

School of International Service

American University – Washington, DC

International Economic Relations

Winter 2014

Dear students, alumni, faculty, and friends of IER



DR. ARTURO C. PORZECANSKI Director, International
Economic Relations Program
Distinguished Economist in
Residence

The “Spring” semester is underway but it has been so cold this year that it should be renamed the “Winter” semester!

In this issue we call attention to seven high-achieving students who have joined our program this semester, either because they are new arrivals to American University or else because they have transferred in from another SIS program. We extend to them all the warmest welcome we can manage given the frigid weather outside.

We also take pleasure in profiling three faculty members, two of whom taught here for the first time in Spring 2013, and one who has been on board for several years. Prof. Catherine Bocskor, an alum of American University who went on to law school and has had a successful career as general counsel for various multinational corporations, runs the IER-sponsored practicum, which this semester involves projects with one U.S. government agency and three corporate partners: BAE Systems, a global provider of national defense and security products; Blackboard, a leader in education technology with which all AU students are familiar; and WeddingWire, a software company that hosts a wedding destination site and provides software for wedding-related businesses. Students are working in teams researching issues related to actual or potential operations of an international nature in each of these companies.

The fourth project, courtesy of an IER alum who proposed it, is sponsored by the U.S. Commerce Department’s International Trade Administration. In that practicum, students are looking

into which countries would make for suitable trade-agreement partners for the United States. In addition, Prof. Bocksor is leading another practicum class involving projects in Hungary: one with the National Innovation Office of Hungary; another with a Hungarian start-up company named MiniBrake; and a third one with a Hungarian non-profit named Hazikence. The students are advising Hungary on how to introduce alternative financing vehicles such as crowdfunding into the country.

Prof. Manuel Suárez-Mier is a seasoned practitioner who has been teaching mostly undergraduate courses in international economics and economic globalization, and a Master's level class in the economics of transnational crime. He had a distinguished career as staff member of Mexico's central bank and finance ministry; held high-ranking appointments at the Embassy of Mexico in Washington; worked as a senior international economist in Bank of America and also in a leading bank in Mexico; and taught economics for many years at a prestigious university in Mexico City. We wish Prof. Suárez-Mier all the best in his latest part-time endeavor as Director of the Center for North American Studies at American University.

Prof. Andrew (Andy) Wolfe, a senior official at the International Monetary Fund, has been teaching the class on "Financial Issues in Latin America" which I developed and taught through Spring 2012. Under his tenure the class has become very popular, especially with students from the Economics Department. A couple of weeks ago, Dr. Wolfe kindly agreed to raise the cap on the class to absorb the steady and long waitlist that had formed, thereby taking in everyone who wanted to learn macroeconomics and macrofinance as practiced with various degrees of success and failure in Latin America. Prior to joining the IMF twenty-seven years ago to work mostly in its Western Hemisphere Department, Prof. Wolfe taught at Maine's Bowdoin College. He holds a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Wisconsin.

We are truly blessed to have attracted the kind of great new students and experienced, knowledgeable faculty who are taking the IER program to a much higher level than ever before.

DR. ARTURO C. PORZECANSKI

Winter 2014: New Faces in IER

Ha Bui: She was awarded her B.A. degree in International Relations, with a specialization in International Economics, by the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, which is located in Hanoi. After graduating in late 2009, Ha worked for the Hanoi Stock Exchange, at first mainly in strategic planning and new-product development, and more recently as team leader of the exchange's international relations area, planning and coordinating all international cooperation activities.

Greg Haar: A graduate from California's Pepperdine University with a B.A. in International Studies, with a focus on Europe and minors in History and German, he started out in Fall 2012 in the Global Governance, Politics, and Security program. Greg has been working on the side for Starbucks Coffee and has had several internships with SS8 Networks, a leading worldwide provider of end-to-end communications and cyber intelligence solutions. He is bilingual in German and studied abroad in Heidelberg.

Karen Kelly: A recent graduate from American University with a B.A. in International Studies, specializing in international economic relations with a regional focus in Asia, as well as a minor in the Chinese language, she had enrolled in the Comparative and Regional Studies program. Last year Karen interned with the U.S.-China Education Trust and in 2012 with the Feminist Majority Foundation, while helping bilingual elementary school children learn to read better (through the DC Reads program) and also young teenage students struggling with extreme learning disabilities (through LS Tutoring). She grew up and went through high school in Switzerland.

