



Chair's Thoughts

Greetings!

It is an honor to bring all our alumni, current students, and friends of the department up to speed on what has been happening in the Department of Economics. First off, welcome to twenty-four new Furman Economics alumni. Congratulations on your 2023 graduation. I hope you are finding purpose and meaning in your post-Furman endeavors. You are now part of an illustrious group of fellow Furman economists. Whether you are a brand-new alumnus, or more seasoned, we hope you will let us know what is happening in your life. Email, call, or stop by and visit at any time. We would love to learn from you, and if there is anything we can do to help you wherever you are on your current path, we are happy to sit down and have a chat.

The department has begun the process of reviewing all we do to make sure we are still providing the best experience possible. As a first step, we have reflected on who we are and why we do what we do. This has led to an updated mission statement:

"Within the framework of the university's strong undergraduate liberal arts tradition, the mission of the Department of Economics is to help students develop broadly transferable skills in analytical reasoning and empirical methods that enable them to apply models to real world issues, work with data, conduct independent research, and effectively communicate complex ideas. Through excellent teaching and advising, a rigorous academic program, and innovative research we prepare students for success in their individual intellectual and professional pursuits."

This may not be flashy (let's face it, our department has never been too interested in being flashy), but it captures our efforts to be the best department for you. We are grounded in the liberal arts tradition of teaching, preparing, and inspiring our students to be set up for success in a complex and ever-changing world. We hope this mission reflects your experience with the Department of Economics. As we explore how to best fulfill our mission, we anticipate needing to make some adjustments. We are willing to look at all aspects of what we do. I invite you to reach out with any ideas or suggestions you might have to help us fulfill our mission. Please feel free to contact me directly at any time at jason.jones@furman.edu.

In other news, we are very excited to announce that both Dr. Taha Kasim and Dr. Kelsey Hample received tenure and were promoted to the rank of Associate Professor in 2023. This promotion is a significant achievement and reflects their important contributions to teaching and mentoring, professional activities, and service to the University. This promotion is well deserved!

We have some new/updated course offerings in the 2023-2024 academic year. Dr. Cook has created a 200-level Game Theory class, taking the concepts many of you might have seen in his senior seminar to a level accessible to underclassmen, bringing the joy of economic games to a wider audience. Dr. Khandke introduced a new senior seminar called "Voting Behavior and the Economy" just in time for the upcoming election cycle. Dr. Peterson has totally revamped the "Economics Strategy" course and is using his experience and skills developed in his administrative roles to introduce an FYW titled "Leaders, Leadership, and Writing". In addition, Dr. Hample and Dr. Peterson have joined Dr. Cook, Jones, and Hennessey as Pathways advisor, the innovative two-year class helping students navigate their unique Pathway at Furman and beyond.

The department continues to be committed to providing The Furman Advantage. Dr. Hennessey is leading a fall 2023 study away trip to Edinburgh, Scotland. Dr. Khandke and Dr. Taha mentored a total of five students on two independent research projects in the Hollingsworth Summer Research Program. We brought in Dr. Sandra Black, Columbia University Professor of Economics, for the annual American Enterprise Lecture where she talked about her research on the sources of wealth. Dr. Cook, Jones, and Peterson (with a big organizational lift from Dr. Hennessey) participated in the "Career Trek" to Washington DC sponsored by the Malone Center. We spent our days meeting with our many alumni and other friends of the University. The Department hosted a dinner and lunch panel discussion with Furman economic alumni who gave wonderful advice to students about life and work as an economics graduate in Washington DC. Every graduating major engaged in at least one meaningful engaged learning opportunity (undergraduate research, study away, or internship) while at Furman. Our alumni continue to play an important role in the success of the Economics program. This is what makes Furman special. With your support, we will truly be the department that "prepare students for success in their individual intellectual and professional pursuits." Thank you for your continued engagement!

Dr. Jason Jones
Chair, Department of Economics

DC Career Trek

In May, The Malone Center for Career Engagement hosted the first Paladin Career Trek to Washington DC in collaboration with the Furman Development Office, Pre-Law Advising, and the Economics Department. Students, faculty and staff traveled to learn more about careers in government and policy and connect with Furman alumni in the Washington DC area. During the two days in DC, students visited the U.S. Department of State, Brookings Institute, American Enterprise Institute, Booz Allen and Hamilton, and Whitmer & Worrall. In addition to traditional employer visits, there were opportunities to engage with additional alumni from the DC area thanks to programs hosted by the Economics department and the Pre-Law Society.

