



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY

# Thinking about Graduate School in Economics?

Department of Economics

Dr. Rob Oxoby / Dr. Trevor Tombe / Dr. Ben Crost / Dr. Kent Fellows / Dr. Lucia Vojtassak

November 1, 2023

# Schedule

- 4:00pm: **Welcoming remarks** from Academic Program Specialist Raj Lakhan  
Enjoy free coffee, tea, and cookies
- 4:00 pm to 5:15pm: **Graduate school information session**, presented by Drs. Oxoby, Tombe, Crost, Fellows, and Vojtassak
- 5:15 pm to 6:00pm: **Student panel**—Hear from current graduate students at various institutions during a candid, interactive caucus-style student panel
  - Steph Daly, BA honours 2023, University of British Columbia
  - Sydney Fielding, BA honours 2022, Queens University
  - Karli Stubbs, BA, University of British Columbia
  - Adam Braun, BA honours 2023, University of Calgary
  - Matthew Lloyd, BA honours 2023, University of Calgary
  - Jordan Schimke, BA honours 2022, MA 2023 University of Toronto



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# Why Graduate School?

**Department of Economics**

Dr. Rob Oxoby, Head of the Department of Economics

# Why grad school?

- Graduate school is an investment in your future
- Many interesting careers in economics require an MA
- Economics can be applied to a variety of areas and interests
- Greater earning power

# Consider the following factors

- Costs and benefits
- Opportunity cost
- Direct financial cost
- Commitment to the graduate program
- Opens the doors to interesting careers in economics, business, government

# Choosing a grad school

- Many things to consider:
  - Course/program offering
  - Research interests and department strengths
  - Placement
  - Grad school experience
  - Funding
  - Location

# Preparing for grad school

- Think carefully about grad school
- Need a GPA  $> 3.00$  , very competitive
- Need good background in Math and Statistics
- Good grades in
  - Econ 557, 559, 497, 387, 389
  - Math 211/213 and 249/265 and others
  - Stats 217 and others
- Get to know your professors and make sure they know you

# Preparing a grad school application

- You need strong letters of reference to support your application
- Faculty members in Economics to write letters from courses like Econ 557 & 559
- Provide information to your professor that shows your abilities and potential
  - Unofficial Transcript
  - Statement of Purpose: *Why do you want to go to grad school?*
  - Resume/CV
  - Pay really close attention to English and grammar!



# Transcript

- Mathematical background is very important
- Taking difficult courses is as important as good grades
- Not all grades are created equal
- Highlight course names and content (not just the number)
- Take at least one course with a serious term paper.

# Letters of Recommendation

- Should have three letter writers identified
- Letters should add to what is already in your transcript
- Letters should emphasize your creativity, writing skills, and drive
  - Work as an RA or write a good term paper.
- Ask letter writers at least a month in advance and provide clear instructions/materials

# Curriculum Vitae

- Importance of employment and extracurricular and leadership activities depends on what program you are applying to
  - Economics departments care about research-related experience
  - Law schools place greater weight on extracurricular and leadership activities

# After applying

- Assess offers and negotiate
  - Seek advice of faculty members
  - Don't be a jerk
- Make a choice
  - Inform promptly those rejected
  - Accept only one offer!



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# Applying to U of C's Graduate Programs

**Department of Economics**

Trevor Tombe

Professor and Graduate Program Director

# UCalgary's Department of Economics



- Collegial environment
- Office space
- Highly competitive funding
- Vibrant research environment
- Multiple departmental seminars, other events
- Excellent placement record
- Expertise in many areas: energy, environment, labour, trade, applied micro, public economics, monetary, industrial organization, health economics, and more!

# Where our students go



## Master's Students

- Halifax Partnership (Taylor Grady)
- IHS Markit (Hilary Bao)
- O'Brien Institute (Shahreen Khair)
- NEB (Ryan Quan)
- RBC (Prince Afrim)
- Brookfield (Deny Sullivan)
- Alberta Utilities Commission (Phil Alonzo)
- Westjet (Morgan Gluszak)
- Alberta Electricity System Operator (Lars Renborg, Brendan Jewitt)
- Enbridge (Vadim Parshintsev)
- Twitter (Brent Cohn)
- Competition Bureau (Adam White)
- Graduate Programs at LSE, John Hopkins, UBC, Toronto, Cambridge, UBC, Queens, Warwick
- ...

