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## *Economics at OU: Be in Demand*

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This publication, produced by the Department of Economics, is issued by the University of Oklahoma and authorized by David Wrobel, dean of the Dodge Family College of Arts and Sciences. This newsletter was produced at no cost to the taxpayers of the state of Oklahoma.

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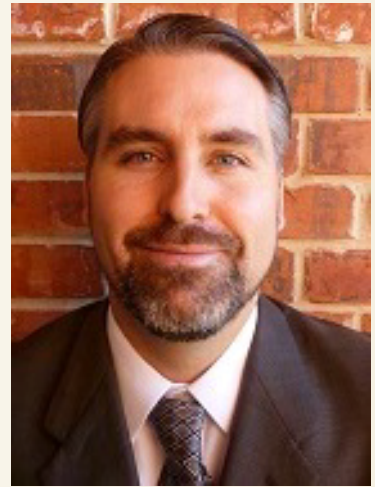
## Welcome and Department Update

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Hello, alumni & friends of the OU Economics Department!

Without a doubt, spring 2023 was our most exciting term in recent memory, so this newsletter is packed full! I'll hit some highlights – but please check out the full newsletter for a deep dive.

Before I get into our 2023 highlights, I want to start with a huge thank you to all the generous supporters of the economics department who helped make our recent Day of Giving a big success. In 2022 we held the first ever Day of Giving and raised over \$6,000 – more than any other department at OU! In 2023, our



team and our generous donors more than doubled this – and we raised nearly \$13,000 to support need-based Study Abroad Scholarships – incredible! To everyone who helped – from the \$10 donors, to the family who anonymously gave a \$5,000 seed donation for our match program, to the student- and staff-led team that organized the awareness campaign surrounding the big day, to the incredible faculty, staff and students who make OU Economics such a special department – we thank you and value your support.

This April, we hosted the annual meetings of the Chinese Economists Society. This prestigious event came to OU via Professor Qihong Liu and his service as CES president and my own service as lead local conference planner. More than 300 scholars participated and over 150 research projects were presented!

## Welcome and Department Update

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Highlights of the event included an attendance of over 170 at the keynote luncheon with Judith Chevalier – professor at Yale University who chairs the American Economic Association’s Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession. This marked the first time economics hosted an international research conference of this size and scope, and was one of the highest-profile research events in OU’s recent history. We thank our generous donors, the Dodge Family College of Arts and Sciences, the Michael F. Price College of Business, and incredible on-site support team of over 20 students whose support helped make this dream a reality.

Another important moment for us came in February when over 450 students attended a guest lecture on contemporary economics and politics given by current member of British Parliament Rehman Chishti. In 2012, MP Chishti was elected to Parliament at age 31. Soon the British press labeled him a “rising star” and leading candidate for prime minister. While his 2022 bid for prime minister was unsuccessful, his role as special envoy on religious freedom and engagement with U.S.-U.K. trade relations positions MP Chishti as a leading global force for human rights and economic freedom. We look forward to maintaining future connections.

Our student and faculty accomplishments over recent months have been simply incredible! Congrats to Georgia Kosmopoulou for being named to the National Science Foundation Technology Council, to Joan Hamory for winning the 2023 Rothbaum Outstanding Assistant Professor Award (giving economics OU’s first ever back-to-back winners of this prestigious award, as Tyler Ransom was the 2022 recipient), and to Firat Demir who won the Kinney-Sugg Outstanding Professor of the Year Award. That’s right folks – if you enjoy a good sports analogy – Economics has won consecutive “Rookie of the Year” awards and now the “MVP” – what an incredible team! All of these and more were celebrated at our Spring Awards Banquet!



## Welcome and Department Update

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But the real focus of the Spring Award Banquet was our students. More than 20 students were awarded scholarships and celebrated for other various honors and achievements. In fact, we even had a few parents attend the event! It's always heartwarming to celebrate the accomplishments of our students and wish them well as they earn their OU degrees and move into their careers. Thanks to your generous support, this year we gave out over \$25,000 in prizes and scholarships to our students! This is considerably more than any previous year, and a sign of even better things to come. Thank you to our incredible students and our fantastic alumni and friends.

