Greetings from the Economics Department! It is good to be working on a newsletter after a one-year hiatus. The Washington Post asked readers to describe 2020 in one word or phrase. Exhausting, Lost, Chaotic, Relentless, Surreal and Nightmare were some of the top words. You get the idea. We are optimistic and looking to move on, but we cannot ignore or forget this past year.

A quick recap on 2020: the faculty taught face-to-face up until spring break. They found out over spring break that when we returned, teaching and learning would be fully online. That was quite a transition with very little notice. We faced huge challenges, but we worked as a team, overcame obstacles and continued to provide the best education to our students. Last fall, we offered a few more face-to-face classes, but many were still online or hybrid with masking and social distancing. Students also adjusted to learning under different circumstances. What is important is that the teaching and learning never stopped or diminished in quality.

As you know, the Economics Department greatly values its students and their success. We like to brag about our placement rate and our successful alums. However, in my opinion, the relationships we build in our department are the most important part. The Economics faculty choose to serve as faculty advisors despite the presence of professional advisors in the college because we feel a sense of personal commitment to our students. This is what makes this department so unique and amazing.

Speaking of our amazing department, we had two retirements this past year. We will look and feel quite different without these pillars, but we are happy for them and their well-earned retirement. We also added a new faculty member and welcomed the return of one of our own back to the department. You can read more about them in this newsletter, in addition to brief updates about the rest of the faculty and staff.

I would like to end by thanking our generous donors who have made it possible for us to offer scholarships to deserving students. Your generosity goes a long way to support our program. I also want to acknowledge the faculty members and staff for all they do for our students and for supporting me in my role. They deserve all the credit for the achievements of this department. I am very thankful to be a part of such a great team!

Go Panthers!

Shar Self
Robert J. Waller Professor of Economics and Department Head
Virtual Jepson Forum Discusses Health Inequality

To honor Lawrence M. Jepson and to promote his vision, the Jepson endowment and the Department of Economics held the Jepson Forum virtually in September 2020. The topic was “COVID-19 Pandemic and Health Inequality at Home and Abroad.”

Five learned panelists shared their knowledge and views. The panelists were:

- **Michele Devlin**  
  Professor, Public Health and Education, UNI, & Director, Iowa Center on Health Disparities

- **Sharon Duclos**  
  Co-medical Director, Peoples Community Health Clinic

- **Keyah Levy**  
  Associate Director, Multicultural Education Services/Gender and Sexuality Services, UNI

- **Alejandro Murguia-Ortiz**  
  Community Organizer, American Friends Service Committee, Iowa

- **Nicole Novak**  
  Assistant Research Scientist, College of Public Health, University of Iowa

Hundreds of students, faculty, staff and community members attended the events. Students and other attendees learned firsthand how COVID-19 has impacted different communities differently. They learned from the speakers that it was not the first infectious disease in recent years. The speakers talked about how emerging infectious diseases (EID) are rising due to global warming, rising urban population, greater mobility and illegal hunting.

Attendees learned how intensely COVID-19 hit Tyson Foods in Waterloo and the reasons behind that. Panelists also talked about how minority college students were affected when UNI got closed down in Spring 2020.

One student said that “This zoom opened my eyes that this really is more than just a sickness; this affects people’s jobs, families and lives.” Another student said the forum was “informative,” “eye-opening,” and “touching.”
Lawrence M. Jepson International Experience Award

The Lawrence M. Jepson International Experience Award has been established to honor Lawrence Jepson’s vision to understand the importance of global interrelationships. His endowment supports activities in the area of international economics. The awards are given to students who are majoring in Economics and going abroad through UNI’s study abroad program.

The awards were given to students who studied abroad in the 2019-2020 school year. These students traveled to Greece, Costa Rica, and France. Jepson scholarships helped them with their expenses.

2019-2020 WINNERS

Shreeti Adhikari
Hometown: Davenport, Iowa
Major: General Economics
Shreeti travelled to the American College of Greece to study Economics in Spring 2020.

