



# NEWSLETTER

**Wellesley College Department of Economics**

**June 2022**

Dear Alumnae, Graduating Seniors, Former Faculty, and Friends of Economics at Wellesley:

It's an honor to be writing to you for the first time as the Economics Department Chair. I want to start by thanking my predecessor, Patrick McEwan, for his superb leadership during the pandemic years! His adaptability, patience, and good cheer in the face of shifting circumstances helped the rest of us navigate the challenges of that period.

This year was not *quite* a normal year around the Economics Department, but we were grateful to have all of our students back on campus and all of our classes back in person, even with masks and COVID testing required. The return to the classroom brought its own challenges, of course. Students had to get used to semester-long classes again and to being in a classroom with rather than in Zoom boxes. After a year and a half of retooling their classes to adapt to the pandemic, faculty had to redesign them again to incorporate the best of those new elements into their in-person teaching. Even so, there is great satisfaction in being together again, especially as events return in person and the level of activity in the department rises. This spring, we were delighted to see our honors thesis students at the Ruhlman Conference and to wish our 79 majors and 26 minors well at our Senior Celebration and Commencement!

Speaking of events, two of the highlights of this academic year were the annual Goldman and Calderwood Lectures (both held on Zoom). The Goldman Lecture featured Katherine Baicker, the Dean and the Emmett Dedmon Professor at the University of Chicago Harris School of Policy, speaking on "Health Policy in a (Post) COVID-19 Era." The Calderwood Lecture was given by Sendhil Mullainathan, the Roman Family University Professor of Computation and Behavioral Science at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, on the topic "Algorithms and People: How Machine Learning Can Change Society and Science, For Better and Worse." In the spring, we also held an event on the "Economic Consequences of War in Ukraine," with Professors Joe Joyce and Dan Sichel providing insights on this important subject.

Another special event this year occurred when Professor David Lindauer was given the honor of delivering the College's Distinguished Faculty Lecture. He spoke about the Calderwood Seminars in Public Writing program, which had its roots in his 1984 Economic Journalism class. David has since grown the program to include 27 courses at Wellesley as well as courses at many other colleges and universities, with over 2200 students now having taken a Calderwood seminar.

This brings us to my bittersweet news: Professor David Lindauer is retiring this spring, after 41½ years as a member of the Wellesley College Economics Department. His contributions are many, including (to name just a few), participating in 16 overseas missions with the World Bank, co-authoring a best-selling development economics textbook, and leading the renovation of Pendleton East. However, readers of this letter will surely argue that his biggest contribution is his inspiring teaching and dedicated mentorship of thousands of students. To read tributes to David (and add your own!), visit: [Tributes to David Lindauer, Kudoboard](#).

Fortunately, we have some unambiguously happy news to report as well – Professor Baafrā Abeberese was granted tenure this year! We are delighted by this well-deserved recognition of her outstanding teaching, top-notch scholarship, and impactful service, and count ourselves very lucky to have her as a colleague. We also congratulate Rachel Deyette Werkema on her appointment as a lecturer, after four years of dedicated and highly effective teaching as a visiting lecturer in the Department!

In other good news, I am excited to announce that Tyler Giles will join us as a new Assistant Professor of Economics starting this summer! Tyler received his PhD in Economics from the University of Notre Dame, having written a dissertation that examines the effects of criminal fines and fees and of drivers' license suspensions. He will be teaching courses in statistics, econometrics, and public economics. Welcome, Tyler!

I will leave it to my faculty colleagues to each convey the highlights of their own year, confident that their passion for teaching, their remarkable scholarship and professional accomplishments, and their many critical contributions to the College will come across clearly. I will only add that one of the perks of being the chair of this department is being told regularly how lucky

I am to have such a collegial, collaborative, and engaged group of faculty members in my department. To this I can only say: I agree! Thank you to my faculty colleagues and to our wonderful Academic Administrators Karen Cronin and Sheila Datz for all your support during this year!

