

IAE Informer

News and gossip from the Institute of Applied Economics

March 2005

Happy New Year!

We hope that you and your family had a wonderful 2004. I do apologize for the tardiness of this issue. I started it several times but just never seemed to have the time to stick with it and finish. In this issue, I'll try to bring you up to date on comings and goings at the Institute and UNT. Enjoy!

It's hard to believe that it has been over a year since we moved to Chilton Hall, but it has. We're almost settled in, and we've actually almost found everything! Adjusting to the new surroundings and space was a challenge, but we didn't complain too much (only the amount that was absolutely necessary).

Nothing has really changed faculty- and staff-wise here. Dr. Weinstein is still our fearless leader, Dr. McKee continues to wear many hats around campus, and Dr. Clower still tries to figure out how he ended up teaching the two classes that students dread the most. They still travel quite a bit – attending conferences and meeting with clients on research projects. As for me, I'm



Participants at the North American Regional Science Association Meeting in November 2003. See Message from the Director on page 2 for details.

still here too and am thankful every morning for a job so close to home (especially when I hear Dallas and Fort Worth traffic reports).

Student-wise, we've had 14 new students join the program since fall 2003. This past year, we graduated six students and have a few more in line to leave us in May. Overall, we're maintaining about 17 active students and currently have six more who are finishing up problem in lieu of thesis work. We're still trying to grow and expand the program, so if you know of anyone who is interested, just send them our way.

IAE Informer Staff:

Bud Weinstein (budw@scs.unt.edu) – Still showing up to keep the rest of us on our toes.

Terry Clower (tclower@unt.edu) – Can't believe that he actually moved close enough to the office so that he has to come to work on days when he has meetings in Dallas.

Lisa Gage (lgage@unt.edu) – Just waiting for the next Springsteen album (due out in April – yeah!) and concert.



Message from the Director -

For the past several years, Terry Clower and I have undertaken a serious effort to expand our research and contacts to other parts of the world. To that end, we have presented papers and attended international forums in Japan, Korea, Australia, Scandinavia, England, Ireland, Switzerland, Austria, Spain, Portugal, and France. In the process, we have significantly enhanced the visibility of the University of North Texas and its Institute of Applied Economics.

Most of our international activities have evolved through the Regional Science Association International (RSAI), a global association with regional sections. We've had the good fortune to develop close personal relationships with leaders of both the International organization and the regional sections. The photo on page one portrays four current and former presidents, myself excluded, of both the International association and some regional sections. From left to right are me, Dr. Kingsley Haynes of George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia (former president of both the North American section and the Pacific Regional Science Council), Dr. Robert Stimson of the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia (current president of RSAI), Dr. John Rees of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (former president of the Southern Regional Science Association), and Dr. Antoine Bailly of the University of Geneva in Switzerland (current president of the European Regional Science Association and former president of RSAI).

The photo was taken at the North American meetings held in Philadelphia in November 2003. Regional science is concerned not only with economic development, planning, and resource allocation but also with the geography of food and wine. As the photo suggests, this particular restaurant presented us with a lengthy wine list featuring vintages from many different regions in the U.S. and abroad. It was only with the combined oenological knowledge of this cross-section of international scholars that the appropriate wine pairings could be made. This is what applied social science is all about.

—Bernard L. Weinstein

Scholarships

Recipients of departmental scholarships during the 2004-05 academic year were Felipe Almanza, Svetlana Barnes, Veronica Carreno, Jennifer Graves, Paul Hendershot, Rafael Raygada, Jorge Rengifo, Tatania Salomatnikova, Paulo Shargorodsky, and Ryan Tharp. Most of these scholarships were possible because of funded research projects of the Center for Economic

Development and Research. However, we still get some funds from the Dean of the School of Community Service that are designated as incentive funds for new students. And, the Luker Endowed Scholarship Fund continues to provide partial scholarship assistance to deserving students.

As always, we need your help to build our scholarship fund so that we can continue to help AECO students. Tax deductible donations to the Economic Development

Scholars fund can be mailed to the UNT Office of Development, P. O. Box 311250, Denton, TX 76203. Please note on your donation that it is intended for the Economic Development Scholars fund, Account 76549.