The Economics department sponsored a "Paladin Professional Pathways Dinner" to kick-off the trek as well as a lunch panel with alumni representing careers in research and consulting. These events provided invaluable insights into the diverse career paths that economics graduates from Furman have pursued. This immersive experience not only connected students and faculty with our alumni network but also exposed our students to the vibrant applications of economics in our nation's capital. Here are some reflections on the experience:

Kaitlin Balog, '26 ECN and EES major

As an Economics and Environmental Science major, I was excited to have an opportunity to explore career options in Washington D.C. Visiting different think tanks and government agencies was fascinating and gave me a variety of careers to consider. One of my favorite parts of the career trek was communicating with alumni over dinner and lunch to learn about what it was like to live and work in Washington, D.C. I was able to speak to Emily Hunter who is a financial economist working at the U.S. Department of Treasury. It was amazing to hear her pathway from her time at Furman to ending up working in DC. Learning first-hand about her experience and being able to ask her questions helped me to understand what life might be like after Furman. The networking reception was also helpful. Although it was an intimidating experience for me, it was beneficial to break out of my comfort zone and talk to Furman alumni and hear about their experiences and careers in D.C. I spoke to Tyler Rubright, who is a program manager at the environmental protection agency. This was a highly valuable conversation for me and I quickly became captivated by the idea of working for the EPA. My current goal is to apply for an internship for the EPA and see if a career with them is something I am interested in pursuing. Overall, this trek was a highly beneficial experience, and I am very thankful for the Malone Center for giving me this opportunity. I will encourage anyone who is interested to attend a career trek.



Rachel Campbell-Baier, '20 ECN major; Medicine, Health and Culture minor Advisory Services Analyst at Mathematica

Although I did not participate in a Career Trek myself when I was a student at Furman, I have many friends who completed the program and see them as an invaluable experience for current students. The Career Trek's allow students to explore new cities and career paths that they are interested in as well as some that they may not have considered yet. I participated in the ECN Career Trek Alumni Panel in Washington, DC, which was focused on careers in research and consulting. I was fortunate to participate in the panel with two fellow alumni who were in my year at Furman as well as Dr. Cook, who I had for my Intermediate Microeconomics class. Themes of the panel focused on our career paths, current work, and things we had done (or wished we had done!) at Furman to prepare ourselves for our future career.

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One of the common themes across all three of our experiences is that none of our career paths looked like what we expected them to when we were juniors and seniors. As alumni, I think this is a valuable perspective we can provide to current students - things are not always going to work out as planned, and that's okay. It's also okay to pivot, try something new, or leave something that isn't the right fit. In college, I feel like there's often a lot of pressure to have everything figured out and know exactly what you want to do when you graduate. Career Treks allow students to explore careers they may or may not have considered. They also provide students a chance to speak with alumni and professionals and learn about how they got to where they are today - which often is not the linear career path you would expect. Thanks for letting me participate!

Nathan Cook **Professor, Department of Economics**

Participating in the Career Trek was a great opportunity for me to facilitate and deepen connections between and among students and alumni. At a dinner organized by the Department of Economics, Elizabeth Bradley Clelan (Class of 2008), Emily Hunter (2009), and Chad Scott (2016) all did a great job of sharing the stories of their professional pathways post- Furman. Students on the Trek benefited not only from these stories but also from the opportunity to engage in informal conversations with these impressive alums over a nice dinner. At another event organized by the Department of Economics, we had a mini Class of 2020 reunion as panelists Rachel Campbell-Baier, Mattie MacDonald, and Davis Cousar shared their experiences in and perspectives on careers in research and consulting. Students on the Trek really benefited from hearing about the diversity of career opportunities in these fields and about the curricular and co-curricular experiences at Furman that prepared these alums for their professional successes.

Participating in this Career Trek benefited me as a faculty member and an academic advisor. Every opportunity to connect with alumni face-to-face provides me with valuable new information about career trajectories and industry trends that inform my conversations with current and future advisees and conversations with my colleagues about the kinds of classroom experiences and opportunities for skill development that our alumni identify as being the most beneficial to them. As I listened to our alumni share information about their careers, it was reaffirming to hear how well the experiences that Economics and Mathematics-Economics students have and the skills they develop through those experiences would align with a wide variety of careers in DC - from serving as an Economics Officer for the U.S. Department of State to conducting policy research with the Brookings Institute. It was also really helpful to re- connect with several alumni in different graduate programs to hear about their experiences (it's been a minute since I was in graduate school...), and really inspiring to hear how well they're doing. I'm always so proud of the impressive accomplishments of our outstanding alumni!



Cabot Fowler, '23 **ECN and MUS major**

The DC trek is one of the most unique experiences at Furman and really gave me a clear understanding of what it's like to live and work in DC. The trip is a MUST if you are at all considering working in the DC area. I had the opportunity to speak to over 100+ Furman alumni in the DC area who were all happy to share their stories and offer advice. The two day itinerary was packed with different formal and informal alumni networking experiences like panels, meet and greets, and intimate dinners with alumni that best fit the student's interests. It's the conversations with Furman alumni that are the most valuable. Each of these conversations helped me to decide what I was going to do after graduation, and gave me a solid understanding of what life would look like in Washington DC. This trip is perfect for anyone who's interested in living in working in DC (regardless of major), and I couldn't recommend it enough!