Finally, please follow us on Twitter ([@WellesleyEcon](#)) for regular updates on the doings of Department faculty members and alumnae!

*With appreciation,  
Courtney Coile, Chair and Professor of Economics*

\*\*\*\*\*

### **2021-2022 HIGHLIGHTS**

Courtney Coile, Chair of the Economics Department welcomed Katherine Baicker, Dean and the Emmett Dedmon Professor at the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy to deliver the 2021 Goldman Lecture on health policy.



\*\*\*\*\*

The Department gathered outdoors to celebrate the end of the “in-person” fall semester, after a long year of “remote” teaching in 2020-2021 – and to celebrate Baafrā Abeberese’s promotion to tenure. Congratulations, Baafrā!



Back row (l to r): Karen Cronin, Joe Joyce, Patrick McEwan, Akila Weerapana, Casey Rothschild, Corri Taylor, Dan Sichel, Seth Neumuller, Pinar Keskin, Phil Levine, Front row (l to r): Sheila Datz, Rachel Deyette Werkema, Kartini Shastry, Baafrä Abeberese '04, Courtney Coile, Olga Shurchkov '01

\*\*\*\*\*

In response to the crisis in Ukraine, the Economics Department offered a conversation for students with Professor's Joe Joyce and Dan Sichel on the "Economic Consequences on the War in Ukraine." It was our first "in-person" event with students and the turnout was wonderful!



Front of the room, (l to r): Joe Joyce, Dan Sichel.

\*\*\*\*\*

The 2022 Calderwood Lecture was delivered by Sendhil Mullainathan, the Roman Family University Professor of Computation and Behavioral Science at the University of Chicago Booth school of Business. Dr. Mullainathan's lecture was on machine learning.



\*\*\*\*\*

The Economics Student Association (ESA) hosted many events this year including a couple of panel discussions with Economics Department alumnae. An alumnae panel including Debbie Chen '10, Kathleena Inchoco '18, Rakeen Mabud '09, Gloria Samen '18 and Jackie Valentine '10 talked about their transition from Wellesley into their careers, and experiences in their professional fields. An alumnae panel including Taylor Cranor '16, Soomi Kim '14, Rifaiyat Mahbub '12, and Dr. Tejaswi Velayudhan '10 shared their thoughts on graduate school. A big thank you to our very accomplished alumnae for sharing your time with our current students!

\*\*\*\*\*

We were thrilled to be able to gather with our majors and minors to celebrate their accomplishments at a "Senior Celebration" event. There were lots of smiling faces under the masks! Faculty pictured below include Seth Neumuller, Akila Weerapana, Olga Shurchkov, Patrick McEwan, Courtney Coile, Eric Hilt, and Joe Joyce.



Professor David Lindauer shared memories and thanks for his 41½ years at Wellesley College with the crowd of well-wishers who gathered to celebrate his retirement at an event hosted by the Economic Department. We toast to your new chapter, David!



\*\*\*\*\*

Next year's AEA meetings will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, January 6-8, 2023. Please follow this link to learn more about the annual meeting: [aeaweb.org/conference/](http://aeaweb.org/conference/)



\*\*\*\*\*

**2022 Economics Department  
Award Winners**

**The Peggy Howard Fellowship:**  
Tianyu Chu '22, Kyra Frye '20, Soomi Kim '14, Beryl Larson '19

**The Natalie Bolton Faculty Prize in  
Economics (Best 200-level Paper):**  
Eshika Kaul '23, Lynsey Rumbaut '22,  
Nina Zhang '21



