OVERCOMING CHALLENGES
This was a year that taught us many lessons: the value of respecting other’s views during the industrial action; we experienced a lockdown for the first time; adapted our teaching and assessment to be delivered online; we experienced the cancellation of group events and discovered the surge of participation when delivered online. We learned that we are more resourceful, understanding, and entrepreneurial than we thought ourselves to be at the beginning of this academic year. This, I believe, is a reflection of the great sense of community within the School.

Looking back on the past academic year, we will remember the challenges and the lessons, but we will also remember some notable events and causes for celebration. We started the year by celebrating ECO Professor Bob Sugden’s award of the 2019 Joseph B Gittler Award by the American Philosophical Association for his book, The Community of Advantage: A Behavioural Economist’s Defence of the Market. We hosted our first collaborative workshop with colleagues from Tohoku University in Japan, during which we discussed Economics applications of Big Data analysis.

Although we were unable to host our Alumni Networking Event and NEP Competition in London in March, we held the Competition virtually and our Advisory Board were extremely impressed by all those who entered. Our congratulations to all the winners and a big thank you to the NEP Editorial Board for making the event such a success.

Student successes over the past year include Ashini Shah being awarded the Ede and Ravenscroft Prize in recognition of excellence, both academically and within the realm of extracurricular achievement.

Our first-year student team reached the finals of the University Business Challenge! George Bailey, ECO Year in Enterprise Student, successfully launched his own sustainable eyewear brand!

And who would dare now say that economists cannot have sporting success? By joining forces – students and staff – we climbed up to the second place in this year’s Zigzag Challenge with Pete Dawson coming 3rd in the “Most Sporting Staff Champion Award”.

I am particularly proud that, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, ECO continued to reach out and engage others in conversations with the aim to inform, inspire, and support. We successfully ran the second volume of the Women in Economics (WinECO) event bringing together even more female participants from further afield compared to last year. Sheheryar Banuri, managed to publish an e-book during lockdown on how learning from past crises can help us make good decisions during COVID-19! The work on pharmaceutical deals by another ECO academic, Farasat Bokhari, also received national and international coverage. And let’s remind ourselves of the amazing work ECO student Songze Chang did around Norwich early in the lockdown, by distributing masks to those who needed them.

Thinking back on the academic year just finished, the results of the National Student Survey are the logical conclusion to our collective efforts. ECO again is among the Top 10 institutions for student satisfaction, an achievement that we are very proud of and something that will reflect positively on our graduating, current and future students.

Emiliya Lazarova
Head of School
ECO STILL TOP 10 IN THE UK

FOR ECONOMICS IN THE UK
(Guardian University League Table 2021)

FOR RESEARCH OUTPUTS IN ECONOMICS AND ECONOMETRICS
(Research Excellence Framework, REF 2014)

FOR OVERALL STUDENT SATISFACTION IN ECONOMICS
(National Student Survey, NSS 2020)

UK TOP 25
The Times / Sunday Times 2019 and Complete University Guide 2020

AWARDED
Teaching Excellence Framework 2017-21

WORLD TOP 200
The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2020

UEA
George Bailey launched a sustainable eyewear brand with TV personality Jake Humphreys. George, who creates designer glasses and sunglasses from fishing nets rescued from the ocean, received backing from Jake and together they have launched some brilliant products which are now available on Kickstarter.

George first started Coral Eyewear in 2019 with the help of the UEA Student Enterprise Service and investment from the University’s ‘Scale It’ award of £50,000.

He has recently been accepted onto a brand new ‘Year in Enterprise’ course pioneered by the School of Economics which allows him to focus on his business full-time for the next 12 months. This is the first-of-its-kind at UEA and is different to the well-established ‘Year in Industry’ courses where students often work for large corporations. This will allow him to develop Coral Eyewear as well as enhancing his entrepreneurial skills and knowledge.

George employs two UEA students as interns and he hopes to launch a Climate Change scholarship which will offer students the financial security to carry out planet-positive research.
POSITIVE MESSAGES DURING PANDEMIC

ECO student Songze Chang did some truly inspirational work around Norwich during the COVID-19 pandemic. Songze was stopped one day by an elderly man, asking where he got his face mask from. The man had been struggling to find any in the shops and had no access to the internet. Songze decided he really wanted to help the man (and others like him) and bought 100 face masks from China, packed them up with some positive messages and an image of his national flag, and began to give them out around Norwich with the help of his friends.