## PhD Students

- Jevan Cherniwchan (U of Alberta)
- Juan Moreno-Cruz (Waterloo)
- Itziar Lazkano (UW Milwaukee)
- Victor Song (SFU)
- Jinan Liu (University of Nebraska)
- Matt Krzepkowski (Finance Canada)
- Olena Ivus (Queen's)
- Meng Sun (Thompson Rivers)
- Wei Dai (UBC Okanagan)
- Safoura Moeeni (University of Regina)
- Miguel Olivo (University of Sydney)
- Arezou Zaresani (University of Sydney)
- Qiongda Zhao (Mount Royal University)
- Elham Adibnia (Institute for Health Economics, U of A)
- Fruzsina Mayer (Statistics Canada)

# The Main Graduate Programs at U of C

## ➤ Master of Arts

- Can be **terminal degree** → employment
- **Course-based** or thesis-based
- **Preparation** for further studies at the PhD level
- **NEW: Doctoral-stream option**, where during your MA you take PhD-level classes and write comprehensive exams to begin (effectively) in your 2nd year PhD

## ➤ Doctor of Philosophy

- Leads to research or academic positions
- Compete for senior government or industry positions





# Master of Arts (Course-Based)

12-month program, Fall entry

	<b>Block Week</b> (late August/Early September)	<b>Fall Semester</b> (September – December)	<b>Winter Semester</b> (January – April)	<b>Spring Semester</b> (May – June)	<b>Summer Semester</b> (July – August)
<b>Core Courses</b>	Students attend 2-week Math Camp	ECON 615: Advanced Econometric <sup>1</sup>  ECON 657: Micro Theory <sup>2</sup>  ECON 659: Macro Theory <sup>3</sup>			
<b>Research Courses</b>		ECON 691: Research Methods I	ECON 693: Research Methods Course II	ECON 695: Research Methods III	ECON 697: Research Methods IV
<b>Field Courses</b>			Four Field Courses		
<b>Independent Research Project</b>				Students complete and present an independent research project under faculty member supervision	

<sup>1</sup>May be replaced with ECON 705/715 with approval of the Graduate Program Director

<sup>2</sup> May be replaced with ECON 707/757 with approval of the Graduate Program Director

<sup>3</sup>May be replaced with ECON 709/759 with approval of the Graduate Program Director

# Funding available

## ➤ Department Recommended Scholarships

- Frank Anton / John Dalgarno Memorial Scholarship (5 x \$10k)
- Arthur Child Memorial Scholarship (\$15k)
- Stephen G. Peitchinis Memorial Graduate Scholarship (\$7.2k)
- Department of Economics Alumni Graduate Scholarship (\$2.6k)
- Economics Society of Calgary Graduate Scholarship (\$2.8k)

## ➤ FGS Graduate Award Competition

- Special Awards Competition: **January 15 Deadline**, no citizenship restriction

Details: <https://grad.ucalgary.ca/awards/award-opportunities/graduate-award-competition>, FGS Awards workshop: November 28

## ➤ Teaching and Research Assistant Opportunities

- “Full” allocation is roughly \$9,000 per semester

# SSHRC Funding for Master's Students

- Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Master's funding (CGS-M) is valued at \$17,500
  - “Canadian Graduate Scholarship – Master's Program”
- Must be a Canadian (citizen or PR) enrolled in, or will apply to, a Canadian institution
- Deadline to request transcripts – **November 5**
- Deadline for **entire application** (including references and transcripts) – **December 1**
  - <https://grad.ucalgary.ca/awards/award-opportunities/canada-graduate-scholarships>

# Requesting Transcripts Funding for SSHRC CGS-M

- General information including link to **transcripts request form**:  
<https://grad.ucalgary.ca/awards/award-opportunities/canada-graduate-scholarships>
- How to request transcripts:
  - Should have received an email from Merrit Penny with instructions
  - Student complete **transcripts request form**
  - Save completed form as “**YourLastName-CGSM Transcript Request**” and send by e-mail to [gsaward@calgary.ca](mailto:gsaward@calgary.ca) by **November 5**
  - **Important:** form says the following, which you can **ignore**

*You must be a current University of Calgary Master's student to request your transcripts from FGS*

I confirm I am a current University of Calgary Master's student

# Benefits of and Support for SSHRC Application

- CGS-M applicants are automatically considered for the Alberta Graduate Excellence Scholarships (AGES) – annual value of \$11,000
- 30% of the adjudication weight is on your research proposal. If you would like a faculty mentor to go over your research proposal, please email the department at [econgrad@ucalgary.ca](mailto:econgrad@ucalgary.ca).
- The Graduate Leaders Circle hosts CGS-M scholarship cafes & one-on-one mentoring sessions in November. Details:  
<https://grad.ucalgary.ca/awards/award-opportunities/canada-graduate-scholarships>
- Slides from FGS workshop on CGS-M application strategies:  
[https://grad.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/teams/5/awards\\_2022\\_CGSM\\_Workshop.pdf](https://grad.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/teams/5/awards_2022_CGSM_Workshop.pdf)