Catherine the Great is attributed as saying "Bad news travels faster than good," so I'm guessing this next piece will hit hard and spread quickly. Our very own OU Legendary Professor – Alexander J. Kondanassis – passed away this May, at the age of 95, in the loving care of his family, who still live in the Norman/Oklahoma City area. "Dr. K" as his students and colleagues were fond of calling him, served OU with dedication and excellence for over 50 years. I had the privilege of serving at OU during the last few years of Dr. K's remarkable career. I'll never forget the time he took me to Café Plaid my first semester at OU. What a fun person to get to know. Some brief highlights of his incredible career include his 1965 Fulbright Award, his appointment to the Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education Hall of Fame in 1998, and then of course May 17, 2005, when Oklahoma Gov. Brad Henry – a former student and friend of Dr. K – honored him with "Alex J. Kondanassis Day" for his extraordinary contributions to the state. Upon his retirement from OU a few years later, the university presented him with their lifetime achievement "Seed Sower Award," one of the highest honors an OU Faculty member can be given.

Another bittersweet note relates to OU Economics Alumnus Jerod Coker. When he graduated OU with his economics degree in 2013, Jerod was class valedictorian, delivered the student address at the OU Commencement, won the Carl Albert Award for the top graduating senior in the college of Arts and Sciences and was awarded the Marshall Scholarship to study as a graduate student at the London School of Economics.

## Welcome and Department Update

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Over the years that followed, Jerod lived life passionately to serve others – devoting his career to unlocking the potential of small start-up companies in the poorest countries in the world, trying to break down longstanding barriers of social inequality. In my nomination letter for Jerod for the Carl Albert Award in 2013, I wrote “Jerod is a strong community leader of remarkable personal character.” Over his next decade of life, Jerod validated that claim in countless ways, so much so, that he was awarded the 2023 “Young Alumnus Award” for the most impactful recent graduate from OU’s College of Arts and Sciences. Tragically, this was a posthumously presented award, as a rare illness took Jerod’s life in 2022.

Importantly, the legacy of incredible people like Dr. K and Jerod lives on. Their impact doesn’t end with their last breath. In fact, it’s quite the opposite since they positively touched the lives of so many others while they had the chance. I hope we all take inspiration from their example – promising ourselves that whether we have the 95 years given to Dr. K or the barely 30 given to Jerod – we would use each day to work, play, love and support others to the best of our ability.

I’ll close the same way I always close these – which is by highlighting that WE succeed when YOU succeed; that’s our mission. To that end – reach out to us! We want to hear how you are doing! Our website (<https://www.ou.edu/cas/economics>) is a great way to check out previous newsletters and get the latest updates on the department. Also follow us on Twitter using @OUeconomics, and never hesitate to shoot me an email at [gburge@ou.edu](mailto:gburge@ou.edu) if there is any way we can serve you better and keep you more passionately connected to OU Economics.

Best & Boomer Sooner,

Greg Burge  
Department Chair and Professor of Economics  
University of Oklahoma



Georgia Kosmopoulou, associate dean for research in the Dodge Family College of Arts and Sciences, was recently asked to represent the Directorate of Social Behavioral and Economic Sciences at National Science Foundation on the Digital Assets Research and Development Fast-Track Action Committee, which was created by the Networking Technology Research and Development program of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, with membership across the federal government, to develop the National Digital Assets Research and Development Agenda.

The committee's work includes promoting research that can aid in the experimentation and development of central bank digital currency (CBDC) at the Federal Reserve. It also covers foundational and translational research and development relevant to digital asset technology, including cryptography, cybersecurity, privacy protection and accessibility while addressing social, behavioral and economic aspects of development. A more comprehensive research and development approach would provide concrete areas of focus toward achieving a holistic vision of a digital assets ecosystem that embodies democratic values and other key priorities. This approach would help ensure that sometimes-overlooked topics like environmentally friendly consensus mechanisms and fraud-resistant transaction programmability receive appropriate levels of research and development support.



