



Fall Newsletter 2016

December 2, 2016

Fall Welcome Reception



Prof. Silvia with students Maoyuan (Sherry) Zhang, Nabila Ferdous, Michael Lucci, and Yolanda Ngo.

Dr. and Mrs. Porzecanski again hosted the IER Fall Welcome Party for students and faculty at their home. Food and conversation were thoroughly enjoyed, and no one could have asked for a more beautiful Washington evening to get to know one another!



Prof. Porzecanski with students AnnElizabeth Konkel, Alexis Cherry, and Julie Geiger

New Student Faces in IER/IE

Welcome New Students!

We are pleased to welcome the following new students who are entering the International Economic Relations program:

Ian Bonanno: An undergraduate student at AU who has been admitted to the accelerated B.A./M.A.-IER program, he hails from coastal Maryland and has held several internships in Washington DC, including at the National Endowment for the Arts, the United States Peace Corps, and the DC Water and Sewer Authority. He has also had interesting volunteer experience with the Smithsonian Museum of American Art and the Calvert County Board of Elections, and as part of American University's Annual Fund phonathon. Ian has a keen interest in China, and is currently doing a semester abroad at Peking University, Beijing.

Gabriela Chamartin: Born and raised in Barranquilla, Colombia, she is a graduate of Universidad del Norte with a B.A. in International Relations who is currently completing an online B.A. in Economics at the Universidad Politécnico Grancolombiano. Gabriela has interned at Colombia's Mission to the Organization of American States in Washington DC, and has been working for the Comité Intergremial del Atlántico in Barranquilla, a non-profit association of the local business community. She is fluent in English, French and German and of course in her native Spanish.

Qunrui (Tim) Zhou: An undergraduate student at AU who has been admitted to the accelerated B.A./M.A.-IER program, Qunrui was born and raised in China and he is a double-major in International Studies and Economics. He has been working on campus as a tutor in Chinese and Economics; has held interesting internships at CCTV-America and the Hudson Institute; and has done volunteer work for Everybody Wins! DC, a non-profit promoting children's literacy through shared reading experiences.

Alumni Profiles



Jeffrey Odum, IER '14

Jeffrey serves as a Senior International Trade Specialist with the **U.S. Department of Commerce** since August 2015. In this capacity, he organizes and attends trade- promotion events to help connect US companies with foreign clients in order to facilitate export sales. This entails travel to places like Las Vegas or New York and occasionally also overseas. Jeffrey also helps to organize trade missions, whereby a group of U.S.companies are escorted to foreign markets to meet potential clients.

“A typical day at the office for me usually involves working closely with my team and client partners for an upcoming trade event,” says Jeffrey. “Most mornings are dominated by coordinating planning efforts with my overseas colleagues, aligning their input with our clients’ needs. My afternoons are focused on drafting memos for distribution within Commerce or to our overseas personnel, to provide updates on upcoming events.”

Jeffrey attended the IER Program while already working at Commerce. From 2008 until mid-2015, he managed advocacy and issue-monitoring in support of U.S. companies impacted by the trade policies of Australia, Canada and the European Union. He also developed and coordinated strategies for effective U.S. government engagement with those foreign governments, establishing relationships across the U.S. private sector and the relevant foreign official agencies.

Prior to joining Commerce, and after graduating from Salisbury University (MD) with a B.A. in Economics, Jeffrey had worked for a couple of years as an international trade analyst at **Exceed Corporation**, a Maryland-based company that provides technical, management, and analytical services to federal, state, and local governments, as well as private industry.

Reflecting on his career, Jeffrey recalls that “prior experience living abroad – I was raised partly in Nigeria – instilled in me a strong interest in international affairs and current events. With respect to skills, and beyond my having majored in Economics, which proved very useful, I would say that an orientation toward research, coupled with natural curiosity, were important. Developing organizational skills also became crucial over time, as many roles have depended on my managing time and priorities with minimal guidance. Finally, being personable has been very helpful, as my positions have required collaborating well across teams and different constituencies.”