\*\*\*\*\*

**The Natalie Bolton Faculty Prize in Econometrics (Best 203 Paper):**

Katherine Guo '23, Eman Khatri '23, Julie Ma '23

**The Natalie Bolton Faculty Prize in Economics (Best 300-level Paper):**

Emily Hur '22, Rachel Moberg '22, Lily Wancewicz '23

**Lambie Prize in Economic History:**

Zhara Thabet '22

**The Natalie Bolton Thesis Prize:**

Melissa Carleton '22, Tianyu Chu '22, Anushka Kelshikar '22, Cynthia Zhao '22

**The Natalie Bolton Student Prize:**

Zahra Thabet '22

**The Wall Street Journal Award:**

Navya Chawla '22, Libby Chang '22

\*\*\*\*\*

**2021 - 2022**

**ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT FACULTY**

**Ama Baafrā Abeberese '04** was delighted to be awarded tenure by the College, and is grateful to be able to continue to work with wonderful colleagues and students! She enjoyed teaching her principles of macroeconomics, trade and development classes and interacting with students in person again! She was excited to have her joint work on intranational trade with Mary Chen '18 published in the *Journal of Development Economics*, and had the chance to present her work (thanks to Zoom) at IIT Bombay, Amherst and Brookings. At home, her boys, now rising first and third graders, continue to keep her entertained and busy, usually by acting as a (not so great) defender in soccer games. She wishes everyone a productive and relaxing summer!

**Kristin Butcher '86** spent 2021-2022 at The Brookings Institution as the Director of the Center on Children and Families. She was happy to host three events with Wellesley tie-ins! First, a book event featuring Williams Professor Tara Watson's new book "[The border within: The economics of immigration in an age of fear.](#)" which her Fall 2020 Econ 311 students will recognize as the book they previewed in class. Second, an event on [immigration and caregiving](#), which featured her work with Tara Watson and Kelsey Moran W'17 (now studying for a PhD in Economics at MIT) on the effect of immigration on the living arrangements of the elderly. That work, which was part of Kelsey Moran's honor's thesis at Wellesley, was published in the [Review of International Economics in March 2022](#). Finally, in May, she hosted a book event for Phil Levine's new book "[A Problem of Fit: How the Complexity of College Pricing Hurts Students – And Universities.](#)" featuring Wellesley's Dean of Admission and Financial Aid, Joy St. John. Kristin is on leave from Wellesley for 2022-2023 as well. She will spend her time in the Research Department at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. A special shout out to former students Clare Sachsse, who will be starting a PhD program at Tufts/Fletcher in Economics and Public Policy, and to Zohal Barsi who will be starting a PhD program at University of Wisconsin, Madison. It was a pleasure to support you in this process and I look forward to seeing what comes next!

**Courtney Coile** survived her first year as department chair! As noted above, highlights included running a successful tenure-track search, overseeing a positive tenure case, and bringing in two terrific speakers. She was happy to teach her microeconomics of pandemics course again, this time with Heather Long '04 and Emily Moss '19 as guest speakers! She enjoyed teaching econometrics in person while retaining elements of the Zoom version, like video lectures and class activities that allowed her to be more "guide on the side" than "sage on the stage." She wrapped up

two of last year's projects – her article on the economics of Alzheimer's Disease was accepted at the *Journal of Economic Literature* and the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) study on *Understanding the Aging Workforce* that she helped to write was published. She chaired a NAS workshop on improving social and economic mobility in the US and initiated new research, including a project on the mental health benefits of paid family leave. On the personal front, the (literal) high point of the year was hiking up New Hampshire's Mount Washington (pro tip: celebrate with a shot of scotch at the summit!).

**Eric Hilt** returned from a year of sabbatical leave and taught economic history and macroeconomics in the spring. It took some time for him to adapt to wearing a mask while teaching, and to figure out how to lead discussions of masked students. But he enjoyed getting back into the classroom, and he hadn't realized how much he missed being roasted by quick-witted Wellesley students--he's just no match for them. This year he attended some economic history conferences that were actually held in person, which was a nice sign that things are getting somewhat back to normal. His daughter is now 8 and torments him by blasting Olivia Rodrigo and Taylor Swift at home.

**Joe Joyce** was very happy to be back in the classroom, even if masked. He taught macro principles, international macro and the economics of globalization. In January he participated in this year's Madeleine Albright Institute for Global Affairs. In his research he deals with issues related to financial globalization. Last summer he traveled to Crete to present a paper at the Conference on Macro Analysis and International Finance. He also writes about these issues in his blog, [Capital Ebbs and Flows](#).