Anna Hicks, '25 **ECN and POL major**

The Washington DC Career Trek was an amazing experience that allowed me to explore several potential career paths such as consulting, public service, research, and more. Having both departments participate in the programming showcased the overlap of the majors within the DC area and was also perfectly tailored to my personal interests. The supplemental alumni panels the Econ department held were both so informative and provided a wide range of alumni engagement that was immensely helpful. It provided me the opportunity to ask questions about specific fields while also opening the potential to continue networking after the Trek. Additionally, it was great being able to meet so many Furman alumni and see how the community of Furman has carried on in cities outside of Greenville.



Lauren Payne **Assistant Vice President, Career & Professional Development** **Malone Center for Career Engagement**

The treks provide students with the opportunity to explore potential career paths, learn about the work culture of potential employers, and make valuable connections with Furman alumni in cities throughout the country. During the DC Trek, students had the opportunity to meet over 60 alumni representing a variety of organizations. We typically have 2-3 students secure an internship or full-time opportunity as a result of one of the connections made during the trek. It is always beneficial for the Malone Center team to visit these organizations to learn more about their culture, internship and full-time opportunities that may be a good fit for Furman students, and the qualities that they are seeking in future employees. I always try to take a lot of good notes so that I can pass this insight along to students when I return to campus. I also really enjoy the opportunity to reconnect with Furman alumni and learn about their experiences since graduating from Furman. I find that our alumni are such a valuable resource for our students and I enjoy connecting current Furman students to the alumni that I meet during Treks.

Research

Trevor Hastings '24 and Bryden Holladay '24

Over the summer, we had the privilege of engaging in economic research as part of the Hollingsworth Undergraduate Research Program. Under the guidance and expertise of Dr. Kailash Khandke, our team explored the dynamics of a cashless society and its profound impact on economic growth. The inspiration for our investigation emerged from Bryden's study abroad experience in economics at the University of Otago in New Zealand, where cashless transactions dominated. Many establishments exclusively accepted electronic payments, prompting us to explore the potential ramifications of a cashless society on a broader economic scale. The primary question guiding our research centered on the relationship between the ratio of cashless to cash spending and its influence on the GDP per capita growth rate in a country.



Examining past literature on the topic allowed us to develop our own model based on past research and think critically about how to accurately predict the relationship between cashless spending and economic growth. This allowed us to uniquely examine our topic through a micro-foundation based macro-perspective, coalescing much of what we have learned throughout our experience at Furman and during our research. This culminated in the creation of a nineteen-country database, varying in developmental level, geographical region, and cultural characteristics, spanning the years 2017 to 2021. Ultimately, our research suggested that as cashless spending increased in a country, the GDP per capita growth rate would also increase.

This two-month, hands-on, research endeavor was an incredible experience that allowed us to deepen our understanding of economic dynamics, while contributing to the ongoing discourse in the field. With the assistance of Dr. Khandke, we were able to develop broad skills in critical thinking, model building, and analysis, as well as specific skills in econometric regressions, data collection and refinement, as well as writing and communication skills.

Andy Strohman '25

This summer, my group and I had the opportunity to conduct research through the Hollingsworth Undergraduate Research Program. My group aimed to understand differences in voter turnout between white and black people in the United States. We hypothesized that this would represent one's trust in government institutions. This is a significant indicator of economic growth, as we discovered through our literature review directly correlates with trust. We used the American National Election Survey to gather our data and discovered a significant disparity in voter turnout between white and black people, with black people eight percent less likely to vote in the 2020 presidential election than white people at a statistically significant level, and around seven percent less likely to vote upon the introduction of a variety of control variables. We were also able to investigate different mechanisms that may help to explain this disparity, such as education levels, income levels, and exposure to discriminatory attitudes. We argued that these factors may affect an individual's trust in institutions and therefore their voting behavior.

The research my group and myself conducted this summer was an invaluable experience. As we dived into research, data analysis, and writing the paper, I think I grew as a professional and as a person. Never would I have imagined having this opportunity when I first arrived at Furman University. Now, I don't think my college experience would have been complete without exploring this path. I'm extremely grateful for Dr. Taha, my fellow researchers Campbell and Mya, and the entire Economics Department for fostering a positive summer of learning and development. I'm so thankful for my time in the research world, and I hope to continue drawing on skills I've learned as I grow into a professional.

