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

It’s a pleasure to be writing to you at the end of my second year as the Economics Department Chair.

I write to you from the department’s temporary home in the “mods,” modular units next to the Science Center. We moved out of Pendleton East in December 2022 to allow the building’s heating and cooling system to be replaced. During our absence, classroom technology and some common spaces will be updated, changes which are welcome as the building was last renovated in 2000. The department’s faculty and staff handled the disruption of moving and working in a communal space this semester with characteristic good cheer. We are grateful to our Academic Administrator Sheila Datz for orchestrating the move. We look forward to being back in our “refreshed” building for the Fall 2023 semester!

I am delighted to share the news that Akila Weerapana and Olga Shurchkov have been promoted to full professor! We congratulate them on this well-deserved recognition of their fantastic teaching, impressive scholarship, and outstanding service to the College. Our students are so lucky to learn from them and we are so grateful to have them as colleagues!

In other faculty news, we were very happy to welcome Tyler Giles as a new Assistant Professor in our department this past fall! Aside from his inexplicable preference for Philadelphia-area sports teams, we are finding him to be a great new colleague.

On the curricular front, Akila Weerapana and Casey Rothschild co-taught a new version of our two-semester principles course designed to meet the needs of students who have not yet satisfied the Quantitative Reasoning requirement or could benefit from additional support in their study of economics. We greatly appreciate Akila and Casey’s efforts to make economics more accessible and welcoming to students of all backgrounds.

In September, the department hosted the Liberal Arts Colleges Development Economics Conference (LAC-DEV). Baafra Abeberese, Pinar Keskin, and Kartini Shastry shared the organizing duties and put on an amazing event, with superb event management from our AAs Karen Cronin and Sheila Datz. The event attracted about 35 attendees, including alumnae Sarah Pearlman ’97 (Vassar College), Emily Conover ’98 (Hamilton College), and Tamara McGavrock ’08 (Grinnell College). Rema Hanna of the Harvard Kennedy School gave the keynote address and students from our Economics Research Seminar attended.
Another highlight of this year was holding our Goldman and Calderwood Lectures in person for the first time in 3 years. The Goldman Lecture featured Nancy Rose, the Charles P. Kindleberger Professor of Applied Economics at MIT, speaking on “Antitrust Policy: Separating Rhetoric from Reality.” The Calderwood Lecture was given by Trevon Logan, Hazel C. Youngberg Distinguished Professor of Economics at Ohio State University, on the topic “Sins of Economic History.”

I will leave it to my colleagues to share their own “fancy news” (a term borrowed from my daughter’s dance classes), which includes recent publications, media appearances, new courses, and leadership roles at the College. For updates throughout the year on faculty and alumnae news, you can follow us on Twitter (@WellesleyEcon).

*Best Wishes,*

Courtney Coile, Chair and Professor of Economics

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**2022-2023 HIGHLIGHTS**

We had a wonderful time reconnecting with alums at Reunion 2022!

(1 to r): Professor Courtney Coile with Clio Flikkema ‘17

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Wellesley College was the site for the Liberal Arts Colleges Development Economics Conference (LAC-DEV) in September. Over 35 economists attended the event lead by Kartini Shastry, Pinar Keskin, and Baafra Abeberese. ’04.

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Professors Dan Sichel and Olga Shurchkov ’01 caught up with Emma Rackstraw ’14 at ASSA ’23 in New Orleans!

Current Economics students love to hear what our alums have to say about their career and graduate school choices. The Economics Student Association (ESA) hosted two alumnae panels this year. In the fall, an alumnae panel including Sidrah Baloch ’14, Karrisha Gillespie ’19 and Shrunothra Ambati ’20, spoke about their transition from Wellesley into their careers. In the spring, alums shared their thoughts on graduate school. A big thank you to our very accomplished alumnae for sharing your time with our current students!

The 2023 Calderwood Lecture was delivered by Trevon Logan, Hazel C. Youngberg Trustees Distinguished Professor of Economics, The Ohio State University.

Congratulation to our thesis students who represented the Economics Department well
at the Ruhlman Conference. They did great work and made us proud!

