With A Lot Of Help From Our Friends

by Department Chair Bruce Blonigen, Philip H. Knight Professor of Social Science

The past couple decades have seen much success in the growing prestige of our department. For example, on the research front, our current faculty members have received twenty-one National Science Foundation grants over their careers, as well as many other grants and funding from such organizations as the National Institute of Health, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the Surface Transportation Board. Currently, our faculty members are on seventeen boards of editors of noted economics journals and a number are members of the prestigious National Bureau of Economic Research. Many of our faculty members serve state, national, and international government organizations, and they have research alliances all over the world.

On the teaching front, our teachers have won UO teaching awards, including the coveted Ersted Award, while working hard to serve an incredibly fast-growing

Bon Voyage to Georgette Winther

Georgette Winther came to the University of Oregon in 1981 and to our department in 1984. She is leaving us after thirty years of service to our university. She has been a mainstay in our department as our graduate student secretary and has shepherded scores of graduate students through the perils of new experiences, new countries, and the complications of graduate studies. We are so grateful to her many years of service and wish her all the success in her future.

A number of our faculty members, as well as current and past students, have passed along quotes and memories of their interactions with Georgette. Former departmental chairs and associate chairs invariably point to her invaluable service in assisting students (and professors) with both academic and personal issues, while at the same time meticulously keeping students informed of the daunting list of deadlines and other requirements necessary for progress toward their degrees.

For most graduate students, she was the “point of first contact” with our department. Current and former students alike note Georgette’s humor, genuine warmth and concern, and the support provided through the many stresses and pitfalls of graduate school. Of course, she was dedicated to making sure that deadlines were met and proper forms were submitted, not to mention the stacks of doughnuts she supplied for the PhD core examinations and the cheese, crackers, fruit, and champagne provided for the ritual celebration of every dissertation defense. A notable example of her care, respect, and generosity was in helping a faculty member in completing the master’s thesis of a graduate student who passed away while finishing his degree. To this end, she helped format, type, and guide the thesis through the myriad formatting rules and the delicate process of making the award of a master’s degree posthumously to his family at graduation.

In addition to her competence and dedication to the graduation program, Georgette’s playfulness, athleticism, and peacefulness are all noted with great fondness.

Check out the PLC webcam: webcam.uoregon.edu/view/index.shtml
Help from Friends continued from page 1

Community Outreach

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY ISSUES

Building on tremendous past successes, the department continues to offer the Economic Analysis of Community Issues research course to select undergraduates. In this course, students tackle applied economic analysis either for local communities or on a topic of community interest. In the end, students complete a research paper that provides them with some practical experience, apply their economic and statistical studies, and get the community partner a finished research project that provides useful answers to questions that matter for their decision-making.

The completed projects are intended to satisfy the research component of the department’s requirements for graduating with honors, and are a valuable addition to the résumés of the participating students. The class is small and involves intensive interaction with the teachers, Joe Stone and Glen Waddell.

Without donor support, these time-intensive opportunities would be difficult to continue, and so our students and faculty members are very appreciative.

In 2010–11, our students produced four “clandestine” remodelings of their offices for Halloween (bats, snakes, beetles, bugs), birthdays, and Valentine’s Day, and so forth. Another colleague recalls “Joltin’ Georgette,” whose mighty bat安装ed fear in opposing pitchers during wiffle ball tournaments held at “Lucky Field,” formerly located on Ferry Street. Still another colleague points to her quest for peace when she temporarily erected a cardboard enclosure around her desk with nothing but a small flap to the rest of the world.

We wish Georgette many happy years in her well-earned retirement from the department and the University of Oregon.

continued page


Fanglian Du and Chris Koehler, “A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Truck versus Rail Shipment in Lane County.” For the Eugene Chamber of Commerce.


Melinda Noel, “Relative Costs and Benefits of Campus Land Use.” Prepared for the University of Oregon Campus Planning and Real Estate office.

Over the years, there has been a lot of repeat business with our organizations. We are interested in exposing our students to greater and new opportunities. If you are interested in participating in this program, please do not hesitate to contact the department.

