

The Short Run

Student News & Views from the Humboldt State Economics Department

Inside this issue:

In Memoriam: Thomas L. Bruner 1

In Memoriam: Julia (West) Ross '07 2

Alumnus Highlight: Jessica Digiambattista Peters 3

Humboldt Institute for Interdisciplinary Marijuana Research 4

In Memoriam: Thomas Leland Bruner



On December 24, 2012 the Department of Economics and Humboldt State University said goodbye to long time lecturer Thomas Leland Bruner, who passed away from heart failure. Thomas grew up in San Leandro, California, and graduated from the University of Southern California with a degree in Communications. While at USC, he participated in Semester at Sea, and that experience fostered a lifelong love of world travel. He fell in love with the rugged beauty of California's Redwood Coast and built his dream home in Trinidad, where he enjoyed golf, fly fishing, kayaking, and skeet shooting. He traveled all over the world, including Southeast Asia, South America, Africa and Antarctica. He earned a Masters in International Finance from Thunderbird School of Global Management in Glendale, Arizona. He was opinionated and passionate about many things, and one of them was teaching economics and finance at Humboldt State University.

Since 2004, Thomas taught ECON 104 - Contemporary Topics in Economics where he demonstrated how economics affected all aspects of society and especially the area of politics and development in the third world. Through his teaching he was able to make a mark on students. Daeng Khauprdradit, an alumnus, currently working in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, recalls her time in his class, " he was engaging...he gave the classroom examples of real world experiences." His goal was to make economics come to life for students in his class; and he succeeded. His sister Ann Nash said, "Economics wasn't just a class to him...it was everything."

Thomas suffered from a lifelong congenital heart condition and in 2002 received a heart transplant. At the time of his death he was at the Stanford University Medical Center for dialysis and to start the processes to receive a new kidney and heart. He is survived by his mother Barbara Bruner, sisters Lynne Bruner and Anne Bruner Nash, brother-in-law Jeffrey Nash, niece and nephew. He will be remembered fondly by the faculty, staff and students of Humboldt State University.



TSR Staff

Editor - Kerri Malloy

Faculty Advisor - Beth Wilson

[e-mail-
theshortrun@humboldt.edu](mailto:theshortrun@humboldt.edu)

The Short Run

In Memoriam: Julia (West) Ross '07



Julia (West) Ross passed away unexpectedly on March 15, 2013, from septic shock. She graduated from Humboldt State University with a degree in economics in 2007. Julia was an amazing and talented student, who was extremely passionate about economics. She was a self-proclaimed economics "super geek" and continued her studies at UC Irvine, earning her master's degree in economics. Julia had just married the love of her life, Eric Ross, in February and was working as an Economist for Urban Science in Southern California. According to her parents, Dru and Joe West, Julia loved her time at Humboldt and was serving as an Ambassador for Humboldt in Southern California. She was very social and she and one of her fellow students founded the Economic Forum, an on-going monthly meeting of students and faculty that combines discussing an economics journal article with socializing with fellow students and faculty. We are very proud of Julia.

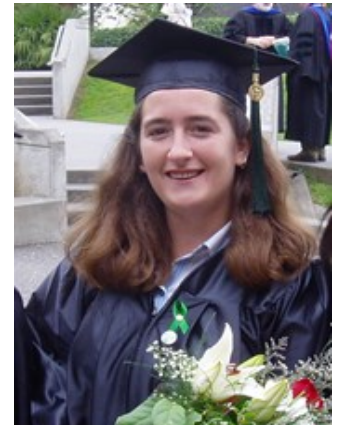
Julia's family believes that Julia would want friends, family, and alumni to support Humboldt. They ask that memorial contributions made in Julia's name be given to the Department of Economics at Humboldt State University, Gift Processing Center, 1 Harpst Street, Arcata, CA 95521-8299 with checks made payable to HSU Advancement Foundation.

Memorials for Julia:

Southern California:
Saturday, April 13 at Noon
The Clubhouse at Aspen Village
3600 Aspen Village Way
Santa Ana, CA 92704

Northern California:
Saturday, April 27 at Noon
At Julia's parent's home
510 Stadler Lane
Petaluma, CA 94952

Thoughts and stories about Julia can be sent to her mother, Dru, at druwest@comcast.net. Please contact her if you want more information or would like to attend.



Upcoming Events

- | | |
|---|---|
| Tuesday, April 2nd
5:00-6:30
Founders Hall 125 | 2013 Alumni Speaker Series - Schuyler Kirsch ('11) |
| Friday, April 5
5:30-7:00
Location TBA | Econ Forum #2
Check out the Econ Department Website or Facebook page for more information. |
| Thursday, April 11
6:00-8:00
Native Forum BSSB 162 | "Marx in Soho", a play by Howard Zinn. |
| Friday & Saturday, April 19-20 | HIIMR Earth Day Symposium on Marijuana |
| Wednesday, April 24
5:00-6:30
Founders Hall 163 | 2013 Alumni Speaker Series - Chris Munshaw-Rodriguez ('07) |

The Short Run

Economics Alumnus Highlight: Jessica Digiambattista Peters

Jessica graduated from HSU with a Bachelor's of Arts in Economics in 2004 and went on to complete a Masters of Arts in Economics at California State University, East Bay. She currently works for the California Legislative Analyst's Office, a nonpartisan fiscal and policy advisory office for the State Legislature. Jessica's work includes program areas of local streets and roads, public/private partnerships, the State Highway Operation and Protection Program, the State Transportation and Improvement Program, transportation funding and finance, and transportation policy. She also works in the budget areas regarding the California Transportation Commission, Department of Transportation and Shared Revenues.