Evan Huckle '24

As an economics major, one of my career interests is empirical research at a think tank. The only prior experience I had with economic research came from my empirical methods class in the spring of 2022. My opportunity to gain more experience came in the spring of 2023, when I was a data assistant working with Dr. Sauve-Syed. My job was to clean up and make new variables in an Excel sheet with over five hundred thousand observations. In the summer, I joined the project as a co-author with more responsibilities. This research project served as an introduction to formal research and gave me the opportunity to author a paper in an economic journal.

The focus of our research is on the impact of a policy change on the productivity and efficiency of Greenville Memorial's emergency department. In 2018, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services updated their policy to allow the notes of medical students to be used for billing in emergency departments. According to economic theory, a more developed division of labor tends to generate more productive and efficient outcomes. The project sought to determine if medical students' billing notes were a boon or a burden on the emergency department.

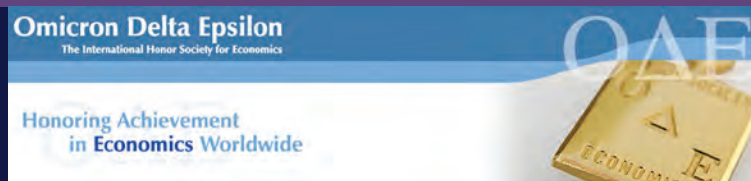
During the summer, I first looked at literature on my topic. This included an analysis of past empirical data, medical journals, and economic papers on how to quantify productivity and efficiency. Once we had a sufficient amount of literature, we started to work on Stata. This included creating functions to measure productivity and efficiency, collapsing large data sets, and merging data sets together. Whenever I ran into an issue, I would try different techniques or try to find solutions online.

After this experience, I have been even more interested in having a career in economic research. Even when there were problems that seemed difficult or frustrating, I knew that I would be able to solve them. The sense of satisfaction after solving difficult tasks was quite rewarding. This program also helped me develop technical skills for Stata, research skills to find information and sources, as well as soft skills such as professionalism and timeliness. I would strongly recommend summer research to other economics majors who desire to make a career out of it.



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2023 ODE INDUCTEES

IVAN HUCKE
BENNETT STOVER
WALKER BURNS
LAUREN GARRISON
LAINA WILSON
DANIELLE DRURY
LYDIA TAFT
ELIZABETH YEAGER
ALFREDO DIAZ-SANTILLAN
LANE SEGUURA



Study Away



Furman offers many different study away programs and, for many students, these are an integral part of a liberal arts education. Recently, Furman has offered programs (Brussels, Edinburgh, and London) which give students the privilege of undertaking international internships in addition to traditional academic coursework. These internships provide students with a wealth of benefits, including practical real-world experience. What makes these experiences truly exceptional is the cross-cultural dimension; students not only gain valuable skills but also cultivate a heightened cultural awareness, adaptability, and a global perspective. These attributes are increasingly vital in today's interconnected world, making our study away programs which include international internships an exceptional opportunity for our students to flourish academically, personally, and professionally. Here, some students share their experiences on these programs:

Abby Hepper, '25 Edinburgh – Fall 2023

Before coming to Furman, studying away was one of the things on the top of my list I knew I wanted to complete while in college. I have always loved traveling, visiting new places, and learning more about different cultures. I thought studying away was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, with it fitting perfectly into my Furman pathway because I would be able to do all of that while taking classes. I found that the Edinburgh program in particular fit me the best because I would also have the opportunity to participate in an international internship. While in my sophomore year at Furman, I had declared an Economics major, but had little direction of what

I wanted to do after. In order to help me on my path in finding a specific interest or career, I wanted to participate in an internship. I found the Edinburgh program and thought this was the perfect experience to be able to combine my love of traveling, participating in an internship, and taking classes. Our Furman program has also been amazing because we have been able to travel to the Highlands in Scotland as a part of the program. We took two trips, one to Oban and one to Isle of Skye. This allowed us to visit more remote locations in Scotland, see beautiful landscapes, and bond with one another.

My internship for the semester is at Young Company Finance. They focus on monitoring the deals and funding between investors and young startup companies in Scotland. They send out monthly newsletters with the latest updates in the industry, as well as current deals, trends, and interviews. I have been working on a project with the editor of the magazine, researching the gender representation of people with significant control in startup companies in Scotland.

I hope to gain a new insight about the financial industry and learn more about myself in the process as well. Being a part of an internship that will expose me to opportunities I have never had before will help me both professionally and personally. I am hoping to gain the necessary skills for future internships and jobs, such as working with senior advisors, other employees, and doing research and writing, while exploring areas to discover what I may be most passionate about. Even if I don't end up pursuing a future in this industry, it has already given me so many skills and experiences that are new to me and accelerated my growth as a student. I have really enjoyed my first six weeks here, and I cannot wait for the rest of my time in Edinburgh!



