

# APPLIED ECONOMICS NEWSJOURNAL

## Interview with Diana Furchtgott-Roth

Adjunct Professor to Bring Her Unique Experience to the Applied Economics Program



Diana Furchtgott-Roth

After three years at the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), Adjunct Professor Diana Furchtgott-Roth is back in the classroom, and ready to teach students the latest in transportation and technology in her summer transportation economics elective.

“There are lots of transportation headlines these days, and the future of transportation after the pandemic will be interesting,” said Furchtgott-Roth, who served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Research and Technology at DOT.

One headline increasingly in the news is the sharp decline in traffic observed in 2020, as office workers were forced to telecommute amid the spread of COVID-19. After more than a year of piloting work-from-home policies, many companies and employees are now accustomed to telecommuting and flex schedules. Furchtgott-Roth said there are policy implications if rush-hour traffic patterns in the post-pandemic world are permanently altered.

“Some people won’t want to work five days a week, and that could change how we construct infrastructure. Right now, our roads are designed for peak hours, but if not everybody is commuting, then we can think more broadly about how to use and construct infrastructure.”

These are the kinds of practical economic and policy issues Furchtgott-Roth wants students to wrestle with in her class. She also wants students to understand that DOT’s responsibilities go far beyond maintaining roads and bridges.

“DOT is a department that can hold up or approve technology, and make sure it gets to the general public,” Furchtgott-Roth said. “Our biggest challenge is losing our lead in technology, and we have to make sure that companies that do automated vehicles, drones, and intelligent transportation systems are able to compete.

In fact, technology issues posed some of the biggest challenges for Furchtgott-Roth at DOT. She found herself in the middle of a spat between the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and DOT over the allocation of spectrum, which are the invisible radio frequencies used to transmit data. The FCC regulates the use of spectrum, and it had signaled an interest in reallocating a portion of it designated for transportation safety. Furchtgott-Roth lobbied for DOT to maintain its current level of spectrum.

“Textbooks don’t reflect the reality of the economic and policy decisions people have to make,” Furchtgott-Roth said. “Students don’t want to just be doing the same old marginal cost curves – my class will focus on guest speakers, public and private partnerships, and discussions of cutting-edge issues like spectrum.”

*Professor Furchtgott-Roth’s Applied Transportation Economics elective is open for enrollment. In addition, she is teaching Labor Economics in the fall.*

## Highlights

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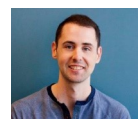
Volume I. Issue 2

## Note from the Editors



Alfredo M. Leone  
(Adjunct Professor)

With 2021 commencement celebrations fast approaching, we are looking for the next generation of student editors to help foster this publication. Working at the NewsJournal is a great way to build connections outside of class, and get the early scoop on happenings in the program. If you are interested in submitting articles or would like to join our team, please email us at [appliedecon@gwu.edu](mailto:appliedecon@gwu.edu). #RaiseHigh!

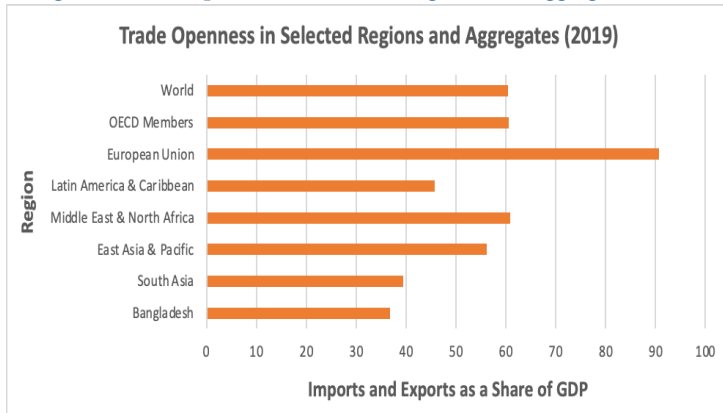


Sean Windle  
(MA Candidate, 2021)