(l to r): Nuzaina Faisal Khan, Julie Ma, Amy Rose, Eshika Kaul, Mariela Duran, Beatrice Chen

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We had a great time at this year’s Senior Celebration with the yellow class of 2023! Faculty pictured below include Kyung Park, Akila Weerapana, Baafra Abeberese, and Sue Skeath.

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Next year’s AEA meetings will be held in San Antonio, Texas, January 5-7, 2024. Please follow this link to learn more about the annual meeting: aeaweb.org/conference/

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The Peggy Howard Fellowship:
Rachel Cummings ’19, Morgan Mastrianni ’21, Miray Omurtak ’21, Arielle Concilio (Parra) ’14

The Natalie Bolton Faculty Prize in Economics (Best 200-level Paper):
Clara Chambers ’24

The Natalie Bolton Faculty Prize in Econometrics (Best 203 Paper):
Fatima Djalalova ’24, Laura de Ladoucette ’24, Ekaterina Tsavalyuk ’24

The Natalie Bolton Faculty Prize in Economics (Best 300-level Paper):
Olivia Arthur ’23, Cece Henderson ’23, Jessica Liu ’23, Lucy Wang ’23, Dixue Zhang ’23

The Natalie Bolton Thesis Prize:
Eshika Kaul ’23, Beatrice Chen ’23, Amy Rose ’23

The Natalie Bolton Student Prize:
Mariela Duran ’23

The Wall Street Journal Award:
Emma Rutkowski ’23

2023 Economics Department Award Winners

Kristin Butcher ’86 spent 2022-2023 in the research department at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. She is very excited to welcome Micah Villarreal (W’15) to the Chicago Fed as an American Economic Association in-residence summer fellow in a few weeks! Micah is pursuing her PhD in Economics at UCSB and is an NSF graduate research fellowship winner. Kristin is pursuing research on the effects of state paid parental-leave programs on firms (with Sari Kerr and Deniz Civril) and will present at the upcoming annual meetings of the Society of Labor Economists. She is happy that two of her projects with Patrick McEwan and Akila Weerapana using Wellesley data -- one on the effects of shadow grading at Wellesley and one on the effect of women’s colleges on choosing an economics major -- are making their way through the publication process. Her work on immigration and the elderly, with Kelsey Moran (W’17) and Tara Watson (Brookings and Williams College) continues to garner attention, and will hopefully lead to some policy action around the challenges of the aging baby boom. Kristin is looking forward to being back in the classroom teaching the Economics of Immigration (Econ 311) in the Fall!

Courtney Coile is wrapping up her second year as department chair. This year’s projects included planning for the move to the modulars and for an external visiting...
Professor Coile delivers remarks at opening reception for new research institute at the Sorbonne.

**Tyler Giles** survived his first year as an Assistant Professor at Wellesley College! He taught Econometrics and Public Economics, both for the first time, and was proud of the effort he applied in both. On the research side, Tyler largely continued to work on revisions of his papers on the effects of different criminal justice sentences. Somewhat unexpectedly, some of his work on social institutions and mortality in the U.S. received a bit of attention, leading to an article in *The Economist* and a handful of guest lectures. As for things more broadly, Tyler enjoyed getting to know his colleagues during Mods lunchtime and, despite constant bafflement at its roadways, slowly settled into New England life. This summer, Tyler will work with a Case Fellow for the first time and is looking forward to collaborating on new and exciting projects.

**Eric Hilt** taught economic history, finance, intermediate macro, and the economics research seminar, all of which were great fun. In the Spring, Pendleton Hall was under renovation, so he moved with his colleagues to the temporary buildings in the parking lot next to the Science Center, which reminded him of the trailers his elementary school used for extra classroom space. He had a busy and productive year professionally, presenting papers at economic history conferences, and continuing to work as editor of the *Journal of Economic History*. He looks forward to spending lots of time this summer with his daughter, who is now 9.

**Joe Joyce** was on leave during the fall semester, but happy to be back in the classroom in the spring semester. He taught macro principles and the economics of globalization. In his research he deals with issues related to foreign direct investment. In family news Caroline is finishing her doctoral degree at McGill University, while Alison works in Boston for DraftKings. Catherine and Joe gave up their house in Wellesley this spring to move to Needham, a short distance from campus.