Alexi Maxwell: A 2010 graduate from Kentucky's Berea College with a double major in Economics and Mathematics, Alexi worked as a consultant for the school's Learning Center, a teaching assistant in both Econ and Math, and copy editor for "The Pinnacle" (the college newspaper). She spent the following year honing her skills as a freelance tutor, and received her CELTA from Teaching House New York. In the summer of 2011, she moved to Japan as part of the JET Program, and worked for the Board of Education in Okayama, a prefecture located between Osaka and Hiroshima. She left Japan last fall to spend a few months travelling within the United States.

Juan Pajon: He is the recent recipient of an MBA degree from Florida's Nova Southeastern University and a previous, 2010 graduate from Florida's St. Thomas University, with a B.A. in Political Science and in Liberal Studies/Global Leadership. In 2012-13, Juan worked as an international admissions officer at St. Thomas University, which allowed him to travel on recruitment business to the Caribbean, India and Russia. Before that, he was an office and sales manager for Rosmel Pools and a store manager at The Men's Wearhouse.

Amanda Saville: She received a B.A. in International Studies from Pennsylvania's Muhlenberg College in 2011, with a concentration in environmental issues and minors in French and Economics, and began her studies here last Fall with the U.S. Foreign Policy program. Amanda is currently interning with UK Trade & Investment USA, which works with U.K.-based businesses to ensure their success in the United States, and encourage American companies to look to the United Kingdom as their global partner of choice. In 2012, she worked for the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers-Standards Association and also interned with the League of Women Voters of New Jersey. She has studied and travelled through China.

Brittany Sholes: A 2009 graduate of Michigan's Grand Valley State University, with a Bachelor's in Business Administration and majors in International Business and Marketing, she studied abroad in Spain and also in Taiwan. Once done with college, Brittany worked for a year as a licensed investment banker for JP Morgan Chase's office in Ann Arbor, and then left in 2010 for Korea to teach English to middle-school students, on the staff of the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education. After a couple of years there, she relocated to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 2012 where she taught English to college students attending Princess Nora University.

Prof. Catherine Bocskor, Adjunct Professorial Lecturer



Dr. Catherine Bocskor is a 1969 alum of American University who went on to law school and obtained her Juris Doctor from the University of Toledo College of Law, and then an LLM in Securities and Finance from Georgetown University and an LLM in International Law from George Washington University. She has had a remarkable 40 -year career in international law and business, mainly as an attorney for various multinational corporations.

“The lessons I learned at SIS and the encouragement I received from my professors had a profound effect on my career,” says Bocskor. “I fell in love with international law because of an SIS professor's enthusiasm and dedication to the field.” When she returned to DC after a stint teaching macroeconomics, international business, and business law at a university in Saudi Arabia, she says, “the School of International Service was my first choice to develop my interest in teaching.”

Dr. Bocskor feels that her perspective as an international business veteran enables her to make a unique contribution to the IER program. “I have served as in -house counsel and General Counsel for three multinational corporations over a sixteen -year period... Now that I am teaching the practicum on “Issues in International Economics and Business,” I can bring all of this experience to bear on the international business and regulatory issues that the students confront in the class.”

She encourages IER students to “...always keep an open mind about the rest of your career. Never turn down an opportunity to learn and grow as a person and as a professional... Also, remember that every contact you make is potentially someone who can advance your career in the future, so always give your best effort to any project you undertake.”

Prof. Andrew Wolfe, Adjunct Professorial Lecturer



Dr. Andy Wolfe, a senior manager of the International Monetary Fund's Western Hemisphere Department, is currently in his second semester of teaching on a part-time basis at SIS.

Currently, one of Dr. Wolfe's primary research interests is the coming transition of the Cuban economy, so he is intent on teaching a course on economic transition issues or on economic challenges in the Caribbean region. He is also very interested in the current debate on the role of income inequality and sustainable growth, which he says is "overdue" as an issue of public-policy importance.

In addition to the conventional wisdom that our graduates need to be technologically savvy, Dr. Wolfe highlights language skills as being of great importance in the job search of IER students. "The more languages students can speak and write—thus gaining the ability to communicate verbally with people from different cultures—the more they will be advantaged." He also offered some words of wisdom concerning students' pursuit of current economic affairs coverage: "Stay away from US-based news companies (except for NPR) and the Internet-based news sources, including Facebook and Twitter," he advises. "The coverage of world events is not sufficient in the former and not vetted in the latter. The best sources are BBC World, NPR, and the Financial Times."