Or, you can mail your donation directly to us at P. O. Box 310469, Denton, TX 76203-0469. We will deliver your check to the UNT Office of Development and provide them with all information that they need to deposit it into our account and send you a tax receipt.



Faculty

Dr. Clower is now in the midst of his tenure process. After much stress and panic in the fall, his packet was submitted to the School of Community Services Personnel Affairs Committee (PAC) last month. After the PAC reviews it (and approves it), it will go to the Vice President of Academic Affairs for final approval. The tenure process is a very detailed look at a professor's contributions (teaching, publications, and overall service both to the university and community). Since entering the tenure-track position in 1999, Dr. Clower has taught seven courses, transformed the Research Methods course to web-format, and authored or co-authored six publications in peer-reviewed journals. In addition, through his work at the Center, he received a visiting research fellowship from Flinders University in Australia, has authored well over 20

research reports, and has presented papers at numerous national and international conferences.

Unfortunately, we won't know the results of Dr. Clower's bid for tenure for several months. So, we all anxiously await to hear his fate...

Ch-ch-ch-changes...

For over a year now, the entire UNT system has been in the midst of some major technological changes. UNT is implementing a new computer system that integrates many functions that were previously handled by completely separate systems. As with all technological changes, this one has been challenging, and we're still working through it.

Many departments (Human Resources, Purchasing, and Budget) continue to work out some bugs in the administrative-side of the new system. More and more of our daily office routine is now computerized, and many functions are handled electronically instead of through signed paper forms.

Student News

Sara Rutledge (MS '98) was recently promoted to Vice President at Delta Associates. Delta Associates provides real estate research, consulting, valuation, and subscription data services. Sara has been with Delta Associates for five years as Associate Research Director.

Congratulations Sara!

Student Spotlight

Michelle Bragg has had many adventures since graduating from UNT with her MS in Applied Economics in 1996. For a year after graduation, she stayed on as a Research Assistant at the Center for Economic Development and Research. In 1997, she took the advice of Drs. Weinstein and Gross and began doctoral studies in Public Policy at George Mason University (GMU). Upon moving from Texas, Michelle found lots of surprises awaiting her in the DC metro area – she realized that knowing how to parallel park was a necessary skill and that valet parking is both a great stress reducer and sure-fire way to avoid parking tickets!

While studying at GMU, Michelle took advantage of being in the “policy Mecca” of America and accepted a one-year fellowship with the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Inc. (CBCF), which meant working on Capitol Hill. She found this to be a life-changing event. As a policy student, just being in the legislative environment was a dream. As an added bonus, her work there led to a dissertation topic, helped her to really understand politics and policy, and gave her the chance to develop some really great friendships. During her time at GMU, she also participated in fellowships with the National Academies and the Economic Policy Institute.

In 2003, she began working with the CBCF’s Congressional Fellowship program and eventually took over directing the organization’s education and outreach programs. While this was great, she was simultaneously completing her dissertation and planning for graduation. Talk about working overtime! In January 2004, Michelle completed all requirements for her

doctorate. According to Michelle, “the best part of May graduation was receiving my degree and seeing my great-grandmother, age 95, up in the stands waving at me!”

After graduation, Michelle took a job with the Government of the District of Columbia in the Center for Innovation and Reform (CIR), which is part of the Office of the City Administrator. CIR examines ways to make government operations more efficient. Michelle was really enjoying the local government experience when she learned she had been awarded a postdoctoral fellowship at the Wellesley Centers for Women (WCW) at Wellesley College. This opportunity was too compelling to ignore, so Michelle said goodbye to DC and packed for Boston.

Michelle is now in a two-year research postdoc sponsored by the National Institutes of Child Health and Development (NICHD). Primarily, her goals are to publish articles based on her dissertation (see below), conduct ethnographic research and create instruments to collect data from social fathers and their families in a broad range of racial and ethnic groups. She also anticipates collaborating with WCW researchers on various projects.

Michelle’s dissertation, “Social Fathering among African American Men and the Impact on Child and Family Outcomes,” examines the impact of “social fathers” on the family dynamic. “Social fathers” are a subgroup of men who parent other than their own children.

Michelle has been in Boston a few months now and is thoroughly enjoying this opportunity. Those of you who remember Michelle know that while she’s in the midst of this adventure, she’s also already looking ahead to the next!