Public Service Commission and NorthWestern Energy Company to serve on the Natural Gas Technical Advisory Committee to guide NorthWestern's natural gas supply acquisition planning. He already serves on a similar committee guiding electric supply acquisition. In addition, Professor Power was invited to the Governor's Symposium on Montana's Energy Future.

**Dennis O'Donnell** received the Distinguished Service to International Education Award. This award is presented to a member of the University community who has achieved an outstanding record of distinguished service to international education. Dennis was cited for his "key role in creating and implementing innovative funded research and curriculum development projects at UM. He enriches the University by providing a better understanding of international issues. O'Donnell serves as co-director of the Central Asia and Caspian Basin Project, which in part sponsors a number of lectures that help educate the community about this part of the world. In addition, he served as the principal investigator for the Sino-American Negotiation and Conflict Management Project." Congratulations, Dennis.

## ALUMNI NEWS

**Abigail Anthony** (BA '02, MA '04) is in her second year in the doctoral program in Economics at the University of Rhode Island. Abby is a fellow of the University of Rhode Island's Coastal Institute and a writer for the *Jamestown Press*. "I really enjoying writing my little 'science and you' column, and I hope to develop a career out of it somehow. I'm not quite sure what path I want to take, but I do want to communicate innovative solutions to environmental problems to the public in print media. I also want to change the world, but I can only do one thing at a time."

**Alex Beal** (BA, '00) graduated from law school in May and is clerking for Judge Greg Todd of Billings, MT.

**Bruce Benson** (BA '73, MA '75) is the DeVoe Moore Distinguished Research Professor at Florida State University. Another one of John Wicks' students found success.

**Jordan Carroll-Larson** (BA, '04) is at Utah State University. Jordan and his wife, Rachel, work for USU Extension and both are finishing their Master degrees. Jordan is in an Applied program in Environmental Economics. His thesis work is in the area of mobile source pollution modeling for winter inversions. He is also working on an impact analysis project for an oil find in a six county area in Utah. Once they complete their degrees, Jordan and Rachel hope to do some work in South America working for an NGO for a couple of years before returning to Montana or "it might be that we'll end up in a 6 month Buddhist retreat in North California providing meals to poor people and meditating all day," which Jordan thinks would be an exceptional way to transition out of academia.

**Edward Coffield** (BA '04) waited for President Bush to appoint him to the Supreme Court after Harriet stepped down, but he never received the call so he remains a poor economics graduate student. Edward graduated from the University of New Hampshire this summer with a Masters in Economics. His thesis was a continuation of the work he initiated on his senior thesis. At UNH Edward was awarded TA of the Year and worked as a research assistant on Elderly Migration and taxes. He is currently in the doctoral program at the University of Utah (trying to be like Dr. Bookwalter). If he survives comps (*again*) he plans to specialize in the History of Economic Thought and Economic History.

## ALUMNI NEWS (CONTINUED)

**Jessica Daniels** (BA '03) is at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, working on a graduate degree in City and Regional Planning, with an emphasis on international planning. She'll be traveling to the Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico in January to do research on rural development and the implications found in integrating the goals of the government, universities, the community, and NGOs in order to provide proper outreach to agriculturalists. A group of Cornell faculty, staff and students will be teaming up with students and faculty from a university in the Yucatan, as well as ranchers, farmers, scientists, and community activists in order to create an "action plan" for the direction of agricultural production in the Yucatan. Her program is a two-year program, including a summer internship and an exit project. Jessica hopes to spend her final semester participating in Cornell in Rome, finishing up her exit project and interning with some international organization such as the UN or FAO. Jess closed with, "Say hello to the faculty, and tell them their support and training have ultimately put me where I am today!"

**Steven Johnson** (BA '05) is in the Master degree program in economics at the University of Oregon.

**Mike Kadas** (BA '92, MA '95) is completing his stint as Mayor of Missoula, and will join his family in Nicaragua in January. Talk about new horizons!

**Ron Lee** (BA '99) is working in Helena for the State of Montana as a Default Resolution Officer for the Montana Guaranteed Student loan program. He hopes to get into high school teaching and continues to officiate high school sports.

There was a nice story in the *Missoulian* on **Brian Morgan's** (BA '96, MA '97) local business, Adventure Life. He didn't let his MA degree hold him back and he is doing what he loves.

**Heather O'Loughlin** (BA '03), who is currently half-way through her career at UM School of Law, sent us this note: "Following my first year in law school, I clerked for the U.S. Senate Finance Committee in Washington DC. I worked mostly on tax policy, and my projects included the estate tax, tax implications of conservation easements, and offshore hedge funds. I also did a significant amount of research on the recently confirmed Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts. Beyond just work, I had the opportunity to meet several Senators, attend various forums on tax policy, and I toured the White House. It was a great time to be at the Finance Committee; the Senate passed the energy bill and the transportation bill, and there were several big tax plans in the works. I also attended hearings on the recent scandals with lobbyist Jack Abramoff. But the best moment: attending a hearing where Alan Greenspan testified in front of the Senate Finance Committee!"

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**PAKISTAN RELIEF EFFORT:** Mr. Janjua and other faculty and students at The University of Montana, in association with the American Red Cross of Montana, are working diligently to collect donations for injured and displaced victims of the south Asian earthquake (<http://www.umt.edu/oip/documents/Earthquake.pdf>).

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*We would love to hear from you. Feel free to send us a note at any time to give us your news. If you send us an email address (econ@mso.umt.edu) we'll notify you when the next newsletter is posted to the website in Fall 2006.*