Christian Mancino, '25 *London – Spring 2023*

I always knew that I wanted to study away at some time in my Furman career, I didn't know exactly where I wanted to go. I'm a double major in Politics & International Affairs, and one of the requirements of the major is to have an Engaged Learning experience, meaning I needed to do a study away experience with an internship component. I also saw this as an opportunity to get working experience in a field that I am interested in.

When making this decision, I knew that I didn't speak another language, so I wanted to go to an English-speaking country. I had taken a trip to the UK during the London 2012 Olympics when I was a child and I remembered that trip fondly. I also was in the process of figuring out where I wanted to live after graduation. I'm originally from the Chicagoland area, so there are not too many cities of a similar size, which was something I wanted to learn.

My internship at Pogust Goodhead has been an incredible experience filled with plenty of hands-on opportunities. In addition to exposure to multiple active litigations, I've explored the non-legal processes that make an international law firm able to function. The program began with the Business Development team, providing an overview of the firm and time to understand Pogust Goodhead's mission of ensuring justice through large-scale group litigation.

Through conducting market analyses, building website content and attending meetings about the firm's investment opportunities, I developed a solid grasp of the firm's plan for growth. Transitioning to a litigation team, I started to explore cases in more depth. In this seat of the internship, I focused on a case involving Environmental and International Law. I aided in the creation of legal documents and helped to answer legal questions about multiple jurisdictions.

This internship opportunity has encouraged me to think more about my future, where I hope to move to London and enter a career in the legal industry. I am incredibly lucky to be interning with colleagues who have welcomed me with open arms and made my time here unforgettable.

This internship has opened the door for me to become a solicitor in the United Kingdom. I exited the internship with a valuable set of experiences that will help boost my chances of securing a training contract - a mandatory two-year apprenticeship for lawyers. But more importantly, I left London feeling energized about my future and I have been focused on finding a way to make a career in London possible. I'm currently in the application process for both law schools and jobs in London, and I hope to return to London on a more permanent basis.



Will Wand, '25

London- Spring 2023 (pictured with Christian Mancino)

I remember early in my freshman year discovering the programs Furman offered and few jumped out at me and I made it my goal to study away at some point. I knew I wanted to study away in my junior year, and it was also a good time for me to break up academic career. None of my siblings were able to study away because it never worked with their schedules, but I was able to take some key classes before my study away so that I study away and not disrupt my academic progress.

I knew I wanted to go to a large city in Europe, and London was the perfect place to study away, not only is there so much to explore in London but it also it is very easy to travel to the rest of Europe. The program also partnered with City, University of London which offered a vast array of Economics and Finance classes. As well as having the internship portion of the program was important to me because it gives you real world experience that you can later reference on your resume and in interviews.

I interned at a small AI start up called Edgify. They use learning algorithms and cameras for self-checkout and produce weighing systems in grocery stores. So when you put down items without barcodes such as a banana the camera would recognize it and input it into the scale. They also developed an anti-theft algorithm for self-checkout. I shadowed and worked on their customer success team with their customers both abroad and in the US. I learned what it is like to work in a startup environment, and I also built a lot of connections. I worked with really great people who were very keen on my success during the internship.



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. and Mrs. Chandler Barton	Ms. Donna A. Etter	Dr. Kailash Khandke & Dr. Veena Khandke	Mr. Leas Seman & Mrs. Allison Seman
Mrs. Kerry Stubbs and Mr. Tyson Bohler	Mrs. Pamela Z. Evett	Mrs. Jean H. Kujawa	Mr. Daniel W. Sharkey
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Economics Department Student Groups



FES

Ivan Agyaakwah, Mia Mantovani, Adriana Williams, Chris Lightcap, Sawyer Sams, Taylor Bell



FUWIE

Adriana Williams, Mia Mantovani, Colleen Quinn, Sabrina Caruso, Lynnea Parish

From the outgoing FUWIE leadership (Danielle Drury '23, Lydia Taft '23, and Laina Wilson '23)

Furman University Women in Economics (FUWIE) began five years ago with an overall goal of bringing together women with a passion for economics. We host speakers, panels, and socials to build a community outside of the classroom in hopes to make individuals feel more supported in a male-dominator major and industry. Each year, we build off the momentum of the last and we are happy to share that we had another incredibly successful year!

We first hosted an event called "Women in the Workplace" where Dr. Oakes from the English department spoke. She shared advice for young individuals entering the workforce on topics like workplace attire and etiquette. Secondly, we hosted a student panel in which Kimberly Kiepek, Lauren Garrison, and Danielle Drury spoke. They shared their experiences over the past four years and gave great advice to attendees about class selection, the job search, and various resources available to students at Furman. Lastly, we became an official SGA recognized organization! We cannot wait to see what the new group of leaders will do in the upcoming school year.

