



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

NEWSLETTER

10/2019

From the Chair

by Nathan Cook

Greetings from the Department of Economics! Since Furman launched its strategic initiative, The Furman Advantage, in 2016, the Department of Economics has continued to build on its existing strengths in providing an excellent classroom learning experience, exceptional mentoring and advising, and a variety of engaged learning opportunities.

Several new faculty colleagues in the department have made important contributions to enhancing our curriculum, both by offering courses like Economics of Gender (Dr. Jessie Wang) and Health Economics (Dr. Jessica Sauve-Syed) that hadn't been taught in recent years, and by offering new courses like Behavioral Economics (Dr. Kelsey Hample) that had never been taught at Furman. We're not only enhancing what we teach, but how we teach it, for example, by adding an additional laboratory component and explicit instruction on discipline-specific writing (i.e. How to "write like an economist") to our Empirical Methods in Economics course.

The department continues to be committed to excellent academic advising, and has explored creative new opportunities for advising and mentoring students. Dr. Jessica Hennessey and Dr. Jason Jones have participated in a University-wide advising program for first- and second-year students to facilitate their successful transition to college and develop their sense of belonging at Furman.

Other mentoring opportunities have intersected with a variety of engaged learning experiences. We received a record number of applications for our Hollingsworth Undergraduate Research Program in 2019, and Dr. Jeff Yankow and Dr. Kelsey Hample each mentored research teams of three students throughout the summer. Dr. Jessie Wang and Dr. M. Taha Kasim each collaborated with student researchers during the last academic year. Dr. Kailash Khandke and Dr. Jessica Hennessey are both currently leading Furman Study Away programs (in Brussels and Edinburgh, respectively) through which students pursue international internships. Dr. Jeff Yankow coordinates our department's individualized internships for academic credit.

In all of these ways (and many others!), all of the faculty members in the Department of Economics are making important contributions to delivering on

the promise of The Furman Advantage. More information about some of the many activities in which our faculty members are involved, and student reflections on these experiences, can be found in the rest of this newsletter.

Alumni also play a critical role in contributing to The Furman Advantage. Especially over the next several years, we will be exploring new opportunities for alumni engagement, so look forward to hearing from us soon! In the meantime, we would welcome YOUR creative ideas about how our students might benefit from your experience and expertise. Hopefully we'll see you at Homecoming on October 19, but feel free to contact me any time at nathaniel.cook@furman.edu We'd love to hear from you!

Homecoming

October 18-20

Join Furman alumni, affinity groups, and academic departments for the annual Homecoming Tailgate Lunch and Reunion Village on the 18th from 11am-1pm.





Faculty News

Dr. Kelsey Hample mentored three students—Riley Burr, Nicole Greenfield, and Emma Sanning—through the Hollingsworth Undergraduate Research Program investigating the effect of two state-wide paid family leave policies on breastfeeding rates. She served as the Omicron Delta Epsilon faculty advisor at Furman and gave the economics honors society keynote at her alma mater, Illinois Wesleyan University. Dr. Hample also enjoyed continuing her service on the LGBT+ Affairs committee, working with more advisees, and preparing to facilitate individual student research projects in Empirical Methods.

Dr. Jessica Hennessey started working on some new academic research driven by her experience working on the Earned Income Tax Credit in South Carolina communities. She presented her new working paper, “The impact of volunteer tax assistance on EITC participation and claims” at the Eastern Economic Association meetings in February 2019. The plan is to continue working on this project (and others!) this spring during her sabbatical. In addition to this new research, Dr. Hennessey published “The Impact of Decentralization on Municipalities: Evidence from the Municipal Home Rule Movement” in *Public Choice Analyses in American Economic History* and has another article under review at the *Journal of Economic Education*. Dr. Hennessey also enjoyed being a part of the second year of Pathways, Furman’s new academic advising pilot program. This past fall, she served as an educator for the US delegation to the APEC Voices of the program in Papua New Guinea. She is currently enjoying leading the Edinburgh Study Away program in Fall 2019.

