

# Economics Newsletter

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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH

2025–2026 ANNUAL EDITION



**ECONOMICS**  
**DEPARTMENT**  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY LONG BEACH





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# GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIR

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While the return of our newsletter last year reaffirmed our commitment to connection and shared purposes, this edition reflects the inspiring work happening across our community for academic year 2025-2026.

I want to extend my gratitude to our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends for their unwavering dedication to academic excellence and community service. From classrooms to internships, outreach, and conferences, the Economics Department remains a thriving center of intellectual energy and collaboration. As we continue to expand opportunities for students, deepen our scholarly impact, and strengthen our partnerships, I thank each of you for being an indispensable part of this vibrant and ever-evolving community.

*Dr. Yutian Chen*

ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT CHAIR



# THE ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT

To our students, faculty, alumni, and friends, welcome!

The Economics Department experienced a dynamic and impactful 2025–2026 academic year. As we conclude this year, we reflect with pride on a period defined by scholarship, connection, and a strong sense of community across the CSULB Economics network.

Beginning last year, we renewed our newsletter tradition, creating a space to celebrate and share the work of our students, faculty, and alumni. This year continued that momentum, featuring research presentations, alumni panels, student achievements, and faculty contributions that highlight the depth and diversity of our community.

Together, we are building a vibrant, intergenerational Economics Department network that extends far beyond the classroom and we look forward to many more years of connection and collaboration.

Without further ado, here's what's new in the Department of Economics!



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY LONG BEACH

# WELCOME MASHA ESCH

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We are happy to welcome Masha Esch, who joined the department in Fall 2025 as our Administrative Support Assistant II. From the outset, Masha has brought dedication and professionalism to her role, along with a genuine commitment to supporting both our students and faculty.

Masha holds a B.A. in Political Science, Public Administration and an M.A. in Political Science. Her academic background, combined with her passion for student initiatives and faculty support, has made her an invaluable addition to our department. She approaches her work with enthusiasm and a collaborative spirit that strengthens our day-to-day operations.

We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to Masha for her coordination and serving as a Chief Editor of this 2025–2026 Economics Department Newsletter and organizing the reinstated Economics Research Poster Competition, helping bring back a meaningful tradition for our department community.

We are excited to have her on our team and look forward to her continued contributions in the years ahead. Welcome, Masha!

# WELCOMING NEW DEPARTMENT STUDENT ASSISTANT

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Please join us in recognizing our department student assistant, Zoey Burns, whose creativity, initiative, and leadership have made a lasting impact on the department’s outreach efforts. Zoey brings strong experience in social media and communications and independently developed the Department Interview Series, an engaging initiative featuring students and faculty.

Through her work, Zoey has strengthened connections within our community while helping highlight the voices and experiences that make our department unique. She also played a key role in redesigning this year’s

newsletter, taking the initiative to photograph and thoughtfully develop the layout, resulting in more polished and professional publications for Economics social media. On top of that, she made additional contributions by providing professional headshots for faculty, further elevating the department’s presentation and outreach.

We are incredibly grateful for Zoey’s dedication, innovation, and contributions. As she graduates this semester, we will be sad to see her go, but we are excited for all that lies ahead. We wish her continued success in her next chapter.

# ECONOMICS POSTER COMPETITION IS BACK

We are thrilled to celebrate the return of the Economics Department Research Poster Competition. Reviving a long-standing ECON tradition paused during the pandemic, the competition once again provided a platform for students to showcase their research, engage with peers, and strengthen their ability to present and defend their work.

This year's competition was evaluated by a distinguished faculty panel: Dr. Yutian Chen, Dr. Kairon Shayne-Garcia, and Dr. Andre Harrison. Participants competed for awards in three categories—Most Creative, Best Visuals, and Best Overall—recognizing excellence across different dimensions of research communication.

The Economics Research Poster Competition is built around ECON 490: Selected Topics in Economics, led by Professor Herman Singh. We are grateful for his mentorship and guidance, which play a key role in fostering student research and academic development. We are excited for the Fall 2026 Research Poster Competition. Stay tuned for more updates!



*Aasha Dave, Priya Chundi, Kanika Lee, Jasmine Forbes, Nidia Nolasco (Group 4) – Most Creative & Best Overall*



*Christian Emperador, Ella Graves, Joseph Moore-Raygoza, Zoey Burns, Isabela Pinheiro (Group 2) – Best Visuals*



*Benjamin Maldonado, Michael Jimenez, Luke Jesse Brown, Xochilt Argueta Zelaya, Daniel Rancano (Group 1) – Best Visuals*



*Keanu Hua – Most Creative*

# COMMUNITY UPDATES

## STUDENT NEWS

**Hung Nguyen** (Economics, B.S) and **Ethen Lundquist** (Business Economics, B.A.) were selected for the 31st cohort of the Beach Investment Group, which manages \$1.7M in assets. They represented CSULB in a regional RFP, presenting portfolio analytics at PIMCO headquarters.

**Keanu Hua** (Applied Statistics B.S. & Math Econ & Econ Theory B.A.) has been accepted to work under Dr. Neale Mahoney, the director of the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research, as a predoctoral research fellow for up to 2 years with the ultimate aim of pursuing a PhD.

**Jasmine Forbes** (Economics B.S.) serving as the Academic Affairs Officer for ASI, contributed to three campus policies aimed at supporting academic success. In recognition of her commitment to student advocacy and leadership, she was awarded the Leadership Academy Medallion.

**Zoey Burns** (Business Economics B.A.) and **Hung Nguyen** (Economics, B.S.) attended George Mason University's Public Choice Outreach Conference in Washington, DC. **Zoey Burns** was also selected as a Student Liaison board member for the CCIM Institute – Southern California Chapter, representing CSULB.

**Allison Tan** (Economics B.S.) finished 2nd in the Sunstone Innovation Challenge this year with her startup UPGRADED, which helps high school students choose a college. Her team also won an additional \$4,000 in a competition in downtown Long Beach for one of our off-campus programs. Congratulations, Allison!

