Ben Li, Julie Mortimer join BC Economics faculty

Last year’s faculty recruitment season was exceedingly successful, with the department filling four authorized positions in an attempt to reduce the pressure on undergraduate enrollments and strengthen the graduate program.

Assistant Prof. Ben Li joins us from University of Colorado-Boulder, where he received the Ph.D. this year. His interests are in international trade, economic development, and industrial organization. He has published in World Economy, Journal of Urban Economics, Economics Letters and Economics Bulletin. Li is teaching the graduate international trade course this fall and the undergraduate trade course next spring.

Associate Prof. Julie Holland Mortimer is our new hire in the field of industrial organization. She has been a member of the Harvard faculty since 2001, and serves as a Faculty Research Fellow of the NBER. Mortimer received her Ph.D. from UCLA in 2001, and has published in Review of Economic Studies, Quarterly Journal of Economics.

Utku Ünver promoted to Professor

Microeconomist Utku Ünver has been promoted to Professor. Ünver joined the BC faculty in 2008 as an Associate Professor from the University of Pittsburgh, where he served since 2005. He completed the Ph.D. at Pittsburgh in 2000 and taught for five years at Koç University in Turkey. His interests lie in microeconomic theory, particularly game theory, market and mechanism design, and social choice. His wide-ranging publications have appeared in Games and Economic Behavior, International Economic Review, Review of Economic Studies, and New England Journal of Medicine.

Ünver’s work on kidney exchange, some of it coauthored by Prof. Tayfun Sönmez, has been widely cited and supported by the National Science Foundation. That work’s relevance to societal needs has in turn been used to encourage support for NSF funding of social science research in the face of Congressional budget cuts.
Eight Ph.D.’s Awarded in University Commencement

The 135th commencement exercises of Boston College were held on May 23, 2011. Eight economics students received the Ph.D. since the last commencement. They are listed with their thesis topics and advisors. Matteo Cacciatore, “The macroeconomics of international trade, regulation and labor markets” (Fabio Ghironi); Wataru Hirata, “Financial market imperfections and aggregate fluctuations” (Susanto Basu); Nadezhda Karamcheva, “Essays on private pensions and workers’ savings behavior” (Peter Gottschalk); Murat Mungan, “Optimal procedures in criminal law: Five essays” (Hideo Konishi); Luigi Pascali, “Essays in growth, development and international trade” (Fabio Schiantarelli); Shannon Phillips, “Essays on HIV, marriage and education in sub Saharan Africa” (Peter Gottschalk); Geoffrey Sanzenbacher, “Essays in labor economics” (Shannon Seitz); and Caglar Yurtseven, “Theoretical and empirical essays on strategic behavior in various industries” (Utku Ünver).

Twelve students were awarded the M.A. degree at the commencement exercises: Brent Bundick, Jinghan Cai, Jin-Young Choi, Krastina Dzhambova, Anthony Hannagan, Jonathan Hoddenbagh, Naijing Huang, Yuji Maruo, Michael Smith, Bertan Turhan, Yat Fung Wong and Esha Zaveri.

Among the undergraduate class of 2011, more students chose the economics major (277) than any other Arts and Sciences major.

New faculty...from page 1

Maxwell takes permanent position

Prof. Chris Maxwell, who has offered electives in sports economics, game theory and math for economists, has joined the full-time faculty as an adjunct associate professor. Maxwell, who received his Ph.D. from Harvard in 1983 and served on the faculty in the 1980s, is teaching a section of econometric methods and the math for economists course this fall, and participating in senior honors thesis advisement.

Chugh to join faculty in January

Prof. Sanjay Chugh of the University of Maryland, who visited the department in spring 2010, will join the economics faculty next January, strengthening the ranks of the macroeconomics group. Chugh received his Ph.D. from Pennsylvania in 2004 after undergraduate study at MIT. He has also served at the Federal Reserve Board and as a visiting scholar at the Boston Fed.