# Questions about Ucalgary's grad program?

- Contacts:
  - General Inquiries: [econgrad@ucalgary.ca](mailto:econgrad@ucalgary.ca)
  - Graduate Program Advisor: Merrit Penny at [penny@ucalgary.ca](mailto:penny@ucalgary.ca)
  - Graduate Program Director: Trevor Tombe at [ttombe@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ttombe@ucalgary.ca)



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# Applying to Graduate Schools in the United States and Europe

Ben Crost  
Associate Professor  
Department of Economics

# Graduate Programs in the US

- Many of the world's best economics departments are in the US
  - MIT, Stanford, Harvard, Chicago, Berkeley, etc.
- Similar to Canadian programs but differ in:
  - Mostly PhD programs, fewer master's programs
  - Direct-entry from undergraduate
  - Do not need a master's degree for entry
  - US undergraduates often don't complete master's degrees



# Canadian vs American Ph.D. programs

- Reasons for going to US: training, interests, branding, career options
- Most of the very best Ph.D. programs are in the US
- But: A higher ranked Canadian university may be a better option over a B-listed US university in terms of finances, branding, and career options
- Tuition fees in the US vary widely, but are overall among the highest in the world
  - Don't get sticker shock - most Ph.D. students get tuition waivers

# Application differences

- Most programs require the GRE exam
  - Similar to the SAT undergraduate exam for US students
  - Questions can be tricky
  - Need to prepare for it to do well
  - Economics programs care about Quantitative section the most
- Mathematics preparation is key
  - For top programs strong applicants have completed Real Analysis (Math 335 at Calgary)
  - Significantly more math classes than most honors programs require
  - At UofC this would be like completing a math minor

# Preparing your application

- Top programs are very competitive
- Need to have a strong **GPA**, strong **reference letters**, high **GRE quantitative score**, and strong **math background** to be competitive
- Plan early! GRE should be taken a year in advance of applying to grad school – leaves room if you make a mistake

# Choosing where to apply

- There is a broad range of programs of different levels and different strengths
- Good application strategy is to apply to a range of schools
  - some **reach** (hard to get into)
  - some **well-targeted** (where you have a good chance) and
  - some **safety** (where you would go and are likely to get into)

# Financial aid

- The posted tuition fees for US PhD programs are very high, but not relevant for most applicants
- Most offer financial aid to many students
  - Financial aid typically covers tuition and living costs
  - Usually from a position like a Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant
- If a school really wants an applicant to attend, they will offer a strong financial aid package

# U.S. Master's programs

- Most Ph.D. students enter directly after completing their Bachelor's degree
  - Master's programs are usually intended to be terminal degrees
- Much easier to get into than top Ph.D. programs, but very expensive and much harder to get financial aid
  - High cost may be worth it for a top US university brand
- But less clear that you're getting a good deal compared to a Canadian or European Master's program

# European Ph.D. programs

- Wide range of approaches and quality levels across and sometimes within countries
- Top programs are comparable quality to top / very good U.S. and Canadian programs
- LSE, UCL, Oxford, Paris School of Economics, Toulouse, Pompeu Fabra, Bocconi, Zurich, Mannheim, Rotterdam, etc.
- Look for programs modelled after North American Ph.D.
  - 5 years including 2 years of classes
  - Avoid “research only” 3-year programs

# Why go to Europe?

- **Pros:**
- Admission may be less competitive for similar quality program (particularly compared to the U.S.)
  - Admissions requirements will differ across countries – need to do your own research early – many will require Master’s degree
- Some offer good financial aid / compensation
- **Cons:**
- Brands are less known, particularly outside of Europe
  - Look at where past graduates have placed (particularly if you want to come back to North America)



# European Master's Programs

- Some top and very well-known Master's programs, e.g. LSE
  - Great stepping stone for getting into top U.S. Ph.D. programs
  - But can be very expensive for foreign students
- Some high-quality bargains to be found:
- Germany has English-language Master's programs at top Econ departments like Mannheim, Bonn, LMU (Munich) that are very cheap (1,500 Euros per semester)

