



2021

## *Letter from Chair*

Greetings from the Department of Economics! Since our last newsletter in 2019, the Department of Economics has demonstrated tremendous creativity and versatility in continuing to provide excellent learning opportunities for students, both inside and outside of some very different “classrooms!”

Over the past several years, faculty colleagues have adapted to new spaces and embraced new technologies in order to safely and equitably teach students who were participating in our courses both in-person and remotely (and sometimes changing their mode of participation from day to day!). Beyond the traditional Furman classrooms that many of you remember, we had faculty colleagues teaching in the Garden Room of the Chapel, the basement of the Library, and even in the Younts Conference Center, as well as some teaching entirely remotely. To continue deliver the excellent learning experiences that we’ve always provided from these very different spaces, faculty colleagues became experts at juggling iPads, laptops, and in-class cameras, and, like everyone else, learning all of the secrets of Zoom. Through it all, the quality of instruction was excellent, and we were all excited to celebrate Dr. Jessica Hennessey’s well-deserved recognition as the recipient of the 2020-2021 Alester G. Furman Jr. and Janie Earle Furman Award for Meritorious Teaching.

The department’s commitment to continuing to provide excellent opportunities for student learning extended beyond the classroom. Our faculty colleagues continued to mentor undergraduate research opportunities for students as part of the department’s signature Hollingsworth Undergraduate Research Program. In the summer of 2020, Dr. M. Taha Kasim, Dr. Kailash Khandke, and Dr. Jessica Sauve-Syed, all mentored teams of students – the first time we have had three teams in one summer! In the summer of 2021, Dr. Jason Jones and Dr. Jeff Yankow both mentored research teams.

So while it’s all “looked a little different,” and has required considerable efforts on the part of faculty colleagues, the story of the past several years has been one of commitment and resilience, and I couldn’t be prouder of the job that my colleagues in the Department of Economics have done. And we haven’t just figured out how to “do what we’ve always done, albeit differently.” A major initiative over the past several years has been to develop new “Purposeful Pathways” programming for students, providing opportunities for 3rd and 4th year students to reflect on their values, strengths, and experiences, and to purposefully explore various post-Furman pathways. Alumni have been a tremendous resource in these efforts. (Thank you!) One of the “silver linings” of the embrace of digital technologies over the past several years has been the opportunity to connect current students with alumni through a series of virtual panel discussions over Zoom, on topics ranging from finance to consulting to graduate programs.

Our department is committed to continuing to facilitate these connections with alumni in the future, 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 23**, but feel free to contact me any time at [nathaniel.cook@furman.edu](mailto:nathaniel.cook@furman.edu)

We’d love to hear from you! – **Nathan Cook**

# Internships

## Lauren Garrison '23, *Whitmer & Worrall*

When I first came to Furman, I intended to go to law school. I was surprised by how much I enjoyed research when I took econometrics last spring, and this shifted my interest from law towards policy. It was in this context that I had the opportunity over the summer to virtually intern with Whitmer & Worrall, a DC-based government relations firm. My experience attending and reporting on congressional hearings, assisting with client servicing tasks, and learning about federal policy topics confirmed my interest in policy and provided me with valuable insight into potential career paths.

Interning at Whitmer & Worrall allowed me to strengthen my writing skills and gain knowledge about federal policy. Briefing congressional hearings, for example, forced me to write more concisely, a skill which I've already noticed has transferred to my academic work. I was also intrigued by the content of my work. From FinTech to supply chains and infrastructure, I really enjoyed studying a variety of topics. I love learning, and I've always feared that there will be limited opportunities for learning once I finish school. I was delighted, then, that I learned something new every day during my internship.

*Overall, this internship provided me with an excellent overview of the federal policymaking process, an understanding of which will be important context for policy research. I was also fortunate to get advice from my coworkers on careers in policy and graduate school options. As a result, I've become especially interested in pursuing an MPP. Even though I didn't have the chance to experience DC in-person, the conversations I had with my coworkers confirmed my interest in federal policy. I hope to have the opportunity to work in DC through a future internship or after graduation.*



## Jayla Hill '22, *Public Defender's Office in Dekalb County*

This summer, I was given the opportunity to intern for the Public Defender's Office in Dekalb County in Georgia. The Public Defender's office provides legal services and representation to people that cannot afford it. It was a very interesting and enriching experience to say the least. As an undergraduate intern, I could not practice and represent clients in court, but I was still a part of the process. I was a part of the early representation unit or the ERU which represented clients at their first appearance bond hearing. My team would try to get their clients out on bond, so they could fight their cases from the outside and not in jail. I would speak to clients within twenty-fours of arrest and get useful information for their bond hearing. To be specific, I would ask about their job history, education, and get some details about the case that would appeal to the judge and be useful in court. I also sat in on superior court bond hearings which were for more serious offenses, and I wrote bond memos which were summaries of the hearings and their outcomes. My writing and communication skills definitely improved because I was talking to different kinds of people every day and asking for feedback on my client interviews and drafting numerous memos.