**Jocelyn Pham** (Business Economics B.A.) is a recipient of the Settlemyer Family Endowed Scholarship for the 2026-27 academic year.

**Aaliyah Folquet** (Mathematical Economics & Economic Theory B.A.) and **Mikaela Henning** (International Economics, Minor) are recipients of the Gene Simonson Endowed Scholarship for the 2026-27 academic year.

**Ryder Mawby** (Economics, M.A.) and **Zoey Burns** (Business Economics B.A.) is a recipient of the Powell Endowed Scholarship for the 2026-27 academic year.

**Joseph Moore-Raygoza** (Business Economics B.A.), **Ethen Lundquist** (Economics B.A.) and **Shelby Bibler** (Business Economics B.A.) are recipients of the Ray and Marge Lancaster Scholarship for the 2026-27 academic year.



# ALUMNI NEWS

**Herman Singh** (B.A. '17 & M.A. '18) is three years into the four-year tenure process at Golden West College. He is an Assistant Director of the Office of Economic Research and a Board Member of Khalsa Aid assisting with community service for the greater LA County and Orange County.

**Alondra Hernandez** (M.A. '26) is a recipient of the Powell Endowed Scholarship for the 2025–26 academic year. She earned her Master's degree in Economics in December 2025. During her graduate studies, she worked as both a research and teaching assistant. She will return as faculty in Fall 2026 and looks forward to supporting students in their study of economics.

**Ashley Wong** (B.A. '23) earned her M.S. in Economics from USC and returned to CSULB as a part-time faculty. She will teach undergraduate econometrics and is passionate about helping students apply economic thinking to real-world questions. Her research focused on the effectiveness of vacant property taxes in reducing housing vacancy and blight in tight housing markets.

**Lucy Baker** (B.A. '24 & M.A. '25) recently completed her master's degree in economics at CSU Long Beach and is continuing work on her thesis paper with Dr. Andre Harrison while working in her hometown and planning future travel.

It was wonderful to hear from everyone! We congratulate all our students and alumni on all their successes!

This newsletter is for you—celebrating the hard work and achievements of our Economics community. We received many outstanding submissions this year and hope they inspire future students to contribute to the next edition.



# FACULTY SPOTLIGHTS

## A Tribute to Dr. Hou on His Retirement

Dr. Jack Hou received his Doctorate from Yale University in May 1989 and joined CSULB in Fall 1989. With decades of service, he is now the most senior tenure-track faculty member in the Economics Department. As his retirement approaches, Dr. Hou reflects not merely on what he has accomplished, but on how he has contributed to students, the profession, and society.



Deeply influenced by the Chinese tradition—师者，所以传道受业解惑也—Dr. Hou has always understood teaching as more than delivering content. A teacher’s role is to propagate the “way,” impart knowledge, and clarify confusion. This principle has guided his teaching philosophy throughout his career. Dr. Hou often tells students, “As I have no children, my legacy lies in how I influence you—your careers, values, and future families.” Former Chair Dr. Joe Magaddino once told him, “You don’t touch every student, but those you do touch, you touch profoundly,” a comment Dr. Hou considers one of the highest compliments he has received.

Over the years, former students have stayed in touch from all walks of professional life, including university provosts, full professors, public finance directors, government officials, financial executives, entrepreneurs, and even colleagues now teaching in our own department. Dr. Hou takes the greatest pride not in titles or numbers, but in moments such as receiving an unexpected email from a former student describing how his “connecting-the-dots” approach shaped their thinking, or a handwritten note thanking him years after graduation. These are the footprints he leaves behind.

Beyond teaching, Dr. Hou has devoted substantial service to the economics profession. He served the Western Social Science Association (WSSA) as Section Coordinator, Executive Council member, Vice President, President-elect, and President—introducing reforms that helped strengthen the organization during the subprime financial crisis. He was honored as the first Asian, non-North America-born President of the WSSA.



His service to the Chinese Economists Society (CES) has included two terms on the Board of Directors, leadership of a constitutional reform committee, and service as President. He also created and chaired the Regent structure and led the Academic Publication Council. Currently, he serves as an officer of the Western Economic Association International (WEAI) and as a longtime co-editor of *Contemporary Economic Policy*, where he regularly organizes the largest share of sessions at WEAI conferences.

Dr. Hou’s research career—motivated by intellectual curiosity rather than promotion—has remained active and internationally visible. Citations to his work peaked over the past three years, reflecting growing scholarly interest in China and Asia, which have become central to his research agenda. He currently has multiple papers under review at top-tier journals, including work on media sentiment toward China’s Belt and Road Initiative and political-economy approaches to U.S. trade policy. A new project examines global coffee and alcohol markets through a cultural and economic lens.

When asked to contribute a short newsletter blurb, Dr. Hou wrote far more than requested. This reflects his approach to life and work: either do not do it or do it well. As his longtime motto says, “Over prepare and go with the flow.”

We thank Dr. Hou for his unwavering dedication to this university community. Read more about his current work in Faculty Spotlight.

*Over prepare, and then go with the flow.*

*- Dr. Jack Hou*

# Economics Department welcomes new lecturers!

Over the past few years, the Economics Department has been fortunate to welcome a number of outstanding new lecturers. Their fresh perspectives, dedication to teaching, and engagement with students have brought new energy to our classrooms and community. We are excited to highlight their contributions and achievements. We are especially proud that all of them are alumni of the CSULB Economics Department, reflecting the strength and continuity of our own academic community.

## Welcome Ashley Wong

We are delighted to welcome Ashley Wong to the Economics Department. Professor Wong holds an M.S. in Economics from the University of Southern California. She began tutoring statistics in 2021 and later served as a teaching assistant, developing a strong commitment to student learning. Professor Wong brings economics to life by connecting course concepts to current issues such as



traffic, inflation, and SNAP benefits. Her projects have explored topics including vacant property taxes in California—examining whether new taxes encourage property use under Proposition 13—and the potential economic impacts of a Long Beach “Air Taxi” initiative. She currently teaches ECON 100, ECON 101, and ECON 310, and we are excited to have her as part of our teaching community since Spring 2025.