Songze then posted his efforts on the social media site TikTok and people from China, some of whom he didn’t know, began sending him more masks to distribute. So far, he has received around 8000 masks from Chinese people who were inspired by his actions.

He has now donated many masks to the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, Earlham Police Station and local care homes.

THE ZIGGURAT CHALLENGE 2019-20

CLIMBING THE RANKS WITH DEV TO 2nd PLACE

The Ziggurat Challenge is a recreational programme of sporting events open to all students, alumni and staff at UEA. It is run by UEA’s Sportspark and a dedicated team of student volunteers. The programme is designed to promote enjoyable participation in the spirit of sporting competition, as well as to encourage friendly competition (and rivalry!) between Schools.

Once again, the School of Economics paired up with the School of International Development to form Team ECO/DEV. As in previous years, the Ziggurat Challenge involved a huge range of different sporting events, including a fun run, tag rugby, swimming and tug of war! Team ECO/DEV performed brilliantly, coming 2nd place overall.

We were also extremely proud of our brilliant Pete Dawson, who came 3rd in the ‘Most Sporting Staff Champion’ award.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AWARDS

This year we held our 1st Annual ECO Student Engagement Awards. These recognised those students who performed particularly effectively with their engagement work over the past year.

Winning categories include: Student Blog – Special Commendation; Student Blog of the Year; Course Rep of the Year and Student of the Year.

EDE & RAVENSCROFT PRIZE

Ashini Shah, a 3rd Year student on the BSc Economics, received this year’s Ede and Ravenscroft Prize. This is an annual prize which is awarded to an undergraduate student who has made a considerable contribution to both the academic and communal life of the School and University. Ashini was nominated for this award by Head of School, Emiliya Lazarova, recognising both her extracurricular and academic achievement.

UNIVERSITY BUSINESS CHALLENGE

TOP 5 FOR OUR UNDERGRADS

Congratulations to five of our Undergraduate students who came 5th out of over 200 teams in the University Business Challenge competition. UBC is a nationwide leading employability competition, designed to develop student employability and enterprise skills.

Daniel Hempsted (team captain, Year 1), Joshua Phillips (Year 1), James Branch (Year 1), Loving-Grace Mawire (Year 1) and Qing Guan (year 2), were one of the youngest teams in the final and hope to compete again as a team next year.

WATCH THE VIDEO HERE

tinyurl.com/yc6b346
I surely did not wish for a pandemic to hit us so violently, but the pedagogical transformation we conducted here at the School of Economics in response to the COVID-19 emergency is fantastic.

The end of the past academic year gave us some challenges. However, I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved in such a short space of time. Colleagues became familiar with new technologies and new ways to engage with students. Shifting into a world of open-book examinations was not just a technological challenge, but also a review of what we think is important to assess. From memorising and recalling information, to applying, analysing, and criticising concepts, our assessment methods were reinvented to become more relevant and authentic experiences. Traditional exam-type assessments are just part of the story. Embracing technology, we have been able to facilitate multiple assessment formats, such as poster presentations, discussions and debates, preserving interaction with students in an online environment. Our partnership with students was essential to our success; thanks to students’ input, passion and enthusiasm we are confident in the renewed design of the ECO learning and teaching strategy.

The academic year 2020-21 will be different, but it will be great: we are prepared for it. Media and the press tend to denigrate the concept of online learning, automatically classing it as ‘inferior’ to what happens in the classroom. This is a flawed view. An effective learning experience is not about the medium, online versus face to face: it is about good pedagogical design! Each ECO module taught at Undergraduate or Postgraduate level has been thoroughly reviewed, and learning has been entirely redesigned to adapt to the challenges posed by social distancing. We are ready to deliver a blend of classroom and online experiences. There will be interaction, and there will be exciting materials to explore together. Summative assessment will be streamlined and organised in portfolios built all along the semesters. Students will be invited to learn by engaging in cycles of low-stake testing and feedback. Embedding cutting-edge pedagogies, this approach will lower the pressure yet increase interaction and engagement. Our aim is keeping the dialogue open as we are ready to listen, teach, guide, support, interact, and enjoy this journey together with our students.
The Norwich Economic Papers is our online student journal, and an invaluable resource for the School. In addition to publishing our students’ most innovative and insightful essays from various modules, it features staff spotlights and the winning entries from our annual student competitions. The NEP was created to recognize and showcase the outstanding work of our students and has a long history of publishing high-quality student-authored academic analysis.