## How Does Trade Openness Influence Economic Growth?

Reem Al-Emadi (MA Candidate, 2021), remadi@gwu.edu

Figure 1: Trade Openness in Selected Regions and Aggregates



Source: World Bank

This paper assesses whether there is a long-run relationship between trade openness and economic growth in Bangladesh and suggests causal directions for this relationship. Figure 1 shows that not only is South Asia below other regions in terms of trade openness, but also Bangladesh's share of imports and exports in GDP is lower than the average for the South Asia region. Thus, it is important to consider the relationship for Bangladesh in greater detail, which I do by employing a Vector Autoregression (VAR) model.

In addition to trade openness, the model accounts for other variables, such as gross capital formation, government expenditure, and urban population

growth. The VAR model is estimated based on annual data from 1961 to 2019. The results of cointegration analysis suggest that there is no long-run relationship between real GDP and trade openness. However, Granger causality analysis provides strong evidence for a bidirectional relationship between economic growth and trade openness. Based on these results, policymakers in Bangladesh should adopt more liberalized trade policies and emphasize competitiveness in the national development strategies to encourage innovation and productivity improvements.

Note: Reem wrote this paper for ECON 6376 Time Series.

## Can Taxes Reduce The Consumption of Road Transportation Fuels in Spain?

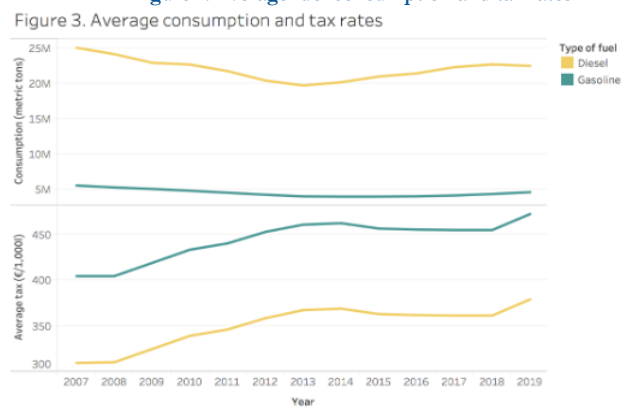
Maria Elisa Vollmer (MA Candidate, 2021), mevollmer@gwu.edu

Emissions associated with fossil fuel combustion impose costs on public health, the environment, and private property, among others. Recognizing that the market price of fuels does not include these costs, the government of Spain has taxed fossil fuels since 1992. Figure 1 depicts average fuel consumption and tax rates from 2007 to 2019. On average, diesel taxes are 21% lower than gasoline taxes even though diesel emits 15% more CO<sub>2</sub> per liter than the latter (Spain's Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge, MITECO, 2020). Given the emissions factors reported by MITECO and the tax levied in 2019, each unit of carbon from gasoline combustion is being taxed at a rate 31% higher than that of diesel. Since the taxes do not equal their emissions rate, this fact counters the idea of a Pigouvian tax that should correct for externalities by being equal to the marginal external cost.

Even if tax rates were set at the marginal external cost of combustion, reducing demand by taxing transportation fuels is contingent upon changes in consumer behavior, and Spain is unlikely to meet its 2030 emissions reduction target solely by taxing fuels. Thus, Spain should pair the tax with policies promoting cleaner fuels, efficient technologies, and alternative transportation to help consumers adjust their consumption more easily and reduce the consumption of fuels.

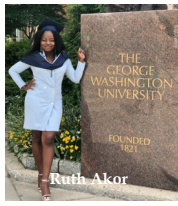
Note: Maria Elisa wrote this paper for ECON 6301 Applied Microeconomic Theory.