## Welcome Hazel Hotchandani

We are delighted to welcome Dr. Hazel Hotchandani to the Economics Department, who joined us in Spring 2026. Dr. Hotchandani earned her PhD from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa in 2024. Her research-

sits at the intersection of labor and health economics, migration studies, and applied micro-econometrics.



Her research sits at the intersection of labor and health economics, migration studies, and

applied microeconometrics. Her recent work explores selection in migration, the weight–wage relationship in Mexico, and the development of a parametric Bayesian approach to quantile regression using the asymmetric Laplace distribution. She has taught a wide range of courses in microeconomics, macroeconomics, applied statistics, and econometrics, and is deeply committed to mentoring students and fostering curiosity in the classroom. We are excited to have her as part of our Economics community.

## Welcome Andrew Flores

Andrew Flores received his M.A. in Economics from CSULB Department of Economics and now serves as a lecturer here. His research interests focus on Applied Econometrics, Macroeconomics, and Time-series Econometrics. His recent research is studying the difference between Federal Government debt and



State/Local Government debts and their impact on economic output. Professor Flores also conducts applied economic research with the Office of Economic Research

here at CSULB, working on Economic Impact Analysis' for Long Beach Transit and the City of Long Beach. Alongside his research, Professor Flores is committed to teaching and mentorship, bringing real-world data application skills into the class to help other students develop strong analytical and quantitative skills for careers in economics and related fields.

## Promotion to Associate Professor

We are proud to celebrate the promotion of Dr. Andre Harrison from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor. Dr. Harrison earned his Ph.D. from the University of Alabama in 2020 and has since made significant contributions to our department through his teaching, research, and service.

His scholarly interests span macroeconomic theory, monetary economics, international economics, financial intermediation, economic development, and applied macroeconomics. Guided by his philosophy that economic challenges affect not just individuals but society as a whole, Dr. Harrison's work reflects a deep commitment to understanding and addressing complex, real-world issues.

We extend our sincere thanks to Andre for being such a valued member of our community and for his dedication in hosting the Economics Seminar Series each semester. His leadership and engagement continue to enrich our academic environment, and we congratulate him on this well-deserved achievement. Read more about his research and publications on the page below.



Congratulations to Dr. Harrison!

## Research and Publications

Our faculty continues to push the boundaries of knowledge in Economics. The following showcases their accomplishments and the meaningful developments emerging from their research. This section highlights recent publications, ongoing research projects, conference presentations, and notable achievements that reflect the depth and impact of our department's work.



**Dr. Yutian (Kate) Chen** received her PhD from SUNY Stony Brook in 2007. Her research interests focus on the application of Game Theory in multiple fields, including Industrial Organization and Reinforcement Learning.

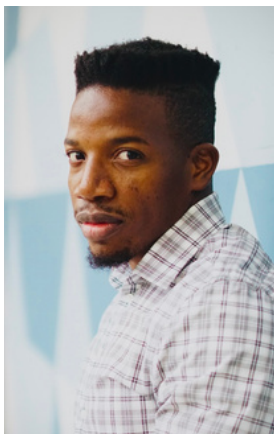
Her recent research is to study dynamic learning when there are multiple agents with conflicting or not fully aligned interests. She has recently published in several academic conferences, and in academic journals such as ACM Transactions on Sensor Networks and International Journal of Production Research. Dr. Chen has been teaching Game Theory in recent years and has been truly enjoying this class. In the summer of 2026, Dr. Chen will participate in an academic conference IEEE CaribCon to present her research paper.



**Dr. Kairon Shayne D. Garcia** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics, with a Ph.D. in Economics from Washington State University (2024). Dr. Garcia’s research focuses on applied

microeconomics and econometrics, with a particular emphasis on causal inference in labor economics, economics of education, and development. She is currently engaged on several research projects, including a book article and a paper on remote work in the U.S. (available through the National Bureau of Economic Research, NBER), as well as studies examining the impact of extreme temperature shocks on employment in the Philippines, and water rights forfeiture in Washington State. These projects are at different stages of the peer review and publication process.

Dr. Garcia is also actively involved in both the university and the broader professional community, serving as a Beach Mentor and as a peer reviewer for several Economics journals. In addition, she has recently presented her research work at the 50th Annual Association for Education Finance and Policy Conference (AEFP 2025), and at the 100th Annual Western Economic Association International Conference (WEAI 2025).



**Dr. Andre Harrison** is an Associate Professor who received his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Alabama in 2020. His research applies Time Series Econometric techniques to topical issues in International

Economics, Monetary Economics, and Economic Development. He has recently published work in notable economic journals such as the Journal of International Money and Finance, Economic Inquiry, and Energy Economics. Dr. Harrison has also actively been involved in student research, which includes recently published work with a former CSULB Economics student in Empirical Economics. He continues to be a champion for student research, as he is currently working with three other former economics students on separate projects. In addition, he has experience of being a thesis advisor for students in the University Honors Program. In 2024, Dr. Harrison participated in the 58th annual staging of the Canadian Economic Association Conference (CEA 2024) and is scheduled to do so again in 2026.



**Dr. Jack Hou**, the most senior tenure-track faculty member in the Economics Department, has been at CSULB since 1989 following the completion of his Ph.D. at Yale. Dr. Hou is deeply committed to the traditional Chinese philosophy of teaching—

to impart knowledge, clarify confusion, and guide the way—Dr. Hou has left a profound mark on countless students, many of whom have gone on to successful careers in academia, public service, and the private sector. Known for his high standards and heartfelt dedication, he considers his students his legacy, and their growth his greatest reward.

Beyond the classroom, Dr. Hou has made significant contributions to the profession through extensive service and leadership in several academic associations, including WSSA, CES, and WEAI. He has delivered keynote speeches around the world and served as editor for multiple high-ranking journals.

Dr. Jack Hou’s recent research has focused on media sentiment analysis surrounding China’s Belt and Road Initiative, with two papers currently under review at top-tier journals. He is also developing a political economy analysis of U.S. trade policy and a new project titled “Balancing Sips and Spirits,” which explores global trends in coffee and alcohol consumption. His work continues to attract growing academic interest, with his highest citation counts coming in the last three years—an uncommon trajectory for a scholar approaching retirement.



