

Issue
1

Fall 2011

Exploring the World Through Economics



Department of Economics Newsletter

**JOHN
JAY** COLLEGE
OF
CRIMINAL
JUSTICE

The Economics Department in the College

Economics Welcome Event: The event was held on Tuesday, October 18, 2011. Professor Hoffman performed her economic recipe rap poem on the causes of the financial crisis and “recipes” for some needed cures. The event was well attended by students, faculty, staff, and the general public.

Brown Bag Lunch Series: The first lecture of the brown bag series was held on November 7, 2011. Professor Hoffman discussed energy questions from global warming to whether New York City needs Indian Point. The second lecture was presented by Professor Dhondt on Mass Incarceration on December 7, 2011 at 1:30 p.m. in Room 3510N. One of the main goals of the series is for the faculty to learn about and discuss each other's research, to foster a dynamic and fertile research environment in the department.

Hydrofracking Forum: On November 17th The Economics and Science Department co-sponsored on hydrofracking and the dangers it present to the environment in general and the New York water supply in general. Professor Hoffman presented with Professor Swenson of Science and Professor Pammer of Public Administration.

Omar Azfar Award Presentation: The Omar Azfar Award was presented to Katsiaryna Stserynzat for the award winning essay on corruption. A dinner with Omar Azfar’s family, the faculty in the Economics Department and the winner of the contest took place on December 6, 2011.



Omicron Delta Epsilon Honor Society Inductees: This fall we were proud to see several students inducted into Omicron Delta Epsilon, the national honor society for economics: Sophia Donaldson, Sherizma Francis, Jasmin Jack, and Vanessa Navarro.

Student Faculty Activities

Students Visit Amherst

Economics professors Geert Dhondt, Mathieu Dufour, and Cathy Mulder recently attended and presented at the International Confederation of Associations for Pluralism in Economics (ICAPE) conference held at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, MA. Professor Dhondt presented *The Logic of the Whip: Mass Incarceration as Labor Discipline*, Mathieu Dufour presented *From Exuberance to Timidity, an Inquiry in the Determinants of Agent Expectations in Financial Markets*, and Professor Mulder presented *Enterprise Structure and the Self-Governed Firm: The Case of the London Symphony Orchestra*.



(David Ruccio, Adjunct Professor James Miehl, Geert Dhondt)

The professors brought with them 3 John Jay College students who may be interested in pursuing a graduate education in Economics. Simone Smilie, Shanelle Washington, and Ishani Batuwantudave, met many graduate students, faculty, conference presenters, and most importantly had conversations about graduate education in economics with Professors David Kotz, the graduate program director, James Boyce, internationally renowned environmental economist, Gerald Epstein and Mwangi wa Githinji, among others. They also had the opportunity to meet three of their textbook authors, Professors Samuel Bowles, Nancy Folbre and Susan Feiner.



(Simone, Shanelle, Ishani, & Prof. Jim Boyce)

Students visit Watershed with Professor Hoffman

Students from Professor Hoffman's class in sustainable development visited the New York City watershed. They hiked along the New York City Ashokan reservoir (below), had interviews with a hydrofracking activist, the town Supervisor who heads the organization of watershed town that negotiates with the city, visited a farm, saw a bear and jumped in a beautiful but very cold swimming hole.



Faculty Doings



Congratulations to Professor Mathieu Dufour who successfully defended his dissertation entitled: "A Minskian Approach to Financial Crises with a Behavioural Twist: A Reappraisal Of The 2000-2001 Financial Crisis in Turkey," on September 9, 2011. Professor Dufour received his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Faculty from the Anthropology Department (**Travis Wendel, Ric Curtis, and Robert Riggs**) worked with faculty from the Economics Department (**Jay Hamilton, and Geert Dhondt**) on a research project trying to explain why crime dropped in NYC and the U.S. Travis Wendel presented results of this research in a paper titled: "More Drugs, Less Crime," at the Understanding the Crime Decline in NYC on Thursday September 22nd hosted here at John Jay.

Professor Geert Dhondt presented a paper on "ClassCrits IV: Criminalizing Economic Inequality" on September 23, 2011 at the American University Washington College of Law on Mass Incarceration and Neoliberalism.

Professor Joan Hoffman presented a paper, "Truth and True Grit for True Green" on energy obstacles and choice at the Annual Public Administration Conference in NYC. (October 29, 2011)

Professor Mathieu Dufour spoke at a teach-in about the broader economic context in which the cuts to the CUNY system are occurring. The teach-in was held at John Jay College on November 15, 2011, and was organized by John Jay students.

Professor Geert Dhondt attended the American Society of Criminology conference and presented on a paper on the relationship between crime and incarceration. (November 17, 2011)



Professor Warburton published his book titled *Essentials of Finance and Forensic Economics*. The book provides an overview of the US financial system and concepts of finance and economics that have been applied in US courts of law. A significant component of the analyses in the book involves the importance of scientific evidence, methodologies for economic valuation in litigation, and evaluation of various cases that have been resolved in US Federal Courts and the US Supreme Court.