Now in its eleventh year, the NEP is run by our students and with guidance from our Academic Editor, it strives to provide a platform to advertise excellence in all forms. In previous years we have organized essay competitions, however this year we decided to adopt a Poster Competition, open to 1st and 2nd year students, and a 3-Minute Thesis Competition, open to 3rd year and PGT students. For the Poster Competition, we encouraged entries on a wide range of topics, from carbon taxes to China’s response to Trump’s increase in import tariffs. For the 3-Minute Thesis Competition, students had the opportunity to select and discuss a research topic of their choice and the significance of their research study.

As well as a cash prize, winners would have had the opportunity to present their work at the School’s Alumni networking event in London on 13th March 2020. However, due to COVID-19, this was cancelled, and the competition was held online instead. People were able to vote online for their favourite poster and the 3-minute thesis competition was live-streamed to an audience of students, alumni and members of the ECO Strategic Advisory Board, who then voted for the winners. Congratulations to Cameron Dix, winner of the Poster Competition and to Max Wheeler, winner of the 3-Minute Thesis Competition.
It sometimes veers into the territory of the higher education buzzword. Universities across the sector struggle to convince. Every year they decorate the campus wall with ‘you said; we did’ proclamations. Every year students drift past, shaking their heads and questioning the latest unfathomable change to their student experience. ECO does things differently. I might justify that by mentioning our wonderful Staff Student Liaison Committee, brimming with double success in the Student Union’s Transforming Education Awards. I might also refer to our multiple medallists in ECO Bridge’s Student Engagement Awards. But not today! Today let’s use coronavirus to celebrate real student partnership.

The challenges posed by the lockdown, and then social distancing, are substantial. How can we maximise the effectiveness of how we teach? How can we ensure that decision-making is focused on meeting student needs? Up steps the special forces of student partnership, EPIC: The Educational Practice and Innovation Committee.

This is a student committee tasked with assessing, and improving, learning and teaching innovations within the School. Ideas are tested within an open environment. Free from a restrictive hierarchy, they’re either developed further or chucked into the ‘paper good, reality bad’ ideas skip. Examples of their positive involvement include: the use of synoptic assessment in Year 1, allowing students to problem solve by combining their knowledge across modules; design of online resources to ensure increased engagement with learning materials; restructuring of ECO Bridge – our online transitions package – to ensure more consistent student engagement; and championing pedagogical flexibility to maintain a ‘diverse and rich’ learning experience.

For those on the committee, and the importance of all your contributions this year, I salute you. For everyone else? You too can be part of their success! Do you want to help innovation in the School? Do you want the Committee to consider an idea? Then just give me a buzz. Student partnership for ECO, after all, isn’t just a buzzword.

**STUDENT PARTNERSHIPS**

**ECO DOES THINGS DIFFERENTLY**

Duncan Watson | Professor of Applied Economics

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**ECONOMICS SOCIETY**

**A GREAT SENSE OF COMMUNITY**

Rosie Fruish | President of UEA Economics Society

Despite COVID-19, we are glad to report that this academic year has been particularly successful for the society. Firstly, the society reached a peak in its number of members hitting over 240, which is more than we have ever had. With such vast numbers there has been a greater sense of community than ever before and we capitalised on this by having even more events this year. Subsequently, there has been a great level of engagement in events from both students and staff which has been encouraging to see.

One of our key achievements this year was the incorporation of an academic officer into the committee. We felt this role was needed in order to provide quality academic events and opportunities for our members, which we seek to further improve in the coming year.

We are aware of the strain COVID-19 has had on us all and we applaud our members for pushing through final lectures and exams. As a society we had to adapt and continue to hold events. A particular highlight was the talk we participated in with economist and journalist, Tim Harford, and the Oxford PPE Society. This event had a great response from our members which was encouraging. We also held a zoom celebratory bingo which was a lovely way to end the academic year.

Looking forward, in order to support students further through these difficult times we are beginning discussions with the school to provide help with adjusting to the new normal and addressing any student concerns about returning to university. We look forward to returning and continuing to enhance the society and take on some new members!

