

School of International Service – American University

International Economics Relations

Summer 2016 – July 28, 2016

It seems like just last week we were celebrating Commencement ...



... and now we are already welcoming our new students!

Summer 2015 : 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:

Nyanya Browne

Born and raised in St Kitts and Nevis, she has previously attended Spelman College (Georgia) and Temple University (Pennsylvania), having obtained B.A. and M.A. degrees in Economics. Nyanya is a Trade Policy Officer within her country's Ministry of International Trade, Industry, Commerce and Consumer Affairs. She previously served as a Bank Examiner at the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank. Her current research interest is to analyze to what extent foreign aid has helped the development of small, island states like St Kitts and Nevis. She is entering the Graduate Certificate Program in International Economic Relations.

Alexis Cherry

An alumnus of Florida State University with a B.S. degree in International Affairs and Economics, she spent a semester studying in Paris and during the past year has been based in Ankara, Turkey. Alexis has been teaching English at Yildirim Beyazit University and also working as a Research Assistant at Ankara Social Sciences University, helping faculty members there draft a grant proposal to the European Union for financial infrastructure-security funding. Previously, she interned at the International Trade Administration in Washington, DC. Alexis is most interested in international trade policy issues.

Julie Geiger

The recipient of a B.A. degree in International Studies and Political Science from Thomas More College (Kentucky), she spent academic semesters in Washington, DC, and also in France, and spent considerable time in Jamaica, as well. Since her graduation from college, Julie devoted two years to the Peace Corps assigned to Benin, West Africa, and most recently a year with AmeriCorps VISTA, as a Financial Education Resource Coordinator based in Cincinnati, Ohio. She is interested in globalization, economic development, and political economy.

Peter Giblin

A recent alumnus of the Ohio State University, where he earned a B.A. in International Studies, Peter wrote an honors thesis on "Strategic Trade Theory in the Brazil-Canada WTO Dispute" which covered the politics, economics and legality of a major WTO dispute between Brazil and Canada. Peter was an avid member of Ohio State's Model United Nations team and enjoyed traveling the country to MUN conferences. Peter is keenly interested in global economic governance and international political economy issues.

Romero Harper Jr.

A recent graduate of Kent State University (Ohio), with a B.B.A. degree in Finance and a minor in International Business, he has a strong interest in investment strategies and analysis, and aspires to become an international financial analyst. Romero is especially interested in economic and financial issues in Sub-Saharan Africa, and has researched how dividend and earnings announcements affect African stock markets. He has had work experience in two Ohio companies, Sunless and Morgan Technical Ceramics.

Jovianus (Alden) Hartopo

The recipient of a B.A. degree in Economics and International Relations from Calvin College (Michigan), he wrote an honors thesis titled "Facing the ASEAN Economic Community: A Case Study on the Republic of Indonesia." Alden had a summer internship at the Goldman Sachs office in Salt Lake City and a previous summer as a writer for an Indonesian English-language newspaper, *The Jakarta Globe*. In the year after his college graduation, Alden worked as the lead writer for a start-up company based in Chicago, and also as an intern with a data analytics company serving school districts in Michigan and beyond. He is strongly interested in East Asian regionalism and regional-integration issues.

AnnElizabeth Konkel

A graduate of Mount Holyoke College (Massachusetts), she earned a B.A. in History and was a four-year member, and two-year captain, of its varsity tennis team. AnnElizabeth had internships at the U.S. Army War College in Pennsylvania, and in Washington, DC, at the Hudson Institute's Center for Political- Military Analysis and at the Middle East Institute. In the past year, she has been working as an Executive Assistant at Development Alternatives Inc., a global development consulting company. AnnElizabeth has a particular regional interest in South Asia.

Artur Kurbanov

Born and raised in the Ukraine, he obtained B.S. and M.S. degrees in Business Management from the Luhansk Taras Shevchenko National University. The Maidan Revolution awoke in Artur an interest in the economic and foreign-relations dilemmas facing his country, and this has motivated his decision to study international trade, financial and governance issues at SIS/AU. During the past year-and-a-half, Artur performed auditing work for KPMG's office in Kiev.

Caitlin Stewart

The recipient of a B.S. in International Affairs and Spanish from Florida State University, she had a study abroad experience in Valencia, Spain. Caitlin returned to Madrid after graduating in order to teach English and improve on her Spanish, and subsequently moved to Budapest, Hungary, to work in sales at the company Global Leading Conferences Europe. Prior to going to college, she had the opportunity to travel to Brazil, Norway, Slovenia and Sweden through CISV USA, an international organization that promotes peace through understanding and friendship among young people.

Warren Vierheller

An alumnus of the University of Louisville (Kentucky), he earned a B.S. in Economics and had the opportunity to spend a study abroad year at the University of Seoul. Last year, Warren returned to Seoul to attend Korea University, a partner of AU/SIS, and complete the first year of a Master's degree program in International Development and Cooperation studies. He has now transferred into IER/SIS in order to complete his studies. Warren is fluent in Mandarin.