*This internship also taught me that you have to work with what you are given. It might not be enough or adequate, but if that is all you have, then you must try your best to work with it. These were people's lives and futures at jeopardy. I already knew that I wanted to help others, but this internship reinforced that goal for me. I plan on going to law school to practice real estate and transactional law to help entrepreneurs with their businesses and to help people with the home-buying process. I want to use my expertise to benefit others and be able to give opportunities to intern at my firm how a Furman graduate gave me the opportunity to intern at their office*

## Laina Wilson '23, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

This summer I had the incredible experience of interning with the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. HSMG is a contemporary art museum that is a part of the Smithsonian Institute, and it sits on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Normally you wouldn't expect to see an economics major interning at an art museum, but this internship is exactly the type of work I want to do in the future. I'm an econ and art history double major and I'm hoping to work in a gallery, museum, or auction house within the finance or art advisory departments. My goal is to combine my love for art with my skills in economics to be able to advise clients or groups on art sales decisions.

My internship this summer was with the museum's Audience Insight department. This department gathers data and analyzes the museums' digital and in-person interactions with the public. I enjoyed furthering my excel skills and seeing how data is used in the real world. I'm excited to take this experience and hopefully apply it to my work in Econometrics next year. I was given a first-hand opportunity this summer to see how I can combine my majors and apply them in real-world situations. My time this summer was very formative in my future career planning. I had genuine connections with the people I was working with, and I loved working in an environment where we all shared similar passions.

My main project during my time with HMSG was planning a focus group that would gather audience data for the sculpture garden that sits on the mall. During my research on focus groups, I learned how to ask effective survey questions, select productive and diverse participant groups, and compose mass emails. The skills I learned while organizing this event are going to be beneficial in any job I land in the future. While most of my day-to-day work was spent recording data or compiling quarterly reports, I was still able to interact directly with the art and artists within the museum. My experience ranged from pivot table practice one day, to seeing exclusive images of upcoming art exhibits the next. This internship was the exact experience I needed to confirm that I'm on the right path as I continue to pursue a career in economics and art.



## Ian Martens '22, Ernst & Young

This past summer, I worked at Ernst & Young based out of the Charlotte office. While I was there, I assisted in the business consulting field primarily in technology risk mitigation. We performed audits on client's technology to make sure they were within regulation from the government and help them implement any necessary changes. I did plenty of notetaking and was able to work on some client deliverables as well. EY has gone to a hybrid work environment, where you can work at home or in the office, but because my team was located all over the country, we communicated through online platforms a lot of times. I learned a lot about the power of Microsoft products such as Outlook, PowerPoint, and Excel.

*This summer experience allowed me to learn, despite mainly working remotely. The flexibility of the hybrid model of work allowed me to build connection across the EY network in many different places such as Tysons, VA, Greenville, SC, and Charlotte, NC. I was bummed the internship experience was not in person, but I was determined to take advantage of what was available. While I visited multiple offices, connecting with individuals energized my sense of hopefulness for what EY had to offer. I made it a priority to get to know the people I worked with and meet with them. That was a rewarding experience for me as I learned so much about my co-workers and how to navigate a demanding working environment.*

*At the end of the summer, I did get a return offer which was a special moment. When the partner offered the full-time position, it was an exciting moment that I will never forget. It has allowed me to focus on broadening my skills during senior year to be the best at that job. I cannot wait to move to Charlotte and would love to connect with more Furman alumni in the area!*



# Research

## ***Danielle Drury '23***

This summer, I had the pleasure of working with Dr. Chatterjee from the lovely Furman Economics Department, and her colleague, Dr. Bose, from the Harvard School of Public Health. Together, the three of us conducted research on the effect of healthcare worker strikes on overall health outcomes. Halfway through the summer, we narrowed our focus on the potential switch from public to private healthcare and the extra costs patients incurred because of the labor strikes.

The majority of the summer was filled with data collection and cleaning as we took on the large task of creating a self-compiled dataset using news articles from India. While this was painstaking at times, the finished dataset is valuable, unique, and very thorough. Throughout this process, we sprinkled in literature reviews and built upon my econometric knowledge established by Dr. Taha the semester before. The most interesting part of this process to me was being able to see how my coursework directly translated to the research field.

Even though the summer is over, Dr. Chatterjee and I are committed to continuing this work until a final paper is written - especially as she is in her new job with more built-in research time! I am extremely thankful to both Dr. Chatterjee and the entire Furman Economics Department for being so invested in helping me learn more and reach my goals. I hope to build upon my research experience in a similar role next summer!

## ***Cabot Fowler '23 and Lindsay Diehl '22, Hollingsworth Undergraduate Research Fellows***

This summer, we had the opportunity to participate in undergraduate research as Hollingsworth Economic Research Fellows with Dr. Yankow. We started our research by discussing possible research topics (mostly in labor economics) and decided that we would be using a relatively new data set, the National Longitudinal Survey of the Youth 1997 (NLSY97), to find interesting results using a fixed effect regression model. Ultimately, we decided that we would be exploring the 'marriage premium'.