### OU Economics Departments Hosts Chinese Economist Society



OU Economics hosted the Chinese Economist Society for their annual conference, bringing many scholars and students together for invited keynote speeches, round-table forums, rising star sessions and parallel sessions. From the CES website: “This conference aims to promote academic exchanges among Chinese economists and those interested in the Chinese economy in a North American venue.”



Professor Firat Demir received the Kinney-Sugg Outstanding Professor Award



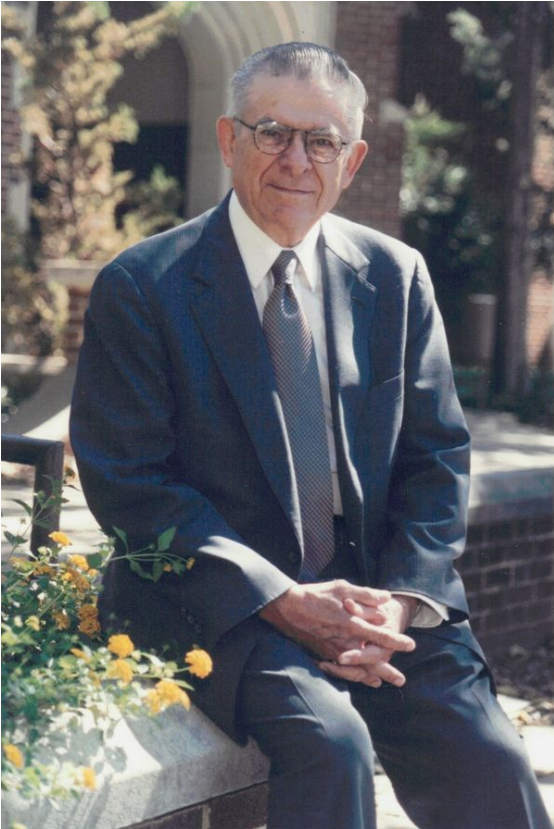
### Spring 2023 Awards Banquet



OU Economics honored student achievement at the annual Awards Banquet on April 28. Student awards included the Economics Travel Abroad fellowship, the Holmes, Shary and Clark Scholarships, as well as recognition of students accepted into Phi Beta Kappa, accelerated B.A./M.A. degree graduates and Graduate Student awards.

## 2023 Department News and Notables

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Alexander J. Kondonassis, 95, of Norman, passed away on May 12, 2023. He was born in Athens, Greece, on Feb. 8, 1928, to John Isadore Kondonassis and Eve (Hatzistyliaou) Kondonassis. He studied for one year at the University of Athens before making the voyage to the United States to enroll at DePauw University on full scholarship, graduating with a B.A. in economics with distinction in 1952. He went on to receive his M.A. and Ph.D. in economics from Indiana University in 1953 and 1961, respectively. He joined the faculty of the University of Oklahoma in 1958 and was a professor of economics there for over 50 years. While at OU, he served as chair of the Economics Department for 17 years, and he was named a David Ross Boyd Professor in 1970 and a Regents' Professor of Economics in 1993. Earlier in his academic career, he was awarded a Fulbright Professorship in 1965 and was a visiting professor at Oxford University (England) in 1979. He received the Regents' Award for Superior Teaching in 1964, was named an Outstanding Educator of America in 1971 and was awarded the Merrick Foundation Teaching Award in 1977.

He was inducted into the Oklahoma Higher Education Hall of Fame in 1998 and the governor of Oklahoma declared May 17, 2005, "Alex J. Kondonassis Day" for his contributions to the State of Oklahoma. Upon his retirement from OU, he was presented with OU's Seed Sower Award for extraordinary academic contributions to the University of Oklahoma.

Affectionately called Dr. K by his legions of students who teach and hold positions all over the world, he authored over 80 books, monographs and articles, with a specialty in economic development and under-developed countries. He directed more than 60 doctoral dissertations and led OU's Advanced Program in Economics for several decades, which offered military personnel in the United States and abroad the opportunity to earn degrees from the University of Oklahoma. He traveled extensively and was a guest lecturer all over the world. His pride and joy was his family, and he is survived by his daughter, Yolanda; his son, John; his beloved granddaughter, Amanda; and his son-in-law, Michael.