Laura Kremer
Hometown: Cascade, Iowa
Major: Business Economics

Janae Frisch
Hometown: Ankeny, Iowa
Major: Business Economics/Financial Management
Janae travelled to Renee School of Business in France in Spring 2020.

Lawrence M. Jepson International Economics Essay Contest

The Jepson Foundation awarded three students for their essays. Each of the winners received a monetary award from the Lawrence Jepson fund.

2019-2020 WINNERS

Molly Mingus
Hometown: Ankeny, Iowa
Major: Business Economics/Management

Aaron Iehl
Hometown: Cedar Falls, Iowa
Major: Applied Economics Analysis
Aaron’s essay is titled “The Effects of Relative Wages and Border Enforcement on Illegal Immigration.”

Emily Iehl
Hometown: Forest City, Iowa
Major: Applied Economics Analysis
SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS 2020-2021

HUGH ZEHR
Jeff Scudder Economics Scholarship
Hugh is from Waverly, Iowa, and he is majoring in General Economics.

ADAM KURT
Charles Leavitt Scholarship
Adam’s hometown is Long Grove, Iowa, and his major is Business Economics/Financial Management.

TAYLOR SHIPLEY
Maurice Van Nostrand Scholarship
Taylor comes to UNI from Newton, Iowa, and she is majoring in Business Economics/Financial Management.

MEREDITH GROSSMAN
Economics Scholarship (Dreyer)
Meredith is from Carroll, Iowa, and she is majoring in Business Economics/Supply Chain Management.
CIARA HALVERSON
Thomas Amlie Scholarship
Ciara’s hometown is Fayette, Iowa, and she is majoring in Business Economics/Financial Management.

COLE SANDER
Economics Alumni Scholarship
Cole is from Anamosa, Iowa, and his major is Business Economics/Financial Management.

SARAH HERZ
Glasener Scholarship
Sarah comes to UNI from Lovilia, Iowa, and her major is General Economics.

GRADY BRUNGARD
Mahmood Yousefi Scholarship
Grady’s hometown is Parkersburg, Iowa, and he is majoring in Business Economics/Finance.

SHAY SLIFKA
Economics Emeritus Faculty Scholarship
Shay is from State Center, Iowa, and she is majoring in General Economics.

JARED LARSON
Faculty Dads’ Scholarship
Jared hails from Armstrong, Iowa, and his majors are Business Economics/Finance/Real Estate.
Difficulties in Decision Making During the Pandemic

Policymakers universally made errors during the COVID pandemic. How do I know this? Given the complexity of the problem, mistakes were probably inevitable. But things might have been better if policymakers had tried to use basic economic concepts, especially the idea of comparing marginal benefits to marginal costs when making decisions.

Unlike textbook problems, where relevant parameters are given and finding the optimal solution is straightforward, the pandemic involved many uncertainties and unknowns.

A major problem is that people often misperceive risk.

For example, the safety record of large commercial jetliners is exemplary, as years sometimes go by without a fatality. The real carnage involves automobiles. Americans, however, appear willing to spend more money on incremental improvements in airline safety than automobile safety.

Decision making is also complicated by the reality that marginal benefits and costs have both subjective and objective aspects.

Measuring subjective benefits and costs is difficult.

When Oregon started rationing health care procedures decades ago, legislators held town hall meetings to sample citizens’ attitudes towards different facets, including pain and suffering, loss of use of limbs, etc. There were some objective measures of the cost of losing, say, a dominant arm, but there were subjective costs, too. A simple thought experiment demonstrates this:

Of your five senses, which sense would you least like to lose?

Had the Utilitarian dream of measuring utility come true, then economists and policymakers could better measure the subjective aspects of marginal benefits...
and costs of different policies. Without it, policymakers will have to rely upon indirect measurements of subjective benefits and costs, which are often of dubious value.

With respect to the pandemic, even objective aspects of the pandemic proved contentious and confusing. How was the virus transmitted? Who was at greatest risk? How effective would masks and social distancing be in preventing the spread of the virus?

Aside from the objective and subjective costs and benefits, the experts often proved myopic. Public health experts frequently focused solely upon the number of cases and deaths; they frequently neglected collateral benefits and costs of their policy prescriptions. Business leaders may have been too focused on economic aspects.

