

## Important Dates:

March 7	Final exam conflict filing period ends
March 8–12	Spring Break
April 9	Late drop deadline
April 30	Withdrawal deadline
	Classes end
May 3–7	Final exams
May 15	Liberal Arts Commencement
May 16	Smeal College Commencement

## Great Debate VI

Great Debate VI, the sixth annual Penn State Economics debate, will take place on April 21, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in Eisenhower Auditorium. The topic will be “The Economics of the Legalization of Marijuana.”

In the past, attendance has been over 2000. Be sure to mark this day on your planner for some exciting and informative economics sparring.

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## Spring Advising Schedule

The economics department has two undergraduate advisers for Liberal Arts students, Marie Villefranche and Suzanne Bennett. Quick question advising hours and locations for both advisers are listed below. You can also schedule an appointment by going to <http://www.la.psu.edu/advising-appt/>. More information about advising is available on the department’s Web site <http://econ.la.psu.edu>—click on the Undergraduate tab, and then click on Advising Schedule.

### Marie Villefranche

608 Kern Building  
[mev11@psu.edu](mailto:mev11@psu.edu)  
814-863-0560

### Marie’s Quick Question Advising Hours:

Mondays 9:00 a.m.–noon  
Tuesdays 2:00–4:00 p.m.  
Fridays 1:00–4:00 p.m.

### Suzanne Bennett

302 Kern Building  
[svb2@psu.edu](mailto:svb2@psu.edu)

### Suzanne’s Quick Question Advising Hours:

Mondays 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.  
Fridays 9:00–11:00 a.m.

**Faculty Interview with Travis Letellier****Why did you choose economics?**

It was pretty late in college when I got turned on to economics. I believe that economics is a unique discipline. You either love it or you hate it, and it's all because of the teacher. There usually isn't much of a middle ground. As an undergrad, I had my share of both good and bad teachers. Luckily, though, the good outweighed the bad, and my interest in economics kept growing. As I got closer to graduating, my adviser suggested that I think about graduate school. During my senior year, I did a couple of independent studies in macro and monetary policy, and I found that I enjoyed it. So I decided to pursue the Ph.D., and I have been lucky enough to find research areas that really intrigue and interest me. I guess the rest is history.

**What degrees do you have and from where?**

I hold two undergraduate degrees from Northern State University in Aberdeen, South Dakota: Bachelor of Science *In Honoribus* (Finance) and Bachelor of Arts *In Honoribus* (International Business). I also hold a Master of Arts (Economics) degree from Florida International University (FIU) in Miami, Florida. I am currently finishing my Ph.D. in Economics (also from FIU); I hope to finish in Summer 2010.

**What are your major interests regarding economics?**

Strictly speaking, my primary research field is "media politics." I study the relationship between the media, politicians, and voters. My research focuses on how ideological bias in newspapers and television can influence voting behavior in certain congressional districts.

From a broader perspective, however, my interest lies in the field of "behavioral economics." This is the branch of economics that tries to add more realism and powers to our standard (classical) economic models. We do this by expanding and solidifying the psychological foundations of economics. This is such a cool new area in economics; we study things like procrastination, emotions, gambling, addiction—basically, all of those "weird" human behaviors that have no place in the standard rational models.

**What is your teaching philosophy?**

I think a lot of the time, economics gets a bad rap. Students (and people in general) have so many preconceptions about economics—and most of them are bad. People are scared of economics: it's too hard, or too abstract, or too unethical because it involves greedy and ruthless people.

So, then, this is how I view my job as a teacher: to rectify and ameliorate these misconceptions. I don't deceive myself. I don't go into a class with the attitude that my lectures will convince everyone to magically start "loving" economics. Rather, my approach is to show people that economics isn't nearly as scary or as hard as they think it is. I try to open their eyes and give them a new appreciation for how useful economics can be. It overlaps with so many areas of our life—politics, history, psychology—that we need to see how applicable it is. And if we can see that economics is so much more than just profit or indifference curves or boring equations, then we are all better off.

**Do you have any special teaching methods?**

Not really—I think my answers for this interview are already getting too long. I will say that it is very important to me to spend time incorporating current events into all of my classes. I think it is vital to link together the definitions and concepts from class to what's happening all around us in the "real world." With everything that is happening—the financial crisis, the recovery, the new Administration—I have plenty to talk about in class.

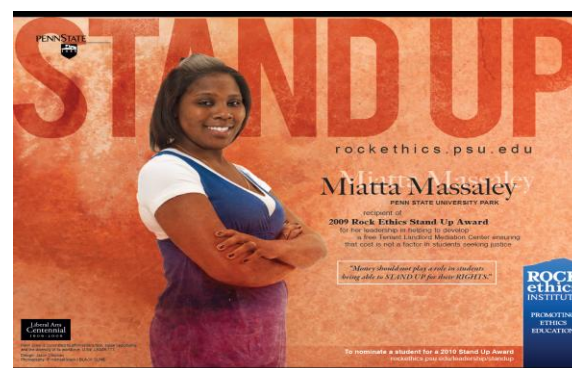
**What are your hobbies or other interests outside of economics?**

Well, anyone who knows me will tell you that I'm a HUGE fan and collector of "He-Man and the Masters of the Universe." I just love it, and it's probably my biggest passion right now. I collect the toys (oops, my bad: "action figures"), the comics, and the DVDs. Thank God for eBay.