**Sari Pekkala Kerr** was taking the year off teaching to complete some outstanding research projects at the Wellesley Centers for Women and to get situated in her new part time role as a U.S. Census Bureau Economist. She works two days a week in the Federal Research Data Center at the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) helping researchers and graduate
students with their research proposals and projects. She will continue in that role through the next academic year and expects to return to teaching after that. Sari has been very busy presenting her work and traveling to conferences and seminars - something that still feels a little unbelievable after the COVID hiatus. Other than that, she keeps very busy with her family, with both kids actively participating in winter sports all around the New England area.

**Pinar Keskin's** twelfth year at Wellesley was nothing short of fantastic. Over the course of the year, she taught four classes, including two sections of Introductory Microeconomics, a 200-level seminar on Environmental Economics, and her signature 300-level elective on environmental issues in developing countries. Outside the classroom, Pinar is constantly on the lookout for research topics that inspire and motivate her. Her coauthored work with (incredible Wellesley alumna) Miray Omurtak on the impact of the arrival of Syrian refugees in Turkey on access to health-care resources and subsequent changes in infectious disease rates among native children was published in the World Bank Economic Review in November. Meanwhile, life at Pinar's house was like a never-ending carnival of fun and laughter. When they're not cheering on their kids at swim meets or conducting science experiments on the kitchen counter, Pinar and her husband can be found challenging each other to a game of Taco Cat Goat Cheese Pizza or enjoying a family movie night with their daughters Maya (10) and Arya (7)."

**Phil Levine** spent much of the year focusing on his work examining college pricing and financial aid. He devoted considerable attention to promoting his book, *A Problem of Fit: How the Complexity of College Pricing Hurts Students – and Universities* (University of Chicago Press), that was published in the spring of 2022. Along with many talks at professional meetings of admissions and financial aid administrators, Phil also had opinion pieces published in CNN, the Boston Globe, and Time Magazine. His point is not complicated. College pricing should be affordable, particularly for students from lower-income families. He also continues to focus on the downward trend in fertility in the US. Phil and Melissa Kearney (a former faculty member!) received grant funding to organize a conference “Fertility and Declining Population Growth in High-Income Countries,” to be held in early June. In the classroom, Phil taught two sections of Econ 103 (Intro Stats) in the fall and he was on leave in the spring. A regular feature of his Econ 103 class is the regular presentation of birth statistics that come directly from the research he conducts on the topic. He reserves his analysis of the college pricing system for his Econ 101 class, which he is looking forward to teaching in the fall. At home, Phil’s family is doing well. His oldest son, Jake, now lives in Cambridge. His younger son, Noah, is graduating law school this spring and will be returning to Boston to start his legal career in the fall. He is thrilled to have both children living locally! If only the Red Sox were good this year …

**Patrick McEwan** had an uneventful year of teaching...but after recent years, that was just perfect! In Fall, he taught courses on economics of education and Latin American development. In Spring, he taught Principles of Microeconomics to students in the Grey Modulars (during the Pendleton East renovation). It was really nice not to bang into those wooden map pegs next to the chalkboards in PNE 239! He wrapped up two projects on the economics of Wellesley College with his colleagues Akila Weerapana and Kristin Butcher. One paper evaluates the impact of 2014's shadow grading policy on student behavior and outcomes. Another paper evaluates the impact of Wellesley College (and women's colleges more generally) on the decision to major in Economics. You can read both at [www.patrickmcewan.net](http://www.patrickmcewan.net). He also visited Chile after many years away, and started
several new projects on the long-run impacts of Chilean education reforms, with colleagues at the Catholic University.

Robin McKnight taught Intermediate Microeconomics and Advanced Health Economics during the fall semester. She has been on leave during the spring semester, and looks forward to returning to the classroom in the fall. In the meantime, she has enjoyed frequent dinner table conversations about economics, arising from the fact that her older daughter is taking high school classes in both statistics and economics this year. Outside of Wellesley, Robin continues to serve as Secretary of the Board of the American Society of Health Economists.

