A look back at the Autumn term 2018

Working together to deliver Economics apprenticeship

The Government Economic Service (GES) has launched the first degree-level apprenticeship in economics and we are delighted to have been selected as their chosen partner to deliver the programme.

The apprenticeship will create new routes to careers in the Civil Service and offers a unique opportunity to work in central government, while studying for a degree in Economics. The new scheme is set to boost diversity at the heart of Government and in the field of Economics more generally, creating excellent opportunities for talented young people.

Our Vice-Chancellor, Professor Karen Cox, said: ‘…. We are looking forward to working with GES to deliver an apprenticeship programme which provides participants with on and off the job training and support that will prepare them for long and successful economist careers.'

The first apprentices will begin their study in September 2019.

The Kennedy Building: A new home for Economics at Kent

With our move-in date fast approaching, the new Economics building is taking shape, with the installation of doors and lighting. Decorating continues throughout the building and landscaping outside is about to begin.

Named after the British economist Charles Kennedy, who was Chair of Economic Theory at the University of Kent in 1966, the building is due to welcome its first students in September 2019.

On 5 December, a group of students and staff toured the new building, giving them a sneak preview of each floor and the different rooms and social spaces that the building offers.

There will be plenty of opportunities in the Spring and Summer terms to tour our new home, so watch this space...
Professor Miguel León-Ledesma has been appointed as Fellow of the Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR). The CEPR is a prestigious research network of top economists in the world conducting research on issues affecting the European economy. Miguel has been appointed Fellow of the Macroeconomics and Growth programme area.

Miguel appointed CEPR Fellow

Researchers into informal insurance for poor countries

Larger informal insurance groups need not provide better insurance in low-income settings. That is the conclusion of a study by Dr Bansi Malde (School of Economics), Emila Fitzsimons (UCL and IFS) and Marcos Vera-Hernandez (UCL and IFS), published in the July 2018 issue of the Economic Journal. Their research indicates that in the event of a crop loss in rural Malawi, women with a large number of brothers fare considerably worse than those with fewer.

Full details of the findings were highlighted in the Royal Economic Society’s Media Briefings in July 2018.

Major contribution to recent UNIDO publication


See full publication here: https://bit.ly/2RW7zLW

Iain discusses the Government’s new Agriculture Bill

An interesting piece by Professor Iain Fraser featured in the Food Research Collaboration blog Food Voices on 12 December on ‘De-linking final Basic Payments from Farming’. In the article, Iain discusses the Government’s Agriculture Bill published in September 2018, which marks a profound change in the design, delivery and rationale of agricultural policy in the UK.

See full article here: https://bit.ly/2DDJ5hJ

VC salary study demolishes pay rise claims

Research by Dr Adelina Gschwandtner (School of Economics) and Richard McManus (Canterbury Christ Church University), was covered by Charles Hymas in The Telegraph on 6 June 2018:

‘The most comprehensive study into university vice-chancellors’ pay has demolished their claims that their huge rises are based on performance. Economists have shown that instead it is the vice-chancellor equivalent of “keeping up with the Jones’s” as the lower-paid race to close the gap with the best-paid university bosses.’

Technological change in the labour market

Dr Christian Siegel (School of Economics) and his co-author Zsofia Barany (Sciences Po and CEPR) were invited to write an article on ‘Understanding the bias in technological change and its impact on the labour market’.

The article was published on VoxEU, a website for research-based policy analysis and commentary from leading economists. Economists agree that structural transformation and job polarisation are both caused mainly by biased technological progress, but there is no consensus on the nature of these biases. Christian and Zsofia’s column used US data to estimate the extent to which technological change is biased across sectors and across occupations. It found that for improved labour market outcomes, policies targeting occupational choice for workers might be better than industrial policies to protect sectors of the economy.

Roger’s international travels

In October, Professor Roger Vickerman took part in workshops organised by the Department for Transport on Transformational Infrastructure Investments and the Independent Transport Commission on the impact of peak and off-peak travel on urban economies.

Then in November he was invited to speak at a conference on the wider effects of high-speed rail, organised by the Asian Development Bank Institute in Tokyo.