Dr. Jason Jones completed a study assessing the economic contribution of Furman University on Greenville County with the help of Dyson Robinson, a senior economics major. The finding that Furman contributes \$297 million to the

local economy was widely reported in the local press and featured in promotional material for the University. Dr. Jones and Dr. Cook completed their joint paper on the effects of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) on Growth in Sub-Sahara Africa and it is currently under review for publication. It was also presented at the Southern Economic Association Meetings held in Washington DC. Dr. Jones also finished his joint work with students Matthew Deininger and Samikshya Pandey titled “Crisis Length and Speed of IMF Response”, which is currently under review as well. Dr. Jones also chaired a session on monetary policy at the American Economic Association annual meetings held in Atlanta, GA. Dr. Jones has served on a number of committees for the University including Chair of the Academic Policies Committee and the Faculty Athletics Committee. His work on the Faculty Governance Review Committee contributed to the creation of a new faculty constitution, which he is now helping implement. He enjoyed meeting with his colleagues across the University over a year to discuss “ways of knowing” as part a faculty Cothran Center Seminar. Dr. Jones has added Pathways to his teaching repertoire, and still seeks out any opportunity to talk macro!

Dr. M. Taha Kasim (jointly with H. Spencer Banzhaf) published “Fuel consumption and gasoline prices: The role of assortative matching between households and automobiles.” in *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*. This research was presented at the Furman Faculty Scholarship Reception and has been covered by Furman News and GSA Business Report. During the 2018-2019 academic year, Dr. Kasim mentored Philip Heidt (Class of 2019) on a research project. In this project, they empirically estimated the effects of the interstate highway building on school segregation in U.S. cities. This work was presented at the Southern Economic Conference in Fall 2018 and Eastern Economic Conference in Spring 2019. Currently, Dr. Kasim is working with Harrison Broyles (Class of 2021) on a project that will disentangle the value households attach to environmental amenities by observing households’ locational decisions. In Spring 2019, Dr. Hample and Dr. Kasim were the main speakers at a Cultural Life Program (CLP), which discussed application of experimental economics in developing countries. This past year, Dr. Kasim taught Empirical Methods,

Statistics for Business & Economics and Urban Economics.

Dr. Kailash Khandke revised and updated his chapter first published in 2007, “The Economies of Asia Pacific” (in *Understanding Contemporary Asia Pacific*, Edited by Kate Kaup. Lynne Reiner Publications). He will teach a new elective in the 2019-20 academic year, ‘Economic Growth’. With Dr. Kelsey Hample’s interest in Development issues, the department decided that the time was right to split the former Economic Growth and Development course into two separate electives, (1) Development Economics and (2) Economic Growth. Dr. Khandke is faculty director for Furman’s study away program in Brussels, Fall 2019.

Dr. Jessie Wang presented her research on the effect of aging population and female labor supply at the Midwest Macroeconomic Meeting in 2018 and at the Conference of Macroeconomists from Liberal Arts Colleges in 2019. She chaired a president-elect paper session on Aging at the Western Economic Association Annual Meeting in 2019. Dr. Wang received a Special Collection and Archives faculty fellowship to incorporate historical texts from the Furman Library Special Collect and Archives in her course, Economics of Gender. During the 2018-2019 academic year, Dr. Wang worked with Nino Kodua (Class of 2019) on a research project that studies household expenditure and time-use patterns in 2019. This year, Dr. Wang is working with Amy Stewart (Class of 2020) on a research project that adopts the narrative approach in analyzing text as data to gain insights on the evolution of gender-specific social norms and academic expectations.



Meet our New Faculty



Jagori Chatterjee completed her Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Washington in Seattle and joined the Furman economics faculty in 2019. Her current teaching schedule includes Introduction to Economics and Behavioral Economics.

Dr. Chatterjee is a labor and development economist with research focused on the effects of economic growth on gender inequality in South Asia. Currently, she is reviewing the relationship between agricultural productivity shocks and infant sex ratio in India. She is estimating how this relationship changes when households have access to government-provided employment opportunities outside of agriculture. When a household's preference for sons coincides with adverse agricultural productivity shocks, families tend to disproportionately reduce investments (prenatal and postnatal) in their female children. This behavior leads to a relatively more balanced sex ratio in good rainfall years and a more skewed sex ratio (in favor of boys) in bad rainfall years. This research finds that a workfare program, which decouples both wages and consumption from rainfall, attenuates the relationship between rainfall and the infant sex ratio. The study finds that the program could have saved around 1.4 million girls if the government had implemented it in the years 2001 to 2005.