# The MPP Program

*“Shape Policy Ignite Progress”*

## WHY MPP?



**ONE-YEAR PROGRAM**  
(AUGUST 2024 TO AUGUST  
2025)



**INTEGRATED MULTI-  
DISCIPLINARY PROGRAM**  
FOCUSING ON APPLIED  
LEARNING



**PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
OPPORTUNITIES**

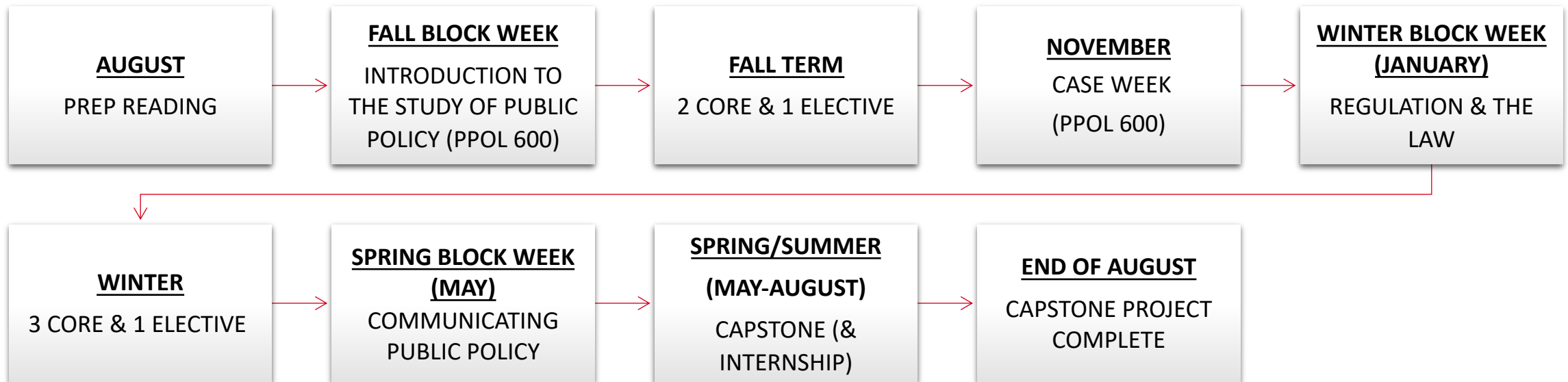


**INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**



**CAREER FOCUS AND  
PLACEMENT**

## A YEAR IN THE LIFE.....11 COURSES



# MPP CAPSTONE PAPER

## Opinion: Is it time to sell off Crown corporation ATB Financial?

Calgary Herald  
Oct 20, 2020 • October 20, 2020 • 3 minute read • [Join the conversation](#)



Is it time to sell off Crown corporation ATB Financial? asks columnist. PHOTO BY BRENDAN

### Academic, Community, and Political Engagement: Crafting Pandemic Preparedness Policies for Vulnerable Families

Authored by Jessica Kohek; Supervised by Dr. Jennifer Zwicker

#### BACKGROUND

##### Vulnerable Families

- Families experience vulnerability under three overarching domains:
  - Economic need
  - Physical need
  - Social need
- Community-level services help families navigate their specific needs in a proximate context.
- Social vulnerability is exacerbated when families are prevented from comprehensively accessing services needed for daily function.

##### Evidence-based Practice in the Community

- Evidence-based interventions integrates patient centredness, expertise, and clinical evidence to provide the safest, most effective services to families.
- Yet, there is a disconnect between research collection and analysis, and subsequently translation of evidence-based practices into community-level services.

##### Pandemic Preparedness and Community Organizations

- COVID-19 has highlighted pre-existing knowledge mobilization challenges
- Service continuity planning is difficult for community organizations to engage in, as so many programs are traditionally offered in-person
- The recency of COVID-19 and impacts, combined with slow knowledge mobilization, implies evidence-based pandemic preparedness is not yet available for community organizations.

#### METHODOLOGY

Research Question: What barriers have you encountered

#### RESULTS

Policy Category	Policy Issues
Reduced Revenue Streams	Funding and grant focus, funding structure, income loss
Transition to Online Service Delivery	Access to hardware and software, digital literacy, staff capacity
Inadequate Communication and Collaboration with Government	Insufficient guidelines, lack of sector specific guidelines, inconsistencies between health and regulatory bodies
Person-centred Policies and Programs	Equity lens for policies and programs, evidence-based policies and programs
Reciprocal Partnerships	Intragovernmental communication, sector alignment, partnerships between academia, policymakers, and community organizations

#### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

**Education and Consultation with Community Organizations**  
There is a need for provincial leadership around hazard awareness, technological assistance, and staff training

All-new research on Confronting the Alternate Level of Care (ALC) Crisis in the Canadian #Healthcare system with a Multifaceted Policy Lens, by @StephDyyc, Ken Fyie, @jdzwicker and Travis Carpenter is now available.

