ECON NEWS

October 27, 1998.

The new academic year began with many changes in the economics department. Jim Moncur completed his term as chairperson, and Andy Mason has taken on the difficult and often thankless job in these austere times. Long time clerk/secretary, Pat Nishita, retired and we are happy to have a super efficient replacement in Irene Uemoto, who came to us in September from the Communications Department. (She's in Las Vegas this week and will return on November 4.) Evelyn Ho, who came down from the Political Science department to lend us a hand when we had no secretarial staff, remains with us...hopefully for a while longer. Student help Kris and Lahela graduated, and we are fortunate to have capable replacements in Kristine Chang and Kaalokalawai Nago (Kaalo for short). For the moment, we are at full staff in the office.

That can't be said on the faculty front. Three vacancies in the past 2 years have not be replaced. (We have been given the o.k. to go ahead and advertise one vacancy this fall!) Stepping in to fill the breach are several capable replacements, Eric Im (UH-Hilo), Paul Brewbaker (Bank of Hawaii) and alum Lee Endress and current graduate students Jeff Heinrich, Abdul Jabbar and Herath Gunatilake.

It's great to have Chung back in the department again after he completed his term as Director of the Korean Studies Center. He is splitting time between the department and the East West Center.

But we miss Sumner, who is spending a year in New York as Elena Hirschorn Visiting Professor at Barnard College for the 1998-99 academic year. He reports that there are no classes at Barnard before 9:30 a.m. When assigned a term paper, one of his undergraduate students obtained a corporate sponsor and plans to take a "team" of people to Latin America to interview key figures. Oh, he also mentioned that his undergraduate students expect to earn an average annual income of $145,000 five years after graduating from Barnard. Obviously, Barnard is a different world than Manoa.

The department is happy to host Cliff Slater, this year's Community Scholar in Residence. Cliff is the chairman and CEO of Maui Divers of Hawaii Ltd, Hawaii's largest manufacturer and retailer of fine jewelry. Cliff will be giving seminars and lectures on his favorite topics on privatization and urban transportation.

Roger Blair (University of Florida) has been added to our list of Affiliate Graduate Faculty.

After 30 years at UH, Lou announced his retirement at the end of this academic year. He and wife Joan plan to relocate from Hawaii and do some extensive traveling.

The following summarizes what some of the faculty members have been doing since last spring.

Publications

Denise has two papers soon to be published: "The Vertical Multinational Enterprise and International Trade," Review of International Economics, and (with Bernard Hoekman and Keith Maskus) "An Egypt-U.S. Free Trade Agreement: Economic

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Jim Mak and alum Yuki Abe (with Shyam Sunder and Kazuhiro Igawa): "The Japanese Economy in U.S. Eyes: From Model to Lesson," in a special (fall, 1998) issue of Education About Asia, focusing on U.S.-Japan relations. The U.S.-Japan Foundation is providing funding to send free copies to 20,000 school librarians throughout the U.S.


Travel

Faculty members have been racking up their Mileage Plus accounts.

Marcellus attended the Twelfth Biennial Conference of the International Telecommunications Society in Stockholm in June and presented a paper on the "Economic Aspects of Language".

Jim Roumasset gave presentations at the Environmental Economics Seminar at Stanford University; the World Congress of Environmental and Resource Economists in Venice in June; the Western Economic Association meetings in Lake Tahoe June 29-July 2 and presented 3 papers, 1 jointly with Lee Endress and 1 with alum Peter Johannson. He also attended the 4th Occasional California Workshop on Environmental and Resource Economics (October 16-18) at UC Santa Barbara. Closer to home, he participated in the Hawaii Conservation Conference in Honolulu in July.

Byron travelled to New York in March to serve as rapporteur for a U.N. Expert Group meeting on the Asian financial crisis. He also gave presentations on the same topic to several local organizations in Honolulu. In June, he and Sumner, Chung, Denise, and Andy travelled to Stockholm to attend a pre-conference meeting on a book project (with Magnus Blomstrom) on Japan's economy in the 21st century. A final conference will be held in Honolulu in January, 1999. In September, he presented a paper on the "Future of Japan's Trade Surplus" at the Stockholm School of Economics and Project LINK meeting in Rio de Janeiro.

Denise, Chung, Seiji and our alumni Marcia Sakai (UH-Hilo), Pearl Imada-Iboshi (DBEDT) and Janis Togashi (DBEDT) attended the 6th East Asian Economic Association convention in Kitakyushu, Japan in September and presented papers, served as discussants or chaired sessions. Among many former graduates also attending the meeting were Ted James and Yuki Abe (co-organizer of the meeting). Jeff Heinrich and graduate student Jeff Brown were co-authors on two of the papers presented at the convention.
Denise also gave papers at the Midwest International Economics Meetings at Michigan State in May and the Western Economic Association Meetings at Lake Tahoe in July.

Chung also travelled to Seoul last month to present a paper ("Redesigning Institutions for Global Business") at a Korea Research Institute for Human Settlements-East West Center conference on Restructuring the Korean Peninsula for the 21st Century. At home, he was discussant on a paper by Manuel Montes at a conference on Asian Perspectives on the Economic Crisis (in Asia, of course).

During the summer Andy presented a paper and served as a resource person for a Senior Policy Seminar organized by the World Bank and Harvard Institute for International Development in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Following the meeting, he spent a few days in Kathmandu, Nepal, which gave him the opportunity to meet with many University of Hawaii alums. While in Nepal, he gave a public lecture (he was introduced by Shankar Sharma, another UH Ph.D. who is the Commissioner of the National Planning Commission.) The lecture was reported on the front page of the national daily newspaper, The Rising Nepal. In his lecture, Andy opined that "the population changes in East Asia will favour strong economic growth for at least two more decades, except in Japan."