Iacoviello, Seitz leave the department

Assoc. Prof. Matteo Iacoviello has resigned to take a position with the Federal Reserve Board in Washington. Asst. Prof. Shannon Seitz has resigned to take a position with The Analysis Group in Boston.
Grad Econ Picnic Finally Happens!

After several weather-related postponements, the faculty, staff and Ph.D. students of the department of economics finally enjoyed the annual department picnic October 5 on the lawn of Murray House. The enthusiastic crowd of rookie Ph.D. students were treated to classic performances of “I’m a T.A.!” and “You Gotta Learn Math” by the Samson Alva Band, with Don Cox on vocals and Rick Sanger, our custodian, on drums.

Rick’s professional group, Tsunami of Sound (check them out on Facebook, YouTube and iTunes!) then took over, providing a set of surf music that had the youngsters dancing on the lawn. For a unique instrumental interlude, new hire Julie Mortimer and her very talented young son performed violin duets.

Then it was back to surf’s up with the Tsunami’s tunes, making a cool October day feel like southern California. A good time was had by all, and thankfully the event came off before the freak October snowstorm hit the Heights!

Alumni News Notes

Luigi Pascali wins BC GSAS social science dissertation award

Luigi Pascali, an August 2010 graduate of the Economics Ph.D. program, is this year’s co-recipient of the Donald J. White Dissertation Award for the best Ph.D. thesis in the social sciences in Boston College’s Graduate School of Arts & Sciences. Pascali wrote "Essays in Growth, Development, and International Trade", advised by Profs. James Anderson, Susanto Basu, and Fabio Schiantarelli. In his job market search last year, he was appointed to a position at Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona, one of Europe’s most prestigious institutions in economics. Pascali’s selection reflects the innovative nature of his work, one essay of which explores the relationship between the 14th-15th century economic landscape and economic development today.

**Economics graduates garner A&S awards**

The Economics Undergraduate Honors Program had another terrific year in 2010-2011. We had 17 students complete senior theses, sponsored an honors dinner, and fielded a team to compete in the Federal Reserve Challenge competition. We also sponsored lunch gatherings with the Boston College chapter of Omicron Delta Epsilon, the national honor society for economics, for students and faculty to discuss economic policy issues of current interest. ODE also held information sessions on job and graduate school opportunities for economics majors.

The Alice E. Bourneuf Award, recognizing the top economics student (by GPA) who has also written an excellent thesis went to Kathleen Iannone. Kathleen’s thesis, advised by Frank Gollop, was entitled “Green Skies: Effects of Environmental Taxation on the U.S. Domestic Airline Industry.” She analyzed the effects an emissions tax on airlines would have on the viability of the airline industry. Her findings are that moderate-sized emissions tax would provide the benefit of lower carbon emissions with only modest costs in terms of harm to the airlines or consumers.

The Giffuni Family Prizes for outstanding thesis work were awarded to Michael Gordon and Frances Schwiep. Michael’s thesis, advised by Rich McGowan, was entitled “Examining the Sources and Costs of Funding Urban Mass Transit: A Case Study of Six Major Urban Transit Systems.” He investigated how the source of funding for mass transit influences the ultimate cost of projects. In particular, he found that Federal financing is less efficient than state or local financing. Frances’ thesis, advised by Chris Maxwell, was entitled “The Performance of Ex-Offenders in the Labor Market.” She studied...
In December 2010, a number of faculty members attended a dinner in honor of Prof. Peter Gottschalk’s transition to a Research Professorship and, in summer 2011, to retired status. Gottschalk, a labor economist who joined the BC faculty in 1987, has been instrumental in a number of PhD students’ dissertations and their subsequent job placements. We wish him well.


