



UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Department of Economics



The revamped undergraduate curriculum in economics embraces six proficiencies. Specifically, program graduates should be able to:

- ... access existing economic knowledge
- ... demonstrate a command of existing economic knowledge
- ... interpret existing economic knowledge
- ... interpret and manipulate economic data
- ... apply existing economic knowledge
- ... create new knowledge

In the economics curriculum creating new knowledge is accomplished through the “capstone” course associated with each program option:

- Economics 496 – Senior Project (BA option)
- Economics 434 - Labor Market Analysis and Evaluation (BSLE option)

Since fall 2004 more than twenty-seven students have completed their senior project under the direction of various faculty members. Student projects build resumes with practical skills in conducting research.

Final projects have been presented:

- At national and international conferences
- At the UA Conference on Undergraduate and Graduate Student Research
- At the Undergraduate Department Poster Exhibit ([Regional Competition](#))
- Orally to the department students and faculty

STUDENTS ACHIEVEMENTS AND RECOGNITIONS



Greg Madonia with Senator Voinovich

Greg Madonia, “*Terrorism's Effect on FDI: Analysis of 96 Countries from 1999 to 2003*,” presented at the April 2008 posters on the Hill, sponsored by the Council on Undergraduate Research

Jeffrey Wilson,
“*Peer Effects and Cigarette Use Among College Students*,”
presented at the 2006 International Atlantic Economic Society

- Winner, Best Undergraduate Paper Competition, International Atlantic Economic Society
- Published in March 2007 issue of the *Atlantic Economic Journal*



Jeffrey Wilson receiving the Best Undergraduate Paper Award, Philadelphia 2006

Selected Excerpts from Senior Project Reflective Statements

“Peer Effects and Cigarette Use Among College Students”- Jeffrey Wilson

This project is the best work I have done as an undergraduate. I say this not only looking at the results of the project but also at what this entire process has taught me about what it takes to complete a *quality* piece of work. I often found myself completing previous papers months before the deadlines, proofreading them a few times and letting them sit until the due date. Much time could have been devoted to improving those papers to a higher level but I was content with them as they lay. Originally, I held this same attitude towards my senior project. I had already been accepted to all the law schools I had applied to so technically my grades did not matter in this last semester. All I would have to do is complete the paper, get a B or C and move on with my life. This train of thought stayed with me for the first few weeks of spring semester but changed when I realized that Dr. Renna expected more from me than simply a C. In turn, I began to expect more of myself than such a mediocre grade. Regardless of the fact that I had been accepted to any school I wished to attend, I wanted to do my best for this final work in my undergraduate career.

I found a niche in the literature and set out to fill that niche with new results in peer effect and substance use studies. Even when I arrived at a draft of the paper that likely would have gotten me an A I still wanted to improve it. I could have left the project as is with an OLS instead of the probit model. It did not have any way of incorporating price levels nor did it present any sensitivity analysis. With this in mind, I devoted another 12 hours of effort to the paper over the course of two nights to arrive at the piece linked here.

“Today’s New Family: What is it doing to our children’s educational attainment?” – Monika Dutka

Working on this project was by far the most rewarding and challenging experience of my college career. The difficulty of the paper, and the tears of frustration cried over it, however, made the final product all the more worthwhile. Collecting the data was time consuming and maddening at times. I had not used SAS since the year before, so my memory was a little rusty. I had to take time to read about how to properly code the data and run different models. After many trials of my variables not being detected and not being of full rank, I finally was able to test a model and interpret results. After the first test was run, many more followed. I was finally learning what was important in my model and what should be removed because of lack of importance to my specific topic.

“The Effects of High School Athletic Participation and Extra Curricular Activities on Labor Income” - Douglas Brewer

This is the culmination of my work at the University of Akron. This study means so much more to me than just results. By the way, if you participated in High school athletic programs then you will receive 13 % higher labor incomes in your life...based on my work. The key part of the project is the life lesson that I will carry with me. This project enabled me to tie all aspects of my economic work and put it together in a final project that has real world implications. My project makes a statement on educational policies and I learned how to think like an economist.

Undergraduate students presenting research at the department poster exhibit:

Spring 2005 (first year of this exhibit):

- James Underwood, "*The Effects of Education on Prisoner Recidivism*"
- David Rowland, "*Labor Institutions: Effects on Income Inequality*"
- Dan Sunderland, "*Illicit Drug Use and Educational Attainment*"

Spring 2006:

- Douglas Brewer, "*The effects of high school athletics participation and extra curriculum activities on labor income*"
- Monika Dutka, "*Today's new family: What is it doing to our children's educational attainment?*"
- Alex Butler, "*Military training and its reflection in civilian earnings*"
- Jeff Wilson, "*Peer effect and cigarette use among college students*"
- Jared Miller, "*Other-Regarding Preferences: Altruism or Inequality-Aversion?*"
- Jessica Holden, "*Does an increase in education for women increase their income?*"

Spring and Summer 2007:

- Greg Madonia, "*Terrorism's Effect on FDI: Analysis of 96 Countries from 1999 to 2003*"
- David Lucarell, "*The Impact of Rising Health Care Premiums on the Demand for Temporary Workers*"
- James Krein, "*English Language Proficiency and Personal Employment Status*"
- Johnathan Heim, "*New Physicians and the Role of Medical Malpractice Rates*"
- Robert Noetzel, "*Fertility in the United States and German: The Effects on Female Labor Force Participation*"
- Mark Groza, "*Conference Call! NCAA Conference Realignment and Football Game Day Attendance*"
- Shawna Bratsy, "*Parent's Choices and Consequences: How the Labor Force Participation Choices of Parents Affect Their Children's Educational Attainment*"
- Stephen Seyerle, "*Child Malnutrition and Women's Status in Uganda*"
- Milana Borisev, "*Elasticities of Demand for Gasoline in the United States*"

Spring and Summer 2008

- Alan Koncal, "*Cuts and Scrapes: Do Shortened Hospital Stays Lower Healthcare Expenditure?*"
- Kyle Bohland, "*Higher Education and Poverty Rates: Do State Investments in Higher Education Help our Poorest Citizens?*"
- Seth Daniels, "*Willingness to Pay for Hunting Licenses: A Comparison*"
- Marc Servodio, "*Grab that Cash with Both Hands and Make a Stash: Enticing the Youth in Retirement Plans*"
- Tracy Plavney, "*The Role of Art Education in the Demand for Performing Arts*"
- Tom Dolezal, "*The Salary Determinants of NFL Quarterbacks*"
- Sean Depaula, "*The Effect of Attending College on Performance at the Major League Level*"
- James Sibanda, "*Was the Decline in Export Performance in Zimbabwe Caused by Bad Governance or Western Influence?*"
- Forrest Brinkley, "*Piece by Piece: Estimating the Demand for Ironrock Capital, Inc.'s Decorative Tile Products*"

External presentations of undergraduate and graduate research:

- James Underwood, "*The Effects of Education on Prisoner Recidivism,*" presented at the 2005 Midwest Economic Association Meeting and the 2005 UA Conference on Undergraduate and Graduate Student Research
 - ★ Winner, Best Poster Presentation, UA Conference on Undergraduate and Graduate Student Research
- Jeffrey Wilson, "*Peer Effects and Cigarette Use Among College Students,*" presented at the 2006 International Atlantic Economic Society
 - ★ Winner, Best Undergraduate Paper Competition, International Atlantic Economic Society
 - ★ Paper published in March 2007 issue of the *Atlantic Economic Journal*
- Mark Groza, "*Conference Call! NCAA Conference Realignment and Football Game 2+Day Attendance*" presented at the 2007 Bowling Green State University Economics Undergraduate Conference.
 - ★ Awarded Third Place
- Matt Palmer, "*Has Salary Discrimination Really Disappeared from Major League Baseball,*" (with R.King) presented at the Eastern Economic Association Meeting, February 2004.
- Shawna Bratsy, "*Parent's Choices and Consequences: How the Labor Force Participation Choices of Parents Affect Their Children's Educational Attainment,*" presented at the 67th Annual Ohio Association of Economists and Political Scientists Conference, 2007 (presented by James Krien)

- Alex Medvedeff, “*On the Interpolation of Missing Dependent Variable Observations*,” presented at the 2008 Midwest Economics Association Conference.
- Kyle Prock, “*Examining the Effect of State Government Expenditures on Small Business Growth*,” presented at the 2008 Midwest Economics Association Conference.
- David Lucarell, “*The Impact of Rising Health Care Premiums on the Demand for Temporary Workers*,” presented at the 38th National Conference on Undergraduate Research sponsored by the Council on Undergraduate Research, April 2008.
- Greg Madonia, “*Terrorism’s Effect on FDI: Analysis of 96 Countries from 1999 to 2003*,” presented at the April 2008 Posters on the Hill, sponsored by the Council on Undergraduate Research.
- Agnieszka Celejewska, “*Do all Components of Government Expenditure Contribute equally to economic growth? Evidence from the European Union*,” to be presented at the 35th Annual Conference of the Northeast Business and Economics Association, November 2008.
- Ewa Sokolowska, “*The Decision about Joining the European Monetary Union: The Case of Italy*,” to be presented at the 35th Annual Conference of the Northeast Business and Economics Association, November 2008.

Publications of undergraduate and graduate students in peer-reviewed journals:

- Matthew Palmer “Has Salary Discrimination *Really* Disappeared from Major League Baseball?” *Eastern Economic Journal*, Vol. 32 (2), Spring 2006: 285-298 (with Randall King).
- Jeffrey Wilson, “Peer Effects and Cigarette Use Among College Students,” *Atlantic Economic Journal*, 2007, vol. 35, issue 2, pages 233-247.
- Mark Groza, “Conference Call! NCAA Conference Realignment and Football Game Day Attendance,” revise and resubmit to the *Journal of Sport Management*.

