

## **ASHE Conference 2017**

We hosted our 11<sup>th</sup> Conference on “Economic Issues Impacting Hispanic and African-American Communities” in September 2017. The Conference is co-sponsored by the American Society of Hispanic Economists.

Made possible by a generous gift from Dr. Terrence Larson, the two conference organizers (Timothy J. Gronberg, Professor, Department of Economics, Texas A&M University and Diego Escobari, Associate Professor Economics and Finance, University of Texas– Rio Grande Valley) hosted thirty three attendees from five different Texas Universities. This year we added Prairie View A&M University, which is a member of the Texas A&M University system and is a Historically Black University, to our network of participating schools. The conference included eight quality research presentations over the two-day conference focusing on “Economic Issues Affecting African-American and Hispanic Communities”.

The Conference is not just a research forum - a major aim of the event is to enable a diverse set of undergraduates to participate in an academic conference along with their faculty mentors. Fourteen students from five different Texas universities attended this year’s conference. Each of these fourteen students is considering pursuing a doctorate in economics. The conference was structured so the visiting students could interact with current TAMU PhD students and faculty and hear firsthand about the TAMU Economics PhD program. Students also participated in a mock economics experiment in our Economics Research Laboratory. Behavioral/experimental economics is an area of particular strength in our department. The experiment was run by Billur Aksoy, one of our advanced behavioral/experimental PhD students. The visiting undergraduate students really seemed to appreciate the hands-on exposure to the human subject laboratory method.

A new feature this year was a presentation about the American Economic Association Summer Program. Professor Don Meyer from Western Michigan University, who has been teaching in the AEA Summer Program the past two years at the current host site, Michigan State University, was the visiting speaker. He was aided in his presentation by two of our own students who participated in the AEA program last summer. One of those students, Chandon Adger, completed his TAMU undergrad econ degree and is now a first-year PhD student in our department. The second student, Cecilia Moreira, is a senior econ major, will graduate this spring and is in the process of applying to PhD economics programs.

Overall the conference was a major success. Several of the students who attended indicated that they are making A&M one of their top choices for graduate school.