Legislators who were supposed to weigh a variety of constituents’ well-being and who lacked expertise in public health faced a menu of terrible choices. Politicians love to brag about how their policies “saved lives.” The obverse holds, too. Citizens are quick to blame legislators for adverse outcomes, especially outcomes involving injuries and deaths. Politicians focused on explicit, obvious outcomes; they hoped that voters would ignore the implicit, abstract aspects such as the opportunity costs of imposing quarantines and lockdowns. Thus, some marginal costs and benefits were explicitly ignored. This political calculus undoubtedly skewed their decisions.

Because legislators frequently failed to consider many relevant marginal costs and benefits, they were destined to make faulty decisions.

To be fair, many of their decisions will be determined to be faulty only in retrospect, when more data and cooler passions arise.

Economic thinking could have made useful contributions to the debate but was ignored all too often.

The views and opinions expressed are those of the author and do not imply endorsement by the University of Northern Iowa.
The Labor Market Impact of COVID-19

BY SHAHINA AMIN

“We are all in this together” is the phrase we have heard since the pandemic began. But the sentence is incomplete.

The complete sentence is, “We are all in this together, but we are not in this equally.”

The pandemic affected different groups of people differently – the impact varied by gender, age, ethnicity and the kind of work people do. The pandemic severely impacted jobs that require high levels of physical proximity and face-to-face contact. Women, minorities, and the less-educated are over-represented among these essential frontline workers. Workers who could work remotely suffered much less in terms of earnings and wages than their low-wage counterparts.

We all know that unemployment increased and earnings fell overnight for most people. The unemployment rate for households earning less than $30,000 per year was double that of the unemployment rates of higher-income households. The unemployment rates of Black and Hispanic workers were 1.6 to 2.0 times more than that of their white counterparts. Of all the demographic groups, the unemployment rate increased most for Black women, followed by Black men and Hispanic men between March 2020 and March 2021.

One study reports that the racial and ethnic gaps persist even after controlling for education and occupation. Permanent job loss has also been higher among these groups. We see a relatively high rate of labor force exits for Black workers, which may lead to more racial inequality in wages than what already exists.

In 2019, there were roughly 9.7 million working mothers with a child under the age of 6. Because COVID-19 closed the child-care facilities and schools overnight, mothers of children faced a severe blow. Four times as many women as men dropped out of the labor force. Working mothers quit so that they could take care of kids. Women have accounted for nearly 56 percent of workforce exits since the beginning of the pandemic.

Dropping out of the labor force will decrease their lifetime benefits, social security and will increase gender inequality.

One report estimates that women leaving the workforce and reducing work hours could amount to $64.5 billion per year in lost wages and economic activity. Studies find that lack of child care due to the virus will set women back a generation. Even a five percent decline in mothers’ employment would undo the past 25 years of progress.
In the days ahead, we expect many changes. A recent study by the McKinsey Global Institute finds that up to 25% more workers than previously estimated may need to switch occupations. E-commerce sales increased more than 32% in 2020. Many consumers say that they will continue to shop online. This will hit workers who worked in retail in person. Since many companies shifted to remote work, it is possible that many companies will continue to do so. There is emerging evidence that remote-working employees sometimes work longer hours, are more productive, save commute time, and help make companies more money. Remote work is generally concentrated in higher-earning jobs. Remote work will also affect the local businesses, e.g., coffee shops, restaurants and boutiques, as well as the housing market. People will likely move to comfortable suburban areas, which is already happening. There could be pandemic-driven automation which could displace workers in the assembly line, food services, retail, hospitality, etc., most of which are low-wage jobs. Studies project that people with less than high school education and earning less than $25,000 may not fully recover to their pre-pandemic employment rate until 2024. It is also implied that these workers may have to learn new skills post-pandemic. Black and Hispanic people not only had larger initial losses in employment in the early days of the pandemic, but their employment recoveries are the slowest. Recovery of women’s employment is likely to take 18 additional months compared with men. In order to go to the pre-pandemic level of economic activity, we would need rapid development of more friendly work-family policies. If workers quit in large numbers, not only are the wages, benefits, and retirement assets the only losses that the country will face, tax revenues will also take a significant hit.