Read here: [policyschool.ca/wp-content/upl...](https://policyschool.ca/wp-content/upl...)



## HOW TO APPLY

# February 1 deadline

### Requirements:

- 3.3/4.0 GPA (last two years of study)
- A four-year baccalaureate degree or its equivalent from a recognized institution
- Degree complete by August 2024

### Complete an online application

- APPLY ONLINE NOW
- Pay non-refundable application fees. The application fee is \$125 for Canadian citizens and permanent residents, \$145 for international applicants.

### Submit supporting documents:

- A current resume / curriculum vitae
- Two academic references
- A personal statement
- One copy of unofficial transcripts from every post-secondary institution you have attended
- Proof of English Proficiency Test (International students)

## PERSONAL STATEMENT

Describe HOW the MPP  
would further your future  
career goals

Describe your ability to work  
in a TEAM atmosphere &  
how this has contributed to  
your successes

Describe the strengths,  
ambitions & experience YOU  
will bring to the program

Describe a project that YOU  
might be interested  
in developing

## ALBERTA POLICY INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (APIP)

A 6 month paid internships with the Government of Alberta over the spring and summer period

Provide graduate students a unique access to an experiential learning opportunity with the provincial government.

Opportunity to launch public service careers

Only available to domestic MPP graduate students

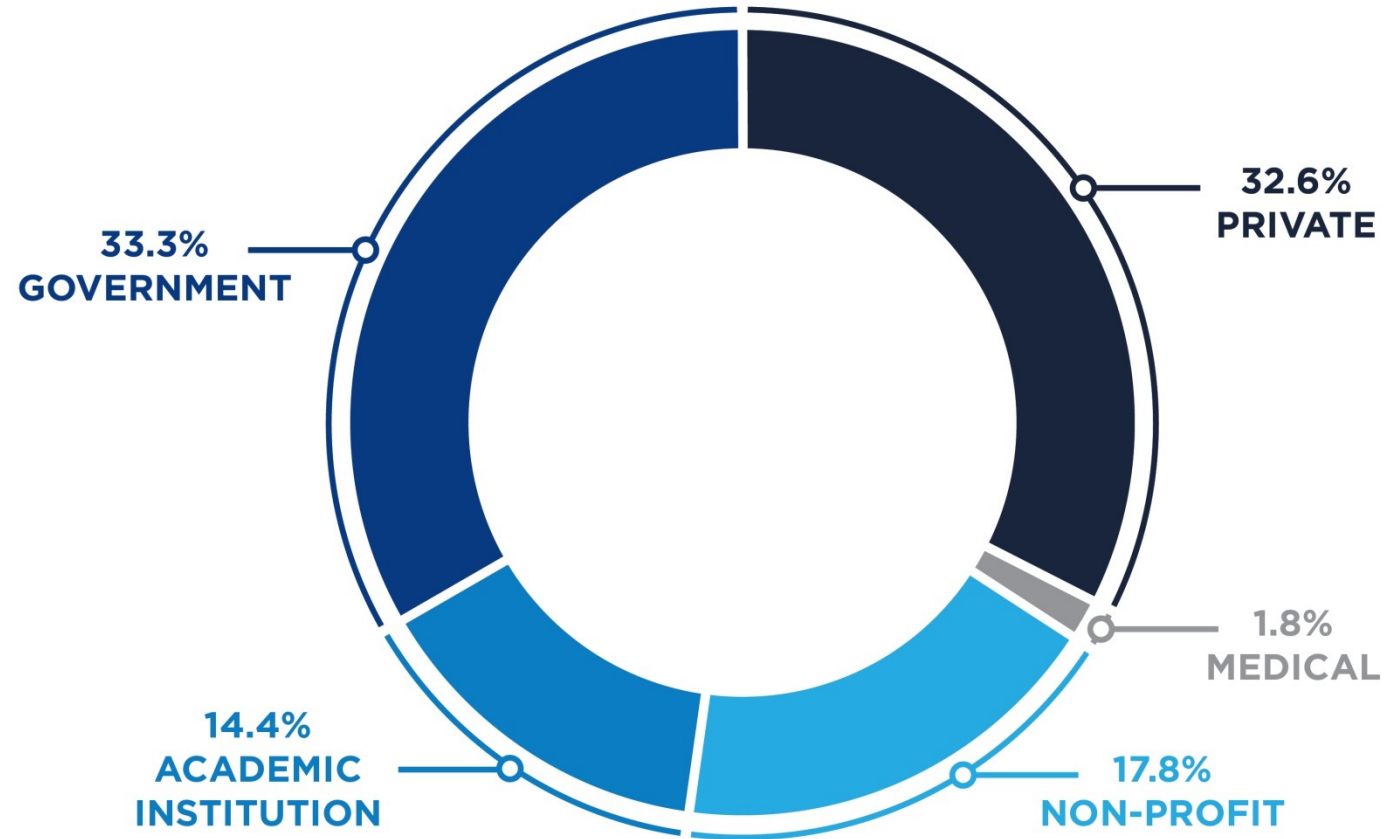


Alberta  
Government

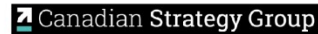
This Photo by Unknown author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#).



## EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR



## MASTER OF PUBLIC POLICY ALUMNI





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**Thank you!**

**Q&A?**

Email: [mpp@ucalgary.ca](mailto:mpp@ucalgary.ca)



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# Graduate School in Economics: The Benefits

**Department of Economics**

Lucia Vojtassak  
Associate Professor (Teaching)  
Undergraduate Program Director

# This could be you: TWO London School of Economics Graduates

## Oxera in Berlin

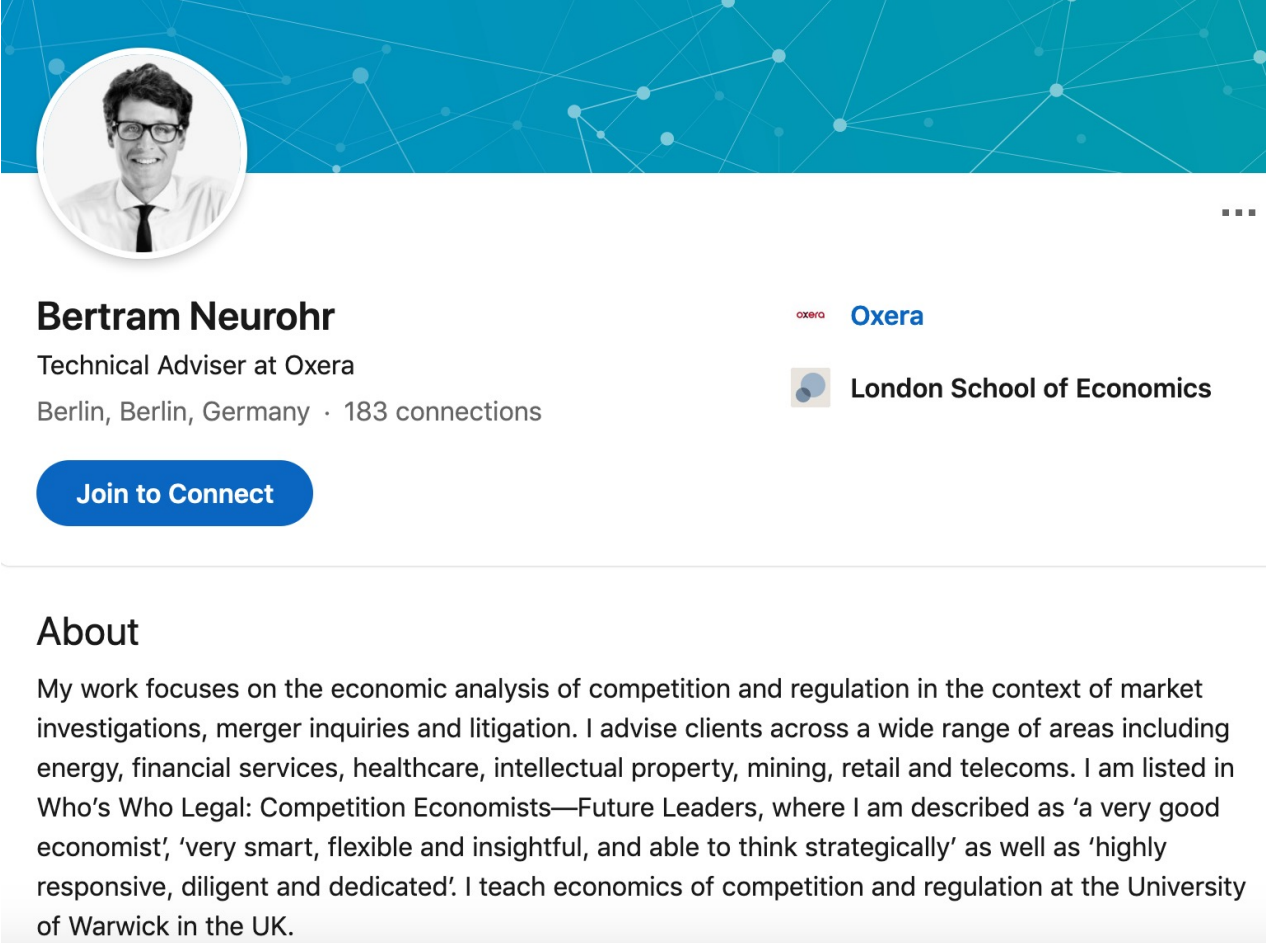
- Consulting firm advising on any economic issue connected with competition, finance or regulation