**Pinar Keskin** was overjoyed to be finally back in the classroom with her students after a year of zoom teaching. Who would know

that a person can miss wearing high heels and jumping around in a windowless PNE classroom with chalk stains all over her? It has also been a fruitful year for Pinar on the research front. Her papers on intimate partner violence were accepted for publication in the Review of Economics and Statistics, Feminist Economics, and in the American Economic Association Papers and Proceedings. Moreover, her work on the mental health costs of COVID-19 lockdowns was published in the American Economic Journal: Applied Economics. When they are not with their students or coauthors, Pinar and her husband spend their time dancing to Taylor Swift songs and playing scrabble or wordle with their daughters Maya (9) and Arya (6)

**Sari Pekkala Kerr** taught her "Women in the Economy" class in the Fall of 2021, and was thrilled to be back in the classroom in-person with her students. The campus was not quite the same as it was in 2019, but the pandemic really made us appreciate the personal connections that get made when we are in the same building. Sari hired a recent Wellesley graduate, Lucy Cheskin, to work with her and professors Claudia Goldin and Claudia Olivetti on a project that analyzes the evolution of gender career gaps over the family life-cycle. The project largely takes place in the Census Bureau's restricted data facility at the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) in Cambridge. Sari envisions spending most of the next academic year in that secure data facility, while taking a break from teaching. That may not sound like a very exciting prospect, other than for those who are data nerds... Elementary schools were finally back in the regular schedule and in-person learning, which made the academic year much easier to manage for the Kerr family. This summer the Sari and her family are planning some nice trips both in the US and abroad, as some family members are suffering from quite a "travel fever" after the limited traveling during the last 2 years...

**Phil Levine** continued to focus much of his attention this past year on the two research topics that have kept him busy throughout the pandemic, financial aid and fertility, including both the falling birth rate over the past 15 years and the COVID baby bust. His work on financial aid led to the April publication of his new book, *A Problem of Fit: How the Complexity of College Pricing Hurts Students – and Universities* (University of Chicago Press). It has already received considerable attention in the higher education world and hopefully will continue to influence discussions about college pricing. His coauthored work on the longer-term decline led to a paper published in the *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, “The Puzzle of Falling US Birth Rates since the Great Recession.” He also documented a baby bust caused by COVID along with a subsequent rebound several months after the pandemic began. In terms of teaching, Phil taught two sections of Econ 101 (Intro Micro) in the fall and two sections of Econ 103 (Intro Stats) in the spring. Classes were held in person both semesters, which was so much better than Zoom it’s hard to imagine, but he’s still looking forward to the pandemic progressing to the point where masks are unnecessary. He revamped his Econ 101 course in the fall so that a lot of the applications of the theory were focused on college pricing (there is an entire chapter on the econ 101 of college-pricing in the book!). At home, Phil’s family is doing well. His oldest son, Jake, is graduating from business school this spring and has a job lined-up at Converse (in Boston!). His younger son, Noah, is finishing up his second year of law school. Phil will be on leave in the spring semester of 2022-2023. He is looking forward to spending even more time at Fenway Park (and with his family!).

**David Lindauer** is retiring this June after 41.5 years on the faculty. Although he is retiring from the college, he is not retiring from work. A final grant from the Calderwood Charitable Foundation will