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GDP and Jobs
Recovering from COVID-19

BY BRYCE KANAGO

Shutdowns and social distancing due to the pandemic led to an unprecedented sudden large decline in economic activity. From January 2020 to March 2020, the unemployment rate rose from 3.5% to 14.8%. In the second quarter of 2020, real GDP fell by over 8%. Expansionary monetary and fiscal policy, some sectoral shifts in demand for furniture, personal computers, delivery persons, and grocery store workers, along with the relaxation of some social distancing requirements lead to a rapid but partial rebound by the winter of 2020.

As of March of this year, real GDP had nearly returned to its pre-pandemic level but was still short of its trend.

The unemployment rate remains elevated at nearly 6% as summer begins.

Low interest rates, increased disposable income, a rise in accumulated savings and continued reductions in social distancing make it probable that real GDP growth will be above average and that the unemployment rate will continue to decline for a year or so. This recovery towards potential output and the natural rate of unemployment is likely to be prolonged by slower recoveries in foreign economies, a shortage of childcare services due to rising demand, supply-chain problems such as the scarcity of semi-conductors and lumber, concerns about the safety of returning to work, and an uptick in retirements during the pandemic.

As the vaccination rate rises and jobs in some sectors, such as delivery services and grocery stores, decline while jobs in hospitality and travel rise, there is likely to be significant turnover, keeping the unemployment rate higher than otherwise. Extended additional unemployment insurance benefits may help explain the inability to fill jobs in some sectors. Given that these additional benefits are scheduled to end in late summer, if schools return mostly to face-to-face instruction in the fall, and if a rise in the percent of the population vaccinated reduces safety concerns further, the pace of the recovery may pick up some by the end of summer.

As real GDP fell and unemployment rose, stock price indexes fell, though prices of some companies such as Netflix, Zoom and Microsoft rose due to social distancing and increased work from home. However, the rebound in stock prices was larger and quicker than that of economic activity.

The Dow Jones index returned to its pre-pandemic level by the end of 2020 and has steadily increased.
The initial drop reflected the expectation of a sharp decrease in spending and a rise in uncertainty. Low interest rates on bonds have made stock more attractive. Stock prices also depend on expectations of future economic growth over the medium and long-term. The Fed’s commitment to keep interest rates low, the government’s three fiscal stimulus acts, and the rapid development of vaccines have likely continued to raise expectations of higher economic growth for the next year or so as the economy continues to recover and so have raised stock prices.

Increased saving due to less spending on travel and dining out and increased income from government stimulus checks may also help explain the increase in stock price indexes.

Initially, the decrease in spending lead to some reductions in the price of gasoline and the costs of travel, but as demand has increased gasoline, air fare, and rental rates for cars have risen, contributing to a more than 4% increase in the Consumer Price Index over the last twelve months. The inability to immediately increase production to meet demand due to the time it takes to rehire and the scarcity of some inputs such as computer chips and labor has also accelerated the rise in prices. High demand has been fueled by the reduction in social distancing due to the vaccines as well as low interest rates and fiscal stimulus. Some of the upward pressures on inflation from increased demand are likely to ease as hiring increases and other supply constraints ease. However, if the Fed continues to keep interest rates low the prospect of continued higher inflation remains. Despite the recovery so far, employment remains nearly four million persons below its pre-pandemic level. The Federal Reserve may soon need to determine whether to tighten to reign in inflation or stay the course to maintain the pace of recovery in employment.

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We welcome Dr. Ryan Rudderham to UNI as an Instructor of Economics. He answered some of our questions so we could get to know him better.

**Q: Tell us a little about your academic background.**

**A:** I did my undergrad at the University of Florida, and I graduated from the University of Iowa with my Ph.D. last summer. My primary area of study is Macro-Labor, so I think about questions related to job search and unemployment. I’m currently working on a research project studying minority-owned businesses and entrepreneurship.