The 'marriage premium' is the idea that married workers are more productive than unmarried workers of the same credentials. Historically this effect has only been found for men, but we hypothesized that because female workers are more comparable to male workers in the 2000's, they might also benefit from a marriage premium. To explore our topic we used Stata, a statistical software taught here at Furman, to clean, manipulate, and observe our data. We were both excited to use this research experience as an opportunity to build upon skills that we first learned in the economics department at Furman. Working with the massive data set was certainly challenging (at times incredibly frustrating), but with time we improved exponentially and became very comfortable working with data. We also used classroom economic concepts like wage equations and regression models to help explain trends in our data. Our results show significant marriage premiums for both men and women throughout the 2000's, making this study one of, if not the first to ever to find a marriage premium for female workers. We also found that college graduates see larger returns to marriage than similar less educated workers.

We are both very grateful to have been selected to participate in the research opportunities here at Furman. This opportunity enabled us to apply our classroom knowledge to the real world, and helped prepare us for life after Furman.

The logo for STATA, consisting of the word "STATA" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The letters are stylized with a slight shadow effect.

We would like to thank Dr. Yankow for mentoring us throughout the research process. He taught us so much, and we appreciate the time he dedicated to us over the summer. We both thoroughly enjoyed this experience, and are now much more confident in our ability to adjust to life after Furman!

## Lane Segura '23

Last summer, I had the opportunity to assist Dr. Sauve-Syed with her research in health-economics by gathering data from medical students at Greenville Memorial Hospital. My fellow undergraduate student Cameron Whitacre and I were part of a research team composed of our professor, a doctor, and several medical students, all working together to explore the impact of the integration of medical student notes into official patient files. Before this change was instituted, these notes could not be entered into the official patient record, as all notes had to be written by doctors. To investigate the influence of this change, Dr. Sauve-Syed crafted a multi-step research plan where data would be collected directly from the hospital for analysis. I helped with the actual collection process.

I gathered information by tailing medical students around the ER of Greenville Memorial Hospital for their full 8-hour shift, recording the tasks I watched them perform and categorizing them for the record. I also collected surveys from the students and from their attending doctors to provide context for this data. The opportunity to be personally involved in events that I had only read about in research papers was exciting and gave me a better understanding of the research process. Dr. Sauve-Syed also met with us each week for in-depth discussion of the project and review of related studies to improve our understanding of the background, allowing us to be part of every step.

For me, one of the most exciting parts of this project was that it is in the somewhat niche subject of health-economics, which has always fascinated me. Since Cameron was primarily interested in health while I was primarily interested in economics, working together allowed us to compare our different perspectives and ideas to explore the overlap between the two fields. Although my contribution was only one step of a long process, I am grateful and lucky to have been part of the project and excited to see where it goes in the future.



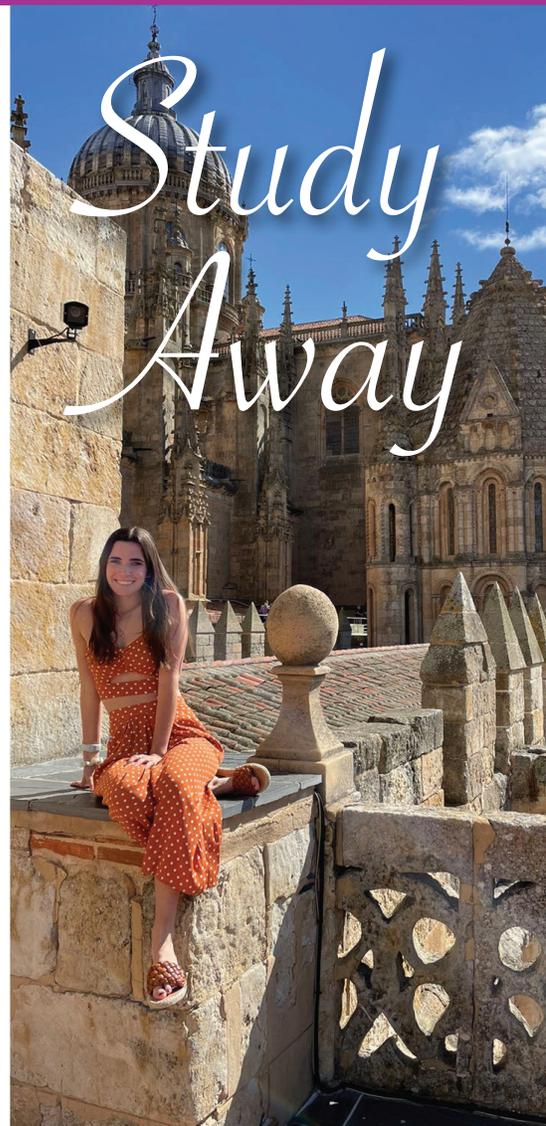
## Kimberly Kiepek '23, Madrid

Coming into Furman, I always knew I wanted to Study Abroad in a Spanish speaking country. I have been studying Spanish since 8th grade, and the only thing that was holding me back from speaking Spanish fluently was the lack of immersion in a Spanish speaking country. For this reason, when I heard that Furman would be sponsoring an IES Abroad Language and Area Studies program in Madrid Fall 2021, I knew I would be there. This fall, I am taking Spanish Language, Advanced Spanish Language Usage for Business, The Prado Museum, Contemporary Film, and an Internship Seminar. For my internship seminar, I am teaching English to elementary school kids. I love all of my courses so much. They are the perfect combination of fun, informative, educational, eye-opening, and relevant. It is especially cool that, through my Advanced Spanish Language Usage for Business, I am able to learn things outside of my Spanish major as well that can be applied if I decide I want to work internationally or with international clients. Additionally, every single one of my classes counts for course credit and towards my Spanish major!