Figure 1. Average fuel consumption and tax rates



Source: National Commission of Markets and Competition's monthly Petroleum Statistics

## Advice from Graduates



Job seeking is always a challenging process. Ruth Akor, Kyra Henderson, Ilyas Iskakov, and Kevin Rudd, recent graduates from GW's Master's Program in Applied Economics who were successful in getting jobs, kindly agreed to share their experiences. Ruth is a Research Analyst at the International Monetary Fund, Kyra is a Consultant at the Menges Group, Ilyas is an Analyst at DAI Global, and Kevin is a Pricing and Security Analytics Professional at Freddie Mac.



Job searching became particularly difficult under the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Job opportunities slowed down significantly. Before any chance for an interview, many positions were cancelled, while others were cancelled after the first round of interviews. Many companies put their hiring practices on hold as it became harder to ascertain what their labor needs would be 6-12 months down the line. Employers adapted to the "new normal" and recruiting became a virtual activity.



Dealing with rejections of applications and after interviews was a prominent issue. It is never a good feeling to be rejected, but you should not take it personally. Your application could be rejected for many reasons, not all under your control. It is common to receive automatic rejections a few minutes after applying. You also learn from rejections after interviews, and you will feel more prepared for the next one. Rejections are part of the process.



Everybody agreed that you should keep your head up since you are well-equipped with the skills and experience you gained in the Applied Economics Program. Just be patient and motivated, keep applying, and follow this advice!!!

- Work with GWU Career Service Office to improve your CV and cover letter.
- In the new environment, be ready not only for remote interviews, but also for remote positions.
- Focus your papers and projects in your classes on the field you would like to enter upon graduation.
- Tailor your cover letter to match the job description. Demonstrate your understanding of the job and the organization, and show that your skills and experience match the job requirements. Do not repeat in your cover letter what is in your resume.
- Start applying for jobs early. Make a list of your target organizations and learn about them, follow them on LinkedIn, and turn on notifications for their job postings. Apply directly on the company's site instead of using other sites.
- Follow up! Leverage your network. Search for people that work in the company on LinkedIn, connect with them, and politely ask them to forward your application to Human Resources departments and put in a word for you. Connect with alumni from your college or GWU working at the company.
- Come prepared for interviews. Search for the company's interview questions on Glassdoor and read people's interview experiences.
- Kindly ask for feedback on your resume and interview performance. Don't focus too much on the rejections or what ifs, but do reflect on your interview answers and try to improve.
- Send thank you notes promptly!

### Note from the Director

Spring semester began just like the fall semester did --- remotely! We're holding all our classes and events remotely via Zoom, Blackboard, or WebEx. Students and professors are learning skills they never knew they'd need but also accepting the "new normal" of remote teaching and learning. But, as I write, more and more people are being vaccinated against COVID-19, thus making a return to campus a realistic possibility.

GW President Thomas J. LeBlanc said: "Given these and other positive developments, we remain confident that we will be in person to the fullest extent possible this fall." As of [April 19](#), GW will require anyone on campus to be [fully vaccinated](#).

In the meantime, we have continued to enhance the applied economics program through features such as our buddy match for new students, an expanded set of virtual events, lunch hour with classmates, and sessions with our career counselor.

We introduced two electives, Transportation Economics and Fiscal and Economic Policy, and we hired about a dozen students to work as research assistants and graders for our professors.

This is the second issue of our NewsJournal - if you'd like to read the first issue, please go to the [News and Events](#) tab on the Applied Economics [website](#).

Director: Joann M. Weiner  
jmweiner@gwu.edu



## Our Students' Achievements

### Cornerstone Research Competition



Economic consulting firm Cornerstone Research hosted a case competition open to students at George Washington University, the University of Virginia, Duke, Emory, and Vanderbilt. In total, 34 teams of undergraduate and graduate students participated, including four students in our applied economics program – Bennett Adamson, Seunghwan Lee, Dinh Nguyen, and Juan Utrera. Competing under the team name "GWU Applied Econ," the four first-semester students analyzed the anti-competitive effects of a hypothetical merger between two healthcare companies. In the final round, GWU Applied Econ presented their report to a panel of Cornerstone judges and finished among the top 5 finalists.

