

EconMatters

Message from Chair

For economics as an academic discipline, 2008 was a watershed. It shattered the belief held by many economists that rising prosperity and economic stability were the dividends of sound economics. Why did the economic and policy consensus have it so wrong? How can we transform our thinking so that we are equipped to deal with future seismic economic events? How can we translate awareness and knowledge to our lectures and classrooms?

There is an urgency to this challenge. "Secular stagnation," "mediocre growth," and "lost decades" are no longer received with deep skepticism or uttered guardedly with qualifications, but acute realities. The political backlash to rising income and wealth inequality and economic insecurity is no longer a hypothetical scenario. Everyone who wants to live in a peaceful world free of hate and discrimination, without poverty and extreme inequality, and in harmony with our planet is looking for answers. The challenges are complex, so the answers will be complex as well. We do not have the "new economics" under our belt, but there is no excuse for postponing the search for it.

As the incoming Chair, I am proud to state that each member of the Department of Economics at Dalhousie University is a resource in addressing these challenges. We hold a long tradition of academic excellence both inside and outside the classroom. This tradition includes a deep concern for the economically marginalized and deprived. It includes a vision that is not afraid of shedding those ideas that have proven to be misleading at best, and creating the new economics that our societies deserve. It continues to be an exciting place to study, learn, debate, and engage each other.

Sincerely,
Talan Iscan

Faculty Profile - Meet Professor Okoye

I am Dozie Okoye, an Assistant Professor of Economics here at Dalhousie since the fall of 2013. I was born in Nigeria, and moved to Halifax from London, Ontario, where I had spent nine years as an undergraduate and then as a PhD student. I was told it was not a good idea to remain in one place for that long, but I thoroughly enjoyed my time in London and learned a lot at the University of Western Ontario. Needless to say, it was time for a change when the opportunity to come to Dalhousie came up. I have found Halifax to be very welcoming, with particularly nice people, and an environment that is easy to love.



My journey into economics was not as straightforward as I would have liked coming out of high school. I arrived in Canada looking to complete an undergraduate degree in physics, but friends managed to convince me it would be difficult to eke out a living as a physicist (hint: never listen to friends who are just as clueless as you are). I began a business degree but found that detour to be uneventful. By my second year, I had enrolled in the honours specialization program in Economics at Western. I chose economics because it combines the rigour of physics with the material and human focus of business, and it's been a rewarding journey so far!

After completing my undergraduate degree, I gladly accepted an offer to continue on to graduate school at the same school. I must say that the first year of graduate work in economics was the most challenging period of my life as a student, because I suddenly found myself doing all the rigour with very little material focus. It was expected that the mathematical rigour needed to apply economics to human problems must be acquired first. Nevertheless, the challenging work encouraged me to work more closely with other students and opened up my circle of friends. I survived that year and eventually completed my PhD thesis, which focused on human capital and its contributions to economic growth and development through the lens of macroeconomic growth models.

The focus of my work has shifted slightly since I came to Dal. While still focusing on issues around human capital and development, I have begun to analyze problems related to the historical process of human development (skill acquisition, education, health) and how this process depends on the socioeconomic environment where individuals live (production technology, political and governance framework). My research has extended to studies of the impacts of historical events on contemporary development with a particular focus on the African continent. While I believed myself to be a macroeconomist as a PhD student, it appears I have become an applied micro economist, and that change is the nature of life for an economist. My research has also grown to be interdisciplinary and now involves collaboration with academics from other social sciences, geography, sociology, political science, and history. It is safe to say that I have grown and evolved as an academic over my four years at Dal.

Over the past four years, I have taught classes in both introductory and intermediate macroeconomics, as well as classes in public finance and economic growth in a historical perspective. It has been a privilege to contribute to the Masters in Development Economics program by teaching the macroeconomic theory sequence of the program, and supervising MDE student theses. Above all, teaching has been a rewarding experience for me as I have watched students' progress through the ranks, from first to fourth year, or from Masters to PhD, and then into the workforce.

Here is a toast to more fun, learning, and growth at Dalhousie!

Students Raise Over \$1K for Diversity Fund

Dalhousie Undergraduate Economics Student Association (DUESA) has raised over \$1000 for the Department of Economics Diversity Fund. The Diversity Fund is a new bursary intended to alleviate financial difficulties for Black Canadian and Aboriginal students enrolled in the Department of Economics. The bursary is also intended to help retention, encourage student success, and build on the University's commitment to expanding diversity. The student society learned of this fund and saw the importance of contributing. "The DUESA executive feels very strongly that, given how much we learn about the returns to education and the inequality of educational outcomes between groups in Canada, the money raised from our review sessions should be used to help someone from a minority group obtain post-secondary education at Dalhousie," says DUESA President Matthew McGreer. The money was raised by charging a small fee for review sessions for first-year economics students.

Scholarships & Awards

The Department of Economics is proud to announce award recipients:

Maxwell Scholarship Award Recipients 2016-17

Conor Beer, Zijie Cong, Yun Han, Ziwei Jin, Levi Kingfisher, Jean Luc Lemieux, Xiatong Li, Yangchen Li, Zihan Li, Yujie Lian, Shuhan Liu, Matthew McGreer, Joseph Raymond, Wesley Sagewalker, Yu Su, Xiaoyu Sun, Jinxin Wang, Shilin Wang, Wanli Yang, Guangrui Zhang and Qichen Zhang are the recipients of a Professor W. Maxwell Award for 2016-17.

DAL-SDUFE Joint Program Scholarships 2016-17

Shilin Wang, Qichen Zhang, Li Sui, Wenhao Zhang, Yu Su, Xiaotong Ma, Yixin Li, Yun Han, Ruoqi Xu, Shuhan Liu, Zihao Zhou, Xiang Li, Sizhen Ren, Yijun Yu, Yangchen Li, Xiaotong Li, Hanwen Liang, Zihan Li, Siqi Fan, Yujie Lian, Jinxin Wang, Wendi Jiang, Xiaoyu Sun, Wanli Yang, ZiJie Cong, and Yahan Zhang are recipients of 2016-2017 DAL-SDUFE Joint Program Scholarship. The scholarship awards were presented to students on Thursday, February 2nd.

Grants and Rewards

Catherine Boulatoff and Talan Iscan received funding from ACOA's Atlantic Policy Research Initiative for their grant proposal, Understanding the scope and size of service trade in Atlantic Canada.

Upcoming Events

David Green, University of British Columbia, will be the speaker for the **John F. Graham Memorial Lecture 2017**. The annual public lecture will be held March 9, 2017 at 3:30 pm in the Great Hall, University Club, with a reception following in the dining room. All are welcome.

Economics seminars are generally held in Kenneth Rowe 1009 from 2:30 pm – 4:00 pm on Friday afternoons.

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