Since being in Spain, I have already learned so much and grown so much as a person and as a Spanish speaker. Being in Spain has allowed me to be more independent and fully embrace a culture completely different than my own. It is so cool to really become part of the culture and embrace it as your own while you live here: to truly be a traveler, not a tourist. I have gotten to try new foods, learn about different college experiences, follow different schedules and customs, and so much more.

Additionally, even with COVID, I have gotten to travel so much already. I am less than a month into my program, and I have already travelled twice with my program for free to Avila and Segovia and twice with friends for overnight weekend stays in Mallorca and Salamanca. I also have a trip planned for October in Barcelona.

Studying abroad is something I have always dreamed of doing, and I am so excited to see where the rest of this semester takes me. The opportunities for growth both personally and academically are completely different than the opportunities presented at Furman, and it is such an amazing experience to be challenged in completely different ways while making some of the best memories of my life.



## *Drew Warner '22, Edinburgh*

This fall, I have had the pleasure of studying away in Edinburgh, Scotland. I was originally set to study away in Edinburgh this past spring as part of the Furman program, but COVID-19 had other plans, unfortunately. With Furman's study away trips for 2021-2022 experiencing a bit of a shake-up to due COVID restrictions, the Edinburgh program was no longer offered through the school. This was a great disappointment to me, as Edinburgh was the place I had my heart set on for a number of years prior. However, the Study Away Office was very helpful in walking me through the process of taking a leave of absence from Furman to participate in an abroad semester here through a third-party provider, Arcadia Abroad.

Why, you might ask, would I go through all the additional logistical hoops of traveling with a third-party program when Furman offered a number of alternatives to Edinburgh? The answer lies back in the spring of 2019, my freshman year. That semester, I took History of Economic Thought with Dr. Yankow, a class during which we studied the historical, philosophical, and practical elements of Western economic thought from the 18th-century Mercantilists up through John Maynard Keynes in the early 20th century.

The most interesting parts of the class, in my mind, were the weeks we spent learning about the foundations of Classical Economics. We read texts written by some serious heavyweights in the field – Adam Smith, David Hume, Francois Quesnay, Jean-Baptiste Say, David Ricardo, and many more. Inevitably, reading Smith's *Wealth of Nations* led to a broader discussion about the Scottish Enlightenment and its impact on the world we live in today. Edinburgh, being the center of the movement, was at the heart of our discussion. At one point, Dr. Yankow mentioned that he had led the study away trip to Edinburgh and showed us a few pictures. In that moment, I decided that I would go abroad to Edinburgh and walk in the footsteps of these intellectual giants, experience the city's rich historical tradition, and embrace a different academic experience. For someone who had previously declared they would never study abroad, this was quite the paradigm shift.

Here we are now, nearly three years later and I've finally found my way to Edinburgh! I am studying at the University of Edinburgh in their Economics Honors program, where I will complete one Economics course and two Theology courses. During my time here, I do not need any specific credits towards my major, so I've had the chance to take classes based on interest alone. Although my abroad experience will not directly contribute to my Economics degree from a credit standpoint, it certainly represents the culmination of many years of interest in the foundations of our discipline. With me choosing to take this semester during my senior year, it also represents a fitting bookend to my time in the Furman Economics Department.

As I begin my career in the financial services industry post-graduation next year, I will most certainly lean on the hard and soft skills developed here in Edinburgh, as well as the adaptability a semester abroad requires. Much like tweaking an economic model if the result is not capturing all involved factors, planning travel (especially in the COVID era) requires a high level of flexibility and causes some stress. However, the city, the history, the University, (and a bit of time on the Scottish golf links) has been worth it all.



## *Quinn Funke '23, BMW Co-op program*

Quinn Funke is currently participating in a Co-Op program with BMW manufacturing as an International Financial Steering Analyst. He will be spending three rotations working full-time at BMW where he will be applying much of what he has learned at Furman. Quinn will be returning to Furman to further his studies in Economics and Business Administration following each rotation at BMW. He believes this experience will expose him to new materials, strategies, software, and perspectives. This program will allow Quinn to identify areas of improvement and new content areas where he should focus on when he returns to the classroom. Quinn sees this opportunity as one where he can apply many of the analytical skills from Empirical Economics and the Hollingsworth Summer Undergraduate Research Program and discover potential career paths or areas of interest.