permit the continued expansion of Calderwood Seminars in Public Writing to other colleges and universities. David plans to remain involved in this expansion effort for several more years. In 2021-22, there were 65 Calderwood Seminars offered across a dozen institutions enrolling over 600 students – the highest numbers by far for a single year. In January, David led a virtual panel, *From the Liberal Arts to Public Engagement: The Calderwood Seminars in Public Writing*, at the Annual Meetings of the American Association of Colleges and Universities. David also was honored to be selected to deliver the college’s 2022 Distinguished Faculty Lecture, [What the Calderwood Seminars Teach Us About Our Students and Ourselves](#). It was held as an in-person event and also live-streamed. David appreciates all the emails he received from alumnae about the talk. He is also grateful for the wonderful posts former students submitted to the Kudoboard the economics department organized to celebrate his retirement. In reflecting on David’s over four decades at Wellesley, teaching has been at the core of his life’s work. He also had an active career as a development economist, consulting for the World Bank and other development agencies, where he had the opportunity to work in 16 emerging economies. Co-authoring two editions of the textbook, *Economics of Development*, was another highpoint. At Wellesley he is proud of his contributions to the renovation of Pendleton East and his subsequent role as the first PNE Faculty Director. The Calderwood Seminars, his focus for the past decade, brought him back to teaching, a calling that defined his career from the time he first arrived on campus until today. David thanks the college’s administration, the Wellesley faculty and staff, and, most of all, Wellesley students for helping him to have such a rewarding career.

**Patrick McEwan** returned to full-time teaching after serving two years as Chair of the Economics Department. His colleagues graciously agreed that two pandemic years

counted as three regular years, and the Department is now in the capable hands of Courtney Coile! He taught Principles of Microeconomics, as well as courses in Latin American development and the economics of education. It was a welcome return to in-class instruction, thanks especially to the good humor and dedication of his students. He finished up two research projects (with Kristin Butcher and Akila Weerapana) on Wellesley-related questions: is there a "Wellesley Effect" on majoring in Economics? And, how did the shadow grading policy affect students' choices and outcomes? (see [www.patrickmcewan.net](http://www.patrickmcewan.net) for details). He is looking forward to starting a new research project on Peruvian education during the summer.

**Robin McKnight** This year, Robin McKnight was happy to be back in a real (non-Zoom) classroom. Through a mask, she taught masked students in Statistics, Intermediate Microeconomics and Advanced Health Economics classes. Outside of the classroom, Robin continued various health economics research projects, participated in several (Zoom) conferences, and presented her first in-person seminar since the pandemic started. Outside of Wellesley, Robin continues to serve as Secretary of the Board of the American Society of Health Economists and as an Associate Editor at the Journal of Health Economics. Robin's biggest adventure this year was an unsuccessful attempt to visit relatives in Texas over the winter break. Her daughters came down with Covid upon arrival in Texas, so it turned into an unplanned, 3-day, 2000-mile road trip in a rental car from Texas back to Massachusetts with two sick kids in the back seat. It was memorable, but she doesn't recommend the experience and is hoping for more relaxed travel experiences in the future.

**Seth Neumuller** was excited to return to in-person teaching after teaching remotely during the pandemic. Over the course of this academic year, Seth taught Principles of Macroeconomics for the first time, as well

as courses in Intermediate Macroeconomics, and Advanced Macroeconomics. Having an opportunity to teach across the entire macroeconomics curriculum has been both incredibly challenging and wonderfully rewarding for Seth. This summer Seth will be preparing to teach Corporate Finance for the first time, which will nicely complement Finance Theory and Investments, the Economics Department's other quite popular finance-related course. In addition to teaching, this year Seth made progress on several research projects put on hold during the pandemic and also served as Chair of the College's Advisory Committee on Budgetary Affairs. Outside of work, Seth continues to enjoy spending as much time as possible with his fantastically curious and insatiably energetic daughters Emma (6) and Scarlett (5).

**Kyung Park** had a nice post-pandemic year. On the research side, he is close to submitting two manuscripts, one on consumer sentiment towards Asians during the pandemic with co-authors, and another on information provision and their impact on stereotypes with Lucy Cheskin '21. He advised two senior theses, one with Melissa Carleton '22 and the other with Cindy Zhao '22. The former examines the role of barriers to occupations in occupational sorting for Hispanic workers, and the latter extends decomposition techniques to study how discrimination might accumulate over the course of one's career. Kyung had a great time teaching 201, 203, and 327. Jaehee, Yejin (7), and Jemin (soon to be 5) are all doing well, enjoying their respective work and activities. Looking forward to next year!