When asked why he chose to become an adjunct professor, Dr. Wolfe said the following: "After working at the Fund for over 25 years, I thought that teaching would be a great way to share my long experience with the younger generation. After trying it out last Spring, I realized how much richer a course I can offer now compared to when I taught for a few years right after graduate school."

Prof. Manuel Suárez-Mier, Economist in Residence



Prof. Manuel Suárez-Mier, one of IER's two practitioner/ scholars with full-time positions on our faculty, has recently been designated the new director of the AU [Center for North American Studies](#). He offers his students the perspective of a 35-year professional career in Western

Hemisphere finance, trade, and economic policymaking. His long tenure in Mexico's Central Bank (Banco de México) was peppered with interesting assignments in various Mexican government entities at home and in the United States, as well as with stints in banking and in academia. Specifically, Suárez-Mier taught economics at the prestigious Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM), the University of New Mexico, and also at Georgetown University. He did his graduate studies at the University of Chicago, rose to become the Chief of Staff of the governor of Mexico's central bank, and is best known for his role as the top economic diplomat in Washington at the time of the difficult negotiations of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). More recently (2007-09), he represented the Attorney General of Mexico in Washington during the negotiation on the Mérida Initiative, a security cooperation agreement forged by both nations to jointly fight transnational criminal organizations. He has written extensively on issues related to political economy in Latin America.

Prof. Suárez-Mier has taught part-time in the IER program since 2006, but in 2011, he joined SIS on a full-time basis. Prof. Suárez-Mier emphasizes that the transition to a teaching career, which he described as a "love affair," came naturally: "Throughout my professional career, I always did some teaching on the side, as the best way to keep my knowledge up to date and to be able to perform better in whatever "day job" I had. Once I opted for early retirement, that opened up the opportunity to teach full-time at SIS while carrying out research at a think-tank and getting involved in other activities. I also supplement my teaching with a weekly column in one of Mexico's leading newspapers plus frequent appearances on radio and TV discussing economic and financial issues. I particularly enjoy the interaction with my students and the "eureka" moments when they—or I—finally understand something that had eluded us."



Prof. Suarez-Mier speaks with IER student Elizabeth Felling at the 2013 Fall Welcoming Reception

Prof. Suárez-Mier retains his longstanding interest in the economic integration of North America, and especially in light of the rising competitiveness of the European Union and Asian regions, has hopes for near-term progress on this long-bypassed issue.

What nuggets of professional development or career advice do you have for our IER students?

- If you want to have a great professional career after completing your studies, you must make every effort to deliver a great performance as a student.
- Time flies, so you must use it wisely; do not waste it.

- Take full advantage of AU's unique location: you have here the federal government, numerous think- tanks, many industry associations, plenty of embassies, hundreds of NGOs, and several other excellent universities, all of which sponsor interesting programs on every imaginable topic.
 - Complete as many internships as you possibly can; they will open the doors to future professional opportunities.
 - Office hours are really key to establish good personal connections with the faculty, learn a lot more than what you get in class, and practice your social skills, so take advantage of them.
 - Step outside your intellectual comfort zone and work on your weaknesses; these might be the last safe opportunity for you to do so.
-

Recent Graduate Profile: David Parker '13



2013 IER graduate David Parker's path to SIS began during an undergraduate year spent abroad in Kyoto, Japan. Although he was then a student of Japanese literature, the impact of a strengthening yen on his dollar- denominated budget sparked an interest in economics that he pursued during his senior year, graduating with an economics minor in 2011. After he came to AU, he began an internship with the Simon Chair in Political Economy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), an international affairs think tank where he now works full- time as a research associate.

During his time at SIS, David was involved in the Spring 2013 IER practicum, during which his four-person team had the opportunity to travel to Myanmar to conduct research for their final project: a report providing recommendations for the Myanmar government on how best to attract FDI inflows. "It's pretty hard to beat the opportunity to go to a country like Myanmar and interview top experts from the private, public, and non-profit sector on that country's attempt to engineer a rapid economic and political opening simultaneously" says David about the trip. He has since returned to the region for various research projects, including an ongoing two-year study of Chinese economic decision-making. After CSIS, David hopes to return to Asia to live and work. "Ideally, I'd like to go back and live in Japan for a while, then spend some time in Southeast Asia, hopefully in Indonesia or Myanmar. I'm fascinated by the changes taking place in the region,

particularly since they each have such important and distinct roles to play in the evolution of regional dynamics over the coming decades.”