**HOMECOMING
OCTOBER 27-29 2023**



FACULTY AND STAFF NEWS

Dr. Nathan Cook participated in the Furman Career Trek to Washington, D.C. in May 2023. You can read more about this collaboration between the Department of Economics and the Malone Center for Career Engagement elsewhere in this newsletter. He spent the summer of 2023 developing/redeveloping several courses, including a new 200-level Game Theory course that will be offered in Spring 2024 (alumni who took Dr. Cook's Senior Seminar on Game Theory will remember that this is something he's been talking about doing for a long time!) and a new Senior Seminar in which students will reflect on their previous economics courses and research the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences to select which "big ideas" in economics we'll engage with in the seminar (so the *students* are responsible for choosing the content). Dr. Cook is also co-directing a Cothran Faculty Seminar in 2023-2024 that will involve traveling with a group of Furman faculty members to Ireland and Northern Ireland next summer.

Dr. Kelsey Hample earned tenure and was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor. She also published "[Onerous Disabilities And Burdens: An Empirical Study of the Bar Examination's Disparate Impact on Applicants From Communities of Color](#)" with her legal scholar coauthors. She was most excited, and exhausted, by the week-long 2022 APEC trip to Bangkok, Thailand with four students and another Furman professor from Politics and International Affairs. The 21 member economies of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum send political and business leaders to annual gatherings to promote trade and sustainable growth. A parallel program, the Voices of the Future, invites young people to meet and write a declaration they will present to the host economy. Furman has the great privilege of selecting the US delegates for this youth program and last November they got to interact with this impressive collection of young people and educators to discuss issues of inclusive growth, labor practices, sustainability, and other concerns youth delegates raised. They also got to eat spicy food, visit Buddhist temples, and the students watched as a hundred or so motorcycles rushed past Dr. Hample who was trapped on a small median in a big road. After settling back into life at Furman, Dr. Hample was excited to travel again with one of those students, Lauren Garrison, to celebrate Lauren's invited conference presentation in New York City. Lauren presented her previous summer's Hollingsworth Undergraduate Research Program research that Dr. Hample advised.

Dr. Jessica Hennessey enjoyed revamping several courses with new material, teaching ECN 248 (now called the Economics of Market Regulation) by studying cases like the Ticketmaster-Live Nation merger and using a relatively new textbook by Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfers in ECN 111. She also is happy now regularly teaching the Economics of Gender and participating in the Pathways advising program. Currently, Dr. Hennessey is leading a study away program to Edinburgh. This is her third time leading the program. If any alums would like to come say hello, she is there until mid-December!

Dr. Jason Jones is in his second year as chair of the department. The chair position keeps Dr. Jones busy, but he enjoys the opportunity to support such a great department. After thirteen years of attending and planning conferences in different locations, Dr. Jones brought the Conference for Macroeconomists at Liberal Arts Colleges to Furman University in August 2023. The two-day research and teaching conference brought in over forty macroeconomists from liberal arts colleges across the country. Dr. Jones is happy to be teaching a steady flow of Introduction to Economics, International Macroeconomics, Intermediate Macroeconomics, and Economic Forecasting. He has fielded many media requests and participated in CLP and other events around campus to talk about the current state of the economy. Dr. Jones ran his first half marathon race in April and was reminded why he prefers the 5K.

Dr. M. Taha Kasim taught Empirical Methods in Fall 2022, and Urban Economics and Resource Economics Seminar in Spring 2023. The Seminar was a new course offered by the department, and focused on using microeconomic theory and mathematical modeling tools to develop a rigorous understanding of temporal and spatial use and management of natural resources. Students were exposed to advanced analytical techniques including Lagrangian and Hamiltonian methods, and their application to environmental issues. In summer 2023, Dr. Kasim mentored, the Hollingsworth Undergraduate Research Program team of Campbell Lomel, Andrew Strohman and Mya Tran who studied racial- difference in voting behavior and potential mechanisms that could explain this differential. Currently, Dr. Kasim is working with the United Nations Development Programme on several field experiments to improve economic and social outcomes for the residents of tribal areas in north-west Pakistan. He recently presented a working paper from these projects at the University of Chicago.

Dr. Kailash Khandke was the faculty mentor and supervisor for the department's summer Hollingsworth research program. The students and their research are referred to elsewhere in this newsletter. This fall 2023, he is enjoying teaching a new ECN 475 senior seminar offering, Voting Behavior and the Economy. It's a seminar which is in his area of research interest on the interplay between elections, politics, and the economy. Students engage in a semester long research project and empirical investigation on topics within this area. Dr. Khandke is looking forward to fall 2024, when he will be Furman's faculty director for the university's Edinburgh Study Away Internship Program.