Roger has also been appointed to an advisory board established by the Dutch Statistics Agency on the value added of infrastructures for a programme on Next Generation Infrastructure and attended the first meeting at the end of the month.

In December, he participated in the annual conference of the Hong Kong Society of Transport Studies (of which he is a member of the International Advisory Board) and presented a paper on measuring the long-term impact of cross-border infrastructure.

Workshop on ‘Networks in Economics’

On 12 October 2018, the School of Economics hosted the second Kent Workshop on ‘Networks in Economics’.

Organised by Professor Nizar Allouch and Dr Bansi Malde, it featured leading researchers from across the UK and Europe, including Francis Bloch (Paris School of Economics), Christian Ghiglino (Essex), Mich Tvede (UEA), Pau Milan (UAB, MOVE and Barcelona GSE), Anja Prummer (Queen Mary) and Luis Candelaria (Warwick).

The workshop programme can be found here: https://bit.ly/2RWuGWT

In brief...

The 22nd volume in the Great Thinkers in Economics series, edited by Professor Tony Thirlwall, has been published on the great Austrian economist, Friedrich von Hayek. Two further volumes are due to be published soon on Thomas Malthus and Irving Fisher.

Dr Olena Nizalova edited the September 2018 edition of the Journal of Comparative Economics: Wellbeing in Post-Socialist Countries. The publication featured two articles by School researchers Gintare Malisauskaite, Dr Alexander Klein and Olena Nizalova.

For details of all the volumes in the Great Thinkers in Economics series, go to https://bit.ly/2RkpaYP

Grant success!

Congratulations are due to a number of staff members who have been successful in securing research funding this term.

Dr Anthony Savagar has won an ESRC Research Award for £200,000 for his project 'Firm Dynamics, Market Power and Productivity Puzzles'.

Anthony’s research will analyse UK business microdata to understand whether changes in firms' market power have influenced UK productivity since 2007. It will also question whether the entry and exit of firms into industries disrupted market power to affect productivity. The objective is to improve understanding of the UK productivity puzzle and to better understand policies affecting market power which may widen the current industrial strategy debate.

Drs Amrit Amirapu and Zaki Wahhaj have obtained a research grant from the UK Department of International Development’s EDI research programme to study peer effects in traditional marriage customs.

In developing countries, where the state often has a weak capacity to enforce laws, social pressures and expectations can play an important role in hindering or accelerating behaviour proscribed by marriage laws. The project will build on an ongoing EDI project in Bangladesh to test these ideas, using an experimental design that exploits a recent change in child marriage laws. They are partnering in this research with the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur and the research firm Data Analysis and Technical Assistance in Bangladesh.

Dr Katsuyuki Shibayama (Principal Investigator), Professor Miguel León-Ledesma and Dr Keisuke Otsu (Keio University and Honorary Lecturer at Kent) have received funding from the Murata Foundation in Japan for 2 million Yen for a project entitled ‘A quantitative analysis of population ageing on economic growth and income inequality’. The project aims at understanding the consequences of population ageing for the joint dynamics of growth and income distribution. Its objective is to construct a model of overlapping generations where families choose the number of children and their level of education. The model will then be used to analyse the effect of different "anti-ageing" policies on growth and income distribution, namely: female employment support, child-care support, and higher education subsidies. The project also consolidates the close links between Kent and Keio, who currently have a student exchange agreement.

William Knight wins student award

Final-year student William Knight has been awarded a Kent Student Award for his outstanding contribution to fundraising. William has been a dedicated RaG Treasurer, fundraising and raising awareness for men’s mental health. He was presented with the award on 1 June at the 2018 Kent Student Awards Gala Dinner. Many congratulations William!

Economics baby boom!