**Andrea Mays** published an opinion piece in the Orange County Register titled “Bring Back the SAT at CSU — or Admit We Are Failing Our Own Students.” In the article, she highlights the implications of standardized testing policies and raises

important questions about student preparedness, equity, and accountability in higher education.

In addition to this publication, Andrea Mays continues to share her expertise and passion for Shakespeare and Gilded Age collecting through various speaking engagements. She has been busy lecturing to diverse groups, including the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), donors to the UC Irvine libraries, book clubs, and donors to the Shakespeare Theater Center in Washington, DC.

Andrea Mays continues to research her next book, which will be about the friendship between two figures from the Enlightenment, French satirist Voltaire, and Frederick the Great of Prussia.



**Dr. Mariya Mileva** obtained her PhD in Economics from UC Santa Cruz. Prior to joining the Economics Department, she worked as a research economist at the European Central Bank, the Bank of England, and the Kiel

Institute for the World Economy. She specializes in macroeconomic theory with a focus on labor markets and globalization. Her research applies dynamic macroeconomic models to a range of topics including international trade, experimental economics, optimal monetary policy, and international financial spillovers. She is particularly interested in how trade integration shapes inequality, employment, and business cycle dynamics.

Dr. Mileva is also actively involved in the Long Beach Pledge Pilot Study, a randomized controlled trial evaluating the impact of guaranteed income on single-parent households in the Long Beach area.

Her two most recent publications explore these intersections: “Inter-industry Trade and Business Cycle Dynamics” (Macroeconomic Dynamics, 2024) introduces a dynamic model capturing both inter- and intra-industry trade to study the impact of productivity shocks. The research shows that import-competing sectors are more sensitive to domestic demand, contributing to stronger international business cycle co-movement.

“Trade Liberalization, Wage Inequality, and Monetary Policy” (Journal of International Money and Finance, 2024) develops a two-country, two-sector model with heterogeneous firms and sticky prices to examine the effects of trade liberalization. The study finds that price rigidity can slow wage adjustment and that monetary policy plays a crucial role in shaping real wages and GDP during the transition.



**Dr. Ahmad-Reza Saboori-Memar** has been a member of the Economics Department since 2015. Originally from Persia, he spent his formative years in Germany, where he studied economics. His academic journey

includes international experience as an exchange student in Portugal, followed by a return to Germany to start his Ph.D., and later a move to the United States, where he served as a visiting graduate researcher at UC San Diego.

Dr. Saboori-Memar has taught over 25 courses across economics, finance, business, and management—including five taught in German. His teaching portfolio spans international finance, microeconomics, macroeconomics, game theory, environmental economics, industrial economics, international economics and much more. His global experience extends beyond academia into the financial sector, where he has also worked as a real estate investor in Southern California. Professor Saboori has been selected to lead CSULB’s study abroad program, in partnership with AIFS, to the vibrant city of Kyoto, Japan for Fall 2026. Congratulations, Ahmad!



**Dr. Xuemei Liu** continues to make outstanding contributions to the department through exceptional teaching, dedicated service, and a strong commitment to student success. Her professionalism

and commitment makes her a valued and respected member of the academic community. We are grateful for her continued dedication and the meaningful impact she has had on students, colleagues, and the broader community.



**Herman Singh** is a Tenure Track Professor of Economics at Golden West College and a Lecturer at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB). He earned his Bachelor of Arts in Economics in 2017 and his Master’s in Economics in 2018,

both from CSULB. In addition to his teaching roles, Professor Singh serves as a Research Economist with the Office of Economic Research at CSULB, where he contributes to interdisciplinary projects utilizing econometric modeling, data visualization, and advanced statistical techniques. His work bridges academic research and practical application, offering data-driven insights to support institutional and community-based decision-making.

Earlier this year, he was invited to present a regional economic outlook at the CCIM Southern California Forecast to commercial real estate leaders. He was also interviewed by Spectrum News on a recent Supreme Court decision on tariffs, offering macroeconomic analysis on its implications for consumers, businesses, and trade policy.

We sincerely thank Professor Singh for mentoring students in the Economics Research Poster Competition throughout the Spring 2026 semester.



**Dr. Steve Yamarik** received his Ph.D. in economics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1996. His research focuses on the role of culture in international exchange, the impact of monetary policy on

inequality, and economic growth in U.S. states. During the last academic year, he has published four papers in peer-reviewed journals: “The Effects of Cultural Institutes on Bilateral Trade” in *Economics Letters*, “Federal Reserve Monetary Policy and Income Inequality across US states” (with Makram El Shagi) in the *Journal of International Money and Finance*, “The Effects of World Heritage Sites on Bilateral Tourism Demand” in *Tourism Economics*, and “Federal Reserve Monetary Policy and Income Inequality across US states” (with Jarko Fidrmuc and Ionna Mor) in the *Journal of Cultural Economics*.

Steve presented his research at the Western Economic Association meetings at San Francisco, CA in summer 2025 and will be presenting his research at the Enterprise and Competitive Environment Conference (ECOS) at Brno, Czechia

and Henan / INFER Workshop on Applied Macroeconomics at Zhengzhou, China in spring 2026. He is a member of the American Economic Association (AEA), Association for Cultural Economics International (ACEI) and Western Economic Association International (WEAI).

**Dr. Guy Yamashiro** continues to make outstanding contributions to the department through exceptional teaching, dedicated service, and a strong commitment to student success. His professionalism and commitment make him a valued and respected member of the academic community. We are grateful for his continued dedication and the meaningful impact he has on students, colleagues, and the broader community.

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

Our students remain at the heart of our academic community, and we extend our sincere appreciation to our student employees and members of the Economics Student Association for their continued contributions this year. Their dedication helps create a welcoming and supportive environment while expanding opportunities for economics students to connect, grow, and succeed. We are grateful for their efforts and proud to work alongside such an engaged and motivated group.