Oregon Economic Forum

The Oregon Economic Forum “continues to build momentum. Our 2010 annual conference attracted a sell-out crowd, drawing 350 guests to the Governor Hotel in Portland to listen to presentations by UO economics faculty members Mark Thoma, Jeremy Figer, and Tim Day, and Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco economist John Fernald as they lectured on trends and developments in the U.S. and Oregon economies. This year we also expect a capacity crowd for the University of California at Berkeley economics professor Brad DeLong and Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco economist Glenn Rudebusch.

In addition, Mark Thoma and Tim Day will once again share the stage. This year our presenting sponsor is Key Bank, and we received additional support from Providence Health Plans, the Portland Business Journal, and the Portland Business Alliance, the Portland Business Alliance, Langley (formerly Ashforth Pacific), Colliers International, and the Portland Business Alliance. In ensuing exciting news, we inaugurated our first outside board for the Oregon Economic Forum, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank board members Bill Smith, Bill Wyatt, Dick Sorenson, Bill Thorrndike, Jim Rudd, Jill Elam, Jim Lobdell, Connie Worrell-Druillet, Brian Rice, Jack Friedman for their willingness to serve. We are seeking the board’s consent to creation of new program offerings and fundraising mechanisms. Be on the lookout for exciting changes to the Oregon Economic Forum: in the upcoming year!

Summer Academy to Inspire Learning

There’s no denying that we economists love our theories. But every now and then we try to do something in the real world—and sometimes it even works.

In 2005, the department started the Summer Academy to Inspire Learning (SAIL) program with thirteen low socioeconomic status students from local schools. The theory was to bring them to campus for a week, get them inspired about going to college, and then bring them back to campus every summer for a new camp in a different academic department until they graduated high school—at which point going on to college would seem like the natural next step.

There were just a few practical problems with this great idea. We had no money for it, no experience running a summer camp or teaching high school kids, no idea how to teach anything except economics, and the university administration thought we were nuts. So we siphoned off a few thousand dollars in department money, read some articles on college enrollment and “enrichment programs for adolescents,” got the professors to volunteer their time, and started a summer camp. It went pretty well, so we convinced a psychology professor, Helen Neville, to take our kids the next summer while we started a new cohort. The year after that we got more departments involved, and a generous UO alumnus, Shirley Rippey, helped fund the program.

This year, the economics department organized two camps for thirty-eight new students. We’ve got about eighty faculty volunteers from across campus, and we will have 160 students in a few more years. Last year, we hired Lara Fernandez to manage things, so the faculty volunteers can concentrate on the teaching. SAIL is now the UO’s largest program to “fill the pipeline” with students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Ms. Rippey has just supped her annual gift, and the UO administration has decided that while we are certainly nuts, it’s a good cause, and is now chipping in to pay for Lara’s salary.