Jim Moncur travelled to Hood River, Oregon in August to attend the annual meeting of the Universities Council on Water Resources. He is slated to be the chair of next year's meeting (June 29-July 2) at the Royal Waikoloa Hotel on the Big Island. "Let him know if you're interested in presenting a paper," he said. He was elected President-elect of the UCOWR for the coming year.

At home, Jim Mak racked up many H-1 freeway miles by giving talks on his recent co-edited book, Japan: Why It Works, Why It Doesn't, to the Ala Moana and Pearlridge Rotary Clubs, the Hawaii Economic Association and Leeward and Windward community colleges. This month, he made a presentation to the Nihon Club on Japanese business perceptions of Hawaii as a desirable place to invest and to do business. The presentation summarized the findings of a survey of Nihon Club members conducted in May by the department's new research organization, the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization (UHERO). In July, he also gave a lecture on Pacific Island economies to a group of intermediate level school teachers from Hawaii. Last week, he was a guest on the "You and the Law in Hawaii" television program, along with alum Ray Kamikawa (who is the Director of the Department of Taxation) and UH Law Professor, Randy Roth; discussion focused on the merits of Hawaii's tax system.

Miscellaneous Faculty Items

Jim Mak was reappointed to a new 3-year term on the University of Hawaii Press Editorial Board.

Jim Moncur is principal investigator on a $1.3 million 5-year project sponsored by the City and County of Honolulu. The project "counts fish species, does fish liver necropsy, counts worms and the like in samples from areas around various Oahu sewage outfalls." His responsibility is to count the money.

Denise has been awarded a Pacific Century Fellowship for 1999, an award program for leaders in the Hawaii community. She is also the recipient of a Community of Scholars Grant from the College of Social Sciences to begin work on a CGE model to evaluate tax reform in Hawaii. She and Carl and Byron have received consulting assignments from DBEDT to develop, respectively, a CGE model and a tourism model for Hawaii.
Congratulations to alum Yuki Abe (Kobe University) who has just received a permanent appointment to the prestigious Kyoto University in Japan. Yuki was here last summer to teach our Japanese economy course.

Alum T. K. Jayaraman was also here last summer to teach our Pacific Islands economy course. Jayaraman recently retired from the Asian Development Bank (Port Vila office) and has accepted a faculty position at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji. He joins alum Ward Martin who splits time between USP and Hawaii Pacific University.

Graduate Program

Despite reduced faculty resources in the department, we have 20 new graduate students this year, 7 from China, U.S. (5), Japan (4), Korea (1), Indonesia (1), Spain (1), and Papua New Guinea (1). Five of the new students are East West Center grantees, 1 is an Asian Development Bank scholar, 1 received a RCUH (Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii) scholarship, and 1 was awarded a T.A.ship.

The department awarded the Ph.D. degree in August to Mana Southichak and Ratna Shrestha and the M.A. degree to Hing Ling Chan, He Ji, Hwa Seok Oh, and Zhenyu Yang. Congratulations to Seve Paeniu, Bob Alexander, Naomi Tobita, Asclepias Soerjono, and Jiangbo Zhou for successfully defending their Ph.D. thesis proposals recently. We continue to have approximately 80 students in our graduate program.

Jeff Heinrich is the first recipient of the Burnie Campbell Memorial Scholarship for finishing graduate students.

Undergraduate Program

Undergraduate enrollment in economics has been declining in recent years. With department budget allocations increasingly tied to student enrollment and tuition revenue, the department will be focusing greater effort on increasing undergraduate enrollment. Students now can enter either of our two (micro and macro) principles of economics courses without a delineated sequence in order to increase the number of entry points into the program. We will also be making more effort to advertise our courses campus wide.

At our Spring Awards luncheon, the Central Pacific Bank Outstanding Student Award was given to Anthony Fo, and the CPB Leadership Award was given to Anthony Fujii.

UHERO

The University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization (UHERO) finally got underway last year. The executive director of UHERO this year is Mike Hamnett (Director, Social Science Research Institute). Heading the Hawaii research group is Carl Bonham, and heading the international research group is Denise Konan. The aim of UHERO is to provide research services to clients in Hawaii and elsewhere for a fee. Since the First Hawaiian Bank has closed its research department, and the Bank of Hawaii significantly downsized and restructured its economics department, we believe that there is potentially significant demand for quality economic consulting services that can be met by UHERO. In its first year, UHERO has already received several contracts, including one from the UH President's office to conduct a study for the Japan-Hawaii Economic Council.
on the potential for future Japanese investment in Hawaii. Prospects are excellent for sizable contracts in the near future. Increasing external contracts and funding is a priority goal of the department to fund faculty research and to provide opportunities for graduate students to obtain financial support and practical research experience.

Last spring, UHERO research associates (Sumner, Jim Mak, Lou, Byron, Carl, and Keith Mattson) wrote 4 op-ed pieces for the Honolulu Advertiser to educate the public about several proposals to reinvigorate Hawaii's economy through tax reform, Waikiki revitalization, and the potential elimination of the State's Land Use Commission.

If you have news for the November newsletter, send it to jmak@hawaii.edu as the events occur. You don't have to wait until the last minute. We publish all the happy news that's fit to print.