

December 11, 1987

Greetings:

It's that time of year again: time for a "Christmas newsletter" highlighting some of the past year's doings of the Economics Department "family", and time to remind you that the Department will be holding the usual Virginia get-together at the AEA meetings in Chicago later this month (details below). Roger Sherman told you last year that his five-year term as Department Chairman was about to end - which of course it did. What he didn't foresee, but perhaps should have, was that he would be drafted by unanimous acclaim for another (three year) term. As Roger had a well-earned leave coming, I agreed to stand in as Acting Chairman for this academic year. It is interesting to be back in administrative work again, but I am glad to be able to see the light at the end of the tunnel!

The past year has been a very satisfactory one for the Department, without being momentous. Three talented new assistant professors joined the faculty. Simon Anderson hails originally from Britain and comes to us via Queen's University Canada and CORE Louvain. He works on spatial economics and industrial organization. Ronald Fischer, originally from Chile, comes via the University of Pennsylvania and is an international trade theorist. Gerhard Glomm, originally from Germany, comes via the University of Minnesota and works on a variety of problems concerned with growth and industrial structure. As you see, we have increased the international dimension of the faculty considerably. I am pleased to be able to report that James Hamilton and Jon Skinner were both promoted to Associate Professor with tenure and Bill Johnson was promoted to Full Professor. Charlie Holt returned from Spain for the new academic year but hopes to get back there next summer, being involved in joint research with economists at Barcelona. Don Fullerton, back from the Treasury after revamping our taxes, is fully in harness in the Department once more. Don is currently directing the Department's Distinguished Majors Program and he and Charlie Holt, the previous director, deserve great credit for nurturing a now thriving program admitting a couple of dozen or more strong majors each year. The success of the program is indicated by the fact that Omega Delta Epsilon's Taussig Award, a national award for the best undergraduate thesis in economics, has been won for two years running by Distinguished Majors from UVA: Rodger Erickson in 1986 and Miles Cook in 1987.

Several faculty members are on leave this year. Roger Sherman is spending the Fall semester in Oxford but will be in Charlottesville for most of the Spring. Jonathan Eaton is at the Hoover Institution for the year as a National Fellow. Kenneth Elzinga and Charles Engel are on leave as Sesquicentennial Associates. Marvin Goodfriend of the Richmond Fed, who has been teaching a course here this Fall, is our only outside visitor.

Visiting speakers this academic year will include James Buchanan, Gordon Tullock and Ronald Coase - quite like old times. I might also mention that Max Hartwell received in April an honorary Doctor of Letters degree from the University of New England in Australia, and that Gertrude Schroeder Greenslade testified on Gorbachev's economic reforms before a subcommittee of the Joint Economic Committee of Congress in September. Tipton Snavely recently celebrated his ninety-seventh birthday, while Rutledge Vining's eightieth is rapidly approaching.

Dean Hugh Kelly is pushing fund raising for Arts and Sciences and you may have been contacted by the Phonathon. The Department recently provided the faculty backup for this event and we were amazed at the energy and enthusiasm, not to mention the persuasiveness, of the undergraduate callers. Arts and Sciences has lagged behind the rest of the University in much-needed private support so that if you do give to the University I hope that you will earmark your contribution to Arts and Sciences, or even the Department. Hopefully, an improved reporting system will now allow us to acknowledge all gifts meant for the Department.

The graduate program is in the process of being reconsidered, the most likely changes being a stronger core in econometrics and microeconomics and a closer integration of fields with the workshop program. (There are now workshops in economic theory, public finance, trade and development, finance, and econometrics, in addition to the traditional microeconomics and macroeconomics workshops. Together these have brought in an exciting list of outside speakers too long to list here.) If you have thoughts on the graduate program I or the Director of Graduate Studies, Bill Johnson, would be interested to hear from you.

Rouss Hall is rapidly being taken over by microcomputers, partly as a result of the Commonwealth's Higher Educational Equipment Trust which issues bonds to provide educational institutions with more and better equipment. The problem soon will be space to house all our equipment. A new Arts and Sciences Building on the Amphitheatre site is gradually getting closer to being on the drawing board, but it will be several years before there is much prospect of the space crunch around the Lawn being relieved. The widespread availability of microcomputers and good technical word-processing software (mainly T³ for us) has drastically reduced manuscript typing demand and allowed us to convert a secretarial position into a systems-programmer position, for which we are now recruiting. One of the duties of the programmer will be to improve our computer laboratory for running laboratory experiments.

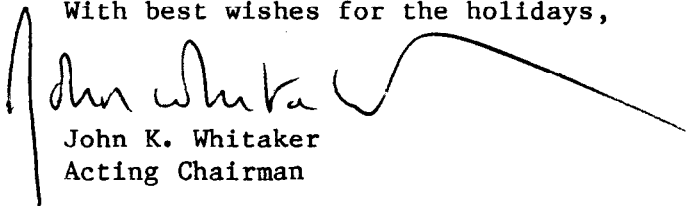
The following economics graduate students have defended so far in 1987: Ph.D.: Amy Behrendt Graham, Walter Strack, Bill Smith, Todd McCallister, Gregor MacDonald. MA: Gregory Gerth, Diana Rodgers, Stewart Groeneveld-Meijer, Joanne Guth, Javier Framinan, Michael Weber. Our placement list this year is short but strong. If you would be interested in a copy call the placement director Wake Epps (804 924-7947) or the Department office (804 924-3177).

News of Graduate Alumni is rather sparse this year. Ed Olsen visited Melbourne last summer and caught up with some of UVA's Australian contingent -

Nisha Agrawal, Bruce Parsell and Phil Grossman. Congratulations to Alan Caniglia on his promotion to Associate Professor at Franklin and Marshall College, to Gary Fournier on his promotion to Associate Professor at Florida State, and to Claire Holton Hammond on the publication by Cambridge University Press of her book The Benefits of Subsidized Housing Programs: An Intertemporal Approach which was the joint recipient of ODE's Irving Fisher Monograph Award. Claire and Dan Hammond are still at Wake Forest where Dan's research focusses on Friedman's methodological views. Congratulations also to Barry Hirsch whose book (with John Addison) on The Economic Analysis of Unions has been receiving very favorable reviews. Bob Wuertz is now providing advice to the Saudi Arabian Finance Minister, having left AT&T. Bob Feinberg has moved to the International Trade Commission in Washington as Senior Research Economist, while Esther Redmount is now an Assistant Professor at Colorado College. Fred McChesney is visiting the University of Chicago Law School this year. Let me add that we are always interested to learn of the doings of our graduate alumni. Drop Roger Sherman a note if you have news for incorporation in the next newsletter.

At the upcoming ASSA meetings in Chicago on December 28 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., the Department will be hosting a University of Virginia Cocktail Party in Parlor H at the Palmer House. I can't be there, I'm afraid, but Charlie Holt will be acting as host. It should be a good opportunity to meet current and past UVA faculty and graduate students.

With best wishes for the holidays,



John K. Whitaker
Acting Chairman

JKW/ppc