***Quinn has learned about the various financial and business processes which allow for a manufacturing organization to operate effectively. Additionally, Quinn is learning how to quantifiably justify discrepancies between projected costs and actual costs. His experiences from Furman have prepared him well for several projects related to cost breakdown and considerations for upcoming forecasts. Quinn believes that exposure to these concepts and problems will prepare him for whatever career he pursues after graduation.***



# THANKS

*Thank you*

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.

*Mr. Jonathan C. Cannito*

*Mr. and Mrs. Paul A. Demetree*

*Mr. & Mrs. J. Menza Dudley, Jr.*

*Mr. Jackson N. Buonamia*

*Mr. and Mrs. C. Bruce Shealy*

*Mrs. Pamela Z. Evett*

*Dr. Kailash and Dr. Veena Khandke*

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*NAC Columbus Chapter*

# Economics Department Student Groups

## FES

The Furman Economics Society (FES) is comprised of five current economics majors and a faculty advisor. We are a student led organization responsible for putting on outside events related to economics and serve as peer advisors for the economics major. FES has organized some wonderful events in the past, and we are hoping to do the same this year!

Currently, we are in the beginning stages of planning a Health/Covid-19 related Cultural Life Program (CLP) with Dr. Sauve-Syed, hosting an FES/Economics Department Drop-In with Sidewall Pizza so students can come and learn about what's going on in the department, working to strengthen our relationship with the Women in Economics program, and more!

FES Leadership: President: Hannah Nodar '22, Events Lead: Drew Warner '22, Women in Economics Emily Capeta '22, Communications Strategist: Donna Etter '23, Treasurer: Sawyer Sams '24, Faculty Advisor: Dr. M. Taha Kasim.



## FUWIE

Furman University Women in Economics (**FUWIE**) is an organization centered around bringing together women with a passion for economics. FUWIE's mission is to help those women develop their academic and career paths alongside other women with similar interests, forming a strong support system before they enter the male-dominated professional field. To foster community, FUWIE hosts events such as panels, social events, and lectures to help connect undergraduate women to older students, recent graduates, and women well-established careers.

During the past few years, FUWIE has hosted several events. In December 2019, female Furman economics faculty Dr. Jagori Chatterjee and Dr. Jessie Wang presented on their research and reflected on their experiences in the field of economics. In April 2021, FUWIE hosted Dr. Rachel Heath from the University of Washington-Seattle, who spoke about her research studying women working in the textile industry in Bangladesh. FUWIE also hosted a virtual alumni panel in the fall of 2020 where students could ask questions about the panelists' professional experiences. Finally, the Senior Women Reflection event continued to be a staple in the spring of both 2020 and 2021 and gave seniors the opportunity to impart wisdom to younger students. FUWIE looks forward to what is to come in the rest of 2021 and beyond!

FUWIE Leadership: Caryss Baldwin '22, Emily Capeta '22, Danielle Drury '23, Charlotte Moore '22

# FACULTY AND STAFF NEWS



**Ashlee Bullock's** family grew by four paws this year. Meet Koda, the very energetic, smart, but sweet Aussie Shephard who loves Puppucino's. Aussie's are known for herding and he does an excellent job with keeping us all together but also can learn tricks in a second. He is now 7 months old and growing every day!

**Dr. Nathan Cook** published "The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Local Projection Approach" with Dr. Jason Jones in *The World Economy* in 2021. A multi-year project with 2021 Furman Economics graduate Angie Pantuosco, "International Trade with Heterogeneous Firms: An Interactive Classroom Simulation," has been accepted for publication in a forthcoming issue of the *Journal of Economic Education*. Dr. Cook continues to serve as the chair of the Department of Economics, and was promoted to the rank of Professor in 2021.

**Dr. Kelsey Hample** published two related research papers after her successful first sabbatical. In "Experimental methodology: Assigning pro-social groups in the lab," she developed a new method for economists to study social networks in the controlled setting of an experimental lab. Dr. Hample is always interested in discussing the benefits of a computerized lab setting, which include the ability to manipulate variables, as well as the costs, which include concerns about how the results compare to the natural world. In "Formal insurance for the informally insured: Experimental evidence from Kenya," she applied this new method to help understand why agricultural insurance is surprisingly unpopular in many low-income countries. Among Kenyan adults, she found that informal sharing through social networks created in the lab did reduce the demand for formal insurance. In addition to thinking about this aforementioned research, Dr. Hample enjoyed studying racial disparities in passing the bar exam after law school and studying how family characteristics -- like spouse's country of origin or number of children -- impact an immigrant woman's predicted standard of living in the US. In the classroom, she had a fantastic time introducing students to economics, statistics, and behavioral economics. In Fall 2021, Dr. Hample is excited for her econometrics students to introduce her to many more topics, like the economic impact of Walmart stores on local economies, the relationship between welfare benefits and the unemployment rate in the US, and heterogeneous impacts of inflation on household saving.

