

Dear Alumni:

Recently, the Department of Resource Economics and Policy (formerly Agricultural and Resource Economics) and the Department of Economics merged to create the School of Economics (<http://umaine.edu/soe/>). The merger resulted in several expected efficiencies, and synergies which unfolded between the two former units brought about several new and exciting developments. I am writing to inform you of the many exciting happenings in the School, and to offer you the opportunity to help us with our efforts.

Recent developments include:

- The creation of the new Economics Lab, which is open Monday through Thursday and is a welcoming place where students can come and seek help with their economics courses, or just ask questions about economics. We have space for make-up exams, private tutoring and group meetings. By all accounts it has been an overwhelming success. The Lab's web site is: <http://umaine.edu/soe/current-students/economics-lab/>
- This past October, Elinor Ostrom, co-award winner of the 2009 *Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences*, visited the University of Maine, and made a special visit to the School of Economics. Following her University lecture, School faculty and graduate students enjoyed discussing economics with her over coffee.
- Several School Faculty are founding participants in the Sustainable Solution Initiative, which was launched with a \$20 million grants from the National Science Foundation – one of the largest grants of this type ever awarded!
- The School of Economics continues to offer the academic programs you are familiar with, but recently began offering PhDs! These PhDs are interdisciplinary (economics combined with ecology and environmental sciences), and School's participation in the large Sustainable Solutions Initiative has helped fund the PhD students, which now number five.
- With the new critical mass the School has launched a broad-based economic development project called the Knowledge Transfer Alliance (KTA) (<http://umaine.edu/kta/>). Under this project, the School assembles teams of faculty, staff, graduate students and undergraduate students to advise businesses and communities in economics and development. We have discovered that many businesses need economic information and assistance during these challenging times, and the program has been an excellent way of getting our students engaged in real-world activities.
- Last year the School of Economics joined with UMaine Engineers and other units within the University of Maine System in developing a Strategic Investment project focusing upon renewable energy. Under this project we have developed three new courses focusing on renewable energy economics and related areas. In addition, this effort has helped fund our newest faculty member who will join us this August. She will be a PhD graduate from Carnegie Mellon University with a focus on renewable energy policy, technology, and economics.

As you can see there are many exciting developments at the School of Economics! You can keep up with news by following our News & Events web site (<http://umaine.edu/soe/news/>). Soon we hope to create an alumni web site, so please be on the lookout for this. Certainly feel free to contact me regarding any questions, comments, etc., as well as just to let us know what you are doing now! Please call (207-581-3151), email ([george.crinier@umit.maine.edu](mailto:george.crinier@umit.maine.edu)), or Skype me anytime you'd like (Skype address under my name and email address).

We do need your help to continue our efforts and we want to highlight four funds you may consider for donations. The first is our newest fund, the School of Economics Excellence Fund (code: ECOXCEL), which helps send students to conferences, host speakers, and help with other aspects that generally improve academic quality. For example, for the third year in a row we are sending students to Boston for mentoring with the Produce Marketing Association, and we also continue to support financial economics education and training under our Farm Credit program.

I also wish to highlight the Ryan Wright Memorial Award, which is an award to the highest ranked senior in the School. The award is based upon scholarship, character, extracurricular activities, and other meritorious activities. We hope to raise money for this award, which was first offered in 2004, in order to solidify the endowed status. If you wish to help us with this effort, the fund code is WRIGHT.

Roger D. Cooper, a 1984 graduate with a Masters in Agricultural Economics, died in a tragic 2004 climbing accident on Mount Kathadin. The Roger D. Cooper Scholarship Fund was established in 2005 with gifts from Roger D. Cooper's former employer (Bangor Hydro-Electric Co.), the Haskell/Stetson Trust Fund, family, friends, faculty and colleagues. Roger understood that traveling and getting to know other people and cultures were important factors in reducing prejudices and broadening one's thinking. This fund helps both undergraduate and graduate students who, like Roger, have a deep interest in global matters. The Roger D. Cooper fund code is COOPERR.

Duane Smith was born in Old Town, Maine, and graduated from UMaine in 1959. Duane worked many years in Aroostook County and in his later years worked at UMaine where he assisted the School with many applied research projects. Duane always enjoyed life and was unique in many ways. We are hopeful to increase the endowment of this fund which targets third and fourth year students who have financial need and have graduated from a Maine high school. If you choose to help us with this fund the code is SMITHDU.

I hope you will join me in continuing the tradition of giving to UMaine by supporting our efforts. Please fill out the card you recently received in the mail and make a difference in the lives of our students. To put your contribution to work while you're online, visit us at [www.maine.edu/give](http://www.maine.edu/give) or return the attached form. If you can help us with a donation, please note any of the above fund codes (ECOXCEL, WRIGHT, COOPERR, SMITHDU), or you can direct general gifts to the School of Economics to fund code: 54750.

Thank you for your consideration and for making the University of Maine a special place.

Gratefully,



George K. Criner  
Director School of Economics