## 2023 Department News and Notables

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Jayke Flaggert, OU economics senior and committee member, was appointed to the City of Norman Strong Towns and One Norman task force. His responsibilities include documenting meeting discussion results about issues such as business retention and expansion, affordable housing, quality of life, unification between the city and the university, transportation and the development of a Norman version of Oklahoma City's MAPS project

Flaggert will calculate the rankings from the group discussions to determine the general top ten issues Norman residents are concerned about.

Cynthia Rogers, an OU economics professor, was also elected to the task force.

Professor Joan Hamory received the Merrick Foundation Teaching Award and the Irene Rothbaum Outstanding Assistant Professor Award.



Professor Tyler Ransom recently published a co-authored paper on instrumental variables in a top-ranking business journal, *Leadership Quarterly*. One of his co-authors is Michael Matthews, a Ph.D. student in management and international business.

Ransom's research on legacy and athlete preferences in Harvard undergraduate admissions was cited in the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to end racial preferences in admissions. Justice Gorsuch cited the paper to make the argument that universities can adjust their admissions practices away from favoring some of the wealthiest applicants to make room for applicants from under-represented backgrounds.



THANK YOU! THANK YOU!  
YOU! **THANK YOU!** THA  
HANK YOU! THANK YOU

OU Economics met and exceeded their \$10,000 fundraising goal for the 2023 Giving Day, bringing in almost \$13,000 from donors including alumni, students, faculty and staff to go toward departmental scholarships and study abroad assistance.

To help in the fundraising efforts, several students provided first-hand accounts of how studying abroad impacted their lives. You can view their testimonials here:

[Leah Pomerantz](#)

[Spencer Flood](#)

[Mitch Grantham](#)





# Economics in London



Several OU students, accompanied by Econ faculty members, went on a study abroad trip to London, England in July.



They visited such iconic sites as Wimbledon, the New London Centre, University College London and the home of John Keynes.



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## Research and Development

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### OU Economics Faculty Research Interests

**Gregory Burge**

Urban Economics  
Public Economics

**Firat Demir**

International Finance  
Development Economics

**Pallab Ghosh**

Labor Economics  
Econometrics

**Joan Hamory**

Economic Development

**Alexander Holmes**

Human Resources Public  
Finance  
Local Econ. Development

**Samantha Johnson**

Agriculture  
Industrial Organization  
Applied Microeconomics

**Benjamin Keen**

Monetary Economics  
Macroeconomics  
Applied Time Series  
Econometrics

**Myongjin Kim**

Industrial Organization  
Applied Econometrics

**Georgia Kosmopoulou**

Microeconomic Theory  
Industrial Organization

**Judith Liu**

Health Economics  
Public Economics  
Labor Economics

**Qihong Liu**

Industrial  
Organization  
Applied Microecon.

**Daniel Nedelescu**

Industrial Organization  
Labor Economics  
Behavioral Economics  
Experimental Economics

**Brent Norwood**

Public Policy  
Education

**Jayesh Paudel**

Environmental Economics  
Development Economics

**Tyler Ransom**

Labor Economics  
Urban Economics  
Economics of  
Education

**Cynthia Rogers**

Urban Economics  
Public Economics  
Public Policy

**Hewei Shen**

International Economics  
Macroeconomics  
International Finance

**Chunbei Wang**

Labor Economics  
Entrepreneurship

**Le Wang**

Econometrics  
Labor & Development  
Applied Microeconomics  
Chinese Economy

**Mu-Jeung Yang**

Empirical Analysis



## Stay Connected to OU Economics

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Please send us updates to be included in the next newsletter. You can send news, announcements, photos and more by sending an email to [cquiett@ou.edu](mailto:cquiett@ou.edu).

You also may participate with OU Economics by mentoring a student, recommending an internship or sharing how you've used your economics degree with our student organization. Please contact Corey Quiett at [cquiett@ou.edu](mailto:cquiett@ou.edu) or (405) 325-4307.

The power of an economics degree from the University of Oklahoma helps our graduates "Be in Demand."

Support our department's efforts to provide an outstanding foundation for success.

You may use the form below, or click here to [give online](#).

I would like to make a gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the Department of Economics Endowed Fund (43099)

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