Congratulations to the following staff who welcomed babies into the world this term:

- Miguel and Laura - Baby Eva in July
- Sylvain and Jess - Baby Alexandre in July
- Christian and Nicola - Baby Lucas in September
- Steve and Caroline - Baby Samuel Roy in December
Graduation and prizewinners 2018

It was a pleasure to celebrate with our new graduates and their families at receptions held after the graduation ceremonies in July and November. This year the School awarded a number of prizes for outstanding achievement:

**Best Stage 1 performance by an Economics Undergraduate:**
Adam Dvorak

**Outstanding performance in Stage 1 by an Economics Undergraduate:**
James Bolton
Rahul Asher
Joshua Green
Edward Maling
Alex Bannon

**Economics Prize for the best Stage 2 performance by an Undergraduate:**
Qi Wen Tan

**Nick May Economics Prize for the best Economics degree result:**
Andrew Cox

**Outstanding Performance Prize in Economics in the Undergraduate Final Year:**
James Harper
Jessica Ball
Charlotte Brown

**Undergraduate Dissertation Prize for the best overall performance in the Dissertation:**
James Harper

**Walter Hagenbuch Thirlwall Prize in Development Economics:**
Andrew Cox

**Economics Prize for the best Postgraduate Degree performance:**
Oliver Fritz

**Outstanding Performance Prize in Economics in the Master’s Degree:**
Raneet Singh Gulsin

**Daniel Trotter Prize for excellence in performance, commitment and progression:**
Samara Spencer-Hope

The receptions took place in Canterbury at Deakins and the Marlowe Theatre respectively and were a great way of marking the achievement of all of our students. We would like to wish all of our graduates the very best of luck for the future!

Introducing our new student reps

The School recruits student volunteers in each year of study to represent their fellow students in giving feedback to the School and raising any issues about their courses. It also gives staff the opportunity to hear student reaction to any teaching or learning initiatives within the School.

Our new reps for this academic year are:

**Stage 1:** Diane Bresson, Rose Boateng, Nick Hutchinson, Yiannis Nalbantis

**Stage 2:** Daniel Tetteh, Muhammad Khan, Tapasya Bhandari, Rahul Asher

**Stage 3:** Jessica Lynton-Jenkins, Tina Kembo Mbi, Samantha Harris, Timothy Sarpong

**Undergraduate School Representative:** Amy Hau

**Postgraduate Taught (MSc):** Louis Pursey, Charles Abad, Stephanie Thavarasa, Omofolarin Lawal

**Postgraduate Research (PhD):** Ram Gulsin, Ioannis Galanakis, Ibrahim Raheem, Santiago Diaz, God’styme Eigbriemolen

If you have any feedback you would like to share, feel free to approach your student reps from your year using the feedback form on the School’s website:

https://bit.ly/2EQ8jYc
In today’s globalised economy, expertise in financial economics is in high demand in both the private and public sector. Kent’s rigorous MSc in Financial Economics provides an excellent background for those wishing to pursue a career in the financial industry.

Delivered by academics engaged in cutting-edge research in the economics of finance, the MSc takes a distinct applied approach to finance topics, such as: the pricing of assets and derivatives, investment portfolio optimisation, financial regulation of investments, international capital flows, exchange rate determination, financial crises and government policies in financial markets.

The programme prepares you for work as a business analyst, data analyst or financial consultant in all types of financial intermediary, investment bodies, consultancy firms and stock exchanges. The programme also prepares professionals for careers within financial regulators, such as central banks and supranational financial monitoring authorities.

A number of scholarships are available to students who study this Master’s programme.

Find out more: www.kent.ac.uk/pg/2206
PhD students introduce student-led seminar series

To help PhD students research and strengthen the School’s academic community, PhD students Guillermo Cabanillas-Jimenez and Pablo Slon-Montero set up a student seminar series, giving PhD students the opportunity to present their research to their peers. Informal discussion is welcomed at sessions, with peers suggesting possible improvements to research. The sessions have been instrumental in training PhD students before important presentations, as students can use the session as a trial run and can seek out advice from their peers.

These sessions take place every other Wednesday from 14.00 to 15.00 and the discussion topics cover all areas of Economics, from applied micro research to macro theory. All Economics PhD students are welcome to present and discuss the topic of the presentation in each session. If you’d like more info or would like to get involved, please contact Guillermo (gc402@kent.ac.uk).

Welcome to...