## UCalgary 2008

- BA Economics
- BSc Pure Math

## LSE 2009

- MSc Econometrics and Mathematical Economics



A screenshot of a LinkedIn profile for Bertram Neurohr. The profile header is blue with a white circular profile picture of a man with glasses and a white shirt. Below the picture, the name 'Bertram Neurohr' is displayed in bold, followed by 'Technical Adviser at Oxera' and 'Berlin, Berlin, Germany · 183 connections'. A blue button labeled 'Join to Connect' is visible. To the right, there are logos for 'Oxera' and 'London School of Economics'. Below the header, the 'About' section is visible, containing a paragraph of text.

**Bertram Neurohr**  
Technical Adviser at Oxera  
Berlin, Berlin, Germany · 183 connections

[Join to Connect](#)

**Oxera**

**London School of Economics**

### About

My work focuses on the economic analysis of competition and regulation in the context of market investigations, merger inquiries and litigation. I advise clients across a wide range of areas including energy, financial services, healthcare, intellectual property, mining, retail and telecoms. I am listed in Who's Who Legal: Competition Economists—Future Leaders, where I am described as 'a very good economist', 'very smart, flexible and insightful, and able to think strategically' as well as 'highly responsive, diligent and dedicated'. I teach economics of competition and regulation at the University of Warwick in the UK.

# This could be you:

## TWO London School of Economics Graduates

### 505 Economics

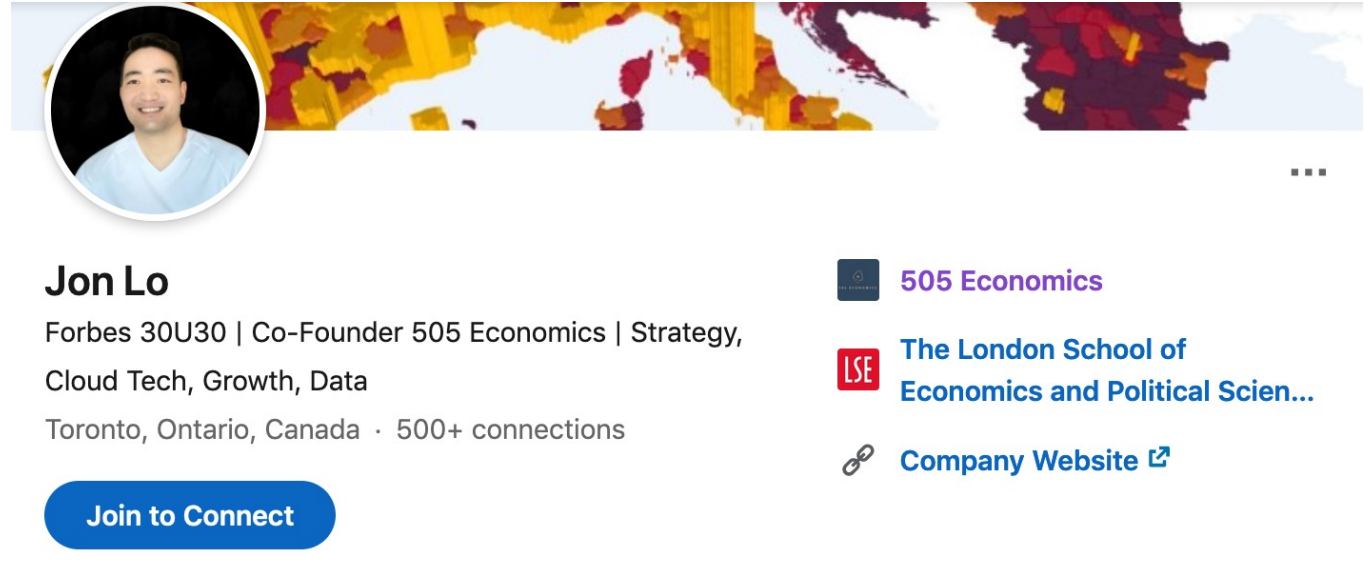
- Consulting firm using satellite imagery and machine learning to calculate economic growth around the world at a near-neighborhood level.