**Dr. Jessica Hennessey** spent Fall 2019 on a Furman study away program in Edinburgh. Immediately following that semester abroad, Dr. Hennessey had a sabbatical where she did research on mutual funds, learned how to program in R, and thought about the application of spatial econometric methods to public economics topics. She published (jointly with Tom Smythe and Jonathan Handy) "Class Matters: Analyzing Mutual Fund Class Structure and Expenses" in *The Journal of Wealth Management* in 2020. In addition to teaching Intro to Economics and Empirical Methods as usual, Dr. Hennessey brought back her senior seminar in American Economic History and started teaching the Economics of Gender course. In December 2020 (somewhere in between the last day of classes and final exams), Dr. Hennessey got married! In addition to that exciting news, she was humbled to receive the Alester G. Furman, Jr. and Janie Earle Furman Award for Meritorious Teaching in May 2021.

**Dr. Jason Jones** received a promotion to Full Professor beginning in the fall of 2021. Since that last newsletter, Dr. Jones published a joint research note with Matthew Deininger and Samikshya Pandey in the *International Advance of Economic Research*. This paper investigated whether a quicker response by the IMF to crises led to shorter recessions (it does not). A multiyear project co-authored with Dr. Nathan Cook was also (finally) published in the *World Economy*. We investigated whether a free trade agreement (AGOA) between the United States and most of the Sub-Saharan African countries bolstered growth in Africa (it did). Dr. Jones currently has another paper under review, coauthored with a colleague from Sonoma State University investigating the effects of a 1994 IMF-supported devaluation on growth on member in West and Central Africa (it did generate growth). Dr. Jones had the exciting experience of serving for a one year appointment on the inaugural Faculty Council, a new faculty governance organizing structure. The Faculty Council came out of the faculty constitution changes Dr. Jones helped orchestrate on the Faculty Governance Review Committee. COVID teaching has been a learning experience. Reflection on the purpose of what we do in class, what is important, what really lines up with our goals and course objectives has led to some changes in the way Dr. Jones teaches, but still maintains the feel, flow, and rigor of those courses. Finishing his first Pathways cohort was inspiring; so much so that Dr. Jones is teaching it again and hopes to continue to do so in the future. At home, Dr. Jones sent his oldest daughter off to school at BYU, he now feels much older, much more sympathetic towards students, and wondering what has happened to the time.

**Dr. M. Taha Kasim** published (jointly with Benjamin Ukert) “The impact of WIC participation on tobacco use and alcohol consumption” in *Contemporary Economic Policy* in 2021, and (jointly with Philip Heidt, Class of 2019) published “The effects of highways on school segregation” in *Papers in Regional Science* in 2020. Dr. Kasim also presented a paper highlighting the effects of conflict on citizen trust at the American Economic Association Conference earlier this year. In summer 2020, Dr. Kasim mentored three Hollingsworth Scholars (Emma Kuntz, Quinn Funke and Meng Zhou) on their project “Environmental justice: Spatial distribution of air pollution, income and race”. This research was presented at the Eastern Economic Conference and is currently under review at *Berkeley Economic Review*. He also worked with James Miller (Class of 2021) on a research project that empirically disentangles the value households attach to environmental amenities by observing households’ locational choices. During the last two years, Dr. Kasim has taught Empirical Methods, Economics of the Environment and Urban Economics.

**Dr. Kailash Khandke’s** revised chapter “Economies” was published in “Understanding Contemporary Asia-Pacific, 2nd Edition, Lynne Rienner Publishers (March 2021). He taught a new course, in Spring 2020, ‘Economic Growth’. This is a new addition to our portfolio of offerings in the Economics Department, splitting our previous Economic Growth and Development course into two