This year, our first big cohort finished SAIL. Of nineteen students, seventeen are going to college, nine of those to Oregon. Now we need to figure out how to run a program to help our SAIL students get through college. So send us a note if you’ve seen some research on relevant theory—quickly, please!
IN MEMORIAM
Robert E. “Bob” Smith
Robert E. Smith, our colleague and friend of nearly fifty years, passed away May 12, 2011. Born October 28, 1921, he was just a few months short of his ninetieth birthday. He was a Phi Beta Kappa, and earned his BA at the University of Southern California in 1943 and his PhD at University of Oregon in 1962, teaching economics, business, and law until he retired. He was granted the title of professor emeritus in 1992. He continued to teach for our department for a few years thereafter, then went to Portland, and ultimately to Bend, Oregon, to be near family. Bob traveled widely throughout the world with trips to India, Pakistan, Japan (as a Fulbright Scholar), Switzerland, and, on two occasions, to Avignon, France, where he taught courses on wine and the common market. He was also much involved in local community activity. His service as an economic advisor to the Federal Trade Commission, President Johnson’s Committee on Price Stability, the U.S. Department of Labor, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. He held a number of the usual committee assignments at Oregon, including one of our most prominent, the Faculty Advisory Council (which advises the UO president), where he served as chair. It is notable that he was also a recognized scholar and was named to various editorial boards such as the Review of Industrial Organization and The Antitrust Bulletin.
Above all else in his professional life, Bob Smith is remembered as a teacher. Indeed, throughout his long tenure in our department, he consistently received among the very highest evaluations from students. Even into his seventies, he was able to effectively teach economics to eighteen- and nineteen-year-olds in his Principles of Economics courses. His skills and dedication to teaching were recognized by the university throughout his career with various awards, underscored by his receipt of the coveted Burlington Northern Distinguished Faculty Achievement Award for Teaching in 1986, the highest teaching award offered at our university. Although Bob proclaimed himself “simply a farm boy from Norfolk, Nebraska,” our faculty liked him to more of an academic James Bond, complete with a sports car and a love of fine food and (of course) fine wine. He is also remembered as a passionate intellectual and an avid reader. Indeed, throughout his life, he collected newspapers and cut articles for use in class and in research. One colleague recalls asking him why he kept the dusty, four-foot-high, nine-foot-long stack of the London Times in his office. Bob replied, “The story of OPEC is in those papers.” He was also a consummate chef. Our office staff has very fond memories of excellent annual dinners hosted by Bob in his home. I should note that these dinners were complete with an ample supply of excellent wine. Throughout his years in academia, he touched many a life of both student and colleague. No one will ever forget Professor Smith, with his hand-tied bow ties, his quick wit, and his steely-blue eyes. A genuine, humble, kind, honest, and compassionate individual, Bob is, and will continue to be, sorely missed.

Personnel Changes

SINGELLI NAMED DEAN AT INDIANA
Faculty member Larry Singelli was named dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Indiana University this past spring. As excited as we are for Larry, we will sincerely miss him personally and professionally. Larry received his PhD at UC Santa Barbara and joined our faculty in 1989, and established himself as a noted scholar in labor and education economics. In recent years, he turned to the dark side (that’s faculty lingo for “administration”) and quickly rose through the ranks from department head and associate dean of social sciences at the UO to his new position at Indiana. We enjoyed roasting him this spring at a party for Larry and his family, but it was truly a bittersweet moment for all. We have recommended to Larry that he doesn’t adopt the management style of Bobby Knight, but that he should certainly get basketball season tickets at IU. We wish you all the best, Larry!

CHANGES IN OFFICE STAFF
We bid farewell to two long-term members of our department, Linda Steller and Georgette Winther, and welcome new staff members Teri Rowe, Kellie Geldreich, and Bonnie Grimm.

Larry Singelli

Linda Steller (department manager): Linda came to the University of Oregon thirty-two years ago and to economics twenty-three years ago. We are deeply indebted to Linda for her many years of service, and thank her for her efforts in managing office staff, continued next page

Grace Miller Scholarship Letters

Grace Miller, a 1954 graduate of the University of Oregon who taught economics at South Eugene High School for many years, recently established an endowment of nearly a quarter of a million dollars for scholarships to economics majors with interests in teaching and associate dean of social sciences at the UO to his new position at Indiana. We enjoyed roasting him this spring at a party for Larry and his family, but it was truly a bittersweet moment for all. We have recommended to Larry that he doesn’t adopt the management style of Bobby Knight, but that he should certainly get basketball season tickets at IU. We wish you all the best, Larry!

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Teri Rowe (department manager): We welcome Teri Rowe as our new department manager. Most recently (since fall 2008), Teri was employed in the Business Affairs Office as a fiscal analyst working mainly on campuswide projects, financial reporting, and system reviews. Before coming to the university, Teri lived in Portland and managed a retreat center in 2001–7; previously she was a self-employed accounting and management consultant, as well as a retail store owner. Kellie Geldreich (graduate secretary): Kellie joined the department as graduate secretary in October. A San Diego native, Kellie moved north to complete her BS in conservation resource studies at the University of California at Berkeley. After graduating, she worked as a primary student coordinator at Argosy University, helping to guide new undergraduate and graduate students through their first semester of studies. Most recently, Kellie worked as office manager for California Ocean Science Trust, a nonprofit organization working to integrate science into policy. She is looking forward to returning to a university environment and helping students to navigate through their graduate education at the UO. An outdoor enthusiast, Kellie is excited about exploring Oregon’s renowned hiking and camping.

