

EconMatters

Message from the Chair

Dear Friends,

As we experience the rising costs of groceries and rentals in our city, it is important to remember that our students are often among some of the worst affected. Several scholarships and bursaries our department offers to our graduate students provide a measure of relief from these financial pressures and help our students complete their degrees. I would like to acknowledge these scholarships and bursaries that were generously funded by the families and friends of our former colleagues and alumni and recognize the recent recipients of these awards.

The four most recent recipients of Dr. George A.B. Kartsaklis Memorial Scholarship are Min Hu, Hasan Mahmood, Sujita Pandey, and Ali Smaili, and the most recent recipients of Robert L. Comeau Scholarship are Paola Beneras, Ali Smaili, and Azad Haider. Both of these scholarships provide assistance to those who are in financial need.

Sarah Idris, Fataneh Esteki, and Weiyi Li are the most recent recipients of a Zella Crowe Spencer Memorial Scholarship, which provides assistance to female graduate students.

The first recipient of Dr. Alasdair M. Sinclair Memorial Bursary was Olasumbo Akinbiyi, and this year's recipient of this Bursary is Abena Bemah Frimpong. The first recipient of Dr. Christian Marfels Memorial Graduate Bursary in Economics is Gabriel Samuel.

The donations of our alumni continue to fund these scholarships and bursaries. On behalf of our students and faculty I would like to thank them for their generosity and support.

Sincerely yours,

Talan İşcan
Professor and Chair



DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY

Alumni Profiles

Janice Compton, MA 1997

My decision to attend Dalhousie was a last minute, roll the dice, jump. After finishing my undergraduate degree in Dec 1993 from Concordia University, I really didn't know what to do with my economics degree. The job market wasn't strong at that time and after a year of not moving forward I decided to return to school for an MA. I loved the East Coast and decided to try Halifax. Those two years I spent at Dalhousie were amazing. I graduated with an MA from Dalhousie in 1997. I met many wonderful people (including my later spouse, Ryan Compton (MDE 1997)) and had a blast absorbing the Maritime culture. We all but lived in the three houses of the economics department during our years in Halifax – spending countless hours in the computer lab in the basement and hanging out in the attic. We learned much in our courses – I still have notes from classes taught by Talan İşcan and Kuan Xu – and even more just from lunchtime discussions with the faculty.



Following a year of courses, I spent a year working as an RA for Prof. Osberg. From him, I learned an immense amount about the process of research. I shared an office with Lynn Lethbridge and had a great year working on regressions and listening to musical soundtracks. Following graduation, I moved to Ottawa for a few years, working first at Statistics Canada and then at the Department of Finance. Many of our classmates from Dal also headed to Ottawa and these years seemed an extension of our Halifax days, only with jobs rather than classes.

After a couple of years, Ryan and I decided to head back to school for our PhDs and moved to St. Louis to attend Washington University. My inspiration to return to school was Prof. Phipps. I remember exactly sitting around a table with Prof. Phipps and some other women in the master's program, learning about household and feminist economics. The idea that I could study and research in this area was amazing to me and after a few years working for the government, I decided to return to school so that I could learn more about household economics. When we were looking at schools for our PhD, we deliberately considered the aspects of Dal that were key to our success – a smaller program, dedicated professors who were doing interesting research, the ability to work as RAs, high standards and a community feel among the department.

After we graduated, Ryan and I moved to Winnipeg and have been at the University of Manitoba ever since – about 18 years now. Working in academia has been amazing. I have been actively researching in household economics, tackling topics such as couple migration, family proximity, bride kidnapping, restaurant tips and discrimination, and couple mortality. I am active in the Canadian Women Economists Committee, currently serving as chair. In this role, I have met and worked with women economists across the country.

Ryan and I keep busy with our three boys and all the sports and chauffeuring that that entails. We both have family in the East Coast and so are lucky to be able to visit NS every few years. When we do, we always take stroll past the three houses of the economics department, then off for a lobster roll on the pier and a beer at the Lower Deck, reliving those memories!

Umit Mansiz, MA 2001

Greetings from Cairo! My name is Umit and I graduated from the Economics Department with an MA degree in 2001. I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the faculty for providing an amazing learning environment and top quality education. Particularly, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Talan İşcan for being a mentor for me during the most challenging times as a newcomer to Canada. He was always inspiring, supportive, and motivating and showed sincere care and kindness. I made significant life choices under his guidance that had real and long-lasting effects in my future.

I remember the heavy math including formulas that did not even fit in two blackboards that most of us find extremely challenging. Indeed, the math was complicated but thanks to my undergraduate training in Statistics, I was able to handle them well.

However, the true challenge for me was to approach the economic theories by shifting my mindset; rather than seeing them as pure mathematical solutions, I trained myself to understand the meanings behind them as complex social relationships.



Economic theories put people's behaviour at the core of its rigorous discipline. This training became practically useful in my career at Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) and the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) in Toronto. My role was to provide business solutions using statistical and financial models to drive decision making as the Manager of Client and Business Insights. Studying economics help me understand past, future and current behaviour of consumer trends, methodologically explore sector and market information, and apply them to a business context.