**Casey Rothschild** was on sabbatical in 2021-22. During his leave, he continued his role as editor in chief of the *Geneva Risk and Insurance Review* and on two other academic journal editorial boards. He worked on several research projects, including a paper on vaccination with Fatima Djalalova '24 and Cherith Chen '24 that grew out of the fall '20 first-year



writing course they took with him, and a paper on new technologies in insurance markets that was just published in the *Journal of Risk and Insurance*. He came back in the spring to co-teach the Wellesley Initiative for Scholars of Economics with Akila and stayed involved in department business, but he otherwise largely took a much-needed break from college teaching and service. This left him with a lot more time to spend with his family – Adele (12), Mabel (9), Lottie (6), his partner Beth, and new pup Ken – gardening, hiking, kayaking, skiing, skating, and playing soccer. He is excited to get back into the classroom full time next year.

**Kartini Shastry** This year marked Kartini Shastry’s thirteenth year at Wellesley College. She taught two sections of Econometrics in the Fall, and in the Spring, she taught Econ 101 and a seminar in Economic Development. Kartini was delighted to advise Tiffany Chu ‘22 on her senior honors thesis, “The Universal Two-Child Policy and The Motherhood Penalty.” On the research front, Kartini published a paper in the *Journal of Public Economics* on the implementation of school nutrition programs in Odisha, India (along with Hannah Ruebeck ‘16 and three other co-authors). She also continued her work on the impact of international funding for vaccine coverage in developing countries, began a randomized controlled trial on remote learning in Haryana, India, and is working on a new project with Olga Shurchkov on gender differences in how economists react to editorial decisions. Outside of work, Kartini is kept busy chauffeuring her two boys, Jai (9) and Sammy (7), between baseball games, soccer games, basketball games, tennis lessons, among other activities.

**Olga Shurchkov ’01** continues to navigate the “new normal” of teaching and doing research during a pandemic. She was glad to return to in-person instruction, teaching her usual courses in macroeconomics, behavioral economics, and Taekwon-Do.

Olga’s research on the impact of COVID-19 on the gender gap in academia continued with a new publication in the 2022 issue of the *American Economic Association Papers & Proceedings*, where she highlighted the importance of access to public childcare relative to other more informal childcare solutions. Olga’s article titled “Competing Now and Then: The Effects of Delay on Competitiveness Across Gender” that she co-authored with a former student, Lien Dao ’20, is forthcoming in the *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*. This year, Olga’s work as the Director of the Knapp Social Science Center comes to an end, and she cannot be prouder of all the new programs, events, and opportunities she helped to establish and run over her slightly extended, 4-year, term. On April 1-2, the College held a virtual summit *The Economy She Deserves*, funded by the Carnegie Foundation grant, which Olga co-organized with Dr. Layli Maparyan, Executive Director of the Wellesley Centers for Women and Professor of Africana Studies. On April 28, Wellesley welcomed Bryan Stevenson as the 2022 Knapp-Wilson Lecturer for the first in-person major lecture since the start of the pandemic – an event three years in the making. Olga is happy that her son is thriving as a curious and athletic second-grader, who recently tested for his yellow belt in Taekwon-Do, and she is looking forward to some travel and in-person conferences in the summer!

**Dan Sichel** Back in person this year but not quite back to pre-pandemic normal. Hopefully, we’ll get there next year! In the fall, Dan taught Macroeconomics in Practice and Econ 202. In the spring, a repeat of Econ 202 and Economic Journalism, a Calderwood public writing seminar. On the research front, Dan published a paper on nails – specifically, he developed and used a series on the price of nails since 1695 as a window into economic change over the centuries. This paper generated some media interest, including a podcast Dan did for *Planet Money*. His work in the policy community also continued, as Chair of a

National Academy of Sciences panel on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), as Chair of the Bureau of Economic Analysis' Advisory Committee of outside experts, and as a just-appointed member of the American Economic Association's Committee on Economic Statistics. The National Academy panel just completed its report with recommendations for modernizing the CPI, and Dan has done some radio and TV promoting the study. Dan will be on leave in the fall and is starting a project on the economics of furniture, focusing on the middle ground between the work of historians of furniture and economic analysis. Outside of Wellesley, Dan and his husband are looking forward to some kayaking as well as time with their two black labs. On the woodworking front, Dan is planning to build a Windsor chair this summer and also to start climbing the learning curve for using a lathe.