Dr. Chatterjee learned about the liberal arts way of learning and teaching from her colleagues in graduate school. Ever since then, she has been keen to live and work in such a cohesive environment. Dr. Chatterjee is excited about her time at Furman. She hopes to guide her students to see how useful economics can be in any field that they choose to apply it. At the same time, she looks forward to her students challenging her to keep her ideas fresh and broad with the lens of their liberal arts education.

Updates from an Econ PhD program...

Quinton White (2008) will graduate with a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in May of 2020. Characterizing his experience, Quinton writes, "Graduate school has been the singular intellectual challenge of my academic or professional life, requiring a critical examination of the economic intuition I developed at Furman, substantial growth in my mathematical capabilities, and a robust expansion of my technical coding skills. It offered opportunities to learn economics to a depth I truly did not know existed, share knowledge via the teaching of my own course, and, when they were kind enough to listen, propose my research ideas to economists from around the world. I am incredibly grateful for the experience and for moving onto the next step.

My research straddles two fields in economics, Industrial Organization and Public Finance. This offers opportunities but also poses challenges. It allows me to participate in a wide range of conferences, contribute to a number of literatures, and potentially reach many policy areas. I must always attempt to convey my research with clarity and appeal to a diverse audience, many of whom would approach the problem differently. Of course, these are worthy goals for any researcher. My education at Furman, especially the focus on writing skills and interdisciplinary research, played a critical role in (mostly) achieving them during my graduate career.

The topic I study, tax incidence, has both a long history and continued relevance. The welfare burden of a tax depends on (among other things) the demand and supply elasticities in a market, the salience of a tax, and the type of tax. In my research, I demonstrate how additional factors influence incidence, namely a firm's ownership of multiple products within a market and connections across their products via cost complementarities. The U.S. domestic aviation industry makes for an excellent setting to empirically study incidence because taxes are substantial (approximately 15% of fares), vary across time, and vary across routes. Using simple network models, I illustrate how cost

complementarities increase tax pass-through to consumers, generate price increases even on untaxed routes, and have especially large welfare consequences when placed on central nodes (i.e., hubs). With these facts in mind, I propose and simulate counterfactual revenue-neutral tax policy which improves consumer welfare."

Quinton is currently in the process of applying for jobs. If you would like to offer him a job or read more about his research, check out <https://econ.unc.edu/grads/arlynng>.



Internships

Rosemary Coskrey (Furman Metropolitan Fellow, Manhattan Institute) Over the summer, I had the privilege of being a Furman Metropolitan Fellow, which gave me the opportunity to live and work in New York City for two and a half months. My internship with the Manhattan Institute, a free-market think tank that focuses on a wide range of policy areas, was so rewarding. As a legal policy intern, I served directly under the deputy director of legal reform and my main tasks included providing research and analysis assistance on issues relating to civil justice reform, state and federal overcriminalization, and corporate governance. From compiling criminal offense statistics in major cities to outlining bills and criminal justice initiatives, I consistently utilized the data management and research skills that I attained through my economics courses.



Throughout my time in New York, I was constantly challenged and encouraged. I was given a chance to look at issues from a different perspective and to engage with brilliant, passionate fellows on everything from urban to education policy. I participated in a debate with my fourteen fellow interns (and my team won!) and provided research for several publications and a cover piece in MI's City Journal. Beyond just my thriving in my internship, I experienced all that New York has to offer; I explored parks and museums, visited countless restaurants, and made lifelong friends. I have so much gratitude for Furman and the Economics department for giving me this incredible opportunity and equipping me to excel.

Jackie Faustin (DFS Creative Concepts) When you think of economics, you think theory, logic, markets, efficiency. When you think of communications, you think strategy, intention, eloquence, charisma. When you combine the two, you bring something unique to the table. At least, that's what I tell myself.

My name is Jackie Faustin and I am a current junior at Furman double majoring in both Economics and Communications. You know, it's interesting, people usually respond surprised after I tell them I am passionate about both of those fields. But the thing is, economic findings don't reach the people without communication, just as communication legitimizes itself with a background in economics.