– **Bennett Adamson, MA Candidate, 2022**

### NABE Foundation Scholarship



In 2020, I was selected as the NABE Foundation scholarship recipient to attend one of their flagship classes, "Machine Learning & Data Science for Economists." Being a student at GW, a National Association for Business Economics (NABE) University Partner, was crucial in the process. I encourage my colleagues in the GW Applied Economics program to apply.

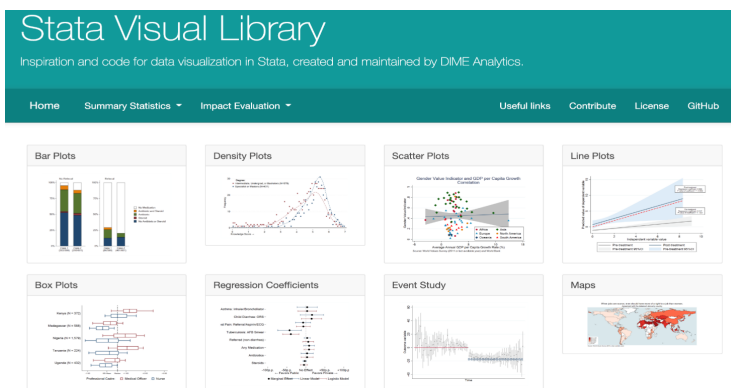
– **Abdulkarim Alkadri, MA Candidate, 2021**



I am pleased to have been selected as a 2021 NABE Diversity Scholar. This scholarship includes a one-year complimentary membership to NABE and complimentary registration to NABE's Economic Policy Conference; the Foundation's Economic Measurement Seminar; the Annual Meeting; and the Tech Economics Conference.

–**Suhaas Ramani, MA Candidate, 2022**

### Department of Economics Applied Economics Award for an Internship



I interned at the Development Impact Evaluation Analytics Unit (DIME Analytics) and Bureaucracy Lab at the World Bank virtually in Spring 2021. The internship allowed me to apply knowledge I learned in data visualization, data analysis, and econometrics into practice, and to become familiar with the practical research process in the real world. The internship widened my perspectives and opened the doors to more opportunities. I am thankful to the Applied Economics MA Program for offering me this Award to complete this internship.



--**Disovankiri Boung, MA Candidate, 2021**

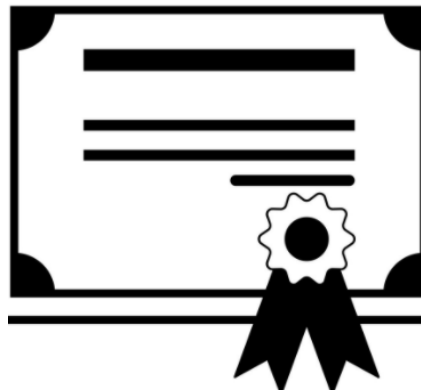
## Celebrations!!!



### Commencement Fall 2020 !!

#### Awards for Academic Year 2019 - 2020.

For fall and spring graduating classes, we grant awards for the Highest Academic Achievement to students who have the highest grade point average in the Applied Economics MA Program. We also award students for the best overall performance in terms of their contributions to the program and the university.



#### Highest Academic Achievement

Nicholas Berini  
Haukur Hilmarsson  
Patrick Hubbard

#### Best Overall Performance

Ruth Akor  
Emilie Ghaffari



GW celebrates its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. While we will not be able to celebrate that event in person as we had hoped, President Thomas J. LeBlanc assured the GW community that “when it is safe to do so, the university will host in-person celebrations on the National Mall to honor the Class of 2021 and the Class of 2020, with each class enjoying its own, curated celebration.” [bicentennial.gwu.edu](http://bicentennial.gwu.edu).