Dr. Ken Peterson has thoroughly enjoyed his re-entry into faculty life at Furman this year. In addition to his favorite course, Introduction to Economics, he is excited to be teaching Economics of Strategy, which melds economic theory and methods with business principles to analyze strategies of for-profit firms. In the spring, he will offer a new First Year Writing Seminar titled "Leaders, Leadership, and Writing," which examines the writings and experiences of a diverse set of leaders in a course designed to help students develop their writing capabilities. Along with several economics faculty, Dr. Peterson was invited by colleagues in Biology, Computer Science, Mathematics, and Chemistry to participate in the STEM Equity Fellows program (supported by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute), which helps faculty improve the relevance and accessibility of their courses for all students. Outside of work, Dr. Peterson enjoys hiking, travel, and spending time with his wife and three dogs (and occasional foster dogs).

Dr. Jessica Sauve-Syed is happy to be back in the classroom this semester after a busy year filled with sabbatical and family leave. The sabbatical provided an opportunity to make significant progress on research focused on productivity in the delivery of emergency department services. Evan Hucke was hired as a student assistant in Spring 2023 and was promoted to co-author on the project during Summer 2023. They plan to present their results at a conference in Spring 2024. A second research project that studies the impacts of programs that attract physicians to medical shortage areas underwent significant revisions. The positive impacts found on mortality rates from chronic diseases will be presented at the Southern Economic Association's annual meeting in November 2023. Dr. Sauve-Syed has also been thoughtfully working to make improvements in the classroom to engage students of diverse backgrounds. She was accepted into the American Economic Association's EDUCATE Workshop (Expanding Diversity in Undergraduate Classes with Advancements in the Teaching of Economics) and attended in May 2023. This fall she is incorporating data modules in a section of ECN 111 that will earn students FRED Data Practitioner credentials. She is also joining Dr. Cook, Dr. Peterson, and Dr. Taha as a STEM Equity Fellow in Furman's STEM Inclusive Excellence Program.

Dr. Jeffrey Yankow published the paper, "[The Effect of Cumulative Job Mobility on Early-Career Wage Development: Does Job Mobility Actually Pay?](#)" in Social Science Quarterly. The results "show that a poor job match at the start of the career need not permanently lower a worker's wage profile but can be more than made up for through strategic early-career job mobility" — news that should take some of the pressure off finding that perfect first job after college!

We have made it easier to follow what is happening in the department with the creation of a department Facebook and Instagram account. Please like and follow by searching "Furman Economics" on either site. We plan to post all the happenings of the department, and a little about what the faculty, current students, and profession are up to. We encourage you to also join our LinkedIn group "Furman Economics Department". This allows current students to easily discover the variety of experiences one can have with an economics degree (and to potentially reach out to one of our great alumni)! Thank you to those that have been so gracious with your time in supporting our students by being willing to talk with students about your career path.



Celebrating Tenure

Tenure at Furman University is a pivotal achievement in the academic journey, symbolizing a faculty member's commitment to research, teaching, and service. Tenure provides faculty members with the freedom to follow their intellectual passions, adapt, and innovate, unburdened by the constraints of tenure-track expectations. Tenure can be a catalyst for intellectual growth, enabling scholars to push the boundaries of knowledge, mentor future generations, and contribute meaningfully to their fields. This past year, our department celebrated the tenure and promotion of two of our colleagues: Dr. Kelsey Hample and Dr. Taha Kasim. Here, they share with you some of their new research endeavors:

Dr. Kelsey Hample

Over the past few years, I've engaged in some exciting new research about the Bar exam law school students take. In some ways, this is very different from my previous research about risk and insurance in Ghana and Kenya. In other ways, this is a continuation of my motivation to identify and assess differences between majority and disadvantaged groups with the ultimate hope that my work will inform policies and programs that improve both economic equity and efficiency.

By the late spring of 2020, I knew my fall sabbatical would not go according to plan. I found myself caught between the world that had come to a halt and the world that continued on, losing my chance to collect data before the full scaleup of a program I had made preparations to evaluate. I searched for new projects that could keep my sabbatical productive and plant me more firmly into the part of the world that continued on.