In this section, we also recognize the recipients of departmental scholarships and awards, selected by the Graduate and Undergraduate Committees in recognition of their academic excellence. We look forward to celebrating their achievements and staying connected with them as they transition into our growing network of alumni.

## Thank You, Student Employees

As we conclude this academic year, we extend our sincere appreciation to our exceptional student employees. Whether serving as Teaching Assistants, Graduate Assistants, or Instructional Student Assistants, your contributions as graders, proctors, office hour leaders, and tutors have been integral to the department's continued success.

We hope these roles have provided meaningful opportunities for academic and professional growth. Your dedication, professionalism, and hard work have not gone unnoticed, and we are truly grateful for your commitment. It is a privilege to have you as members of our academic community, and we look forward to continued collaboration in the semesters to come.

**Shery Awad**

**Mike Aquino**

**Lucy Baker**

**Tristan Bandong**

**Diego Diaz**

**Andrew Flores**

**Ryan Hernandez**

**Truc Hoang**

**Daniel Glenn**

**Kanika Lee**

**Christina Lopez**

**Marc Geren Masana**

**Ryder Mawby**

**Joseph Moore-Raygoza**

**Hung Nguyen**

**Yuvi Pannu**

**Juan Perez**

**Nathan Perish**

**Christopher Reyes Miranda**

**Venus Versher**



## Scholarship Recipients

We are proud to recognize and celebrate the outstanding achievements of this year's scholarship recipients. During the 2025-2026 academic year, economics students received a total of \$12,500 from department scholarships. We thank our supportive alumni and faculty for recognizing these deserving students' merit.

We grant four scholarships every year: the Ray and Marge Lancaster Endowment, the Powell Endowed Scholarship, the Gene R. Simonson Scholarship, and the Settlemyer Family Scholarship.

The Ray and Marge Lancaster Endowment is awarded to undergraduate students majoring in Economics who have demonstrated strong academic performance, maintaining a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. This year, Shelby Bibler was awarded \$2,000, Joseph Moore Raygoza and Ethen Lundquist was awarded \$1,000 each in recognition of their outstanding academic achievement and continued intellectual growth. We congratulate both recipients on this well-deserved honor.

The Powell Endowed Scholarship is awarded to a continuing full-time undergraduate or graduate student with a minimum of 3.0 GPA. This year, Zoey Burns and Ryder Mawby were awarded \$1,500 each for their pursuit of academic excellence. We congratulate both recipients on this well-deserved honor.

The Gene R. Simonson Scholarship is awarded to a junior or senior economics major or minor who maintains a minimum of a 3.0 GPA and is enrolled in 12 units. This year, two students were awarded a \$1,500 scholarship for their academic excellence. Congratulations, Aaliyah Folquet and Mikaela Henning Melo, for your pursuit of academic excellence.



*Photography by Zoey Burns*

The Settlemyer Family Scholarship is awarded to an Economics major Junior or Senior with a 3.0 GPA who is enrolled in 9 units. This year, Jocelyn Pham was awarded the \$1,000 Settlemyer Family Scholarship for her outstanding academic achievement.

These individuals have demonstrated exceptional dedication, academic excellence, and a commitment to personal and professional growth. Their hard work, perseverance, and contributions to their communities embody the values and spirit of the Economics Department.

We are pleased to introduce the recipients of the 2026–2027 Economics Department scholarships, recognizing their exceptional academic achievements and commitment to growth. Thank you to the generous support of our alumni and faculty, the department awarded \$12,500 in scholarships to outstanding students during the 2025–2026 academic year.

The 2026 – 2027 scholarship recipients are:

Settlemyer Family Endowed Scholarship:

**Jocelyn Pham**

Gene Simonson Endowed Scholarship:

**Aaliyah Folquet**  
**Mikaela Henning**

Powell Endowed Scholarship:

**Zoey Burns**  
**Ryder Mawby**

Ray and Marge Lancaster Scholarship:

**Shelby Bibler**  
**Joseph Moore Raygoza**  
**Ethen Lundquist**

These students have demonstrated academic excellence, maintaining GPAs of 3.0 or higher while actively engaging in their coursework and broader academic communities during the 2025-26 school year. These scholarships not only honor their accomplishments but also encourage their continued success. We congratulate each of them on this well-deserved recognition and look forward to their continued contributions to the field of economics.

We applaud their accomplishments and are confident they will continue to make a meaningful impact in their future endeavors. Congratulations to each recipient on this well-deserved honor!





*Photography by Zoey Burns*

## Departmental Awards

Every year, the Undergraduate and Graduate Committees recognize students for their academic excellence and performance in Economics courses. The departmental awards include the J. Richard Powell Award of Merit, Wallace Atherton Memorial Award, and Outstanding Undergraduates in each of the three majors, Economics, Business Economics, and Mathematical Economics and Economic Theory.

For the 2025 – 2026 school year, the recipients are:

**Alondra Hernandez,**  
J. Richard Powell Award of Merit

**Hung Nguyen,**  
Wallace Atherton Memorial Award &  
Outstanding Undergrad in  
Business Economics

**Yuvraj (Yuvi) Pannu,**  
Outstanding Undergrad in Economics

**Keanu Hua,**  
Outstanding Undergrad in Mathematical  
Economics & Economic Theory

Our department also awards Distinguished Undergraduate and Graduate awards to students who have demonstrated a dedication to academic excellence and achievement.

The 2025-2026 students awarded are:

**Keanu Hua,**  
Distinguished Undergraduate Award

**Yuvraj (Yuvi) Pannu,**  
Distinguished Undergraduate Award

**Lucy Baker,**  
Distinguished Graduate Award

**Andrew Flores,**  
Distinguished Graduate Award

**Congratulations to all of this year's recipients!**



# Congratulations, Beach EDGE Graduate and Undergraduate Class of 2026

The 2024–2025 academic year marked the launch of the Economics Department’s Beach EDGE (Expedited Degrees in Graduate Education) program. Designed to streamline academic pathways, Beach EDGE merges existing baccalaureate and master’s programs into a single accelerated track. Students earn both degrees in just five years by applying during their junior year and begin taking graduate-level courses in their senior year, setting the stage for a seamless transition into graduate studies.