Other than that, I'm a pretty low-maintenance guy. I'm single so other than my teaching responsibilities I have a lot of

freedom to pursue the things I like. I love reading fiction novels and playing on the computer. If there's a good concert or play in town, I'll definitely go see it. Oh, and I have a new car now, so I love driving around and breaking it in. I tend to drive fast, so all of these red stoplights in State College are *aggravating*.

**Student Awards**



The Rock Ethics Institute honored a Liberal Arts economics major along with four other Penn State students as recipients of its Stand Up Awards for showing courage and fortitude to take an ethical stand for a person, a cause or belief, and demonstrating ethical leadership through personal example. **Miatta Massaley** designed and procured funding for a pilot landlord tenant mediation center, in partnership with other members of the Legal Affairs division of the University Park Undergraduate Affairs office. She also has advocated to retain the Diversity and Student Life Committee and helped organize events for leaders of student minority and women's groups, discussing eating disorders, body image, and sexual harassment. Check out Miatta's profile and video as well as other Stand Up Award winners at <http://rockethics.psu.edu/leadership/standup/2009/recipients.shtml>.

**Economics Association**

The Economics Association(EA) is the Penn State Department of Economics club. The EA promotes activity between students, faculty, and the community. The club offers its members many opportunities to get involved, including a yearly trip to the FED, sponsoring the Great Debate, Golf tournaments, a Stock Market challenge, and sponsoring lectures. For more information about the club and membership, visit <http://psuea.org/>.

**Study Abroad Opportunities**

Many study abroad programs are open to you. Imagine going to Brussels, Belgium, to observe how the European Union operates. Or traveling to England or Australia and observing the central banks of those and other countries. Study Abroad in Economics allows you to gain first-hand experience with the operations of foreign economies, and facilitates an understanding of currency exchange rates and international trade.

For more information about Study Abroad in Economics, go to [http://www.la.psu.edu/CLA-LAUS/education\\_abroad/Study\\_Abroad\\_Handouts.shtml](http://www.la.psu.edu/CLA-LAUS/education_abroad/Study_Abroad_Handouts.shtml) and click on "Economics." This Web site includes information on planning for a study abroad trip, how to pay for study abroad, academic considerations, as well as a list and description of many recommended programs. You may also contact the department's Study Abroad Faculty Adviser, Katherine McCann, at [ksm19@psu.edu](mailto:ksm19@psu.edu).

**Distinguished Lecture Series in Economics Sponsored by the Koch Foundation**

The Department of Economics and the Koch Foundation are sponsoring a series of lectures this semester covering topics ranging from the economics of religion to climate change and pension plans. Attending these lectures is a great opportunity to meet expert economists from other universities. The Lecture Series Schedule is below.

<b>Date/Time/Location</b>	<b>Speaker and Affiliation</b>	<b>Title of Lecture</b>
February 24, 7:00 p.m. 112 Kern	Colleen Haight San Jose State University	"The Economics of Religion"
March 15, 7:00 p.m. 108 Forum	Sherri Wall University of Alaska Fairbanks	"The Near Extinction of Alaska's Oil Exploration Season: Climate Change or Ad Hoc Management?"
April 1, 8:00 p.m. 102 Forum	David Macpherson Trinity University	"Growth of Participant Direction in Defined Contribution Pension Plans: Causes and Consequences"
April 29, 7:00 p.m. 108 Forum	Robert Lawson Auburn University	"Economic Freedom and the Wealth of Nations"

### Career Seminars and Job fairs

Penn State Career Services offers many programs and services to encourage career development for all students. Programs and resources can assist students and alumni in specifying career goals, exploring career alternatives, understanding effective decision making, and acquiring strategies and skills to carry out the job search process. Career Services can also help students connect with potential graduate schools.

Career Services will be hosting **Spring Career days** March 29 and 30, 2010 at the Bryce Jordan Center from 11:00 a.m.– 4:00 p.m. Visit <http://www.fairs.sa.psu.edu/spring/> for a list of employers attending the spring career days, career workshops, and interviewing.

Career Services also sponsors an **Industry Spotlight Series** where you can learn more about an industry of interest and network with professionals in the field. Location: Room 103 in the Bank of America Career Services Center.

#### Industry Spotlight Series Schedule:

Technology Industry	Monday, March 22; noon
International Affairs/ Business	Monday, March 22; 5:00 p.m.
Consulting Industry	Tuesday, March 23; noon
Working in Government/Criminal Justice	Tuesday, March 23; 5:00 p.m.
Insurance & Financial Services	Wednesday, March 24; noon
Retail Industry	Wednesday, March 24; 5:00 p.m.
Sustainable/Going Green Industry	Thursday, March 25; noon
Healthcare Industry	Thursday, March 25; 5:00 p.m.

If you have questions about the industry spotlight sessions above or about the career fairs sponsored by Penn State's Career Services you can contact [careerfairs@sa.psu.edu](mailto:careerfairs@sa.psu.edu). Another great resource is the Bureau of Labor Statistics Career guide to Industry. You can read this at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/cg/>.

**This publication is available in alternative media on request.**

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment.

The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. Discrimination or harassment against faculty, staff, or students will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University.

Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Director, The Pennsylvania State University, 328 Boucke Building, University Park, PA 16802-5901, tel. 814-865-4700/V, 814-863-1150/TTY. U.Ed. LBA 10-165

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