UC SANTA BARBARA

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A Nobel Experience

Bryan Leonard is in Germany for what he calls “a once-in-a-lifetime chance” to interact with Nobel Laureates, top economists and fellow graduate student researchers. Bryan, a fourth-year Economics Ph.D. student, was one of 29 outstanding graduate research students selected to attend the 5th Lindau Meeting in Economic Sciences in Lindau, Germany, August 19-23. The meeting offers students the opportunity to participate in economics lectures and discussions with Nobel Laureates from around the globe.

Leonard’s selection to the U.S. delegation was a multi-stage process. Explains Leonard: “My advisor, [Bren School of Environmental Science & Management Professor and Professor of Economics] Gary Libecap, suggested that I apply to attend the conference. The initial application was for consideration to be UCSB's nominee. I was selected to be UCSB’s nominee, and then selected by Oak Ridge Associated Universities [ORAU] to be a nominee for the U.S. delegation to the meetings. Finally, my application was approved by the Lindau Council itself.”

Leonard is a Sustainable Water Markets Fellow, “a program through the Bren School that seeks to do policy-relevant research on promoting water markets and other related institutions to promote the better management and allocation of water in the Colorado Basin,” Libecap said. The fellowship is funded by the Walton Family Foundation with a grant to the Bren School. Leonard’s theoretical and empirical research explores existing water rights and why they may be difficult to modify in promoting water markets in a manner similar to what has been done in fisheries, for example. He also is examining the economic effects on the source county of the

water transfer from the Palo Verde Irrigation District in eastern California to San Diego.

Leonard said he is “most looking forward to hearing from the Nobel Laureates directly and to interacting with them in a less formal setting.” He will have the opportunity to do that. Each morning, Laureates lecture on a topic of their choice related to economics and then preside over informal roundtable sessions exclusively for students in the afternoons. During lunches and dinners, Laureates will join participants at local restaurants for additional discussions.

The meeting has grown since its beginnings in September 2004. That year, the first biannual Lindau Meeting in Economic Sciences drew nearly 200 students. This year, more than 400 student researchers from 40 countries are participating. The Economic Sciences meeting supplements the tradition of the annual Lindau Meeting of Nobel Laureates in natural sciences, which began in 1951. The students are sponsored by the National Science Foundation, Mars Inc. and ORAU.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.