

Mathematical Methods in the Social Sciences

Alumni Newsletter

Northwestern University

October 2006

From the Director ...

This has been an exciting year for the MMSS Program. The reputation of the program for producing extraordinarily talented and well trained graduates has continued to grow stronger among potential employers and graduate schools and the strength and size of our applicant pool has also continued to grow. In response, we have decided to increase admissions to the program by about 20 students so that there is a single section of about 60 students this year. However, plans are in the works to create two sections of about 30 students each in the near future.

The strength of the MMSS program is best seen in its graduates. We proudly receive news every year of the publications, research, promotions, honors and accomplishments of our alumni. We hope you will take the time to stay in touch with us and keep us updated on your post-NU lives.

Best wishes,



Prof. Bill Rogerson



From left to right: Ian Dew-Becker, Prof. Michael Dacey, Cheng Zhan Chua, Prof. Bill Rogerson, Evelyn Tee, Jeanette Dacey, and Stephen Master.

As tradition has it, MMSS graduates and their families gathered at Professor Michael Dacey's home on graduation day last June to celebrate their accomplishments at NU. It is at this occasion that Director Bill Rogerson awards the Michael F. Dacey Award for the Most Outstanding MMSS Senior Thesis and the Jeanette M. Dacey Award for the Best Performance in MMSS Required Coursework.

This year, there were two winners of each award. The Michael Dacey Award went to Ian Dew-Becker for his thesis entitled "Kalman Learning and Downsian Competition" and to Cheng Zhan Chua for his thesis entitled "The Effects of Declining Unionization on the Rise of Wage Inequality: A New Perspective". Ian is now working at the National Bureau of Economic Research in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Cheng Zhan is currently serving his required duty in the Singapore Army. The Jeanette Dacey Award went to Evelyn Tee and Stephen Master. They both had a GPA of 3.97 in their MMSS classes. Evelyn now works for the Singapore Government as a policy analyst. Stephen is an analyst for UBS Investment Bank in Chicago.

The MMSS program would like to thank all the MMSS alumni who contributed generously to the program this year. Your support makes these awards and many other events and improvements possible. Thank you!



Obituary: Michael Wallerstein, who taught in the MMSS program for a number of years before he left for Yale in 2004, died of brain cancer on January 7, 2006 at his home in New Haven, Conn. He was 54. He was a gifted teacher, a learned scholar and a wonderful person to work with. He will be greatly missed. A memorial service was held for him here at NU last spring.

Alumni News

Susan (Mosser) Caperton, '91, has been married to Gat Caperton for 10 years now. They have 3 daughter: Eliza, age 7; Katie, age 5 and Evelyn, age 3. Susan is a retired lawyer now working as a stay-at-home mom in a small West Virginia college town.

Lee Branstetter, '91, after graduating from NU in 1991, he received a Ph.D. in Economics from Harvard University (1996), then taught at Dartmouth College and the University of California at Davis before spending five years on the faculty of Columbia Business School in New York, where he was the Director of the International Business Program and, eventually, the Daniel Stanton Associate Professor of Business. This past summer, he moved to Carnegie Mellon to take a joint position in the Heinz School of Policy and Management and the Department of Social and Decision Sciences (SDS). His wife Grace Tan (NU '92) and sons Daniel and Joshua are enjoying a nice house with a yard -- something they could not have dreamed of while living on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. Personally, he is enjoying being a tenured professor in an academic environment in which quantitatively rigorous interdisciplinary social science is highly valued -- a characteristic of Carnegie Mellon that is very much in keeping with the philosophy behind the MMSS program. In fact, his dean would dearly love to clone MMSS there.

Wendy (Ramsbottom) Johnson, '93, is busy keeping up with her three kids.

Jason Keglovitz, '95 was married in September 2000 to Stacy Fosdick (NU '95) and they had their first child, Charles, in April 2005.

J.B. Mantz, '95, is in the second year of a three year social work master's program at the University of Chicago.

Jennifer (Vogt) Lescott, '96, recently gave birth to a healthy baby girl -- Madeline Jane Lescott. She's just wonderful and Mom and Dad are having a lot of fun!

Yi-Ling Lin, '96, became a FSA, Fellow of the Society of Actuaries, in 2006.

Laura Veldkamp, '96, is a visiting professor at Princeton University Economics Department for the 2006-2007 academic year. She had 3 articles published this summer in American Economic Review, the Review of Economic Studies and the Journal of Monetary Economics. She got married 2 years ago to Stijn Van Nieuwerburgh, a Belgian economist also on the faculty at NYU Stern.

Rodney Cruz, '99, and his wife are expecting their first child in March 2007.

Meena (Manickam) Raj, '99, was married on July 14, 2006 in Boston.

Shaun Landa, '00, completed a 3-month service in the Israeli Defense Forces in September 2005 and will continue serving annual reserve duty in a search and rescue unit. He is proud to serve his country, but at the same time he hopes that they will never have to use his services.

Amanda Stilmock, '02, was married on October 13, 2006 to Adam Kelly in their home town of Omaha, Nebraska. Amanda recently earned the Chartered Financial Analyst designation, CFA, in 2006.

Jennifer Chambers Johnson, '03 and Jeremy Johnson, '03 are expecting their first baby in March 2007. In 2006, they celebrated their 2-year wedding anniversary, Jeremy earned his FCAS, Fellowship in the Casualty Actuarial Society, for which he had to take 9 exams and they took a great trip to Puerto Vallarta which was beautiful.