Now, as we wrap up the Spring 2026 semester, we are thrilled to celebrate another major milestone: the graduation of our first Beach EDGE cohort with their master’s degrees.

This moment marks a unique point in their academic journey—it’s the end of their undergraduate chapter, the midpoint of their five-year path, and the exciting beginning of their graduate education.

**Diego Diaz**, B.A. Business Economics,  
M.A. in Economics

**Christina Lopez**, B.A. Business Economics,  
M.A. in Economics

**Marc Geren Masana**, B.A. Business Economics,  
M.A. in Economics



We would also like to welcome our next cohort of Beach EDGE students and congratulate them as they received their bachelor's degree.

**Tristan Bandong**, Economics B.S.

**Corbin Burns**, Economics B.A.

**Daniel Glenn**, Business Economics B.A.

**Yuvraj Pannu**, Economics B.A.

**Joshua Rodriguez**, Business Economics B.A.



To our graduating students, we are immensely proud of your dedication, your perseverance, and your commitment to academic excellence. You have embraced the challenge of an accelerated program and shown that you are ready to take on even more. As you transition into graduate-level work, remember that you are not starting from scratch, you’re building on a strong foundation of knowledge, experience, and determination.



# EVENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS

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Our department aims to develop our students' awareness of career choices as undergraduate economics majors and the options for graduate study through events such as the Economic Seminar Series. Our student organizations also highlight our alumni's career paths and more through their career showcases and professor chats.

## ECONOMICS SEMINAR SERIES

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Each Fall and Spring semester, the Department of Economics hosts guest speakers as part of our Economics Seminar Series. Typically held on Fridays, these seminars feature presentations on a wide range of economic topics, helping students stay current with ongoing research, explore diverse applications of economics, and learn about local Ph.D. programs.

The series also provides valuable opportunities for students to engage directly with speakers—asking questions, networking after presentations, and participating in discussions alongside faculty and peers. Last year, we expanded access by launching an Economics Seminar Series Archive on Canvas, allowing students to view recorded sessions if they were unable to attend live.

This year we had a total of nine guests; among them were local University Professors, CSULB faculty and Ph. D. candidates.

### Fall 2025

On Friday, October 10, Renee Lee, a Ph.D. candidate at UC Irvine, presented her research on the relationship between property values, Mello-Roos taxes, and the efficient provision of local public goods. In her paper titled "Property Values, Mello-Roos Tax and Efficient Local Public-Good Provision," she examined how targeted taxation mechanisms influence housing markets and the allocation of public resources at the local level.

And on next Friday, October 17, Jonathan Kowarski, a Ph.D. candidate at UCLA, presented his research on the economic impacts of labor unions in his paper titled "How Much Do Workers Benefit from Labor Unions? Evidence from Union Formation Elections." His work examined how unionization affects worker outcomes, using evidence from union formation elections to better understand the causal effects of unions on wages and working conditions.

Continuing our seminar series, on Friday, October 24, Minji Kwak, a Ph.D. candidate at USC, presented her research titled “Social Incentives of Non-Elected Leaders in Village Economics.” Her work explored the role of informal leadership and social incentives in shaping economic outcomes within village settings. She examined how non-elected leaders influence decision-making and resource allocation, offering insights into governance structures beyond formal political systems and their implications for local economic development.

In our fourth session, on Friday, October 31, Britni Wilcher, a Visiting Researcher from Stanford University, presented her research titled “*Bridging the Digital Divide for Women Who Report Military Sexual Trauma: Evidence from the Veteran Health Administration’s Distribution of Video-Enabled Tablets.*” Her work examined how access to digital technology can improve healthcare outcomes for women veterans, particularly those who have experienced military sexual trauma. She highlighted the role of technology in expanding access to care and reducing barriers within the Veteran Health Administration system, offering important insights into the intersection of healthcare, technology, and equity.

Finally, in our final Fall 2025 session, on Friday, November 7, Dr. Andre Harrison, Associate Professor at CSULB and Seminar Series Coordinator, presented his research titled “*The Systematic Drivers of Hysteresis.*” His talk explored the underlying mechanisms that contribute to persistent effects in economic systems, examining how temporary shocks can lead to long-term changes in outcomes such as employment and growth. Drawing on both theoretical and empirical insights, Dr. Harrison provided a compelling conclusion to the semester’s seminar series, highlighting the broader implications of hysteresis for economic policy and long-term stability.

### Spring 2026

Kicking off our Spring 2026 seminar series, on Friday, March 13, Angela Mensah, Assistant Professor at Pepperdine University, presented her research titled “When Nature Insures: Using Deep Learning to Price the Contribution of Mangroves to Coastal Storm Surge Protection.” Her work explored how advanced machine learning techniques can be used to quantify the economic value of natural coastal defenses. By analyzing the protective role of mangroves against storm surges, she highlighted the intersection of environmental economics, technology, and climate resilience.



Continuing our Spring 2026 seminar series, on Friday, April 10, Shreya Bhardwaj, a Ph.D. candidate at USC, presented her research titled “When Quality Counts: Early Childhood Regulation and the Long-Run Development of Human Capital.” Her work examined the long-term impacts of early childhood policies and regulatory standards on human capital formation. She discussed how variations in early education quality can shape future outcomes.

And on Friday, April 24, José Antonio Inguanzo González, a Ph.D. candidate at UCLA, presented his research titled “When Quality Counts: Early Childhood Regulation and the Long-Run Development of Human Capital.” His work explored how early childhood regulations influence long-term human capital outcomes, emphasizing the role of policy design in shaping educational quality and economic opportunity.

Concluding our Spring 2026 seminar series, on Friday, May 1, Zhengyi Yu, a Ph.D. candidate at USC, presented his research titled “The Impacts of AI at Scale: Evidence from Research Scientists.” His work examined how the growing adoption of artificial intelligence is transforming research productivity and innovation. Focusing on scientists as a case study, he explored how AI tools influence the pace, direction, and collaboration patterns of

research, offering timely insights into the broader economic implications of technological change.