Bonnie Grimm (office staff): Bonnie has joined our department for the year on special assignment and has already been invaluable in helping our new staff members transition this fall, with more than 900 undergraduate majors and fifty-eight graduate students enrolled this fall. She came to the University of Oregon in 1985, originally with the College of Education, and then served a brief stint at OSU before returning to serve in the UO physics department for the past eleven years.

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Notes from the Undergraduate Director
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Once again, we are heading into the school year with expectations of having more than 900 economics majors! To be sure, growing university enrollments support our numbers. But in addition, economics continues to rise in popularity, partly reflecting growing interest given ongoing economic challenges in the wake of the recent recession, but also as students increasingly recognize the flexibility of the degree. Students leave our program with a set of tools—ways of exploring complex problems—that are applicable to a wide range of career choices, from market finance to logistics to law. We think this is an experience few other majors can offer, and explains why our students can be found in all corners of the economy, both private and public sector.

This year, sunny skies greeted our graduating class of 2011, a group that continued the tradition of excellence that has become a mainstay of our program. Twelve of our graduates earned Latin honors, while three were nominated to Phi Beta Kappa. Undergraduate research remained strong, with awards going to Nathan Voder for his paper “Legislator Gender and Trade Policy Preferences” and Benjamin Griffy and Timothy Galfny for their paper “Framing Effects in Parental Support of Local Public Schools.” And once again, our students were already looking forward to the next stage, going on to work or directly to graduate school at such places as the University of Colorado, the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Duke University, and the University of Montana. Our curriculum continues to evolve, and in the last few years we have added permanent and experimental courses in economic forecasting, the economics of information and law, the economics of transportation, financial crisis, and globalization. Similarly, to better prepare our students for advanced courses, this year we are beginning to require that students first take a semester of econometrics prior to taking any econometrics-based courses. This has added the benefit of ensuring that students can complete their education in a timely and cost-effective manner. These new courses and requirement changes reflect the commitment of our faculty to continuous educational improvement.

Notes from the Graduate Director

The University of Oregon has five PhD students who are “new on the market” this year. Let’s introduce them:

Thomas Groll first visited the UO as an exchange student in 2005-6, while working on his diploma (master of science degree) in economics at the University of Konstanz in Germany. We can assume that he enjoyed the experience because he returned to join our PhD program the following year. Students have public economics and industrial organization, and his research concerns the economics of commercial lobbying. In addition to his studies, he has also completed internships at two German federal government agencies that include foot (i.e., the European kind—soccer of many of us—”Jeja BV!”). When he gets out of his office, he enjoys literature, theater, and traveling, which includes seeing the great outdoors from the saddle of his scooter. That’s Tom on his Bajaj Chetak, channeling James Dean with a European flare.

For far, Lance Kaufman has had what can only be described as a rather unconventional life, for an economist. In fact, it is one that undoubtedly gives him a rather unique perspective and economic behavior. His parents were educators and he was raised in a Yupik Eskimo village in Alaska. Consistent with a life that has been sometimes “off the grid,” he also has an entrepreneurial streak. He has started a smoothie shop, a massage practice, an educational nonprofit, and most recently a small organic farm near Junction City, Oregon, that he works with two fellow economics students. Lance’s broader research interests concern economic behavior by firms that depart from a pure-profit motive. More specifically, his dissertation explores how concerns about hospital governance structures and firm behavior. He is also a rock climber—our photo of Lance shows him climbing the “Monkey Face” at Smith Rock State Park in Oregon.