**Q: What classes do you teach at UNI?**

**A:** For 2020-21 I taught Principles of Macro and Principles of Micro. For 2021-22 I’m planning to add Introduction to Economics and Money and Banking into the mix. It has been such a pleasure working with the students here at UNI.

**Q: What do you like best about teaching this year? What has been your biggest challenge?**

**A:** That’s a great question! I know I’m not alone in saying the pandemic has presented many challenges in the past year. Throw in buying a house in Cedar Falls, moving, and starting a new job and this year sure was one to remember. I am grateful for everything that my colleagues in the department and the students at UNI have done to make me feel welcome here.

Without a doubt, the best thing about teaching this year has been meeting the students at UNI. The students have risen to meet every challenge put in front of them. I have been truly inspired to see how much they have learned and achieved.

**Q: Tell us a little bit about what you like to do when you are not working?**

**A:** I love reading, cooking, and listening to audiobooks with my wife, Giang. Since coming to Cedar Falls, Giang and I have also adopted our dog, Bonnie. She’s 85 pounds of fur and goofiness. Giang and I have gotten to experience all forms of Iowa weather by going on walks with Bonnie.

Before the pandemic, Giang and I also taught Argentine Tango at a community center in Iowa City. We are looking forward to getting a group started in Cedar Falls once the pandemic is over!
I remember the day well. It was the week of final exams at the end of the Fall 2014 semester, and I was sitting in my office updating my Intermediate Microeconomics materials. I had created a “Fall 2015” folder. Things were looking good. Out of the blue, Associate Dean Leslie Wilson knocked on my door. She said something like “Hey, do you have a minute? I have something to talk to you about, but you can’t discuss it with anyone.” How intriguing, I thought. It turned out that Dean Farzad Moussavi had decided to conclude his run as Dean and return to faculty. Leslie would be appointed as Interim Dean, and she needed an Interim Associate Dean. She asked me! You could have knocked me over with a feather. I didn’t really know Leslie all that well, but I admired her work. I knew she had successfully led several AACSB re-accreditation reviews, was the MBA Director at a time when we had greatly expanded our locations and increased our standards, led strategic planning for the College — the list went on ... and on.

Fast forward to the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester. Sitting in the same office, I faced a new set of challenges. I was teaching a fully online section of Principles of Microeconomics, a hybrid section of Principles of Microeconomics, and a face-to-face section of Public Finance, a course I have never taught before. Thank heavens my dear friend and mentor Ken McCormick had given me his notes and continued to answer my phone calls throughout the semester.

I feel very much at home when I walk by my colleagues’ offices in our econ wing of the Curris Business Building. I’ve known most of the people for decades. The students are very nice and hardworking. I’ve enjoyed teaching econ majors in both Public Finance and Directed Research (again, thanks to Ken for sharing his notes and advice!). I always enjoy teaching Principles because the increase in econ knowledge from the beginning to the end of the semester is fantastic. The College has given me many professional development opportunities to learn about best practices in online teaching. I’ve learned so much, but I’ll never be tech-savvy. I try to use that to my advantage so that online students aren’t intimidated by the delivery mode.

I would be less than truthful, however, if I didn’t share that I hope I never have to teach in a mask to masked students again. Not much fun. We are all amazed at how much we relied on facial cues as feedback for teaching. I miss being able to give proctored, in-person exams. But we have persevered under trying times.

I am grateful to Leslie for an amazing opportunity to be the Associate Dean for five years. The list of experiences has added two pages to my CV. Seriously. She was a patient and generous boss. I learned so much under her tutelage.

I am grateful to Shar for welcoming me back to the department. Knowing that the transition from being the person in charge of many projects to someone without a clear leadership role might be a challenge, she has carved out ways that I can help the department by chairing initiatives, including expanding the courses our department wants to offer in the new General Education program, assessment, and a few others.

I am grateful to my amazing econ colleagues who have shared their technology tips and tricks and overall support. And I must thank UNI’s amazing IT folks for all their help.