**Susan Skeath (van Mulbregt)** spent the 2021-22 academic year like many in the department, being thankful that we were back in the classroom but not so happy about having to be there masked. It's amazing how much of the classroom experience relies on facial expressions - in both directions! Sue taught her newly-revised, partially-flipped version of Econ 201 for the first time in an actual classroom in fall 2021, continually revising the approach to meet the needs of in-person teaching. She also taught Advanced Micro Theory in fall and Econ 201 again, along with Games of Strategy, in spring. Sue finished, finally, the revised teaching manual for the 5th edition of the *Games of Strategy* textbook this year as well. On the home front, Sue's husband has finally resumed working at the office (three days a week) after a 26-month hiatus; her daughter, Emily, is in her second year as a Great Apes Swing Keeper at Zoo Atlanta; and her son, Pierce, has finished all of the coursework for his chemistry PhD at U Maryland and is happily conducting research in a laser chemistry lab.

**Ann Velenchik** is even more than usual, grateful for the presence of Sue Skeath in her life. Ann returned to teaching Econ 201 last fall, after a 17-year hiatus, and in the absence of Sue's problem sets and notes would never have finished. It was smart to choose a friend who was so good at teaching Intermediate Micro. Ann is enjoying her joint appointment in Economics and Writing, giving her the chance to be part of two communities of dynamic teachers and scholars and amazing conversationalists. And two lunchrooms. She looks forward to a sabbatical with her husband in Fall 2022, and thinking there might be as much travel as work. Becca (21) and Nate (25) are thriving young adults, though it seems like last week they were toddlers.

**Akila Weerapana** Another year of the pandemic, this one teetering between feeling we had turned a corner and feeling like we were back where we started. Sometimes there is dark humor - when a student saw me outside in the courtyard and said "hi," I had to ask her to put a mask on to recognize who she was! With rising inflation, supply shocks, and zero lower bounds, there was no shortage of interesting macroeconomic topics to cover. My students were as engaged as always but by the end of the semester it was clear that two years of pandemic learning had started to take a toll. I also miss the in-person office hours which was how I was able to build beautiful connections with so many former students. But we will have in-person graduation, reunion, and hopefully with those a renewing of the connections that sustain me. On the homefront, my daughter (who some of you babysat for) is now in high school and my son is in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. They have handled the pandemic with a lot more positivity than I have, for which I am grateful. I wish all of you and your families the best, and look forward to an in-person meeting. I know I won't have to ask you to put on a mask before recognizing you.

**Rachel Devette Werkema** marked her fourth year at Wellesley and was thrilled to

receive an appointment as a lecturer this spring (no more visiting). Rachel continued to teach students at the beginning, middle, and end of their economics journeys, with two sections of Econ 101 and one section of Econ 102 in the fall, and Econ 220 and Econ 226 in the spring. Especially notable (and bittersweet) for this year was reuniting in the electives this spring with seniors she'd first met in Econ 101 as first-years. Rachel is looking forward to participating in the Case Fellow program this summer, hoping to revive a long-dormant research project on school boards and school committees (one that does not revolve around book-banning, masking, or CRT!), and she will be developing a new 200-level elective that surveys Nobel prize-winning ideas in economics. Off campus, Rachel is gearing up for the college application process with her twin daughters, currently high school juniors (neither one is interested in economics, but both firmly believe that if they attend Wellesley, they will see their mom all the time). She is also very excited to attend commencement and will be cheering for all of her graduating students.