Do I know exactly what I want to go into? Absolutely not. But, I do know that I want to combine both of those unique disciplines in order to effectively and accurately communicate with people about important things, whether that be working for a Fortune 500 company in their crisis communication department, working for the press office of the White House, or working for a major news channel; economics and communications play hand in hand more than you'd think.

This past summer, I had the unique opportunity to be one of the few summer interns at DFS Creative Concepts, a full service Marketing and PR firm in Greenville, South Carolina. I had incredible mentors, CEO and Founder Dorothy Self, and my supervisor Austin McCarthy, who helped teach me the ropes of everything related to the Public Relations Industry. What was really unique about this summer associate experience was that we completed an "Internship Experience" that included completing an in-depth brand analysis of a business and attempting to land a new client from start to finish. This was particularly interesting to me because I had to do extensive research on multiple potential clients regarding their business structure, brand structure, and how to effectively market what we had to offer in order for them to want to invest in us. Because I have an economics background, I was able to understand deeper the business strategy of the

Potential clients, and was able to frame my brand analysis accordingly. My potential client scheduled a follow-up meeting with my boss, and to my knowledge it went very well. I absolutely love the combination of Economics and Communications, and I am excited to see what the future has in store for me professionally.



Additional Internships

PT Mattson International, Indonesia
Prisma Health Upstate, SC
GVI - Community Development, Nepal
Furman Metropolitan Intern Manhattan Institute, NY
DFS Creative Agency
Greenville Medical Legal Partnership, SC
New Washington Heights Community Partnership, SC
Institute of Political Ecology, Croatia
Warren County Department of Social Services, VA
Whitmer & Worrall, DC
Canadian Parliament, Canada

Research

Charlie Lott, Intern at the Institute for Political Ecology My name is Charlie Lott



and I'm starting my junior year at Furman University as a double major in economics and sustainability science. This past summer I spent three months living and working in Zagreb, Croatia. I interned at the Institute for Political Ecology (IPE), an independent research organization with ties to several Furman professors. As an intern at IPE, I helped work on "degrowth doughnut models." These models are based on the "safe and just space" framework developed by ecological economist Kate Raworth in her novel, "Doughnut Economics." The basic concept is that we, as a planet, place stress on our natural environment (the outer rim of the doughnut) while trying to fulfill our social and cultural needs (the inner rim of the doughnut). As long as we remain inside the green ring between these social thresholds and planetary boundaries, we are in a safe, just, and sustainable operating space for humanity.

IPE is working towards creating national-level doughnut models so that we can quantify where we are on the doughnut and what we need to do to remain within it. My job was to help collect and synthesize data on 33 different sustainability indicators (ranging from household debt and unemployment to carbon emissions and organic agriculture) for over 200 United Nations countries. The end result, which will be available for use by students in December, is an interactive website to compare the doughnut models for different countries using any selection of indicators the researcher deems necessary. The trickiest part of it was standardizing units of measurement; some indicators were measured in dollars, others in square kilometers, etc. I was tasked with helping write formulas

to reduce these different measurements to a simple scale from either zero to one or zero to two, allowing them to be compared with one another so that national and international governments know which indicators should be their top priority. According to IPE's results (and justifying the title "degrowth doughnuts") the only way for our planet to remain within the safe and just operating space is to "degrow" our economy, or take steps backwards in terms of production in order to reduce our environmental footprint.

In addition to my work on the doughnut, I also read literature on degrowth theory and on former Yugoslavia, discussing my readings weekly with Dr. Mladen Domazet of IPE. I got to travel all around Central Europe, spending weekends in Venice, Ljubljana, Budapest, Zadar, and Dubrovnik. For me, the most interesting part of my experience has been seeing a part of the spectrum of economic theory that really doesn't exist in the United States; the teachings of Karl Marx and the critique of the capitalist state are very much alive and well in Croatian academia, which provided a surprising, challenging, and fun environment in which to work. I spent an immensely rewarding summer tackling big-picture economic and environmental questions, adapting to a new country and culture, and experiencing my first professional research setting. I return to Furman for my third year with a bunch of stories and maybe even a few socialist curveballs to throw at my economics professors. If you want to see more about what I did during my internship, you can check out my weekly vlogs on the Furman University News Channel's YouTube page.