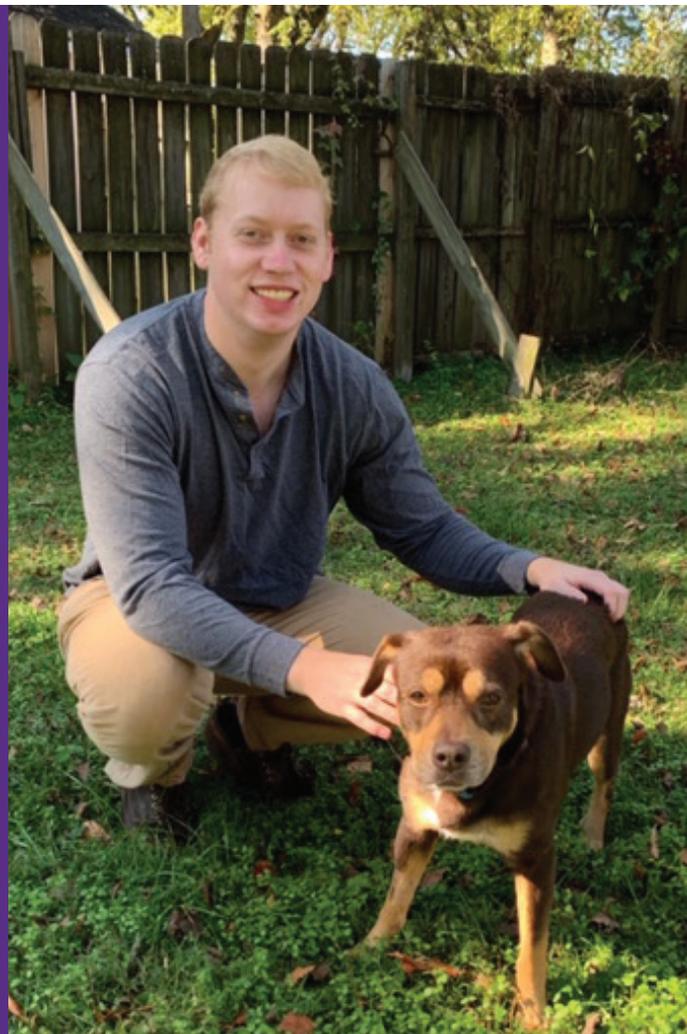
**Dr. Jessica Sauve-Syed** has been busy with mentored student research and new courses in the classroom. In 2020 she mentored three Hollingsworth Undergraduate Research Students – Claire Conzelmann, Dunbar Myrick and Anna Ford Pittard - in their research on coastal flooding and income inequality. The students presented their findings at a virtual Eastern Economic Conference in February 2021. Dr. Sauve-Syed received a grant in 2020 through Prisma Health to conduct research on medical student productivity in the emergency department. During summer 2021 Lane Segura (Class of 2024) and Cameron Whitacre (Class of 2024) joined the research team to collect data and were mentored through multiple aspects of the empirical research process. Deidentified data on patient outcomes and billing will be combined with the data collected this summer. Dr. Sauve-Syed is also excited about new courses that she has taught the last two years, including a Senior Seminar in Human Capital and an elective on Poverty and Inequality. Both classes afford students the opportunity to think critically about important public policy issues as economists. Serving as the Furman Economic Society (FES) advisor during the 2020-21 academic year provided another opportunity to work with students and try to establish some normalcy during the Covid-19 pandemic. In the past year she presented her research on Health Professional Shortage Areas to an interdisciplinary audience through the Associated Colleges of the South virtual conference series and her Flint Water Crisis research at the inaugural Liberal Arts Colleges Public/Labor Conference. Dr. Sauve-Syed is also excited about the next steps of her research. This fall she was accepted into the Early Career Research Accelerator Program through the Health Sciences Center at Prisma Health and named the Robert E Hughes Assistant Professor of Economics which provides additional research support.

## Updates from an Econ PhD program... Tucker Smith '18, Vanderbilt University

Graduate school so far has been an exceptionally rewarding experience, and I am thankful for the comprehensive education I received at Furman that has prepared me so well for this challenge. Just as at Furman, I am fortunate to be surrounded by extremely intelligent and supportive professors at Vanderbilt who have helped develop my quantitative toolset and research agenda. In a profession that puts a premium on being able to clearly convey complex ideas to broad audiences, I benefit from a liberal arts background and Furman’s deliberate emphasis to develop written and oral communication skills.

My research applies concepts from Public Economics and Urban Economics (my first elective at Furman!) and causal inference tools to study local public finance. I am interested in the degree to which neighborhood sorting can determine who benefits from investments in local public goods, such as K-12 education. My existing work, joint with fellow PhD student Cameron Friday, explores the neighborhood sorting response to efforts to improve low-performing schools. We use a difference-in-differences approach to show that relatively wealthier and whiter households move into neighborhoods zoned for newly improved schools upon receipt of federal School Improvement Grants, displacing a share of existing residents from previously low-income, minority-majority neighborhoods. A key takeaway is that households can sort across neighborhoods in a way that limits the ability of place-based education interventions to reach their targeted students.

In future work, I hope to explore the complementarities of place-based public investments by examining the degree to which addressing racial discrepancies in exposure to toxic air pollutants reduces similar discrepancies in school funding and student achievement.



# Alumni Profile

## NAVIGATING GRAD SCHOOL AFTER WORKING

### **Ryan Tholanikunnel '12, Associate at The Brattle Group**

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

*Hi! My name is Ryan Tholanikunnel. I graduated in 2012 with majors in economics and Spanish. After graduating, I moved up to Boston, MA and became a Research Analyst at an economic consulting firm, The Brattle Group. A year later, I moved down to Brattle's New York City office and I stayed with Brattle until 2019. While there, I focused my work in the firm's restructuring practice and specialized in client engagements that required valuation expertise.*

*In 2019 (after 7 years of working), I went back to school. I attended Fordham University's Gabelli School of Business and completed my MBA, with a concentration in finance and accounting.*

*After graduating this past May, I returned to The Brattle Group as an Associate, and am continuing to focus my work and build my expertise in valuation matters.*

*How did you know it was the right time to go back to graduate school and what was the process for you of deciding on what type of graduate school program to attend?*

*For me, it was a bit of a process. My original post-Furman plan was to be a research analyst for a few years, then apply to PhD programs in economics. While at Furman, I had done a number of research projects and had loved the process, and I thought the academic route was right for me. However, a couple of years into my work at Brattle (actually in the middle of applying to PhD programs), I realized that I was enjoying the finance aspect of my work quite a bit, and possibly more than research and econometrics. Seeing that a PhD program was a big commitment, I decided to put the applications on hold for a year and pursue more of the finance and valuation work I was enjoying.*