\*\*\*\*\*

## FACULTY EMERITI

**Ann Dryden Witte** Florida continues to be a crazy place--housing cost skyrocketing, book banning & election restrictions in, etc. My son and his family will visit in July. Cyril (7) has chosen the harpsichord as his instrument and Basil (11) continues to love the lute. Maybe we will form a family baroque group. The [Melbourne Chamber Music Society](#) (a good thing in Florida) had a recital by a wonderful young pianist, [Benjamin Grosvenor](#). He played [La Valse](#) which Revel composed at the end of WWI. As he played it, it seemed to reflect the tragedy that is the Ukraine war. I just finished reading [Their Eyes Were Watching God](#) which I discussed (via Google Meet)

with alum Ellen Neff who lives in Burlington, VT. I am scheduled to lead the discussion The Alignment Problem by Brian Christian at next Sunday's Zoom meeting of the Wellesley Palm Beach Club . It is most reading as we move into a world where Artificial Intelligence drives decisions regarding hiring, incarceration and medical treatment. I love hearing from Alums. We can always use Google Meet or Zoom so please let me know how you're doing ([awitte@wellesley.edu](mailto:awitte@wellesley.edu)).

**Julie Matthaei** is enjoying her third year of retirement, and still trying to figure out what retirement means for her. Her daughter Ella has fully recovered from her double lung transplant. Julie is still active in the U.S. Solidarity Economy Network, and is working on a memoir of her inner, healing work. She loves hearing from alums.

**Corri Taylor** continues to focus on painting and photography in her retirement. Walking with colleagues through the College Arboretum and western woods continues to be her main form of both exercising and socializing. She is happy that her daughter Rebecca Taylor, '17, who lives in nearby Medford, comes back to Wellesley twice a week to coach the Wellesley Whiptails Ultimate Frisbee team.

\*\*\*\*\*

## ALUMNAE NEWS

**Heather Long '04** joined the Washington Post Opinion section as a weekly columnist, and as a member of the editorial board, she is the lead writer on economics, business, labor and related issues. Her appointment was [announced by the Washington Post](#). She also appears regularly on the NPR show, Marketplace.

**Paige Shevlin '06** is Senior Advisor on Workforce Development at the U.S. Department of Transportation.

**Sara Hess '08** is an Associate Economic Affairs Officer with the UN at the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in Beirut, Lebanon. Her previous post was in Mexico City.

**Sara Minkara '11** was appointed by President Joe Biden as the [United States Special Advisor on International Disability Rights](#).

**Karianne Gunderson '12** accepted a position as a fixed income portfolio manager at the Norwegian sovereign wealth fund.

**Cicia Lee '14** spent their time since graduation doing community organizing, working on racial, economic, and environmental justice issues. Most recently they left their work at Momentum, a training and research institute for social movements. They will start a PhD program in Political Science at Brown this fall.

**Mary Lou Akai-Ferguson '16** managed her first political campaign for Boston mayoral candidate Michelle Wu. Wu was elected mayor on November 2, 2021 and Akai-Ferguson received accolades from the Boston Globe for the successful campaign she lead, [Michelle Wu's campaign manager also broke the mold](#).

**Jess Forden '17** plans to start the MA in Economics program at the New School this fall.

**Mingfei Li '17** received her master's degree in Management Science and Engineering from the Department of Industrial Engineering and Operations Research at Columbia University, and now works for Grab in Singapore.

**Mary Chen '18** recently joined the Boston Fed as a Data Analyst and is also pursuing a graduate degree in Analytics at Georgia Tech after spending some time at the Federal Reserve Board and the Financial Stability Board.

**Clara Sachsse, '18** will be starting a PhD program at Tufts/Fletcher in Economics and Public Policy in the fall.

**Zohal Barsi '19** will be starting a PhD program at University of Wisconsin, Madison this fall.

**Sita Dandiker '19** received a master's degree in public health from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She works in NYC at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center's Genetics Services department as a clinical research coordinator. She also creates economic models for different public health and policy approaches to genetics.

**Camilla Jamro '21** works for HSBC in New York.