One opportunity came as I talked to my cousin about her work as an administrator and professor at a law school. She and the dean of another law school guessed that the bar exam was biased against Black and Hispanic examinees. They had years of personal experience and qualitative research to support their hypothesis but wanted to make their case with stronger data analysis. I knew my expertise in econometrics and my ability to explain that analysis would strengthen the research, and I consider the topic to be an important one, especially as it relates to equity and the efficient allocation of resources. The legal profession is among the least diverse in the nation and the justice system occupies a central position in society. Simple statistics demonstrate that non-white law students pass the bar at lower rates than white students, but cannot explain whether that is due to, for example, different ability and preparation for the exam or due to bias within the exam itself. In our first project, my coauthors and I used publicly available data and focused on the most common test, the universal bar examination (UBE), to find that higher proportions of Black and Hispanic students in a law school's entering class are associated with lower first-time bar passage rates for that school three years later when students typically take the exam. This effect persists after controlling for other potentially causal factors like undergraduate grade-point average, law school admission test (LSAT) score, geographic region, and law school tier. In addition to conducting the econometrics, I borrowed from my experience teaching Statistics and Empirical Methods in Economics at Furman to walk readers through my careful analysis and contrast it from previous work that failed to appropriately account for the correlations between race or ethnic status and LSAT scores. Furthermore, I drew a conclusion only as strong as the empirical method and data allowed; I concluded that the evidence was consistent with racial and ethnic bias within the bar exam, but that the data could not prove whether the exam was biased or not.

We continued our work, searching for data at the level of the individual rather than an entire school's entering class of students. We did not earn a grant that would have allowed us to collect such data, so we used Freedom of Information Act requests to get data from 63 public law schools that provided bar pass rates by race and ethnicity across gender. This is the most comprehensive study of the correlation between bar pass rates and demographic characteristics, and it came at a time the National Conference of Bar Examiners was developing the NextGen bar exam that will launch in 2026. We found that first-time bar examinees from non-white examinees underperform white examinees by, on average, 13.41 percentage points. Because we analyze pass rates by group within a school, we are comparing the bar results of white and non-white examinees who have similar entering credentials and received the same legal education. But, as we show, those differences in bar pass remain.

I've had a wonderful experience working in this interdisciplinary team. I've been able to offer my skillset and learn from my coauthors' perspectives. Where I would have seen a dead end, they saw the opportunity to use FOIA requests. Where they saw an answer, I ensured we did not make claims stronger than the data analysis allowed. We have produced better research for working together and have helped raise awareness to potential bias in this last hurdle into the legal field just as a new exam is being developed.

Dr. M. Taha Kasim

While on sabbatical in 2022, I developed a relationship with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Pakistan. With UNDP, I started several new projects in the north-western tribal areas of Pakistan with the goal to improve health and environmental outcomes in the region. Due to lack of security, political unrest, military interference and geography, collecting data in this region has always been a challenge. Therefore, these projects will provide new insights regarding economic behaviors of a population that is rarely studied. Two projects that are currently in their preliminary stages are described below. In the first project, we are searching for affordable and technically feasible instruments to improve mass health outcomes in low resource environments. A concerning feature found through a baseline survey was that a very low percentage of households in the tribal areas purify water before consumption. This is particularly worrisome as water quality reports suggest that 97% of water sources in the tribal belt are unsafe for drinking due to bacterial contamination, and seepage of chemicals from agricultural practices into groundwater. Most of the illnesses in the area could be directly or indirectly attributed to consumption of contaminated water, and this is especially the case for the most vulnerable population (children and elderly). Many of these illnesses are curable and preventable, but because of outdated health infrastructure, low health literacy and limited medical personnel, commiserable health outcomes are common.

Improvements in hygiene practices and promotion of health-preserving behaviors could be a low-cost strategy to reduce negative health outcomes. Given the low rate of water treatment, we designed a public-health education campaign to enhance health literacy in the region. The awareness campaign provided information on potential hazards of consuming poor water quality (example, infant mortality), and strategies to make water safe for consumption (example, boiling). Given the conservative cultural norms of the tribal areas, our interventions also made use of religious texts that promote health-preserving behaviors. Participants were randomly selected to either receive audio-messages, text-messages or no-messages. Post-intervention, we find that there was a significant improvement in health-preserving behaviors for the group that received audio messages. Moreover, the effects are strongest for the group that received religious-audio messages. Given the success of this low-cost intervention, promotion of sanitation and hygiene practices should be used as a tool to enhance health literacy. Such a strategy has the potential to decrease water-borne disease prevalence and deaths, particularly among children. If implemented effectively, behavioral nudges can usher-in early benefits of access to clean water by simultaneously provoking household level action for purification.

A similar project is on water conservation in the tribal areas. Since 2005, Pakistan has been categorized as a "water-scarce" country. 10% of the people in the country do not have access to clean water and this burden is primarily borne by the poorest. Reasons behind this shortage include (i) substandard water infrastructure, (ii) population growth, (iii) intensive agriculture practices, and (iv) climate change. Given these concerns, the purpose of the second project was to design a series of interventions that could potentially influence individual perceptions regarding water conservation, and encourage collective action towards efficient management and maintenance of water resources. In this project, the interventions varied on (i) content of the message (religious v. non-religious) and (ii) frequency (weekly vs. fortnightly). Using a common-pool extraction cell-phone application and through survey data, we found that households receiving religious messages demonstrated a significant improvement in attitudes and perceptions towards water conservation.