Into the Economics Department Conference room walks a smartly suited lady, setting foot once again on “old turf.” Ambassador Moriarty, a University of Hawai’i Economics Alum was back for an educational visit.

January 25th saw the Economics Club host its first event of the semester – an audience with Ambassador Moriarty – former Ambassador to the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation and current Dean of the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies.

Drawing on her vast experience in diplomatic circles, Ambassador Moriarty provided the students with an insider’s perspective of the workings of political economy (or economics). Highlighting different landmarks in her career, she imparted the application of theory to reality. For instance, one of her first postings overseas led her to study the economic impacts of the Tiananmen Massacre from a US perspective in China.

She embedded the vitality of economic analysis in foreign policy decisions. Pulling from her work on negotiating open skies policy with Taiwan, she reinforced the inter-relatedness of economics with all other disciplines, in this case – Aviation.

Building on this perspective she then delved into the operations and the policy constructions of APEC itself. APEC as an organization provides leaders with a haven to discuss and deliberate on policies and issues without the constant spotlight of the media. She explained that it is basically a closed door session whereby you lock 21 leaders in a room and let them bring their personal negotiations skills into play. One would liken this to a “conclave” of sorts, where, instead of selecting a Pope as the ultimate result of the meeting – skeletal outlines of policies transpire. Over the course of the following year, she further explained, representatives of the different countries convene in different locations to discuss the crux of each policy. Senior officials meet four times a year. In this day and age, she acknowledged the use of technology admitting that while these quarterly meetings were useful, the majority of the work was accomplished via emails.

After this brief session which lasted approximately 40 minutes, Ambassador Moriarty opened the floor to questions.