Seth Neumuller taught Econ 102 and Econ 202 this year. He also taught Corporate Finance (Econ 321), a new course just added to the economics curriculum this year which nicely complements Finance Theory and Investments (Econ 323), the department’s other quite popular finance course. In addition to teaching, Seth made progress on several research projects and served for a second straight year 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 daughters Emma (7) and Scarlett (6) who love skiing, swimming, biking, skating, and just about anything else active.

Kyung Park thought he would never spend a second in the modulars outside of teaching, but in fact, enjoyed them, and now, does not want to leave. On the research side, he is currently in the process of revising and resubmitting a co-authored study on information provision and their impact on gender stereotypes with our very own Lucy Cheskin ’21. He advised two senior theses, one with Amy Rose ’23 and the other with Jenny Wang ’23. The former examines whether the legalization of same-sex marriage led to an increase in same-sex couples moving to their home state, and the latter examines machine learning as a potential tool to address measurement error in race-based classification. Kyung had a great time teaching 201, 303, and 327 (special shout-out to the students this year - we made it through the mods and masks!). Looking forward to next year!

Casey Rothschild worked with Akila Weerapana to teach a new “P” version of the Econ 101-102 intro sequence in tandem with WISE (the Wellesley Initiative for Scholars of Economics). They were blessed with an incredibly engaged and buoyant first cohort of 101P-102P-ers and look forward to teaching the sequence again next year. Casey worked with Mariela Duran ‘23 on her thesis on policy reform in Chilean annuity markets, published papers in the Risk Management and Insurance Review and the Journal of Economic Education, gave a keynote address at the China International Conference on Risk and Insurance Management, and continued his work as editor-in-chief of the Geneva Risk and Insurance Review. He also spent as much time as he could find with his family (kids Lottie, 7, Mabel, 10, and Adele, 13, and partner Beth), with his dog Ken, and in his garden.

Kartini Shastry had a busy fourteenth year at Wellesley College. She taught Econ 101 and a seminar in Economic Development in the Fall, and in the Spring, she taught two sections of Econometrics. Kartini was delighted to advise Beatrice Chen ‘23 on her senior honors thesis, “The Effect of Grandparents on Female Labor Force Participation in the United States: Using Fertility Trends in Country of Origin.” On the research front, Kartini continued her work on the Green Revolution and diabetes in India, the impact of international funding for vaccine coverage in developing countries, and gender differences in how economists react to editorial decisions. She also completed a randomized controlled trial on app-assisted homework in Haryana, India, and is looking forward to analyzing the data this summer. Outside of work,
Kartini was unsuccessful as a Lego coach in her attempt to get her sons, Jai (10) and Sammy (8), interested in Lego Robotics competitions and has resigned herself to enjoying many hours of Little League baseball a week.

**Olga Shurchkov ’01** had a busy and productive academic year that ended on a high note with a promotion to the rank of Full Professor! Olga is extremely grateful to the Economics Department and the College for this recognition! In the fall, she taught introductory and intermediate macroeconomics courses, while in the spring she taught two sections of behavioral economics. Olga’s research agenda is as full as ever, with a new paper on perceptions of diversity in occupations forthcoming in the 2023 issue of the *American Economic Association Papers & Proceedings*, and a new project on the impact of self-promotion and social media on academic careers gaining momentum with a pilot experiment launching this summer. As for College service, Olga isn’t taking much of a break since finishing her term as the director of the Knapp Social Science Center. Starting in July 2024, she will become the next Paula Phillips Bernstein ’58 Faculty Director of the Madeleine Korbel Albright Institute for Global Affairs. On a more personal note, in December 2022, Olga took the next step in her lifelong Taekwon-Do journey, earning the rank of 6th Dan. She continues to share this passion with Wellesley students by teaching her PE class. Olga is also proud to serve on the board of directors and to co-chair the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee of the US National ITF Taekwon-Do Association. Her 9-year-old son, who is a green stripe, hopes to return to Taekwon-Do over the summer after a back injury. The entire Shurchkov-Hencke family is looking forward to upcoming adventures in Banff, Canada, in August 2023 and in Vietnam in February 2024!