#### Recent Graduates

Kyle Axberg  
Abdullah Almezyad  
Mitchell Barnes  
Wensheng Chen  
Matthew Frey  
Orhan Gokmen  
Guijia Gu  
Kyra Henderson  
Joseph Hughes  
Caton Lee  
Gabriella Magasic  
Metilda Ntomwa  
Uzoamaka Nwokoye  
Kristine Parisi  
Fatoumata Savane  
Jiadi Wu  
Miao Zhang  
Qianxing Zhang  
Yuzhao Zhong  
Ngodoo Zume

## APPLIED ECONOMICS IN ACTION



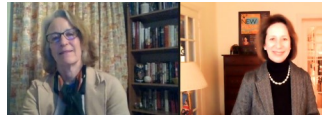
The Economist as Entrepreneur and Innovator

Join us for a Conversation with  
**Chit Waiwan,**  
 CEO New Press  
 Economics

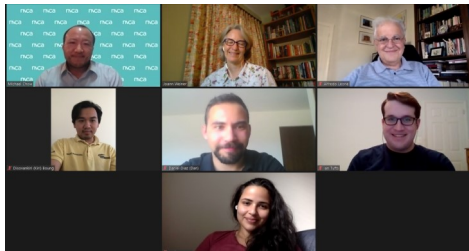


THE FUTURE OF TRANSPORTATION AFTER COVID

Friday, FEB 26 2021  
 6:15pm  
 via ZOOM



APPLIED ECONOMICS Q & A WITH CAREER COACH JULIANNA HUTCHINS



APPLIED ECONOMICS IN ACTION  
**Michael Chow**  
 Research Director  
 National Venture Capital Association  
 & Venture Forward

The U.S. Small Business Sector: From Mom & Pops to Unicorns

Friday  
 March 26, 2021  
 6:16pm  
 via Zoom

### Economist Jokes



*The First Economist: They say that Christopher Columbus was the first economist. When he left to discover America, he didn't know where he was going; when he got there he didn't know where he was, and it was all done on a government grant.*

*Good Advice: Here is a sage piece of investment advice you might not usually find in any tip-sheet, newsletter or "thoughtful" weekly column on capital markets. It comes from Will Rogers, a popular entertainer and wit of interwar America, via the writings of Paul Samuelson, a Nobel prize-winning economist and wit of post-war America. Are you ready? Here it is. You should buy stocks when they are going to go up. When they are going to go down, you should sell them.*



### GW Trivia Answers!!!

See Issue 1 for the questions



A1) On February 9, 1821, President James Monroe signed the Act of Congress that created Columbian College. In 1873, Columbian College was re-named Columbian University, which was renamed the George Washington University in 1904.

A2) After the University was re-named the George Washington University, to preserve the name "Columbian" a new organization was formed and named Columbian College. The AS refers to the department of arts and sciences. Hence, CCAS.

A3) George Washington was born February 22, 1732, at Popes Creek in Westmoreland County, Virginia.

A4) The colors – buff and blue - were chosen to match the uniform George Washington wore as he resigned his position as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army on December 23, 1783. The original colors of the Columbian University were blue and orange.

A5) John Whitefield Kendrick (b. July 27, 1917, d. November 17, 2009) was a pioneer in productivity measurement and economic accounting. Kendrick worked as an economist from 1946 to 1953 at the Office of Business Economics, the predecessor to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, and from 1955 to 1988 as a professor at George Washington University. He earned his Ph.D. in economics from GW.

## Contact Us

### Our LinkedIn Group

We have an active Applied Econ group on LinkedIn that is limited to current and former students, as well as faculty in the Department of Economics. If you haven't done so, make sure you join our group for news, events and job opportunities.

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13567382/>

### Career Services

Julianna Hutchins

Career Coach

[Business](#) | [Finance](#) | [Consulting](#) | [Economics](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Human Resources](#) | [Marketing](#)  
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