In terms of his recollections on the IER Program, Jeffrey says that “my IER concentration was international business, and that proved very helpful to my career, because it helped me transition to my current, export-promotion position shortly afterwards. I don’t believe the transition and subsequent success would have been possible without the academic experience I went through at AU.”

Moreover, according to Jeffrey, “the Practicum was also instrumental to my achievements since graduating. My project team was tasked with advising a local technology firm to evaluate options for international expansion. Our ability to develop an evaluation methodology while collaborating with our client to ensure proper alignment resulted in a successful report that the client subsequently used to make a foreign acquisition. The skills gained and improved during that project have been invaluable in my current role developing strategies and platforms to help U.S. companies develop international growth opportunities.”

His concluding advice to current students: “Certainly, pursue internship opportunities whenever possible. When interning, be open-minded and eager to help in any way – even getting coffee, doing a printing job, or taking meeting notes. With regard to networking, reach out to professors and alumni who seem to have careers or backgrounds that interest you, asking questions about how they got to where they are. And learn how to collaborate and empathize with others, because these ‘people skills’ never go out of style and only become more important as you grow professionally.”



Lawrence Lamonica, IEP '02

Born in New York to Chilean parents, and raised in Santiago, Chile, Lawrence obtained a BS in Economics and Management from Universidad Gabriela Mistral, and worked as an investment advisor at local broker-dealer **LarrainVial**, before coming to the United States to attend American University. In the 1990s and early 2000s, today's IER Program was known as the IEP Program, where IEP stood for "International Economic Policy."

Fast-forward fourteen years from his graduation, and Lawrence is Vice President of Business Development for **SOL Capital Management Company**, a private investment advisory firm based in the DC Metro Area. He is responsible for managing relationships with Latin American investors, as well as developing business opportunities throughout the region. A typical day, according to Lawrence, "includes interacting and meeting with clients, private bankers, tax lawyers, and trust-services firms to discuss issues related to constructing and maintaining highly-customized and globally-diversified portfolios."

During his time in the IEP Program, Lawrence interned in the **Office of the Western Hemisphere** at the U.S. Department of the Treasury, and landed a full-time position there as an International Economist upon graduating from AU. After three years at Treasury, Lawrence returned to Chile, where he worked as an independent advisor in the Office of International Organizations in the country's **Ministry of Finance**. However, he soon came back to Washington, DC and joined SOL Capital Management nearly ten years ago. As a side interest,

Lawrence has also been involved with the **Chilean- American Foundation**, a non-profit organization based in DC that raises funds for projects benefiting underprivileged children in Chile. He began as a volunteer, but over the course of a few years, he took on a much larger role within the Foundation, culminating in serving as the President of the Board until his term expired in 2015.

Reflecting on his experience in government, the private sector, and in a non-profit, Lawrence feels that “being able to draw on years of experience in all three sectors gives me a much broader perspective that has proven useful in strengthening my career path.”

Looking back at his time in the IEP Program, Lawrence recalls developing a useful background on the activities and policies of international financial institutions like the World Bank, IMF and **IDB**. Lawrence said: “My classes in the program allowed me to acquire a keen understanding of economic and financial theories. I am also glad I took several international business courses at Kogod, which complemented my course of study in IEP. I highly recommend that current students take at least a few courses outside of SIS, as I did.”

In terms of other advice for current students, Lawrence says: “In a world that is so uncertain, I recommend constantly challenging conventional thinking, focusing on improving analytical skills, and proactively building and strengthening a network of contacts. The US election, as well as the referendums in the UK and Colombia, have shown how entire populations, media, markets, and experts can be blindsided by conformity. It is upon us to dig deeper and try to better understand the world we live in and the challenges we face.”

Dr. Arturo Porzecanski, Program Director
Martha Berhane, Program Coordinator
International Economic Relations
International Economics
School of International Service

American University
4400 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20016
202-885-6713 ier@american.edu