After gaining nine years of experience in the Commercial Banking sector, I made a radical shift by moving overseas as an expat and started a new career at the United Nations. Recently, I have been recently assigned as Country Director for Philippines at International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), which is an international financial institution and a specialized agency of the United Nations. I feel very privileged to have this responsibility because it gives me the opportunity to develop programmes to address poverty and hunger in rural areas of developing countries. My education in economics provided me in depth understanding of the factors driving the economic growth, public debt, and the effective use of public financing. I apply my learning at Dalhousie to improve the livelihoods of the most marginalized and excluded communities by collaborating with the government authorities and UN/NGO/Private sector partners.

Beyond the top-notch academic training, Dalhousie had significant influence on my values, inspired me and built confidence in a better future, and broadened my outlook on life and its possibilities. The culture among the faculty and staff is very constructive promoting a proactive attitude towards helping its students reap their full potential. Back then, it was a milestone for me when I was tasked with a teaching assistant assignment. I had the opportunity to give preparatory algebra classes to undergraduate students. As a fresh graduate, I was learning how to provide value to others, testing my own skills for the first time through a real-life working experience.

After working many years in both humanitarian and development sectors within the UN, I could confidently say that my education in Economics was the most relevant experience help me advocate in favour of rural communities through development planning, formulating national policies with public authorities and their governance, as well as developing investment programmes to strengthen the rural economies in the very fragile and conflict affected states. Dalhousie's Economic programme has played a big role in defining my aspirations and professional career and I will always remain grateful for my education and enriching experience.

Travis Fong, BA 2016

Originally from Halifax, I moved to Edmonton after graduating from Dalhousie University with a BA Honours in Sustainability and Political Science, with a minor in Economics. It was clear to me that the rigorous analytical framework economics provides would be valuable for my understanding of the multitude of facets that surround our energy transition. I became very passionate about economics thanks to the brilliant and engaging courses I took with the Department of Economics, with special thanks to Professor Talan İşcan for supporting my curiosity. Over the past few years, it has become increasingly clear that I enjoyed an incredible and nurturing education at Dalhousie. In 2017, I decided to pursue a Master's degree in Economics from the University of Waterloo.

Following the completion of my undergraduate degree, I worked on multiple development projects including affordable seniors housing and renewable energy. I was intrigued by the efficiency and growth of cities. My passion for affordable housing and sustainability have led to my involvement in Edmonton's infill community.

In 2017, I co-founded YEGarden Suites, a non-profit that functions as an advocacy, education, and awareness organisation to support the densification of Edmonton through homeowner driven development. Between our policy advocacy and citizen empowerment, we have supported tens of millions of dollars of homeowner led investment into this housing form. Understanding the policy framework, and economic underpinnings behind Edmonton's larger development strategy served our organisation well as we proposed changes and alterations to the regulations which were arbitrarily restrictive and reducing positive housing outcomes. I continue to serve as President and Executive Director of YEGarden Suites, and we strive to deliver extraordinary value to homeowners who are considering making an investment in their own backyard.



In 2021, I was the campaign manager for Ashley Salvador, my partner, co-founder, and another Dalhousie alumna, in Edmonton on her run for City Councillor. Communicating a clear, logical, and convincing message was a complex task that drew on all three of my specialisations. With respect to my background in economics through Edmonton's Open Data, and Statistics Canada data, I used the qualitative and quantitative skills I learned throughout my studies to support our campaign strategy. Ultimately, elections are constrained optimization problems and the efficient allocation of campaign resources is incredibly important. Identifying past political behaviour and making predictions about future political behaviour and preferences is an incredibly powerful ability. The campaign was a success, and Ashley was elected as the 2nd youngest woman elected (3rd youngest overall) to Edmonton City Council.

Following the campaign I joined Councillor Salvador's office serving as a researcher providing advice and analysis on key policy and budget decisions. There is a diverse array of topics and decisions, most of which are directly or indirectly linked to economic policy. Economics is a social science concerned with social problems, and the seat of municipal government is often the front-row to many of the challenges our society faces. Providing insight and recommendations in this exciting environment is a thrilling line of work, and I am proud that my journey in economics started at Dalhousie and brought me here.

News

- [In Memoriam: Roy E. George](#)
- [Congratulations to James McNeil on his successful SSHRC Insight Development Grant](#)

Congratulations to Maxwell Scholarship Award Recipients 2022-2023

Cleo Geggie, Carmen Graves, Yiwen Ma, Owen Porter, Lingrui Zhang, and Leyang Zhou are the recipients of a Professor W. Maxwell Award for 2022-23. Congratulations to this year's award recipients!

FGS International Tuition Fee Bursary 2023

Congratulations to Carlos Arango (MDE) and Yaqi Liu (MA), each named as recipients of an FGS International Tuition Fee Bursary for academic year 2022-2023. Graduate Studies awards, each winter, on a competitive basis, a limited number of International tuition fee bursaries to full-time international graduate students in good academic standing.