*Hitting the pause button ended up being a great idea. I spent the next few years building expertise in valuation. About six or seven years into my career at Brattle, I realized this type of work was something I could see myself doing long-term, including potentially testifying for our clients' matters. However, in the litigation testifying space, credentials are an absolute must-have. So, going back to school and getting a higher degree was an easy decision at this point. The question was – What type of program? It really came down to the field of finance I was interested in. Different types of client engagement and different types of testimony require different expertise. So, I spent a lot of time talking with principals and testifying experts at Brattle about necessary qualification and credentials. In the end, I landed on an MBA. I'll stress how important it was to talk with other professionals in the industry to help guide my decision.*

*How did Furman prepare you for life after college and graduate school in particular?*

*The best thing I took away from Furman was a framework for how to apply intellectual curiosity. Professors at Furman always pushed us to ask questions and never be fully satisfied with the answers.*

*Looking at my job after graduation, our real-world research projects at Furman gave me insight into how the world of data works, outside of just problem sets and theoretical understanding. Having that experience was a big leg-up in a world where my work centered on data collection, cleaning, and analysis.*

*In terms of graduate school, one thing I learned from Furman was that I thrive in smaller classes and team settings. So, when making my decision about which school to attend, class size played a big role.*

*What do you do for fun?*

*I love spending time with my spouse. We like to go hiking and try to get out of the city occasionally. Cooking is also something I enjoy. During the pandemic, I've tried a few more complicated recipes. My favorite so far has been chocolate soufflé.*

*What is next for you?*

*For the immediate future, I'll continue as an associate at Brattle. Beyond that, who knows what will come. I set up my career so that becoming a testifying expert could be in the cards. However, not too many years ago, I thought I'd be pursuing an economics PhD. The important thing to me is to be doing something I enjoy. So, I'll keep my eyes open and watch out for any options as they come!*



## Emma Winiski '18, Current MPP Candidate at Harvard Kennedy School

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

Hi! My name is Emma Winiski. I graduated in 2018 with a degree in mathematics-economics and then moved to DC to work at the Urban Institute as a Research Assistant in the Health Policy Center. After a great three years, I recently started my Master of Public Policy degree at Harvard.

How did you know it was the right time to go back to graduate school?

Before joining Urban, I knew that most Research Assistants stayed for 2-3 years and then went off to graduate school. I thought that applied research experience would help me discern which degree program might be a good fit and that the timeline wouldn't make me feel rushed to apply or be so long that I felt stagnant. Initially, I planned to stay two years, but I lacked clarity about which degree program would be the best fit the fall after my first year at Urban. For my Type A personality, it was difficult to adjust my timeline but in hindsight was definitely the correct decision.

while learning more about the policy design and implementation process. I definitely haven't written off research forever, but I know that if I go back to that field I will have to do more community-engaged and peer research. Also, I talked to countless mentors, coworkers, friends, and family members about my options and priorities and listened to their vocational and professional experiences. Their insights helped me clearly imagine what it would be like to pursue different graduate degrees.

What was the process for you of deciding on what type of graduate school program to attend?

When I graduated from Furman I was interested in an MPH, MPP, and a couple of PhD programs (economics and public policy). During my time at Urban, I had a chance to improve my quantitative data analysis skills and get more insight into how policy research is conducted. There was also a huge amount of new subject material for me to learn about substance use disorders and related policies. While I learned so much from my coworkers and their research, I felt very disconnected from the people who were supposed to benefit from the research/policy change. An MPP seemed like a good way to build on analytic skills (practically all MPP programs have microeconomics and statistics in their core curriculum)

How did Furman prepare you for life after college and graduate school in particular?

Professionally, there were lots of topics from my math and econ courses that helped me in my day-to-day work. The undergraduate research that I conducted with peers involved the same programming and analytical tasks that I did at Urban, and my econometrics class helped with the conceptual foundation to evaluate different parts of the methodological research process. Coursework in the Health Sciences department helped me think about health and health policy using an interdisciplinary lens.

Outside of the classroom, my time participating in extracurriculars at Furman (specifically Mere Christianity Forum) reminded me of the importance of reflection and community, especially as I navigated the first few years after undergrad. I feel incredibly lucky and thankful to have had the roommates and coworkers that I did. The shared learning and support with other recent grads who were asking similar questions as me was invaluable as we each figured out where we would head next.

What do you do for fun?

Well now that I'm back in school, my answer is laundry. I also enjoy playing basketball, printmaking, and baking. I'm back in Boston after I spent a summer here in after my freshman year, so I'm looking forward to exploring more of the city and revisiting some of the art museums and places along the Charles River where I spent time in 2015.

What is next for you?

TBD. I'm still really interested in community-engaged work and research and see potential to do that work in a variety of settings, including in state and local government. I'm also interested in behavioral science and decision science and hope to incorporate learning and research from that field into my career. I also have future plans with my senior year roommate to open a small coffee shop in the Research Triangle, so hopefully that will happen eventually.