Sandy Tang did her bachelor’s degree in Taiwan, Taiwan, where she developed an interest in economics and decided to come to the U.S. for graduate studies. She is interested in the economics of education and the labor market, and her current research concerns the role played by an honors college at a large public university, as well as how the attributes of university presidents determine whether they lead research- or teaching-oriented institutions. Outside of her studies, Sandy enjoys sports and fitness activities. She is keen on tennis and basketball, and has been an avid badminton player throughout her college years. Her passion is not something that is available back home, but it is a new sport that Sandy has discovered here in Oregon, with Williamette Pass so close by.

Matthew Taylor earned his undergraduate degree in political science from UC Santa Barbara with an emphasis in international relations. Commissioned by the U.S. Air Force, he earned an MA in national security affairs and served as an intelligence officer until 2007. Matt’s photo shows him “somewhere in Central Asia” in 2001. Matt’s research considers individual risk preferences and involves economic experiments where subjects optimize the type and amount of information they want before making a choice or hypothetical decisions involving risk. Given the skills Matt developed to prepare and deliver military intelligence briefings to audiences as demanding as four-star generals, he has proven to be an exceptionally good teacher here at the UO. Away from campus, Matt likes to build things that are more tangible than economic models, and he also enjoys just hanging out with his two-year-old daughter.

As an undergraduate, Brian Vander Naald majored in mathematics at Miami University of Ohio. Intrigued by the ability of economists to answer practical policy questions, he enrolled in economics while in his sophomore year. With an MA in economics in 2007. Brian’s recent research has focused on evaluating consumers’ willingness to pay for other species’ well-being as a consideration in the development of benefit-cost analysis of environmental policies. He has also developed an empirical political economy model to explain the outcome of a 2010 referendum to fund state parks through an $18 licensing surcharge on vehicles in that state. When not studying, Brian is an avid runner and hiker. He relieves the stresses of PhD research with breaks for training and weekend excursions for an occasional marathon. Our photo of Brian shows him grinning on South Sister in the Oregon Cascades.

Graduate Students on the Market this Year
Faculty Notes

Bruce Ilonjen continues to serve as department head. He’s having a great time starting research projects with the new international trade professors in the department (Cristina and Sy) and presented his research at the University of Oxford, the World Bank, and the Bank of England. He also enjoyed teaching a new course, Multinational Corporations, to seniors this past spring.

Alfredo Burlando continues his research on how households respond to economic shocks, presenting his work at the Allied Social Science Associations conference in Denver and other venues in Boston, Paris, and Venice. He spent part of his summer in Tanzania, where he participated in a National Bureau of Economic Research conference and conducted research on saving behavior in Tanzanian villages.

Trudy Ann Cameron continues to collaborate on numerous projects with the team of students who make up the Mikkisol Laboratory for Environmental and Resource Economics at Oregon. Current graduate student memes, especially when it comes to trade-offs in environmental, health, and crime. In addition, he is presented with the new conference in Chicago. This year he is teaching courses in microeconomic theory, regulatory economics, and public policy, and this year he will focus on the economic analysis of law.

Peter Lambert lectured on welfare and poverty comparisons at the sixth Winter School on Inequality and Social Welfare Theory at Alba di Canazei, Italy, and continues his work on the regulation of public policy in the state of Oregon. He was recently an expert witness at a hearing to determine budget cuts for the Oregon State Police, citing his research that 1.658 additional traffic fatalities occurred in Oregon from 1979 to 2005 because the police had been cut from more than 640 police in 1979 down to only 250 in 2005.

Bill Harbaugh and UO PhD graduate Dave Wozniak are working on the effect of gender, age, and in-migration on the competitiveness of women and men—especially after the week-end, when they have a lot of estrogen and progesterone in their blood. They now have an NSF grant to fund experiments in which they will knock out women’s biological hormones and inject them with estrogen to see if that makes them more competitive, or if it’s the progesterone. They’ll also do MRI scans to see where in the brain the hormones have their effects.