It feels great to be back home.
Reflections from Fred Abraham:
Time marches on. In 1982 the Economics Department was searching for a professor to teach History of Economic Thought and some sections of Principles courses. The search process was much simpler and less prescribed in those days. Wylie Anderson was the department head and ran an ad in what was called Job Openings for Economists, sent flyers to graduate programs, and called graduate program directors from other schools. Of course, he called Iowa State and the director there said they had this really sharp new Ph.D. named Ken McCormick. He was really good in the classroom, but his one shortcoming was he was from California. Wylie, who was from Colorado, had to think about this but then relented, and we agreed to talk to him.

I was the youngest in the department. Wylie had hired me and, for some reason, trusted my judgment. I said we had nothing to lose by interviewing him since the kid was so close to UNI and could drive over, at our expense of course. Wylie was pretty cheap and suggested that we could meet Ken at a conference we were going to in Kansas City. Iowa State would pay Ken’s way, and we could interview him for free. And we did.

I think Ken was presenting a paper and we sat in on it and then afterward invited him to dinner. In those days downtown KC was not as neat as it is today. In fact it was dumpy. Wylie took us to what was probably the best place there called the Savoy Grille where we had a lousy dinner. Ken hardly ate a thing because we were grilling him at the grille. I recall him being quite nervous as well.

On the drive back, Wylie and I decided to hire Ken. We got back to UNI, called and told Ken he had to meet the dean, but we were going to offer him the job. Ken came, and so did the offer, and here he is 39 years later. I don’t think he attended another conference after that!
Reflections from Fred Abraham:
I became acting department head in the fall of 1990. UNI president Dino Curris came to me and said he wanted a Masters of Public Policy and had been convinced the Economics Department must have courses in it. I brashly told him we would need another faculty in order to do a good job, and unbelievably he said ok. We had gotten approval to hire at the Assistant Professor level and began a nationwide search. There was this one candidate from the University of North Dakota who I really liked. We brought him to campus for an interview, and he did a great job. The department was unanimous we should make him an offer. We got all the permissions and extended the offer. Just one small detail — Bülent Uyar was an Associate Professor at his current school and did not want to take what he saw as a demotion. Ok, fine. Except the provost said we could not advertise for an assistant and hire at the associate level.

So I go back to Bülent and ask him to take the job at the Assistant level. I pointed out he would be making a lot more money at UNI and would be promoted in a few years and get the promotional salary increase. Nope. He was adamant. So I went back to the provost, begging and pleading and pointing out he was clearly the best candidate we had received, the president liked him, and he would be superb in our program. For reasons unclear to me even today, the provost gave in, and my first hire turned out to be one of my best!

Over the years, my students have referred to me as F-Dot. Bülent started calling me that as well. Now, Bülent has an umlaut over the “u” in his first name. An umlaut is 2 dots over a vowel and changes the pronunciation. I figured if he could call me F-dot I could call him B-double dot. I do to this day, and we both still laugh about it. A great guy!

Bülent Uyar Retires (mostly)

BÜLENT UYAR
Professor of Economics
Bülent Uyar joined the UNI faculty in 1991. Prior, he taught at the University of North Dakota. His research has resulted in articles published in numerous journals, and he has presented many papers at research conferences. He received the 1998 UNIBusiness Excellence in Teaching Award, the 2005 UNIBusiness Excellence in Service Award, and the 2015 UNIBusiness Distinguished Scholar Award. Uyar also received the Regent’s Award for Faculty Excellence in 2008 and the UNIBusiness Exceptional Impact Award in 2016. He continues to teach one class a year and work on his research projects.
**IMAM ALAM**

Imam has picked up the guitar as a new hobby but hasn’t started taking lessons yet.

**SHAHINA AMIN**

During COVID-19, Shahina reports learning a LOT during a very short time. In a week, she learned from how to go fully online from a 100% Chalk & Talk professor. Thanks to Bryce, Imam, and UNI’s wonderful IT people. She had a great time cooking some mouth-watering Bengali snacks. She loved evening walks with her husband, drives around Cedar Falls, and even discovered new places after 24 years in Cedar Falls. Her son graduated from college and moved to North Carolina in the middle of the pandemic.

