

Mackenzie Alston Named Dr. John Van Huyck Memorial Fellow

To honor the memory and legacy of Dr. John Van Huyck, the Dr. John Van Huyck Fellows Program provides support for a PhD student in the TAMU Department of Economics to carry out experimental research. The Dr. John Van Huyck Fellows Endowed Program was established through the generous philanthropy of Mr. Alfred P. Van Huyck and Mrs. Nancy Van Huyck Chockley. The Program provides up to \$5,000 of funding for laboratory experiments conducted in the Economic Research Laboratory or for field experiments. This year the award goes to **Mackenzie Alston**.

Mackenzie Alston is a fourth-year PhD candidate whose research focuses on using laboratory experiments to test economic theories. Here is an abstract of her proposal:

"Despite the large and enlightening body of literature on the impact of culture and group identity on giving, not enough economics research has addressed the effect of race (specifically, blacks and whites) on giving. In today's society, however, it is vital to understand how and why people--especially minorities with low socioeconomic status--are treated differently. My research will examine the impact of race and perceived beliefs about others' misfortune on altruism in America. Having this knowledge will allow us to identify reasons why inequality and discrimination still exist and will help us determine what policy interventions might help people of all identities to be considered equal. My proposed experiment will use a well-known paradigm in experimental economics, the dictator game, to investigate how generous blacks and whites are towards (relatively) poor blacks and whites. In the dictator game, one subject decides how to allocate a fixed amount of money between himself and another subject; this game is used as a measure of altruism toward other people. Using this paradigm, my work will be able to explain potential racial differences in generosity beyond simple in-group favoritism. I will examine the direct effect of race on giving as well as the impact of beliefs about why poorer individuals ended up in worse financial situations."

Congratulations, Mackenzie!



If you would like to contribute to the The Dr. John Van Huyck Fellows Endowed Program, please make your gift payable to the Texas A&M Foundation.