

## ALUMNI PROFILE: SUCHARITA GHOSH



Dr. Sucharita Ghosh currently teaches at the University of Akron.

Another prominent Economics Department alum, Dr. Sucharita Ghosh, is currently Associate Professor of Economics and Director of Graduate Studies at the University of Akron. An acknowledged expert on international trade and finance issues as well as macroeconomics, Dr. Ghosh received both her master's (1989) and doctoral (1993) degrees at KU. Among her many publications is a fascinating analysis that appeared in *Applied Economics* in 2014 about the extent to which Chinese tourism may have been enhanced by the establishment of special cultural institutes in other countries ("Does the Confucius Institute Impact International Travel to China? A Panel Data Analysis" (with Donald Lien and Steven Yamarik). The study notes that China began placing Confucius Institutes in foreign countries in 2004 with an eye toward increasing international awareness about Chinese culture, and the effort appears to have paid off. After controlling for other factors accounting for growth in tourism, the authors find that the Confucius Institutes have had a significant impact on overall inbound tourist flows; and that each new institute continues to have a significant positive impact, especially as it relates to workers traveling to China.

A second paper with potential critical worldwide policy implications ("The Relationship Between Communicable Diseases and FDI Flows: An Empirical Investigation" with Francesco Renna) has recently been accepted for publication in *World Development*. The groundbreaking research is the first comprehensive study that investigates how the burden of communicable diseases affects foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows using a sample of 114 countries. The results suggest that governments in developing countries interested in attracting additional FDI should consider reducing communicable diseases and improving the health of their populations as an important prerequisite for additional economic growth, given that health is clearly one of the factors international investors consider when deciding to move their capital.

Dr. Ghosh, who grew up in Bombay (now Mumbai), a city with 20 million people, remembers that when she first arrived at KU for graduate school in 1986, she thought Lawrence, in comparison, seemed like a ghost town. However, she immediately grew to love the university, the city, the basketball-crazed culture, and the Economics Department.

She says one of her favorite professors was Dr. Tom Weiss. As his teaching assistant for several years, she presided over various discussion sections of Econ 140. But when

he had to go out of town at one point for a conference and asked her to teach the full class of 150 or more students at once, she remembers being very nervous.

"When he returned and asked me how it went, I almost burst into tears. I told him it went terribly – students were falling asleep, walking in and out of the lecture hall, and eating while I lectured," she said.

She recalls that when Tom responded with "welcome to America," she began to appreciate anew that many of the cultural differences between India and the United States did indeed extend into higher education classrooms.

Sucharita added that as an international student, she was frequently homesick and has fond memories of the informality and hospitality of home-cooked meals she sometimes enjoyed at the homes of faculty members, including Tom, Dr. De-Min Wu, Dr. Donald Lien and Dr. Joe Sicilian.

Settling into campus in the mid-1980s, Sucharita remembers that at first, "Larry Brown and Danny Manning meant nothing to me. However, I quickly realized basketball was the one thing everyone in Lawrence was passionate about and that everyone's conversations revolved around the Jayhawks' basketball team. I knew I had better start learning the language and nuances of college basketball! I even stayed in Jayhawk Towers my first year in Lawrence, and it was quite helpful that some of my neighbors were members of the team," she said.

"My absolute favorite memory was when we won the NCAA Title in 1988: students streaming out on the streets of campus; the hugging, hollering and high-fiving that went on the entire night; the declaration of a campus holiday; the winner's parade. It was a fantastic bonding experience, and that was when I truly felt part of the KU family!"

Dr. Ghosh has since made it a point to return to KU every chance she gets, and was most recently back in October 2014 for the Midwest Economic Theory and International Trade Meetings which were hosted by the Economics Department.

She laughingly says that on that visit, she was a little disappointed to realize that her favorite former restaurant, the Glass Onion, has now been replaced by the Oread Hotel, "a beautiful, stately building which provides quite the contrast to the cozy, warm atmosphere" that had existed at the Onion. Like so many of her peers from that era, she also recalls many late-night runs to Joe's Donuts on 9th Street.

After her stint teaching Econ 140 discussion sections, she began teaching intermediate macroeconomics and money and banking courses at KU. Sucharita says that this was the critical period that convinced her she wanted to remain in academia. One of her greatest honors while at KU was winning a special Chancellor's Award for Graduate Student Teaching Excellence in 1991.

She began working at the University of Akron in 1993 after completing her PhD at KU. Dr. Ghosh has presented her research at numerous conferences, including a special Round Table at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom on the effects of international trade on the environment. After being named a Fulbright Scholar in 2006, she taught for a semester in Italy at the University of Salento while conducting research on trade issues related to European Union expansion.