The School would like to extend a very warm welcome to a number of new colleagues this term:

Miltos Makris joined the School in August as a Professor in Economics.

Before joining the School, he taught at the Universities of Bristol, Exeter, Leicester and Southampton. His main research is in the areas of microeconomics, dynamic public finance, public and political economics and economic growth.

Rebekah Osborne started in October as a Student Experience Manager, covering for Charlotte Ransom who is on a one-year secondment to the School of Biosciences.

Alice Munday joined in September as Undergraduate Co-ordinator.

Congratulations to...

Academic promotions
The School of Economics is pleased to announce that three of our academics received academic promotions over the summer, with effect from 1 October 2018.

Dr Sylvain Barde, promoted to Senior Lecturer
Dr Fernanda Lopez de Leon, promoted to Senior Lecturer
Dr Zaki Wahhaj, promoted to Reader

Many congratulations to all on this well-deserved achievement.

PhD Vivas
The School would like to congratulate the following students on the completion of their PhD vivas, and wish them all the best for the future:

Olisaemeka Nnamdi Achime
Sevgi Coskun
Francesco Foliano
Cherry Law
Gintare Malisauskaite

Looking back on Autumn term events

Welcome week 2018
The Autumn term kicked off with a series of information and social events for our new undergraduate students, which included a treasure hunt, photo competition, lunch and information fair. It was a fantastic week, allowing students to find their way around campus, while making new friends.

The School also held talks for returning Stage 2 and Stage 3 students, plus an afternoon tea event in the Cathedral Lodge, followed by a tour of Canterbury Cathedral for new MSc students.
Denise Osborn leads talk on Women in Economics

On Tuesday 13 November, we had the pleasure of welcoming Professor Denise Osborn to the School of Economics. Both Secretary General for the Royal Economics Society and Emeritus Professor at the University of Manchester, Denise delivered an inspirational talk on the role of women in Economics, focusing on research and her own personal experience.

Looking back on her career, she examined the perception of women in the field of Economics over time, comparing and contrasting the start of her career in the 70s, where she was very much in a minority, to now where more and more women are joining the field. Denise compared the gender distribution of researchers within Economics and looked into why Economics is still one of the STEM subjects with the lowest percentage of women.

Denise concluded her talk by looking at the steps being taken to challenge gender norms and encourage more women to consider a career in Economics.

The talk finished with a lively Q&A session.

See full talk here: https://youtu.be/FIAJGiqSvww

Annual ‘Working in Finance’ event

On 16 October, the School held its annual ‘Working in Finance’ talk. Two of our alumni, Nuno Nunes and Michael Thurlow, returned to Kent to talk about their experiences of working in the financial sector.

The event involved some interesting discussion and useful advice, followed by an informal networking session.

A huge thank you to Nuno and Michael for giving up their time, and to our Employability Team for organising and making the event such a success.

Getting in the Christmas spirit!

On 6 December, the School hosted a Christmas party for postgraduate students in Keynes Senior Common Room, where drinks and nibbles were enjoyed by all. The event included a Christmas jumper competition with MSc student Lauren Innis and Dr Adelina Gschwandtner winning prizes.

Bake sale raises over £200 for charity

Well done to Katy Wade who held a bake sale in the School on Tuesday 20 November and raised a whopping £214.43 for the Mental Health Foundation.
The School of Economics at the University of Kent has decades of research expertise in the area of Development Economics, an area which has seen some of the most innovative and policy relevant research in recent years.

Delivered by academics engaged in cutting-edge research, the MSc in Development Economics takes a modern approach to the problems of development, covering an extensive range of topics, including: labour, health, education, gender, social networks, firms, institutions and the political economy.

This programme provides excellent training for those wishing to work for organisations engaged in development programmes and/or policy design, such as the UN, World Bank, the UK Department for International Development and NGOs. It will also prepare you for doctoral research.

A number of scholarships are available for students who study this Master’s programme.

Find out more:
www.kent.ac.uk/pg/2207
For further news about the School of Economics, our staff and their research interests, see: www.kent.ac.uk/economics/

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