**STAFF STUDENT LIASON COMMITTEE**

**GREATER REPRESENTATION**

Lea Sixt | School Convenor 2019-20

We are so proud of the brilliant work that our Staff–Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) do and over the academic year 2019/20 one of our major achievements has been representation. Representation over different year groups, degree programs and backgrounds, with every single course representative bringing their individual perspective on what ECO is for them and on how it can become better for everyone. This allowed us to increase visibility and approachability of student representatives, which translated in greater engagement of the wider student body and the SSLC. I am confident that this work will be continued by next year’s school convenor Daniel Hempstead.
Dr Banuri was also interviewed by Sky News in May 2020, commenting on the potential changes in lockdown measures announced by the Prime Minister. You can watch the interview by clicking on the link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhK6N2Ney_s

It wasn’t only our students who were producing great work during lockdown, Behavioural Economist and Associate Professor, Dr Sheheryar Banuri, found time to write a book, ‘Good Decisions for Strange Situations’. A perfect read as our routines and norms were completely disrupted, replaced by stress and anxiety, making a good decision even harder to make than ever.

In his book, Dr Banuri looks at how the psychology of decision-making changes under stress and how we can avoid making the wrong decisions.
CONTESTS: THEORY AND EVIDENCE 2020 CONFERENCE

The sixth annual edition of Contests: Theory and Evidence, the leading international conference series in this active field of research on how people behave when they have the opportunity to expend costly resources to try to win rewards in competitions, moved to an online format. Held over two days in June, the keynote was delivered by Prof Jingfeng Lu of the National University of Singapore. The conference featured 34 presentations in eight single-track sessions.

Due to a new record number of submissions, the conference this year prioritised giving the opportunity for junior researchers to present their work to an international audience (over 200 researchers attended at least part of one session) to help support their career development during this period where travel is restricted and many conferences have been cancelled or postponed. Planning is already underway for the seventh edition of the conference, which is tentatively planned for 12-13 August 2021.

BEHAVIOURAL GAME THEORY ANNUAL WORKSHOP

The 6th Annual Workshop on Behavioural Game Theory was hosted by the School of Economics and the Centre for Behavioural and Experimental Social Science (CBESS) in July 2020. For the first time, the workshop was held online due to COVID-19.

The theme of this year’s workshop was ‘Behavioral Industrial Organisation’. Despite the difficult circumstances due to the ongoing pandemic, the workshop was a great success. We had fifteen speakers from universities around the world, covering a wide variety of topics representing experimental economics, economic theory, and empirical industrial organisation. We also had a productive panel discussion about the relationship between industrial organisation and behavioural economics. Among our keynote speakers, Julie Mortimer (Boston College) and Alistair Wilson (University of Pittsburgh) spoke about pricing and collusion, while Kfir Elias (Tel Aviv University) presented a model of competing narratives.

Our goal for the workshop is to promote the world class research conducted at UEA in behavioral economics and experimental economics, and this year was intended to additionally highlight our industrial organisation group. It took a lot of improvisation and a great deal of help from our outstanding staff, but we feel that we achieved our goals despite trying circumstances.

2nd TOHOKU-UEA RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

COLLABORATIVE WORKSHOPPING

In September 2019, the School of Economics was proud to host the Second Tohoku-UEA Research Symposium. This two day workshop brought together researchers from the School of Economics at UEA and the Graduate School of Economics and Management at Tohoku.

We were delighted to welcome Prof Yasumasa Matsuda, Yuta Kuroda, Yoshimasa Uematsu and PhD Student Anqi Li to UEA, and are extremely grateful for their contributions to the workshop. Talks spanned a range of topics, from time series and spatial econometrics, to policy evaluation methods, to network theory.

The first Tohoku-UEA Research Symposium was held at Sendai, and included presentations by three academics from the School of Economics at UEA. We look forward to continuing to work with our colleagues at Tohoku in future, and developing further collaboration.

I was very impressed by the breadth and depth of the research showcased in the workshop, which emphasised the opportunities for cooperation between the two Schools. I found the atmosphere to be extremely vibrant and constructive and we had many stimulating discussions during the workshop, spilling over into the breaks and the dinner. Many of our staff and PGR researchers attended and actively participated in the workshop, which I thought was a great way to start yet another academic year full of exciting research here at the School of Economics.