Emma Sanning, Hollingsworth Undergraduate Summer Research Fellow. This summer, I had the opportunity to participate in undergraduate research as a Hollingsworth Economic Research Fellow. I worked with two other students, Nicole Greenfield and Riley Burr, alongside Dr. Kelsey Hample to identify, understand, and test a relevant research question. We studied parental leave policies from around the world, read books on inequality and empowerment, and searched for hours for data on households in Sweden. Ultimately, we found our niche, studying the impact of paid parental leave policies on breastfeeding rates in the United States.

Our research question combined our collective interest in gender equality and

let us explore behavioral aspects of the question; looking closely at psychology and policy implications of a paid policy in the United States in comparison with Scandinavian countries. We chose to focus on breastfeeding rates because the literature review indicated that children's health is significantly impacted by if they were or were not breastfed. We wanted to know if adding a paid model changed the rate of breastfeeding in a state. The model we constructed shows the relationship between policy change and breastfeeding rates, including various additional variables (income, ethnicity, education, etc.) to determine if cutting-edge policies were having far reaching impacts. Our preliminary results show that there is little change in breastfeeding rates in New Jersey after a paid parental leave policy was implemented and a significant change in breastfeeding rates in Rhode Island.

Research was challenging, and even sometimes frustrating, but it gave me the experience and confidence to pursue a career in economics. I am thankful that I was able to grow alongside intelligent and inquisitive peers, Riley and Nicole, who encouraged me to work harder and trust myself. Dr. Hample was, and is, an incredible mentor to all of us. She demonstrated what it means to be a strong, confident woman in economics and showed us all that it was possible. This experience has expanded my ability to think critically about global issues and creative models to demonstrate intricate phenomena. I am excited to pursue a career with this new knowledge and confidence in economics!



Study Away

Rachel Campbell-Baier, Brussels

I spent the past spring semester living and working in Brussels, Belgium on a Furman study away semester. During my time there, I had the incredible opportunity to complete a research internship and be published at Bruegel, a world-renowned think tank that focuses on European economic policy, as well as take economics courses related to European macroeconomic theory at Vesalius, a local international university.



My time in Brussels was exciting, challenging, and eye-opening. I learned an enormous amount about the European economic system as well as current policies and future initiatives.

For my internship at Bruegel, I worked alongside the research assistants to provide senior fellows with research support. We would pull data, create summary statistics and reports, and review existing literature. Additionally, we were able to attend many lectures and events that Bruegel hosted that covered a wide range of economic policy issues. During my time there, I worked primarily on two main projects. The first was working on a book about the impact of digitalization on the European welfare state. I worked primarily on a chapter that discussed the change in European welfare over time and how this change varied between the EU aggregate and individual member states. The second project was a global analysis of agricultural subsidies and examined how the level of subsidization in each country impacted food prices, food security, and agricultural productivity. It was amazing to work in such a stimulating environment surrounded by scholars who were constantly debating new and innovative approaches to economic analysis. The experience also confirmed

my interest in pursuing a career in the research field after graduating.

While in Brussels, I also had the opportunity to take a course about European macroeconomics. One of the most interesting aspects of this course was our final project, where each group represented an EU country or institution during the 2008 financial crisis in a mock-EU hearing. My group represented Greece and it was eye-opening to learn about the financial crisis from a new perspective. I believe that this course, coupled with my internship, helped me broaden my worldview and apply the economic knowledge I learned at Furman in a more global context.

Anna Ford Pittard, Southern Africa

When I tell friends from home about my experience abroad, they are surprised to hear that I didn't receive any credit towards my major. Their follow-up questions are usually something along the lines of, "Well, why did you go?" My experience in southern Africa, though it won't show up on my economic transcript, has been one of the most crucial parts of my major. This seemingly unrelated experience abroad gave me undeniable love for what economists can do.

We started the spring semester with three weeks at Furman, spent ten weeks traveling in southern Africa with our professors, and ended with three more weeks on campus. Though we had academic concentrations in sustainability, health care, and earth systems, our class discussions wandered



through all disciplines, often into economics, notably in Johannesburg. We had several speakers who concentrated on economics when describing histories or politics. South Africa, Namibia, and Botswana, the three countries we visited, have the highest GINI coefficients in the world. As we unpacked how and why these countries have earned such high inequality

indexes, we also considered ways to improve the situation. "What do we do now?" became the question at the center of my mind. As we traveled and learned, I enjoyed combining economic theories with lessons I was learning from our guest speakers. I began to see that economics offers insight into countless disciplines and, likewise, economists can learn a great deal from other fields.