**BEV BARBER**

In January 2020, Bev was assigned to be the secretary of both the Economics and the Finance Departments. Bev reports this past year was a challenge in many ways. Spring 2021 will be Bev’s last semester at UNI as she has decided to retire in July after 28 years here — 25 of them in the Economics Department! She will miss her colleagues and student workers.

**DAVID HAKES**

David just completed the last semester of his phased retirement. While his official duties at UNI have ended, he will continue to work on the ancillaries that accompany the leading principles of economics textbook. Because the gyms were closed due to COVID, David rode his bike a few thousand more miles than normal this past year.

**MATT HAMPTON**

Matt’s dogs, Millie and Tyke, had three puppies: Sully, Lulu, and Pixie (they are keeping Sully, who currently weighs a whopping 1 pound 9 ounces). He and his wife are very busy lately trying to get Sully house trained! Additionally, over the winter break, Matt got involved with a new hobby. He completed a private pilot license at Livingston Aviation, a great flight school located in Waterloo, IA.

**LISA JEPSEN**

During the pandemic, Lisa has honed the new skill of competitive grocery shopping during off-peak hours and is pleased to report that Target sells Panera’s Broccoli Cheddar Mac and Cheese. If she forgets to close her office door at home, she becomes one of “those people” whose cat walks in front of the camera during a Zoom meeting. Her dogs are enjoying her WFH days.
SHAR SELF
Thanks to the pandemic, Shar did not travel anywhere this past year. She is grateful for the technology that allowed her to virtually "see" her mother, children and friends. She has found a new website, learned to cook some awesome dishes and learned that cooking can be quite fun and therapeutic. The biggest beneficiary of the pandemic has been her dog, Frankie, who has loved having his mom and dad at home with him all the time.

DAVID SURDAM
Dave continues to teach Decision Analytics while working on research. He looks forward to working with the Economics Club in 2021-22.

KYLE TOBIASON
Kyle grows corn and soybeans on his family farm in East Central Iowa. The effect of COVID on his farm was minimal compared to the effect of the derecho in the summer of 2020. About half of his acres were damaged by the storms, not only lowering yields but also leading to harvest taking twice as much time.

BÜLENT UYAR
Bülent "retired" in June 2020, but he is back as an adjunct. He only teaches one course and only in the fall semesters but is continuing work on his research projects. He is delighted with this arrangement and is grateful to Dean Leslie Wilson and Prof. Shar Self, the Department Head, for their willingness to accommodate him in this way. He says that it would otherwise have been quite challenging to walk away from such a good department with great colleagues.

BRYCE KANAGO
Bryce usually runs at least a couple of races each summer but didn’t this year due to COVID. For the last few years, he has tried to reach 1,000 kilometers. This year he finally reached that goal near the end of the year on a very cold day.

CHRIS LUKASIEWICZ
Chris reports no new grandchildren or hobbies. He continues to enjoy cycling, fishing and hunting when he’s not teaching. He and his wife Anne are still at home with Lucy, their dog.

ALICIA ROSBURG
The Rosburgs added a new family member in December — a chocolate labrador puppy. They took a gamble and let their three-year-old son name her. Shockingly, he chose something reasonable — Milli. She has been a great companion for Alicia as she primarily works from home. Milli never ceases to meet her quota of making an appearance on at least one Zoom call a day!

RYAN RUDDERHAM
This year, Ryan joined UNI and moved to Cedar Falls from Iowa City. He tried (and ultimately failed) to do this without renting a moving truck and spent many weekends on I-380 with his Prius full to bursting. Now that he is fully moved in, he and his wife adopted a dog and have been working on putting together a home gym in the basement.

SPRING 2021
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Make an online donation that will directly benefit the economics department.

Business.Uni.Edu/Give2Economics

Contributions to our department scholarships are critical for supporting students and helping them to meet their goals. We appreciate our alumni and friends who have invested in the economics program, allowing us to serve more students and offer a better quality education with increased learning opportunities.

Alumni — give us your updates!

Do you have exciting news to share with your fellow UNI Economics friends and family? Send us personal news, career updates or other significant events and milestones at shar.self@uni.edu for us to include in the next edition of the newsletter.