Kit Baum was an invited speaker at the CFE’10 conference on computational and financial econometrics at University of London last December, presenting joint work with Paola Zerilli (PhD’06). He then travelled to a conference in Sophia Antipolis, France, where he gave an invited talk “The Impact of the Financial System’s Structure on Firms’ Financial Constraints”, joint with Oleksandr Talavera (MA’03) and Dorothea Schäfer of DIW Berlin. That paper was published this year in Journal of International Money and Finance. The joint work with Zerilli, a lecturer in finance at University of York, was also presented at the Forecasting Financial Markets conference in Marseille and the Money, Macro, Finance Research group meetings in Birmingham, UK. This year, Baum was invited to lecture at the IMF Institute in March and November. He also gave talks on Stata usage in applied research at the Durham (UK) Business School, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore and the Stata Conference 2011 in Chicago. During his sabbatical this fall, Kit visited l’Université de Nice–Sophia Antipolis for a fortnight, giving several lectures on macroeconomics with Stata and two seminars.

Baum’s other recent publications include “Using Stata for Applied Research: Reviewing its Capabilities”, with Mark Schaffer and Steven Stillman, in Journal of Economic Surveys; “The contextual effects of social capital on health: A cross-national instrumental variable analysis”, with Daniel Kim, Michael Ganz, S V Subramanian and Ichiro Kawachi, forthcoming, Social Science & Medicine; and “The role of uncertainty in the transmission of monetary policy effects on bank lending”, with Mustafa Caglayan (PhD’98) and Neslihan Ozkan (PhD’97), forthcoming in Manchester School.


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the role of open-records laws in determining whether former criminal offenders are successful in gaining employment after release from prison.

Our three prize winners are heading on to great opportunities in the workplace: Kathleen and Michael will be working for Charles River Associates, and Frances will be employed by The Analysis Group. Also, another thesis student, Daniel Belton, has entered the Ph.D. program at Michigan State, where former BC and MIT grad, Wally Mullin, is presently a professor of economics.

During the spring, the Department hosted a dinner for our honors students. Our speaker was Joe Quinn, who discussed issues related to the long-term federal budget deficit and debt. As always, this evening was an enjoyable time for our students and faculty.

Last fall, the Department fielded a team to compete in the New England Regional competition of the Federal Reserve Challenge held at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. The team did very well, winning our flight in the morning round and then competing against the three other finalists in the afternoon round. We finished tied for 3rd place with MIT, as Bentley College and Tufts University finished in first and second place. Nineteen schools competed, including Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Middlebury, and Boston University.

Recent placements of BC EC PhDs include:

Alessandro Barattieri: University of Quebec
Isabella Blengini: University of Lausanne
Tatiana Farina: Insper, Sao Paulo, Brazil
Aaron Fix: Analysis Group
Murat Mungan: Florida State Law School
Shannon Phillips: Center for Naval Analysis
Madhavi Pundit: National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, New Delhi
Dessislava Slavtcheva: Clark University
Caglar Yurtseven: Bahçeşehir University, Istanbul, Turkey
as co-advisor of the Boston College team for the College Fed Challenge, and he obtained renewed funding from Boston College’s Institute for the Liberal Arts for the seminar series on International Economic Policy and Political Economy for academic year 2011-12. The IEPPE series, featuring a number of high-profile speakers, has caught the attention of the University, and has been covered in the Boston College Annual Report, distributed to Trustees and major donors. An article on the series is also scheduled to appear in the BC Magazine. Fabio continued to advise a large number of graduate and undergraduate students on their research projects. He also worked on his research and, most important, enjoyed his family: Fabio and Katrina welcomed the arrival of their son, Francesco, in December 2010. Last but not least, Fabio continued to follow the Boston College men’s hockey team: No national championship in 2011 (“only” Beanpot and Hockey East Champs), but the new season is coming soon, and, with it, the opportunity to take care of unfinished business.


Peter Ireland published “A New Keynesian Perspective on the Great Recession” appears in the February 2011 issue of the Journal of Money, Credit, and Banking, and “Theology, Economics, and Economic Development” appears in The World Market and Interreligious Dialogue, a volume edited by Catherine Corinelle and Glenn Willis that collects papers presented at least year’s conference, sponsored jointly by BC’s Economics and Theology Departments. Also in 2011, Peter joined the Shadow Open Market Committee, an independent organization founded in 1973 by Karl Brunner and Allan Meltzer that evaluates and critiques Federal Reserve and other U.S. macroeconomic policies.