No, no credits for my major. But, when I cross the stage in 2021 and receive my economics degree, my semester abroad will be on my mind as one of the most valuable parts in my study of economics.

Amy Stewart, Edinburgh

Last spring, I had the opportunity to study abroad in Edinburgh, Scotland. My time abroad was definitely the most enriching experience I have had at Furman so far! Not only was my semester in Edinburgh one of adventure, but it was filled with learning opportunities, good conversations, travel and new friendships. I miss long walks on cobblestone streets, sitting in the brisk air in Princes Street gardens, overlooking the city from Arthurs Seat, and picnics on Calton Hill.

While abroad, we took classes at a local university, Edinburgh Napier University. Both of my classes were taken at the Business School. My favorite class was World Economy which explored questions surrounding economic growth and development. This class was incredible! Outside of lecture, my World Economy class participated in debates. This element of the class not only pushed me outside my comfort zone, but required me to conduct extensive research on unique economic topics such as Swedish tax rates and the privatization of railroad systems.

Along with classes, I interned at Cyrenians which is a non-profit working with the homeless and vulnerable throughout Edinburgh. I worked directly below the head of social enterprise on an independent research project. The project explored current housing



schemes in the greater Edinburgh area, in order to identify opportunities for financial investment in self-build projects for low income individuals. My research was then synthesized into a business proposal that evaluated costs and expected returns over time.

Over the course of four months, I came to find myself fully immersed in the culture of Edinburgh. The people I traveled with cultivated a feeling of home in a city that once felt so unknown. The hardest part about my time abroad was when it came time to leave! Though the transition back to Furman has been challenging, I am so thankful to have had the opportunity to study abroad, take classes in a new environment and participate in an intensive internship.

Shekinah Lightner, DC

This spring I participated in the Washington, DC Study Away Program. When applying for the program I was unsure of my future academic and career paths, but I saw a study away experience in DC as a chance to explore the many possibilities available to me as a Politics and International Affairs and Economics double major.

Upon arriving in DC, I was excited to get hands on experience in policy research. When I accepted an internship at the NAACP Washington Bureau, I was thrilled to have found an organization that brought together my passion for racial justice and public policy. Living in such a political city was so exciting and my internship afforded me many occasions to go to Capitol Hill. I will not soon forget the rallies I attended, the congressional hearings I sat in on, and the many prominent policymakers I was able to meet. Additionally, the cultural and social scenes of DC are unmatched. Living and working with people from around the world and visiting and attending the numerous museums and cultural events in the city were enriching and memories I will hold dear.

During my time in DC I was also able to connect with several Furman alumni. I am grateful to have gained much needed advice and encouragement from alumni who have taken various paths since graduating from Furman.

After almost three months in Washington, DC, I am now more self-aware and assured than before. Through my work at the NAACP and access to other resources that supported my

professional and personal development, I have a better understanding of the steps I will take after Furman. I am looking to attend graduate school for political science and want a career that allows me to use both quantitative and qualitative methods to address policy issues I care about. This study away program was invaluable to my development and I am thankful to have had this opportunity.



Alumni Profiles

Navigating early career moves

Emily Vonstolos

Could you introduce yourself and tell us what you have been doing since graduating from Furman?

Hi there! My name is Emily Vontsolos and I graduated in 2015 with majors in Economics and Spanish (with a concentration in poverty studies). After a few months in Raleigh playing with my baby niece (and filling out many, many, job applications), I moved to San Francisco in the fall of 2015. I worked as a Research Assistant at American Institutes for Research for two years, and am now a Performance Analyst in the San Francisco Controller's Office.

How did you know the right time to make a career change?

As a research assistant in the education policy area, I loved learning new quantitative research skills and providing research and program evaluation results to practitioners. After two years, I realized that the projects that were most inspiring and meaningful to me were the ones connected to real outcomes for students or teachers. I wanted to do more work that was grounded in my community and tangible -where I could actually see the results of my work. After speaking with mentors and peers for advice, I looked into jobs with several nonprofits and local government in SF. In many ways, I don't actually see this as a career change - mostly because I feel far too young to have a "career" -but changing jobs at

this point was important for me to feel more connected to my work.