CORRADO DI MARIA
Prof of Environmental and Natural Resource Economics

FIGURING OUT THE BEHAVIOUR

ECO MAKES A SCIENTIFIC ENTRANCE

The School of Economics contributed for the first time to the annual Norwich Science Festival in October 2019 at The Forum in Norwich. Sabria Behilil, Deanna Karapetyan, Lucia Murgia, Emrke Nasamu, and Stefania Stitza presented an interactive walk-up activity demonstrating economic and strategic principles with simple games suitable for all ages.

We also debuted A virtual tour of Norwich with UEA’s behavioural economists, a 30-minute talk by Stefan Penczynski and Theodore Turocy, featuring on-location videos filmed around Norwich in which Sheheryar Banuri, Peter Dawson, Boon Han Koh, and Stefania Stitza connecting behavioural economics to decisions we make every day.

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LET’S TALK ABOUT EQUALITY

For the first time, the School of Economics hosted an event in 2019, during Black History Month, to celebrate diversity in economics. The event with around 35 participants was co-organised by ECO’s Ruth Badru and Ayobami Ilori, both lecturers; Laura Harvey, lecturer and a Social Science Faculty’s Widening Participation Academic Officer; and Christa Brunnschweiler, an Associate Professor and the School’s Equality and Diversity Officer. We were fortunate enough to secure the Faculty’s Widening Participation Team’s support and offer all participants some refreshments as an extra bonus.

The afternoon workshop brought together students and faculty from different schools to discuss the range of economic research being undertaken at UEA by BAME faculty and PGR students. The second part of the event saw a lively panel discussion, moderated by Ruth Badru, on the topic of the experience of diversity at UEA. The panel included BAME faculty and students from different levels; a student representative from UEA’s Decolonise the Curriculum initiative; a representative from the Widening Participation team; and an ECO alumnus and member of the Black Economists Network.

There was a very positive and supportive atmosphere, with many honest, thought-provoking and humorous contributions from panellists and members of the audience on how they have experienced diversity at UEA. We also talked about what ECO could do to further celebrate diversity and foster social integration, with a main conclusion being: organise this event again!

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY IN ECONOMICS

MYTH-BUSTING COMMON CLICHÉS

In July 2020, the School of Economics organised the second annual outreach event targeted at female secondary school pupils. The event was organised by Dr Laura Harvey, one of our Lecturers and the Widening Participation Academic Officer at the School of Economics. Dr Christa Brunnschweiler, the School’s Equality and Diversity Director, again obtained support for the event from the Royal Economic Society.

Economics as a discipline in the UK has a gender problem, with women being underrepresented among students, academics, and professionals. Our aim with these events is to deconstruct some common clichés of what economics is about and who an economist is, and to show participants some of the breadth and variety in the discipline in an interesting and engaging way. We offered participants a series of inspiring talks by female economists; a myth-busting session by our very own Dr Bahar Ghezelayagh; and the opportunity to chat to current students about what it’s like to study economics at university. In a separate session, ECO’s Dr Emiliya Lazarova and Dr Fabio Arico talked with High School teachers about making pupils more aware of the opportunities open to economists.

The coronavirus pandemic forced our event online this year, but our enthusiastic speakers and participants were undeterred and made WinECO 2020 into a success. And who knows, maybe among those High School participants there is a future female Governor of the Bank of England!
This has been a unique year for everyone, with the coronavirus pandemic generating many unprecedented challenges. Inevitably, student job opportunities and the labour market for graduates have been affected as well. Nevertheless, this unique experience has taught us important lessons and provided opportunities for exciting initiatives that we hope will have positive long-lasting impacts on student life and employment prospects.
ADJUSTING TO THE VIRTUAL

The academic year started smoothly. We ran several employability-related events in the autumn semester, including an alumni session for first-year students, a number of employer talks, as well as career workshops tailored for Economics students. We also held a networking lunch with members of our Strategic Advisory Board, local employers and students. This introduced a new way for key external organisations to engage with our curriculum by supporting modules through guest lectures, engagement with the module assessments and introducing competitions for our students. We now have three key employers supporting three modules, already receiving good feedback from module leaders and students, and we are hoping to introduce more in the new academic year.

The highlight of the year should have been our alumni event, which would have been the biggest yet, with over 60 of our alumni registered to attend. The event was due to take place in London on the 13th of March, but sadly, due to widespread concerns surrounding the spread of COVID-19, we had to cancel it.