It’s obvious that travel was a major upside to David’s experience at SIS, but he cites “juggling everything” as the hardest part. While he’s no stranger to a heavy work load—between his years in high school and as an undergraduate he worked as a demolitionist, caterer, resident assistant, house painter, tutor, and telephone fundraiser—the graduate experience “...definitely felt like a few years in overdrive.” Prior to landing his current position at CSIS, where he primarily focuses on Chinese and Japanese economic policymaking and U.S. economic strategy towards Asia, David worked as a Teaching and Research Assistant for several professors, and held a variety of student leadership posts, serving as President of the Council for International Economic Relations (CIER), a member of the Graduate Student Council, and the Executive Vice-Chairman of the Graduate Leadership Council. David also served as the student representative on the IER faculty search which culminated with the hiring of Professor Daniel Bernhofen.

We asked David what advice he would give to first-year IER students on surviving and making the most of their time on campus. “I’m a big fan of starting from first principles: before you even start working hard on your education, work hard to figure out what you want your education to do for you, and then act in that context. And if you ever feel your motivation slacking, pick up a copy of *Average is Over*. It’s a book by Tyler Cowen, an economist at George Mason, that looks at current trends and likely advances in technology and, essentially, argues that the future will consist only of those at the top and those at the bottom. It’s very scary, but eye-opening in terms of thinking about what you need to do to be competitive in a field that interests you.” Particularly for those interested in policy, he advises, “Look for help and insight from your peers and advisors early and often.... though always do your homework on the person you’re consulting to help make the most of your time with them. And when you ask for help, empathize! Don’t assume they know you – give them the information from you that they need in order to be helpful.”

In terms of the state of economics education, David believes that “...at the graduate level, for someone studying International Affairs, I think it’s more important to take a rigorous course in international political economy than in economics. You’ll learn a lot of the same concepts and a fair share of the tools, but you’ll get them in the context of real incentives, societal interests, and power struggles, rather than the overly positivist approach that I think introductory economics courses sometimes take. You’ll also understand some of why economic policy is always going to be contentious — even when the economists’ all agree (e.g. on the benefits of free trade)—and regardless of what the welfare-maximizing condition might be.”

In his spare time, David loves reading science fiction, going to metal concerts, and practicing martial arts and salsa dancing. His favorite podcast is EconTalk.

Recent News

The Council for International Economic Relations (CIER), our student group, holds an event-planning meeting in the program suite on January 27, 2014.



CIER sponsored and organized an extremely informative panel discussion on December 8, 2013, with three distinguished alumni: Allison Rose-Sonnesyn '04, with the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology; Lawrence Lamonica '02, with SOL Capital Management Company; and Yun (Monica) Zhang '09, with the National Foundation for Cancer Research. The panelists spoke about their career paths and current job responsibilities; discussed the educational background and practical skills most needed to find and perform well in their professional positions; provided tips for job searches and networking opportunities; and answered specific questions from the IER students in attendance.



On November 11, 2013, IER hosted a presentation by Dr. Ali Al-Eyd and Janyne Quarm of the International Monetary Fund's European Department. Al-Eyd (Ph.D., Imperial College London) is a Senior Economist in the IMF's European Department and previously worked at Citigroup, Dresdner Kleinwort and the National Institute of Economic and Social Research. Ms. Quarm (B.A. & M.A. from SIS, American University) is a Research Analyst in the Fund's European Department and previously worked at the U.S. Congress and the Treasury Department, and was an intern with Chile's Ministry of Foreign Relations and Puerto Rico's Federal Affairs Administration. Prof. Randall Henning was the discussant.

Calendar

February

Tuesday, Feb. 18: Meet your new advisor: Kristin Richards
4:30 to 5:30 PM, SIS 331
Meet-and-greet with coffee.

Friday, Feb. 21: IER Alumni Panel
5:30 to 8:00 PM, SIS 233
Light dinner served.

March

Saturday, March 9 - Sunday, March 16: Spring Break

Friday, March 21: Fall 2014 Course Registration Opens

April

Wednesday, April 30: Final Exams Begin

May

Saturday, April 10: Graduation

4400 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20016-8071

Shannon Hilsey
Program Coordinator
International Economic Relations Program

(202) 885-6713
IER@american.edu