What did you do to prepare yourself for the career change?

To be honest, I was extremely lucky to have my first job in research; it offered many skills that are transferable to several other fields. The jump between Research Assistant to Analyst in government isn't a huge leap. That said, that transition shaped how I see my current work and future opportunities. I learned how important it is to look for skills and professional development opportunities (in addition to interesting content) - because those skills could help to make a pivot or transition much easier in the future.



How did Furman prepare you for life after college?

Furman taught me so much. But out of everything I learned, the most valuable skill was the process of learning itself. Through interdisciplinary study at Furman, I learned for the first time how to scrutinize my own ideas and assumptions, consider my own socialization, learn new histories, hear from different perspectives and new ideas -and then reflect back on how all this changes my view of myself and the world. In life after college, this process has only become more important. Navigating the professional world, moving to a completely new environment, and simply growing up, have taught me how little I know and how much there is to learn. Particularly as a white woman from a considerable amount of privilege, I am continually

learning how to do this work of better understanding the world around me and the systems that are creating the vast inequities and injustices that we see today. I am so thankful to Furman for starting me on this iterative process of opening up, learning, and changing.

What do you do for fun?

Oh my goodness -there are too many things to list (this is my pitch for California, by the way): hiking in the redwoods, driving down the coast to Santa Cruz, exploring a new part of SF, roller-blading, gardening in my tiny backyard, facetimeing my sister, going to the library, relaxing with my friends in a park somewhere. Most importantly, I love taking on new hobbies, which so far have included: ballet, knitting, figure drawing, belly dancing, swimming, and climbing. I also weirdly love a really good cry.

What is next for you?

Who knows? (If you do, please email me, that would be very helpful.) All jokes aside, I absolutely love working in local government. It has been some of the most challenging and rewarding work I've ever done. I have recently taken on more projects related to group facilitation, community engagement, and qualitative research -which I love! I still get to do plenty of data cleaning in R, (which is a ball!), but my current role and team are offering me an exciting range of new opportunities to learn and grow. I plan to continue to try new things at work -and pursue opportunities with local nonprofits, which is incredibly important to me as well. I also plan to expand my garden next year to include roses and hydrangeas, and maybe lavender.



Alumni Profiles

Navigating early career moves

Hart Zwingelberg

Could you introduce yourself and tell us what you have been doing since graduating from Furman?



Hi! My name is Hart Zwingelberg, 2015 graduate in mathematics and

economics. After Furman, I worked as a consultant in Atlanta for 3 years, helping subscription-based companies maintain competitive advantages in customer retention and churn by implementing optimal renewal pricing strategies. More recently, I've been able to combine my knowledge and skillset with my passion for sports by becoming the Manager of Business Intelligence for Chicago Fire Soccer Club in Major League Soccer (MLS) where I lead the strategic development and execution of data strategy, inclusive of data acquisition, architecture, storage, analytics, and operationalization.

How did you know the right time to make a career change?

I had always been intrigued by the application of analytics in sports. After being nominated and recognized with an award of excellence at the 2018 Global BIGGIES Awards in New York City, I knew it was the launching point I needed to break into the industry. This happened to be around the time the U.S. Men's National team failed to qualify for the World Cup and there was a lot of negative press on our country's player performance and development. I was called to interview for the opening. Recognizing that I was more than qualified for the position, I decided to open my mind to other possibilities. A few weeks later the right opportunity surfaced at the Chicago Fire. The job was too hard to turn down. I would be tasked with building the infrastructure for which the whole organization would run, both business and sporting.

What did you do to prepare yourself for the career change?

I worked extremely hard in my day to day job, soaking up as much practical experience as possible, always keeping in mind and thinking through how the work I was doing today could be molded to fit the impact I wanted to have tomorrow. Secondly, and equally as important, I kept in tune with what others were doing in the space. I followed the most influential people on social media, bought or subscribed to their podcasts, blogs, scholarly articles, books, and even reached out to them in-person at conferences to discuss their models, their background, and where the sport was going in their opinion. Sports analytics is still in its infancy, at least in my sport, so a lot of individuals, experts to freelance, publish their work on Twitter and other forms of social media for the sports community, and general public, to read and be critical of. I wanted to make sure that the type of work I would bring to the industry wasn't already commonplace; that I'd have the chance to make an immediate impact.