**Dan Sichel** was on leave in the fall but back in the spring, just in time to move to the Mods. In the spring, he taught Econ 202 and Economic Journalism, a Calderwood public writing seminar. His work in the policy community also continued, as Chair of the Bureau of Economic Analysis’ Advisory Committee of outside experts and as a member of the American Economic Association’s Committee on Economic Statistics. On the research front, Dan continued work on the economics of furniture, focusing on the middle ground between the work of historians of furniture and economic analysis. Outside of Wellesley, Dan has been increasingly involved in his town’s (Sherborn) affairs and served as chair of the town’s Advisory (Finance) Committee this past year. On the woodworking front, he made a lot of progress learning to use a lathe and is planning to build a Seymour-style demi-lune table in the coming year. (Google it if you don’t know what that is!)

**Susan Skeath (van Mulbregt)** taught Econ 201 and her Games of Strategy course (Econ 222) each semester this year. She has submitted a proposal to present her ‘partially flipped classroom’ approach at the 2024 ASSA Meeting in Texas and is considering ways to incorporate some of the techniques in Econ 222 as well. Sue is also planning a research project on active learning techniques for economics courses beyond principles. Kids (who aren’t kids) are doing great - Emily at Zoo Atlanta and Pierce at UMD’s chemistry PhD program.

**Ann Velenchik** introduced a new first year writing course called "Having it All: The Problem of Women and Work." The class went great (and thanks to the folks who volunteered to be interviewed by the students) but it seems likely that none of the 16 students in the course will decide to have kids. Whoops. She actually enjoyed hanging out in the cubicles with her friends and especially loved teaching in the great classrooms in the new Science Center (you should stop by the sit stair and see her little plaque!). Nate (26) is living on Vinalhaven Island, Maine and still works for Analysis Group, and Becca (22) has graduated from...
Pomona and is headed off to work in France on the organic farm of Agnes Fiamma Papone ’96. Long live the Wellesley network.

**Akila Weerapana** Now that classes are over, I feel I can safely say that this was the first year since the pandemic where I felt things were back to normal. Yes, it was not quite the good old days since we had to spend a semester in modular office space because of renovations in Pendleton East but in terms of day to day teaching and learning, life was back to where it was. For me, the single biggest change was the return to in-person office hours, my favorite part of teaching, and the one I truly missed. So many dark clouds were cleared up when I began to be able to work with students again. I also enjoyed teaching our new year-long Econ 101P/102P sequence with Casey Rothschild. We had a fantastic group of students who formed a community that was more supportive and engaged than anything Casey and I had envisioned going into this project. We are excited by the promise of this new model of welcoming in, rather than weeding out, students in the intro courses by giving them opportunities to develop a lot of quantitative and data skills and background that the pandemic had deprived them of in high school. On the homefront, more new phases that I am not ready for, my daughter Anya will be going into 11th grade and we will start doing college tours next year(!), and my son Kiran will be entering high school. Soon they will be as old as many of you were when I first met you! I hope to see some of you at Reunion this year.

**Rachel Devette Werkema** taught Econ 102 along with three 200-level electives: Econ 220 (development), Econ 226 (economics of education policy) and a new course, Econ 204 (Big Ideas in Economics). Econ 204 uses the Nobel Prize in Economics as a launching pad for exploring topics that build on the principles learned in Econ 101 and Econ 102. The final class topic featured the most recent Nobel prize, awarded last fall for research on bank runs and the consequences of bank failures, which turned out to be more relevant than anticipated. Rachel will be working with two Case Fellows this summer, continuing research on school boards and planning a new project to examine the role of large private (and largely unregulated) actors like the College Board in shaping curriculum and the college application process. This latest project is partly inspired by her own family's experience navigating that process over the past year with twins. Rachel will have double commencements this spring, cheering on Wellesley seniors in May and celebrating her own daughters in June.

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**FACULTY EMERITI**

**David Lindauer** retired from the Wellesley faculty last June but he did not retire from working. He continues to serve as the Director of the Calderwood Seminars in Public Writing Program. The Calderwood Seminars will celebrate their 10th anniversary with a conference at Wellesley College this September drawing faculty from a dozen colleges and universities. The Calderwood Seminar program has a new logo:

![Calderwood logo](https://example.com/calderwood-logo.png)

and is about to launch a new website designed to attract new institutions and to instruct faculty on developing Calderwood Seminars of their own.