Zoran Balac, '05, had his MMSS senior thesis "Monetary Inflation's Effect on Wealth Inequality -- An Austrian Analysis" accepted for publication in the Quarterly Journal of Austrian Economics.

Kenneth Chu, '05, works for ABC News and just finished a project about virtual game worlds. You can see his video piece at: <http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/story?id=2521495&page=1>. It is a potentially interesting MMSS thesis topic -- economies/demographics of virtual game worlds.

Tracy Johnson, '05, jointly published a paper entitled "Departure delays, the pricing of congestions, and expansion proposals at Chicago O'Hare Airport" with Ian Savage of the Economics department. Professor Savage was her thesis advisor and helped expand and revise her thesis into the version that was eventually published. It was published in the Journal of Air Transport Management Volume 12:4 (July 2006), pages 182-190.

Keep us informed!

We would love to hear about what you have been doing since leaving NU or any exciting news from your corner of the world. Drop us a line at mmss@northwestern.edu.

Mortensen on Extended Leave in Denmark

A MMSS constant over the past 28 years, Professor Dale Mortensen will be on leave for the next 5 fall quarters at the University of Aarhus in Denmark and will not fulfill his usual roles of teacher and advisor in the MMSS program. Before he left, we asked him a few questions about his work in Denmark and his time with MMSS:

What will you be working on in Denmark?

The project in Denmark is focused on newly available longitudinal data on Danish firms. Currently we are interested in the dynamics of firm entry, exit and growth and how these relate to overall growth in the economy. We are also interested in assessing the role of the reallocation of workers from less to more productive firms in determining the economy-wide growth rate. In the future, we plan to study the reasons why firms differ with respect to the labor productivity



of their workers.

How many years did you teach, direct and advise in MMSS?

At the time the program started (1978), I was the department chair of Economics. In that role, I helped Professors Michael Dacey and John Ledyard with the original organization. I have taught one or more courses in the program since 1982 and was Director from 1982-1984 and then again from 1992-2000.

Any parting thoughts about your time with MMSS?

My time with MMSS has spanned

most of its existence. The program was founded under the leadership of Dean Rudy Weingarter as a special interdisciplinary program in the social sciences. At about the same time, the ISP program was founded as an interdisciplinary program in the physical sciences. It was the dean's intent to create special undergraduate programs that would attract gifted students who might not otherwise consider undergraduate studies at Northwestern. The founding faculty also thought that the program would help generate student interest in research careers in the social sciences. Although the program has had some success along these dimensions, some of its accomplishments were not fully anticipated. For one, the appeal of our students to the business community turned out to be an important aspect of its ultimate success. I am sure the program will continue to contribute much to the success of its graduates in both business and academics.

MMSS Alum Returns to NU



Congratulations to Jamie Druckman, '93, for receiving two prestigious awards recently. He is recipient of the American Political Science Association's Emerging Scholar Award, awarded to the top scholar who is within ten years of his or her doctorate in the Elections, Public Opinion, and Voting Behavior field.

Jamie also received the 2006 Erik Erikson Early Career Award for excellence and creativity in the field of political psychology from the International Society of Political Psychology.

Jamie is an Associate Professor of Political Science and Faculty Fellow at the Institute for Policy Research here at Northwestern. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California, San Diego in 1999. From 1999 to 2005, Druckman served on the faculty at the University of Minnesota, where he was most recently the Benjamin Lippincott Associate Professor of Political Economy.

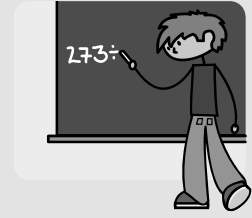
His research focuses on political

preference formation and communication as well as coalition behavior in parliamentary government. His most recent work examines how citizens make political, economic, and social decisions in various different contexts (e.g., settings with multiple competing messages, online information, deliberation). He also has explored the relationship between citizens' preferences and public policy, and how political elites make decisions under varying institutional conditions.

We are very happy that Jamie has come "home" to Northwestern and hope that he may be able to teach in the MMSS program sometime in the near future.

MMSS at a Glance...

The current MMSS faculty for 2006-2007 are:



Michael Dacey
Anthropology &
Geological Sciences

Joe Ferrie
Economics

Steve Fisher
Math

John Franks
Math

Sean Gailmard
Political Science

Bard Harstad
Kellogg, MEDS

Aviv Nevo
Economics

Robert Porter
Economics

Clark Robinson
Math

William Rogerson
Economics

Eric Schulz
Economics

Elie Tamer
Economics

Current MMSS students: 150
Males: 101
Females: 49

Average MMSS SAT score:
Math : 765
Verbal: 694

Year program began: 1978

MMSS Alumni : 705

MMSS second majors:

Economics: 122

Economics & Math: 7

Psychology: 4

Sociology: 4

Math: 3

Political Science: 3

Communication Studies: 2

Computer Engineering: 2

Applied Math: 1

Industrial Engineering: 1

Education: 1

The 2006 MMSS Alumni Electronic Directory is now available. If you would like to be included in the Directory, send us your contact information at mmss@northwestern.edu and we'll send you a copy. It's great for social and business networking!



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