How did Furman prepare you for life after college?

Furman did an excellent job in preparing me for any environment, intellectually, socially, and competitively. Once outside Furman, I noticed that the education I received left me a step ahead against the playing field, on par with master or graduate level students. The liberal arts background provided me chances to interact with students of varying backgrounds and interests by placing me in classes outside of my comfort zone. This played a huge role in my post-Furman success as I was more capable to relate with coworkers and clients and speak confidently in front of and to those of different pay grades and backgrounds. The ability to speak clearly and effectively and make my presence felt around the room has allowed me to thrive in my line of business. While there is argument over whether this skill is inherent or acquired, it was developed further at Furman through my communication with classmates, professors, visiting scholars and invited guests, both in person and through writing. Finally, our econometrics class led me to early success in my career rather unexpectedly. I was not aware that I would be applying the techniques I learned to my job daily. It got me hired, off on the right foot, and promoted within a short period.

What do you do for fun?

I enjoy spending quality time with my fiancé and our four-legged friend, Nala. We take long walks around Lincoln Park as well as frequent the dog beach along Lake Michigan. I like to stay physically active by participating in several adult league sports, soccer, volleyball, and tennis to name a few. When I'm not on the court or field, you can find me in a yoga studio to find peace and recovery. I'd be lying if I didn't admit that I've also become a foodie since moving to Chicago. Finally, I like to wind down at night with a good book by Malcolm Gladwell, David Epstein or Michael Lewis and their stories on unexpected impacts that the social sciences can have on real life.

What is next for you?

I hope to continue to raise the level of business acumen within the MLS until we are seen on a level playing field with our counterparts in other leagues. More recently, we've seen a rise in the number of strategy and analytics experts in executive positions, which is something I aspire to one day hold. If not, I'd like to keep my options open. Since bringing my practice into sports and finding early success, I've received several job proposals inside and outside sports. I'm not naïve to the constant movement and turnover in this industry and how dedication and loyalty is often undervalued and underappreciated, but my interest and instinct tells me that my services are valued in soccer and that the next wave of big data and big ideas will come from this sport. On a more personal level, we're making more investment into our sporting side and I'm excited about the new possibilities and insights that we'll be able to bring about as a business intelligence unit.



APEC Student Delegate

DAVIS COUSAR

Last fall, I had the opportunity to travel to Papua New Guinea with four other Furman students and two professors (including Dr. Hennessey from the ECN department!) to participate in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) “Voices of the Future” Program. Each year during the APEC CEO Summit, leaders from the 21 APEC economies come together to draft a statement summarizing their goals for the economic and political connectivity of the APEC region. The “Voices of the Future” Program is designed to give youth delegates to APEC the opportunity to draft a “youth declaration” of similar nature. The creation of this statement was a quite interesting and meaningful, and it taught me a lot about the necessary yet difficult process of negotiating in multilateral forums.

In the process of drafting the youth declaration, we made friends with delegates from places like Chinese Taipei, Australia, China, Mexico, and New Zealand. We also had the opportunity to listen to speeches from CEOs and political leaders such as Xi Jinping and Mike Pence. This APEC conference in particular was incredibly interesting because it took place in the midst of the US-China trade war. For the first time ever, APEC leaders did not release a statement of their goals and policy priorities because the US and China refused to agree on certain provisions.

In the midst of this disagreement, we learned a lot about the importance of listening and empathizing with the positions of other countries in order to achieve tangible policy outcomes. We also got to learn a lot about the issues facing developing countries through interesting conversations with delegates and political leaders from Papua New Guinea. Despite the disagreements that took place in the leader’s meetings, the APEC Youth Forum was filled with delegates who believed that empathy and collaboration are key to creating a shared future of global growth and prosperity. We learned so much from the diverse ideas and opinions of our newfound friends and colleagues, and it is my hope that such understanding will gain more prevalence in international politics.



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*Thank
 you*

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Your generous contributions help support research, internship, and international opportunities for our students, and help our faculty to remain professionally active. We could not do all that we do without your support. Thank you!