We thank everyone for presenting and attending 2025-2026 Economics Seminar Series!

**We owe special thanks to Dr. Andre Harrison and Dr. Kairon Garcia for their commitment to the Economic Seminar Series. Thank you for all your hard work!**



# Department Recap

**Convocation** – At this year’s College of Liberal Arts Convocation, the Economics Department had many achievements to recognize. We welcomed both a new tenure-track faculty member and a new staff member, and we celebrated a staff promotion. Two faculty members were honored with 35-year service awards, while another received recognition for 40 years of dedicated service. The event also marked the retirement of a valued faculty member, bringing an outstanding career to a close.



*Andre Harrison and Ty Yim speaking at the College of Liberal Arts Convocation*

**CLA Day** - The Economics Department took part in CLA Day alongside other College of Liberal Arts departments, showcasing our diverse academic offerings, including three majors, two minors, our master’s program, and the newly launched Beach EDGE initiative. We were particularly encouraged by the strong interest in our minors and pleased to see such an enthusiastic turnout.



*Dr. Robert Kleinhenz speaking to students.*

**Meet and Greet - Office of Economic Research.** This academic year, the Office of Economic Research hosted its first-ever meet and greet, where students had the opportunity to connect with Director Dr. Robert Kleinhenz, learn more about OER members, and explore available research opportunities. To learn more about OER’s projects and mission, see page 28.



*Dr. Mariya Mileva and ESA Student Representatives talking to the CLA Dean O'Connor at the CLA Day.*

**The Southern California CCIM Chapter Forecast (CCIM)** offered an opportunity to engage with commercial real estate leaders as a Research Economist representing CSULB Economics and California State University, Long Beach. It was a privilege to share a regional economic perspective on labor markets, capital flows, interest rates, demographic shifts, and sector trends shaping asset performance.

We'd like to give a big thank you to the eight economics students who volunteered at the event. They had the chance to learn more about regional economic trends, connect with professionals, and attend a lunch with the keynote speaker and panel. It's always great to see our students getting involved and making the most of these experiences!



*Economics Student Volunteers at CCIM.*



*2025 Economics Department Holiday Party.*



*Dr. Yutian (Kate) Chen, Masha Esch, Ty Yim.*



*SSPA Department Staff Colleagues.*

**Staff Council Spooktacular Office Decorating Contest** – The Economics Department staff proudly joined forces with the Political Science Department, the Master of Public Administration Department, and Social Work for the big department office decorating contest. Staff from all departments dressed as characters from *Shrek 2*. We were proud of the collaborative effort put into bringing our theme to life with festive decorations and matching popcorn giveaways.

**Holiday Celebration and Service Recognition** - This year the Economics Department was delighted to once again gather for our annual celebration, graciously hosted at Dr. Yamarik's home—we are very grateful, Steve! The evening offered a wonderful opportunity to reconnect and celebrate as a community. We marked a particularly meaningful occasion by celebrating Dr. Wade Martin as he approaches retirement and congratulating Dr. Harrison on his well-deserved promotion to Associate Professor, all while enjoying each other's company and the renewed spirit of togetherness.



*Ty Yim, Dr. Harrison, Dr. Mariya Mileva, Zoey Burns, Dr. Yutian (Kate) Chen, Masha Esch and ESA members at Day at the Beach.*



**Jack's Celebration** — Economics Department staff, colleagues, and students came together to honor Jack Hou's many years of service and dedication to CSULB and the economics community. The gathering was a joyful event marked by shared memories, forward-looking reflections, and laughter. To learn more about Jack's work, turn back to page 10.



*Dr. Yutian (Kate) Chen, Masha Esch and Ty Yim speaking to a student at Day at the Beach.*



*Dr. Hou receiving a basket presented by Dr. Chen*

**Day at the Beach** - The Economics Department participated in the fifth annual Day at the Beach, an event where prospective students and their families visit campus to explore the university and connect with departments. Alongside the Economics Student Association (ESA), we had the pleasure of connecting with many prospective economists and answering their questions as they explored the possibility of making CSULB their home. The strong turnout was exciting, and we were delighted to showcase what makes our department such a supportive and enriching place to learn and grow.





*Photography by Zoey Burns*

# The Office of Economic Research

The CSULB Office of Economic Research (OER) conducts high-impact applied economic research that supports the university's mission by addressing critical economic issues and by providing data-driven solutions that have a meaningful impact on the residents, businesses, and industries of Long Beach and Southern California.

Members of the Office of Economic Research pursued research opportunities over the past year that were consistent with its mission to address critical economic issues and to provide data-driven solutions that have a meaningful impact on the residents, businesses, and industries of Long Beach and Southern California.

A core component of their efforts is student involvement, providing students with hands-on research opportunities that not only contribute to impactful projects but also equip them with the skills necessary for future careers in economics and public policy.



**Dr. Robert Kleinhenz,  
Director**



**Megan Anaya,  
Associate Director**



**Herman Singh,  
Assistant Director &  
Research Associate**

# ECONOMIC IMPACT OF LONG BEACH TRANSIT

“OER research team completed work on the sponsored research project entitled Economic Impact of Long Beach Transit in March 2026. The project was launched a year earlier in April of 2025 and ramped up during the summer of 2025, when OER student research assistants and faculty researchers worked with the Long Beach Transit staff to obtain data on the agency’s purchases from vendors going back several years and anonymized payroll for recent years. Data on purchases was organized by year, geographic location of the vendors, and by industry. It was also assigned to operating and capital expenditures “buckets.” The data was then converted to 2025 dollars and used as inputs to the Los Angeles-Orange County (LA-OC) regional economic model and the California model. Overall, Long Beach Transit had an estimated annual economic impact in excess of \$200 million in LA-OC and more than \$250 million across all of California, with a multiplier of approximately two. It also supported nearly 1,300 jobs in LA-OC and nearly 1,500 statewide. The final report was completed in February 2026 and the findings from the study were reported to the LBT Board in March 2026” - reported Dr. Robert Kleinhenz, OER Director

## STUDENT AND FACULTY INVOLVEMENT

Through collaboration with mentoring faculty, OER encourages students to participate in local projects that address real-world challenges.