### UCalgary

- BA Economics
- MA Economics 2016

### LSE 2017

- MSc Local Economic Development



Jon Lo  
Forbes 30U30 | Co-Founder 505 Economics | Strategy, Cloud Tech, Growth, Data  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada · 500+ connections

[505 Economics](#)  
[The London School of Economics and Political Scien...](#)  
[Company Website](#)

[Join to Connect](#)

### About

I am a Forbes 30 under 30 entrepreneur and co-founder of 505 Economics, a DaaS company combining world-class doctoral research on subnational GDP data and cutting-edge tech. I specialize in strategy, cloud tech, growth, and data science.



# Other Graduate Programs: Last Few Years

## INTERNATIONAL

- Barcelona Graduate School of Economics, Spain
- University College London, UK
- University of Nottingham, UK
- Cambridge, UK
- University of Warwick, UK
- Graduate Institute of International & Development Studies, Switzerland
- Johns Hopkins, US

## CANADIAN

- University of British Columbia
- University of Toronto
- Queens
- University of Alberta
- Western University
- McGill University
- University of Waterloo
- University of Victoria
- McMaster University
- University of Calgary
- School of Public Policy

# University of Calgary Department of Economics: Last Few Years

- Alberta Electric System Operator
- Agrium
- Westjet
- National Energy Board
- Alberta Utilities Commission
- TransAlta
- Market Surveillance Administrator
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans
- Enbridge
- Power Advisory LLC
- Twitter
- Brookfield
- Competition Bureau
- Utilities Consumer Advocate
- ATB Financial
- Centre for Health Informatics Cumming School of Medicine
- The Applied Surgical Outcomes Research Lab University of Calgary
- Davis Pier Consulting
- RS Energy Group
- **Ph.D. studies**



# Graduate School: Benefits

- **Human Capital**
- **Opportunities**
  - International economic consulting firms
  - Government
- **Financial**
  - Salary difference: \$20,000-\$25,000 to start
  - Career advancement and salary limited by BA relative to MA
- **Prestige**
- **Challenge**

# Considerations for Terminal MA

- **Choose program carefully**
  - Emphasis on terminal MA or preparation for Ph.D.
- **Placement record**
  - Where, How Much, How Many?
- **Placement resources**
- **Careful which pond**
  - Type of Job
  - Geographic Location
  - Local, National, International Job Market

# Considerations for Terminal MA (continued)

- **Job markets at smaller schools are often local or there is a local advantage**
  - Local networks
    - Concentration of local graduates (TransCanada, NEB, AESO, MSA are examples)
    - Economic Society of Calgary
    - Professor networks
- **Opportunities to develop expertise**
  - Choice of program related to career interests
  - Explosion of customized programs with professional emphasis
  - Clusters of courses
- **Opportunities to research and write, write, write, write**

# Top Ten List

- 1. Best for you is not best in the rankings**
- 2. Academic position: best possible graduate school**

MA first: Oxford to Stanford, UofA to Davis, UofC to LSE
- 3. Why US?**

Great PhD programs, but UBC and UofT top 30  
Specialized programs
- 4. Portfolio of applications**
- 5. MATH 271 and MATH 335**

Ph.D. program or MA at a school with strong Ph.D. program [UBC]
- 6. No honours requirement at many schools**
- 7. Courses offered and faculty during your year of study**
- 8. Attrition rates**
- 9. Differentiate yourself**

Verbal GRE
- 10. Dare to dream**

# Contacts

## Raj Lakhan

- Academic Program Specialist
- [econundergrad@ucalgary.ca](mailto:econundergrad@ucalgary.ca)

## Lucia Vojtassak

- Undergraduate Program Director
- [Lucia.vojtassak@ucalgary.ca](mailto:Lucia.vojtassak@ucalgary.ca)

# Closed-door Caucus-style Student Panel

- Steph Daly, BA honours 2023, University of British Columbia
- Sydney Fielding, BA honours 2022, Queens University
- Karli Stubbs, BA, University of British Columbia
- Adam Braun, BA honours 2023, University of Calgary
- Matthew Lloyd, BA honours 2023, University of Calgary
- Jordan Schimke, BA honours 2022, MA 2023 University of Toronto