What was behind your decision to major in economics at Humboldt State University?

I had taken several economics classes at a junior college before transferring to HSU and was drawn to the scientific approach to studying social systems and government policies and programs. I chose the economics program at HSU because of the focus on environmental and natural resources economics that was offered.

When did you decided that you wanted to attend graduate school and how did you prepare?

Before graduating from HSU, I knew that I wanted to continue my study of economics. I researched various graduate programs and visited several schools. Ultimately, I chose Cal State East Bay in order to be close to my family.

What drew you to working for the California Legislative Analyst's Office?

One aspect of economics that always interested me was the application of economic theories to public policy. The mission of the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) is to provide advice to the state Legislature that is based on the analytical assessment of the best policy choices, so the LAO was a good place to start my career.

How did your education at Humboldt State University prepare you for your career choice?

Having a firm understanding of economic principles has helped me in developing research ideas, and evaluating the structure of incentives and accountability in state programs. The background I gained on environmental laws and regulatory processes (from my minor) has also been helpful because sustainable land use has been a major focus in the Legislature in recent years.

How do use your education in economics in the analyses of transportation issues?

My economics education has taught me an analytical, data driven approach to conducting research and answering questions. Economic theories also inform the specific budget and policy recommendations that we make, such as the role of government in providing public goods and accounting for market externalities.

What advice would you give a graduating economics major that is looking to put their education to work?

Having an understanding of economic theories and an analytical mind-set are valuable professional tools. In real world applications, however, theories and ideal policy choices must be balanced with other considerations. Sometimes things that seem like small steps in the right direction are actually significant victories. If you can influence your job toward more analytically-based decisions and solutions to problems, no matter how large or small, you are succeeding.

What advice would you give an incoming freshman who chose to major in economics at Humboldt State University?

Choosing to major in economics was a wise decision. The work will be challenging at times, but stick with it. Your professors are a resource available to you, ask questions, stop by their office, and take advantage of their knowledge. Most of all enjoy your time at HSU. Make a lot of happy memories and new friends.

The Short Run

Humboldt Institute for Interdisciplinary Marijuana Research

In 2012, the Marijuana Studies working group, which is comprised of faculty from Economics, Sociology, Psychology, Social Work and the Library proposed the creation of an institute for marijuana research at Humboldt State University. This proposal has become the Humboldt Institute for Interdisciplinary Marijuana Research (HIIMR), an organization created to analyze and fill in the information gaps related to various marijuana issues. The charter of HIIMR states that its “research goals focus on data collection and assessment methods that can be used to enhance knowledge available to communities, researchers, educators, and others in better understanding the past, present, and potential future role of marijuana as it relates to the regional economy, workforce development, health, environment, and community relations.” As part of meeting that stated goal HIIMR presented a speakers series this past year that brought in speakers from Sarah Lawrence College, University of California Davis and Humboldt State that addressed the environmental, sociological and economic impacts that the marijuana industry has on the region.

In April HIIMR will sponsor a two day symposium and will see two of its faculty publish research in in the Humboldt Journal of Social Relations. The Earthday Symposium on Marijuana and the Environment will take place on Friday, April 19 and Saturday, April 20, 2013 and include panels, workshops and multimedia presentation ranging from Public Land Management, Indigenous Land and the Marijuana Industrial Complex, Getting Toxics out of the Industry, to Public Health Impacts of Smoking Toxic Weed. Registration for the conference is required. For more information see <http://humboldt.edu/dee/hiimr/>. Dr. Beth Wilson from the Economics department and Dr. Ronnie Schwartz from the Sociology department will each have an article in the themed issue “Current Perspectives on Marijuana and Society” of the Humboldt Journal of Social Relations (<http://www.humboldt.edu/hjsr/index.html>)

Co-Director of HIIMR, Dr. Eschker answered a few questions on the academic and research importance of HIIMR.

What was in the inspiration for the creation of the Humboldt Institute for Interdisciplinary Marijuana Research?

We did not copy another institute, but rather the faculty at HSU felt that it was time to have a more formal organization. Interest in policy questions related to marijuana is great, and we were contacted frequently by many outside of HSU with important questions. The Institute allows us channel questions and focuses our research efforts.

What makes Humboldt State University the ideal institutional location for the Institute?

Marijuana production is a large part of the local economy and social setting. Given this reality, HSU researchers are in a unique position to study many questions first hand, such as what are the environmental impacts of outdoor grow operations.

Will the Institute provide opportunities for student research, and if so, what types of research will be conducted?

There are many HSU faculty and students, both undergraduate and graduate, researching important social questions related to marijuana already. The institute is a way to make connections between interested students and faculty. Research will look at a variety of issues.

How will the Institute enhance the educational experience for students at Humboldt State University and prepare them for careers in their chosen fields?

We hope to have lots of research projects for our students. These will mostly be applied. I think the work will allow students to work in a new, expanding field.

What role will the Institute play in the public debate surrounding the legalization of marijuana in both the state and nation for medical and recreational use?

The institute does not advocate for legalization and is strictly a research body. I anticipate that policy makers will commission the institute to perform applied research to answer specific questions, such as what are the best zoning policies for marijuana production.

For more information on HIIMR please see the institute’s website at, <http://www.humboldt.edu/hiimr/index.html>, or contact Dr. Eschker at erick@humboldt.edu or Dr. Josh Meisel at meisel@humboldt.edu.