Maoyuan(Sherry) Zang

Born and raised in China, she is a recent graduate of Nankai University (Tianjin), having been awarded a B.A. in Economics. Maoyuan has had the opportunity to study abroad at the Pompeu Fabra University (Barcelona) and also at Oxford University. She has held an internship at a Chinese investment management firm and also a research assistantship at the Nankai Institute of International Economics. She has a special interest in the operations of multinational companies.

Alumni Profiles

Jon Menaster, IER '10



Jon lives in fashionable Brooklyn and works as a senior analyst for the [Government Accountability Office](#). The GAO performs financial and performance audits of federal government programs, and Jon specializes in the latter. "We examine the performance of particular programs, and the audit can be quantitative or qualitative in nature. I work in the [Financial Markets and Community Investment](#) group, and we have responsibility mainly for government programs in banking, securities, insurance and housing. This means we help to oversee programs run by the Treasury, the Fed, the SEC, Fannie Mae/Freddie Mac, and the like." He has been with the GAO for six years now, initially based in Washington, DC.

"We operate like a private-sector consulting firm: we design our project and determine the scope and methodology required to answer the researchable questions, then we carry out the actual research, and later we use the results to compare what the agencies are doing against standard criteria of how best to operate a government program. This helps us decide what recommendations would make sense in any given situation."

On what skills, background and experiences have proven useful in the job market and his career path, Jon explains that his prior experience in the private sector, before graduate

school, was helpful because he learned how to work with a diverse group of people on large projects. His experience in graduate school, for its part, helped him hone his research and data-analysis skills, as well as to gain subject-matter expertise in financial institutions, markets and policies.

To be a successful project manager and to get hired as such, especially within the government, you need a strong background in both research and writing as well as in oral communication skills. The best research won't matter if you can't write clearly; the best ideas for designing a research project won't matter if you can't communicate them to your team; and the best first draft won't matter if you don't learn to incorporate feedback from colleagues and superiors."

Regarding his time in the IER program and on what proved useful in developing his career, Jon recalls as follows: "I entered the IER program with very limited research skills, and I believe the wide variety of classes I took both within SIS and in the Economics Department helped me to rapidly gain key qualitative and quantitative research skills that have proved invaluable over time."

"I also did two things outside of IER that were very important to my overall development. First, I ran for and was elected president of the SIS Graduate Student Council, and this helped me to network with many students outside of IER, which I think is important to help contextualize the education you're receiving. The position also helped me learn valuable communication and presentation skills."

"Second, I joined other IER students and we competed -- and won! -- in the Annual Kogod Case Competition, which provided an excellent opportunity to sharpen our communication skills, presentation style, and problem-solving techniques. The competition not only helped me apply analytical skills and become a well-rounded person and job candidate, it was an excellent story to tell during job interviews."

Kirstin Schloss Murray, IER '11



Kirstin is Bank Examiner for Capital Markets at the Washington, DC, headquarters of the [Office of the Comptroller of the Currency](#) (OCC), which is part of the U.S. Treasury and charters, regulates and supervises all national commercial and savings banks, as well as the agencies of foreign banks.

Her [Capital Markets](#) area monitors the interest rate, liquidity and price risks faced by the nation's largest banks, ensuring that the banks are complying with regulations – in particular, the new ones under the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010. "In order to supervise our banks," Kirstin says, "we maintain close contact with bank management through regular meetings, and we review their daily, monthly and quarterly reports. We also assess their risk-management practices and review their policies.

Asked about what current events in international economic relations interest her most, Kirstin replies that "one area I find particularly thought-provoking is how different regulations affect our banks' business models. It is quite a global challenge for banks to operate in multiple jurisdictions when countries have adopted different prudential and other rules for banking, thereby creating legal, compliance, operational and business complexities for banks and their regulators alike.

On what skills, background and experiences have proven useful in the job market and her career path, Kirstin offers that "I have found that programming, analysis, attention to detail, and ability to ask questions have been the most important skills in my job. It has also been very important to recognize how financial markets affect our banks' balance sheets

and activities, and my IER concentration in international finance provided me with the foundation for understanding the links between financial flows, interest rates and exchange rates."

Kirstin also recalls the importance of having landed good internships: "The single most valuable experience during my graduate program was my internship with the OCC. Not only did it solidify my understanding of international finance, but it also led to my current job."

On how she was attracted to the field of international finance, Kirstin remembers that "at the start of the IER program, I was unsure if I wanted to focus on international trade or finance. To gauge my interest in trade issues, I applied for and obtained an internship with the International Trade Administration, in the Department of Commerce. While I enjoyed the internship, I quickly realized that I was much more passionate about financial issues, and so for my second internship I purposely targeted the International Analysis group at the OCC. Therefore, my advice is that IER students should use internship opportunities strategically, to help them decide which area of concentration, and eventually which career, is best for them."

Kirstin also offers the following advice: "Networking is huge in any job field, but it's not just networking for the sake of networking. I've found that the best type of networking comes from working on cross-functional teams, where the members help one another. People are then able to understand what one brings to the table. Internships are a great way to network, build valuable skills, and better understand one's passion. Technical skills are very important too. For me, SAS/STATA programming combined with econometrics has been key."

Dr. Arturo Porzecanski, Program Director
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