Professor Cathy Mulder recently returned from a research trip in London. While there, she examined the business structure of the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO). She worked closely with the LSO archivist and learned much about an alternative work structure the LSO instituted in 1904. She found that the LSO and its various endeavors are truly self-governed. They even appoint their own conductors. The successes of the LSO, Mulder finds, debunk many of the misconceptions that workers are not qualified or are not entrepreneurial enough to be self-governed and have a truly democratic workplace. Professor Mulder presented her findings at the International Confederation of Associations for Pluralism in Economics (ICAPE) conference on November 12th. She plans on submitting an article about this very important case study for publication in an academic peer-reviewed journal.



Economists Statement in support of Wall Street

We are economists who oppose ideological cleansing in the economics profession. Equally we oppose political cleansing in the vital debate over the causes and consequences of our current economic crisis.

We support the efforts of the Occupy Wall Street Movement across the country and across the globe to liberate the economy from the short-term greed of the rich and powerful one percent. We oppose cynical and perverse attempts to misuse our police officers and public servants to expel advocates of the public good from our public spaces.



We extend our support to the vision of building an economy that works for the people, for the planet, and for the future, and we declare our solidarity with the Occupiers who are exercising our democratic right to demand economic and social justice.

Over three hundred faculty signed the above statement including five of our economics faculty: Geert Dhondt, Mathieu Dufour, Jay Hamilton, Joan Hoffman, and Catherine Mulder.

Students Activities

One of our seniors, Anna Mayer, vice president of the Economics Club and a member of the International Economics Honor Society, is in the midst of a pair of public service internships. Presently, she is interning at the Brooklyn Supreme Court Mortgage Foreclosures Department. This is a three-month internship that was offered through the College's Career Services Office. Beginning next semester, Anna will begin a new internship, which was also offered through our Career Services Office. This exciting opportunity will place her in the Manhattan District Attorney's Office. There she will be assigned to intern with one of their investigation units. Her major is economics with the specialization of forensic financial analysis and she has requested to be assigned to the major economic crimes unit.

Student Questions and Faculty Answers

Question: What is the difference between debt and deficit?

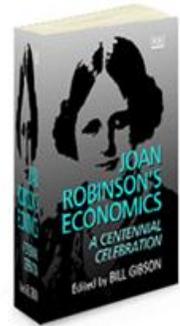
Answer (Professor Hoffman): Deficit refers to amount by which spending exceeds revenues in a given year. Debt is the accumulation of past deficits.

State and local levels of government are not legally allowed to run deficits in their current account or their spending for their ongoing needs. (They can borrow for long lasting infrastructure such as bridges or waste water treatment plants.) The federal government can legally run a deficit in the current account, and this authority to run current account deficits can be used when the economy is in a slump and there is unemployment. If consumer and business spending is sluggish, the federal government can step in and spend to make the economy grow. The idea is that the tax revenues collected from the faster economic growth can be used to offset the deficit.

Economists: THEN and NOW

THEN: Joan Robinson

The economics of imperfect competition Joan Violet Robinson taught at Cambridge University in England from 1928-71. She is noted for being a very clear thinker and writer. Her famous book *The Economics of Imperfect Competition* played an important role in economists accepting the idea that firms were neither complete monopolists nor completely competitive. She is also credited with clarifying Keynes ideas on employment and for explicitly identifying the field of macro-economics. She wrote the much respected *The Accumulation of Capital* in 1956, a book which challenged the idea that aggregating different types of capital together made analytic sense. This work is a root of what is called the Cambridge controversy. She was considered a prime candidate for the Nobel Prize, although it was not awarded. Despite the brilliance of her work, she was made a full professor only in 1965, with gender discrimination being a likely cause.



NOW: Mursaleena Islam: Economics Consultant



Mursaleena Islam, PhD, is a Principal Associate/Senior Economist at Abt Associates, Inc., a global research and policy consulting firm. Dr. Islam specializes in the areas of health systems, health financing, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and has more than twelve years of experience conducting applied research and managing implementation in a wide variety of projects. She has worked in multiple countries in Asia and Africa, providing technical assistance on these issues to country governments and other agencies. Dr. Islam primarily works on the USAID-funded Health Systems 20/20 global project and the DFID-funded health systems strengthening project in Nigeria, Partnerships for Transforming Health Systems (PATHS2). Dr. Islam received her bachelor's degree in economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, her master's degree in economics from Syracuse University, and her PhD in economics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Announcements

- In the life of a department there will always be good byes as well as hellos. Professor David Shapiro will be leaving the department at the end of this academic year to take up a position at Aon Corporation in New York. He will continue to teach at the college on a part-time basis. The department will sorely miss this longtime colleague and friend. We wish him success on all his future endeavors.
- I have been with the Economics Department on a full time basis since September 2008. For better or worse, all things, good and bad, must end, so in this light I extend to all of you - colleagues, students, and administration - a thank you very much for all of laughter and learning over the past 3-plus years. Adieu, David
- The Omar Azfar Contest, sponsored by the Economics Department and the Azfar family. The deadline is on April 13, 2012. Students interested in applying, please visit the Economics Department Homepage.



The economics faculty is actively trying to engage their students in these kinds of events, so please see our bulletin board, office doors, or emails for announcements of upcoming events. If you'd like to be included in our email list, please email Ms. Rita Taveras at: rtaveras@jjay.cuny.edu. The department of Economics is located at 445 West 59th Street, Room 3503N, NY, NY 10019.