Van Kolpin’s research examines issues of labor law, including asymmetric information, discontinuous preferences, and environments populated by both “large” and “small” players. He and his coauthor, David Auldian (University of Wyoming and a UO alumnus), recently published their paper, “Equity Basis Selection in Allocation Environments: An Empirical Analysis,” in the Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics. Van will be hosting a UO economics alumnus as part of the 2012 Allied Social Science Associations meeting in Chicago. This year he is teaching courses in microeconomic theory, regulatory economics, and the economic analysis of law.
Economics at the University of Virginia, the workshop Models of Influence and Network Theory at the University Paris I, gave a special lecture on coaching games at the University of Arizona, and a short course, Stability Notions for Networks, at the University of New South Wales. In addition, she presented her work at several universities in the U.S., Europe, and Australia. Her paper, "Equilibrium in Local Public-Good Economies," coauthored with Myrna Wouders, was accepted for publication in the journal Games and Economics Behavior and "Comments on Cooperative Games and Mathematical Economics" on Cooperation and Games, and was published in the journal Games and Economics Behavior.

Jeremy Pigor's current research focuses on measuring and forecasting the business cycle and modeling inflation dynamics. In the past year, his research has included a new course on the economics of microeconomics, suggesting that barriers are being relaxed but that the benefits are more subtle than head counts would pick up. Glen also has work coming out with Joshua Lin and a graduate student, Isaac Svozen, concerning the influence of college culture on student performance. In particular, they document that the men tend less, probably because they are more social in academic performance: Women tend to have higher grades in full terms in which the UO football team has a higher winning percentage. Glen continues to serve as a coeditor of the Quarterly Journal of Economics.

Wesley Wilson returned to the department full-time after a series of leave for personal or leave for family reasons. He took time off to present a Journal of the Historical Society paper at a conference in Berlin, Germany, in September, "The Public Mission of the Social Sciences and Humanities: Transformation and Renewal," contributed to a past conference of Historical Society and at the University of Portland. He will present a paper at the Journal of the Historical Society, he will present a paper on the Journal of Economic Methodology workshop at Duke University in December, and at the American Association of University Women Conference in January, and he continues his research on monetary policy. Mark has been a regular contributor to The New York Times Room for Debate website and The Economist’s guest network, has a biweekly column at The Fiscal Times, and he contributes occasional commentaries to the website of the New York Times.

Glenn Waddell recently published a paper in the Quarterly Journal of Economics. A past member of the Department of Economics, he is set to begin his third year in the department. In the past year, he began several projects in the international trade literature. In particular, some of his recent work has been in the open economy climate, where debt crises and government solvency problems have spread across national borders. Although some of his recent work has been in the open economy macro field, Nicholas continues to work on issues of labor market structure and international trade. This summer, he presented his work at the Society for the Advancement of Economic Theory meetings in Portugal. The timing of this conference near the beginning of the Greek debt crisis, plus the weak financial conditions in Portugal, made this quite an interesting conference. On the day after this conference, the paper appeared in the Empirical Investigations in International Trade meeting at Purdue, and the University of Michigan Economic Meetings at Universidad. This year, Nicholas’ teaching will still receive higher grades) widened, that the gender gap in academic performance: Women tend to have higher grades. Glen continues to serve as a coeditor of the Quarterly Journal of Economics.

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Generous donations have long-lasting effects. One such donation helped fund the now long-standing Undergraduate Research Center in our department. This center is in place to provide a gathering point in the economics department for undergraduate students, to provide peer advising, study areas, information on internships and graduate programs, access to computers loaded with software used in our classes, and so forth. This center is run by student volunteers and is open 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday–Friday. Participants not only held hours and bird-dogged student inquiries, they also published a student newsletter, *The Utility Times*, and developed the first departmental webpage (now, economics.uoregon.edu). One year, there were as many as thirty-three individuals involved. We are so gratefully to all individuals that participated over the years and dedicate this back page to the undergraduate students who helped found the center. Some have gone on to PhDs in economics or mathematics, while still others are working successfully in business and prosper in a wide range of activities.