Frank McLaughlin’s paper “Economics and Religion: A Theoretical Problem,” was pub-
Cheney Fund Expands Student Support

Thanks to more than 20 years of generous financial support from the many friends of the late Professor Robert Cheney, S.J., we were able to make eight Cheney Scholarship Awards this year, the most ever, to senior Economics majors with strong academic records. Here is a little about the academic and public service interests of each.

**Giovanni Chapa-Cerviatti** is a CSOM student, with concentrations in Finance and Economics, who spent the fall 2010 semester studying in Vallendar, Germany. He volunteers as a college leader at Sociedad Latina, helping underprivileged students get to college. Last summer, he worked for Google’s finance team in Mountain View, California, and hopes to return to Google as a fulltime employee or enter the consulting industry.

**Mikolaj Gawlik** is a Slavic Studies and Economics double major, is in the College of Arts and Sciences Honors Program, and is also scheduled to receive an M.A. in Higher Education from the Lynch School in 2013. Mikolaj directs the BC chapter of Let’s Get Ready, a free, student-run SAT-prep course for underprivileged high school students. The previous two summers, Mikolaj worked at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston in conjunction with Let’s Get Ready, as well as at the Private Industry Council.

**Adriana Henquen** is an Economics and Political Science major and a member of the College of Arts and Sciences Honors Program and the Political Science Honors Program. She is also the captain of the BC
upper-level undergraduate seminar on Microeconomic Public Policy Issues, and has introduced a new course on Public Policy in an Aging Society, and this year, added a freshman seminar on Entitlements and the Federal Budget (timely, at least!) Joe is serving on the College of Arts and Sciences Promotions Committee and is chairing the committee to select academic events for Boston College’s Sesquicentennial Celebration in 2013. He also oversees the department’s Robert Cheney Fund (give generously!) Off campus, Joe is on the Selection Panel for the TIAA-CREF Paul A. Samuelson Award and on the Advisory Council of Emeriti Retirement Health Solutions, chaired the Executive Committee of the Amherst College Alumni Council and served for six months on Amherst College’s Presidential Search committee, where he failed to get himself selected.

**Uzi Segal** was elected as an Economic Theory Fellow by the Society for the Advancement of Economic Theory in July 2011, and was a member of the scientific committee for RUD 2010 (Risk, Utility, Decision Conference) in Torino.


**Dick Tresch** has signed a contract with Academic Press to revise his graduate public finance textbook, Public Finance: A Normative Theory. It will be the 3rd edition.

**Cheney Fund... from p. 8**

Mock Trial team. During the past few summers, she interned for two consulting firms and has remained committed to children’s issues through her service at Boston area pre-schools and as a public policy intern for The Children’s Trust, which serves children and families in Miami-Dade County. Adriana plans to attend law school and hopes to specialize in child welfare litigation.

**Kathleen Horigan** is an Economics major and an Art History minor. She spent the summer before her junior year as an intern at the National Library of Ireland in Dublin. She tutored elementary students at the Jackson-Mann School in Newton throughout her sophomore and junior years. This summer and school year, she is working as a Research Assistant for Professor Tom Hachey on Anglo-Irish relations with the Vatican during the 20th century. Kathleen hopes to enter the consulting industry, and then pursue graduate school and future career opportunities in Ireland.

**Brian Kim** is a CSOM student concentrating in Operations Management and Economics. He has lived in China for 10 years though originally from California. He has interned at the Massachusetts Export Center, Cisco Systems, and at an educational organization in China during his college summers. This year, he is involved with Kollaboration, a non-profit organization aimed to empower the Asian community through entertainment. After college, Brian plans to work for an organization with a global impact.