The economic uncertainty experienced in the wake of the pandemic notably affected the job market as many employers took down previously advertised positions, with the pandemic notably affecting the job market as many employers took down previously advertised positions. This introduced a new way for key external organisations to engage with our curriculum by supporting modules through guest lectures, engagement with the module assessments and introducing competitions for our students.

GETTING PREPARED FOR 2021

The School has strived to have mechanisms in place that support students in their transition from university life to the world of work. For this purpose, we have been working towards new extracurricular initiatives. Including a new Mentoring Scheme tailored specifically to Economics students through a matching process, and an Economics Podcast Series featuring a number of sections, including discussions with alumni and employers, student life, and debates on topical issues. Our first pilot session took place in May, and featured a panel discussion with a number of alumni from different sectors. It was a great success and we are planning to launch this series in September. Hopefully, next year some different sectors.

Placing students in the world of work. For this purpose, we have been working towards building new virtual recruitment processes and more flexible working environments. Secondly, it seems that the opportunities for graduates will rebound, but these adjustments may come with ‘structural’ changes in relation to desired graduate ‘skill-sets’, benefitting those who are more familiar with digital technology and are more adaptable to changes. It is noteworthy that a very similar story emerged from the views of a number of ECO alumni, who shared their perspectives with us back in April.

A report was created to summarise these thoughts, including many interesting tips and advice for our current students.

THE YEAR INTERNSHIPS WENT ONLINE

We were also able to run our ECO Summer Internship scheme this year. Through this scheme, we offered 25 part-time (virtual-based) internships to some of our US students over a 3-week period. As well as providing our students with some work experience and the opportunity to work alongside academics on exciting projects with great learning possibilities, we believe that these internships will help us to further enhance useful technical and employability skills in our students.

The timing for the placements and the nature of the work I would be responsible for were both a really good introduction to the organisation and the data associated with these campaigns. My first month at Sainsbury’s has been a really good introduction to the organisation and the nature of the work I would be responsible for.

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Law and Economics Online: Developing a new online learning environment, the School has strived to have mechanisms in place that support students in their transition from university life to the world of work. For this purpose, we have been working towards new extracurricular initiatives. Including a new Mentoring Scheme tailored specifically to Economics students through a matching process, and an Economics Podcast Series featuring a number of sections, including discussions with alumni and employers, student life, and debates on topical issues.

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Nicole Fong  |  BSc Economics 2016, MSc Economics 2017
Data Analyst (Teach For Malaysia),
Researcher (University of Sydney, Centre for Public Policy Studies),
Activist (Climate justice, LGBTIQ+ rights)

**VALUING VISION AND PURPOSE**

**WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU OFFER TO CURRENT STUDENTS ON CAREER CHOICES AFTER GRADUATION?**

Do a visioning exercise by yourself or with a trusted friend, family, or coach, to really understand yourself as a person and what kind of world you want to work towards. Without this awareness, it will be really difficult to go into the competitive world of job hunting. So my advice is to take a step back to understand what you want for yourself. Also, be open to trying out new experiences whether through internships or volunteering as they are the best way to build relationships and grow your network.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS THAT YOU LEARNED AS PART OF YOUR COURSE?**

All the skills involved in econometrics, from the hard skills of analysing data sets using econometric methods to knowing how to effectively communicate information to your target audiences. The skills I learnt from my econometrics courses are probably one of my biggest selling points and are one of the most versatile skills I use the most in all of my work. I use a lot of the soft and hard skills I learnt from my degree in my everyday work life, even if it’s not Economics related, which really sets my thinking apart from others.

**HOW DO YOU THINK STUDYING ECONOMICS AT UEA HAS HELPED YOU IN YOUR CAREER?**

The overall learning experience by the entire Economics department made my time studying there really enjoyable and fulfilling. Not only were modules designed in a way that would encourage critical thinking and communication skills, the culture that the lecturers created was so personal and memorable. They made us feel incredibly supported and genuinely invested in our growth as students but were also great mentors. The department also provided us with many development opportunities such as internships, career events, and staff-student socials.

**NEW FACES IN ECO**

**Filippo Massari**  
Associate Professor

Filippo joined the School of Economics in July 2020 as an Associate Professor. He is interested in robust statistical decision theory, general equilibrium and their various applications: Behavioural Economics, Gambling Theory, Asset Pricing, Market Selection Hypothesis, Decision Theory, Information Theory, MDL, Safe Bayesian, Game Theory. His research agenda is now shifting towards evolutionary models. He would like to provide a theoretical foundation to many “behavioural biases” leveraging the idea that: “since the thing that grows fastest starts to dominate in evolution, everything we observe today is quite good at maximizing growth.”