This year project research team consisted of:

- Student Researchers: Lucy Baker, BA’24 MA ’25 and Andrew Flores, BA ’24, MA ’25
- Assistant Director and Part-Time Lecturer: Herman Singh, MA
- Associate Director and Part-Time Lecturer: Megan Anaya, MA
- Director: Robert Kleinhenz, PhD
- Executive Director, Professor, and Associate Dean: Seiji Steimetz, PhD

In addition to completing the LBT study, OER researchers took to the road, giving presentations and participating in other events. OER researchers Anaya, Kleinhenz, and Steimetz participated in the Latino Economic Report Summit in October 2025. This was the culmination of a lengthy endeavor that began during the pandemic and culminated in a profile of the Latino population in Long Beach that was contained in the final report and presented at the Summit. Then in February, OER Assistant Director Singh represented the OER as a panelist at the area CCIM commercial real estate conference.



Finally, the OER staff held joint events with the Economics Department, giving students, faculty, staff, and alums the opportunity to network and hear about recent developments with both the OER and the Department.

Last but not least, the OER team thanks Chair Chen, Ty Yim, and Masha Esch for their support over the past year!

# Economics Student Association

**The Economics Student Association (ESA)** is an undergraduate student organization dedicated to connecting classroom learning with real-world applications of economics. Through workshops, guest speakers, and networking events, ESA provides students with opportunities to explore career pathways, build professional skills, and engage with the broader economics community. This year, the organization continued to expand student involvement and strengthen connections between students, faculty, and alumni.

We recognize and appreciate the Economics Student Association for its dedication to supporting student engagement, academic growth, and career development.



*ESA team with Dr. Chen*

**R Coding Workshop: Dr. Andre Harrison** - On Oct. 11, ESA hosted a hands-on R coding workshop led by Dr. Andre Harrison, hands-on R coding workshop introducing students to foundational econometrics tools and practical data analysis techniques.

**Professor Showcase: Sports Economics with Professor Singh** – On Oct. 28th, Professor Singh explored the economics of professional sports, highlighting market dynamics and career pathways within the industry. Students gained insight into applying economic theory to real-world sports markets.

**Professor Showcase: Sports Economics with Professor Singh** – On Oct. 27th, Professor Singh discussed the economics of sports, highlighting industry dynamics and career pathways within professional athletics. Students gained insight into applying economic theory to real-world markets.

## Fall Board Members

**Karla Sabe** President

**Jasmine Forbes**, Vice President

**Aadhil PM**, Treasurer

**Hung Nguyen**, Communications & Secretary

**Priya Chundi**, Corporate Relations

**Keanu Hua**, Academic Relations

**Ella Graves**, **Yuvi Pannu**, Public Marketing

**Bruce Nunez**, Outreach and Finance

**Coffee with Professors:** On Nov 2nd, ESA hosted its annual Coffee with Professors event, giving students the opportunity to connect with faculty in an informal setting. The event encouraged conversation about courses, research, and academic planning.

**Economics on Ice: Intercollegiate Social** - On Nov. 13th, ESA partnered with students from CSUF, CPP, USC, and Chapman for a multi-university networking event at Anaheim ice. The social fostered community building and collaboration among economics students across campuses.

**Economics in the Workplace:** - **Manny Rubianes:** On Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>, Alumnus Manny Rubianes shared insights on post-graduate pathways, startup foundations, and applying economics in business settings. Students learned how to translate a degree into career opportunities.

**Pathways to Academia: Ashley Wong** – On Feb 11th Professor Ashley Wong, a CSULB alum, shared her journey to becoming a professor and offered guidance on developing key skills and networking. The session provided insight into academic career pathways and professional growth.

**Local Economic Development: Julian Cernuda** – On Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> Julian Cernuda from the City of Long Beach discussed economic development initiatives and opportunities within the public sector. Students gained insight into working for the city and applying economics to local policy.

**Careers in Economic Research: Nicholas Roy** – On March 4th CSULB alum Nicholas Roy shared his experience working in economic research, particularly in nonprofit and environmental economics. The session highlighted career pathways and applications of economics in research-focused roles.

**Economic Research & Career Paths: Dr. Robert Kleinhenz** – On March 11<sup>th</sup> Dr. Robert Kleinhenz, Director of Economic Research at CSULB, discussed the versatility of an economics degree and its real-world applications. Students gained valuable insight into research careers and professional opportunities.

**Resume Building Workshop: Nancy Luong** – On March 18 Nancy Luong led a workshop on career development, focusing on resume building, interview preparation, and cover letters. The session provided practical tools to help students strengthen their job application skills.

**Wealth Management & Finance Careers: Alyssa Alvarez** – On March 25 Alyssa Alvarez, a Wells Fargo advisor and CSULB alum, shared insights into careers in wealth management and the finance industry. The event emphasized career preparation and navigating opportunities in finance.



## Spring Board Members

- Jasmine Forbes**, President
- Hung Nguyen**, Vice President
- Destiny Garcia**, Communications/Secretary
- Aadhil PM**, Head of Finance/Treasurer
- Stacy Sanchez**, Head of Academic Relations
- Ella Graves**, **Yuvi Pannu**, Head of Social Media
- Mikaela Henning**, Head of Community Service
- Priya Chundi**, Corporate Relations



*Spring 2025 ESA Board Members*

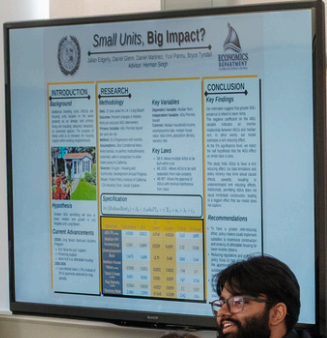
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**Scan the QR code to give back to the Economics Department**  
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Group 2: The Econ Buddies  
 Spillover Effects of Zoning Reform: Lessons From Minneapolis for LA County's Housing Crisis