**John Murphy** is a CSOM student concentrating in Economics and Accounting. He is a member of the CSOM Honors Program and volunteers as a marketing and sales coordinator for Haley House at Bos-
Dissertation Scholars Hard at Work

We are pleased to report that our current PhD students are very active in professional circles. A selection of their recent efforts:

Inacio Bo published “Studies on the effect of the expressiveness of two strategy representation languages for the iterated n-player prisoner’s dilemma” with Jaime Sichman and Diego Queiroz, in Revue d'intelligence Artificielle, 2011. Inacio also presented his joint work with Samson Alva, “Search by Iterative Experimentation – A Simple Model of Technological Research” in the poster session of the 22nd Jerusalem School in Economic Theory Conference held in June.

Jin-Young Choi has “Bounding endogenous regressor coefficients using moment inequalities and generalized instruments” with M.J. Lee, forthcoming in Statistica Neerlandica.

Chiu Yu Ko presented “Menu auctions with budget constraints and non-transferable utilities” at PET 11, Indiana University, last June.

Sam Selikoff was awarded a summer fellowship at The Mises Institute.

Meghan Skira received the Boston College Center for Retirement Research and Social Security Administration Dissertation Fellowship. Meghan also presented “Dynamic Wage and Employment Effects of Elder Parent Care” at the International Health Economics Association (iHEA) meeting in Toronto in July.


Bertan Turhan has been awarded a research support scholarship from “Turk Petrol Vakfi”: the Turkish Petroleum Association.

Chuanqi Zhu was invited to attend the 4th Lindau Meeting with Nobel Laureates in Economic Science at Lindau in Germany, and presented “Econometric Methods of DSGE Models” at Renmin University of China in Beijing during this summer.

Joe Quinn, who supervises the fund, reports that one of our past Cheney Fund recipients, Kurt Lavetti ’04 received his PhD in economics this past May from Cornell University. Kurt’s dissertation is a neat analysis of the implied value of human life based on compensating wage differentials of Alaska fishermen! Kurt is now at UC Berkeley as the Robert Wood Johnson Resident Scholar in Healthcare Economics. In the last few years, Kurt’s parents contributed to the Cheney Fund thankful to Boston College and the people involved with The Cheney Fund for Kurt’s success and wishes BC, the department and the fund well.

Grad Student Awards Conferred
Alessandro Barattieri and Chiu Yu Ko were awarded one-semester dissertation fellowships sponsored by the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and Anna Blank, Radoslav Raykov and Meghan Skira were each awarded a one-semester fellowship sponsored by the Economics Department. This past spring, the 2011 Donald J. White Teaching Excellence Awards went to Meghan Skira (TF) Rucha Bhate (TA) Meghan Skira and Xiaoqing Chen were awarded summer 2011 fellowships provided through the generosity of the H. Michael Mann Fund. Brent Bundick, Rosalia Greco and Bertan Turhan were awarded summer funding to assist on faculty projects while providing the students with invaluable research experience, all provided through the generosity of the Paula and Daniel J. Greeley ’76 Fund. For the current academic year, Marketa Halova was awarded the prestigious Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Dissertation Fellowship and Inacio Bo, Brent Bundick, Chiu Yu Ko and Mikhail Dmitriev were awarded one-semester dissertation fellowships sponsored by the Economics Department.

John Edward Van Tassel, a member of the Boston College faculty from 1956–2004, died on May 8, 2011 at the age of 85. John received the A.M. in Economics from BC in 1953 and the Ph.D. from Harvard in 1956. He taught monetary theory in the Economics graduate program before becoming exclusively a professor of management in the CBA - now the Carroll School of Management (CSOM). John was an Associate Dean in the CBA from 1960 to 1969. He also provided BC an important service in overseeing the installation of its first computing facilities, and he then provided this same service for several other educational institutions. In the 1960s he developed a Management Decision Exercise simulation for management training. This exercise was still in use at the time of his retirement from CSOM in 1995. After retirement from the CSOM he taught at BC’s Woods College until 2004.