**Corri Taylor** continues to reside in Fiske House, making it easy for her to participate in campus life and college events in her
retirement. Daughter Rebecca, ‘17, lives in Medford, and works as a teacher for the Boston Outdoor Preschool Network at their site at Elm Bank on the Wellesley/South Natick line. She visits Corri often for tea in the mornings on her way to work.

Ann Dryden Witte Between DeSantis trying to position himself as far right as possible and the Moms for Liberty, Florida has become a less tolerant and inclusive place. The rights of local governments, companies and individuals are being narrowed. On a brighter note, my younger grandson, Cyril, passed his first year exam at the conservatory with distinctions. It was great to be in Maine in August and September after sweating out summers in Florida (hot, humid and hurricanes) for covid filled 2020 and 2021. I am currently reading a wonderful book, American Nations, which has given me an understanding of the US that I never had before. If you are looking for a funny, entertaining book, I recommend A Year of Living Danishly. I touched base with a number of alums during the year. Tasneem Chipty sold her consulting business and is now working as an independent expert on various antitrust cases. Last time I talked with her, she and Aleks were in Barcelona. Dee Dee Chen continues to help keep Mass General Brigham running and tries to keep up with her 4 year old, George. The Anvary sisters (Nahz, Seema & Goly continue to thrive in Northern California. Helen Wu works for McKinsey’s Chicago office, but lives in Miami. Wonder why? Naana Boampong has given up lawyering and is now an entrepreneur in DC. 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).

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ALUMNAE NEWS

Elaine Sun ’92 works for Mammoth Biosciences as CFO and COO in Brisbane, CA. She and her husband have two children.

Elizabeth Hunter ’00 passed away on September 29, 2022, after a 6-year battle with lung cancer. She was an accomplished employment lawyer, but more than anything, she loved being with her family – especially her three young children, husband, parents, and brother. In both her career and personal life, Elizabeth was committed to serving others with kindness, humility, and quiet strength.

Lin Xu ’09 (Cornell PhD ’18) is working at the Joint Committee for Taxation, estimating the revenue cost of tax bills for Congress.

Cailey D. Stevens ’12 lives with her family in Geneva, Switzerland. She works with the International Trade Centre, a joint agency of the WTO and the UN, which helps firms in developing countries export their products.

Kayleigh Butler ’14 is the Brand Marketing Manager for Kids and Baby at Ralph Lauren in NYC.

Lena Cardoso ’14 moved to Lisbon, Portugal and is a User Experience Researcher at Kaizen Gaming, one of the fastest growing GameTech companies internationally.

Arielle Concilio (Parra) ’14 started her PhD in economics at Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Camille Gardner ’14 has finished her course work and is working on her PhD dissertation in the Econ Dept at Brown.

Soomi Kim ’14 is joining Columbia Business School as an Assistant Professor.

Becca Kimball ’14 moved to Cusco, Peru and runs Peruvian operations for Máximo Nivel, a leading organization in study
abroad and educational travel in Latin America.

**Hailey Lee ’14** joined a global Korean storytech company called WEBTOON, a webcomic platform where anybody can publish their digitally native scroll format web comics, build a fandom, and monetize their content. Hailey and her fiancé live as digital nomads, most recently near Yosemite National Park.

**Prerana Nanda ’14** began an MBA part-time at NYU Stern.

**Lillian Stuart ’14** is an IT project manager with Telesis Bio in San Diego.

**Rachel Cummings ’19** will start her PhD in economics at Brown University in August.

**Mary Feser ’20** will start the Master’s in Public Health program in Applied Epidemiology at UNC-Chapel Hill in the fall.

**Morgan Mastrianni ’21** will start her PhD in agricultural economics at Purdue University this fall. She is currently finishing her M.S. in Applied Economics and Management at Cornell University.

**Miray Omurtak ’21** will start her PhD in economics at Yale University in August.