**Stephanie Heger**  
Lecturer

Stephanie joined the School of Economics as a Lecturer in August 2020. She was previously an Academic Fellow at the University of Sydney, Australia after completing her PhD in 2015 at Washington University in St Louis, USA. Stephanie is a behavioural economist studying preferences and their various applications: decision theory, general equilibrium and their various applications: Behavioural Economics, Gambling Theory, Asset Pricing, Market Selection Hypothesis, Decision Theory, Information Theory, MDL, Safe Bayesian, Game Theory. Her current research focuses on the interaction of social preferences, identity and image and the effects of policies (public and corporate) aimed at behavioural change.

**CELEBRATING YOUR GRADUATION WITH A VIDEO!**

As Graduation 2020 had to be cancelled, we didn’t want to miss the chance to congratulate all of our graduates. ECO put together a short video to mark this great achievement. We are so sorry that we couldn’t get to join you and your families this year at UEA but we look forward to July 2021 when we can meet again and celebrate this special occasion together.

[Watch the video here](youtu.be/VO2XdW_5v5g)
ECO student Leva Kalnina wrote a blog about her experience on her year abroad in Hokkaido, Japan and also took part in a webinar with Liliana Harding, Associate Professor in Economics. While this sadly came to an abrupt end due to the pandemic, Leva still believes that studying abroad is one of the best things that has ever happened to her.

NEW PERSPECTIVES
I have always looked at my course PPE as a course of perspectives. While at UEA I have had the chance to look at the same issues from multiple points of view, my studies in Japan have brought this to a new scale. I have learned that for some economies increasing the total factor productivity is not just a question of development, but a question of survival. I have learned that while for some human capital is the main drive for successful future, for others technological development is the only drive for it. I have started to understand why the urbanization trends that were described as ideal by some of my lecturers, were seen as a threat of losing culture and home by some of my fellow students. This is not just because I had the chance to take modules I would never have taken at UEA, but also because I lived in a society that has completely different values imbedded in their system of cultural and social norms. While I now process information differently than I did before my year abroad, I have become more open to new ways of thinking than ever before.

LABOUR PROSPECTS
The economic literature shows that studying abroad can open up labour prospects one would not have in other ways. It could actually be of benefit to people who do not even consider it due to their disadvantaged socio-economic background, fear of living without family and friends and financial concerns. In fact, learning to overcome these fears has taught me many other skills that are transferable in the working environment. I have become more flexible as I no longer see cultural and language barriers or homesickness as a great issue. I have become more resilient as both moving to a new country and moving back so suddenly has taught me ways to understand myself better and how to see opportunities I did not see before. I have also become more compassionate as I have expanded my point of view. On top of this, I am more motivated to search for opportunities outside of my home country and old comfort zone.

WORLDWIDE CONNECTIONS
Last, but not least studying abroad extends networks in places where one would not otherwise have them. During the lockdown, we all experienced how it does not matter if your friends are 20 or 8000 kilometres away, what does matter is that the people in your life might eventually come back in the most unexpected ways. While currently the greatest gain out of this is the extraordinary feeling of receiving birthday wishes from almost every continent, these contacts are something I will have for a long time and I do believe that knowing a bunch of intelligent, open minded and talented people all over the world will bring me more good than bad.

By this, I want to encourage other students to go abroad as the experience can be life changing. It is just a matter of taking the first step and showing the initiative. Both ECO and the Study Abroad Office at the UEA have wonderful resources in place to help. Studying abroad is not just a once time fun experience; it is a life changing event and if you have never considered doing it, there is a high chance that you are one of the people that might benefit the most from it. Be it new perspectives, skills or networks, I believe that every single one of these puts you in a more stable position for the long term, in spite of all the uncertainties of life.
OUR GOALS FOR 2021

TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH ANY NEW CHALLENGES THAT WE MAY FACE IN THE FUTURE

TO CONTINUE TO DELIVER FIRST CLASS TEACHING AND RESEARCH

TO ENSURE OUR STUDENTS AND STAFF CONTINUE TO EXPERIENCE THE ECO SENSE OF COMMUNITY