The DMC's APEE Presenters

The repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic are far-reaching. Following recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Officers and Executive Committee of The Association of Private Enterprise Education (APEE) decided to cancel their 45th International Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Before setting sights for the 46th International Conference, the DMC wants to highlight the researchers recognized by the selection committee to present: Joshua Durham, Arnel Garcesa, Jason Blackthorne, Patrick Martin, and Mazi Rhodes.

Each year, the DMC invites four of its researchers to apply to the conference and present their work in the Undergraduate Research Competition. This year, all four researchers sponsored by the center were selected to present their work.

Jason Blackthorne, a master's student with the DMC, was also selected to present center research with Dr. Crystal Taylor. In addition, Jason was awarded the Young Scholars Award. Read more about his achievements in this issue.

This issue will summarize the inquiries and findings our researchers intended to present.
Joshua Durham is a double major in Economics and Mandarin Chinese. As a public policy intern for the DMC, Josh conducts research related to free markets, environmental policy, and fishing licensing.

At APEE, Josh planned to present his analysis of the coastal reefs of Florida and the environmental and economic effects of lionfish overpopulation. Josh analyzed existing research to formulate possible solutions.

Josh's research supports the free market as a stable solution. This outlet can take variable forms such as derby, the predominant removal tactic requiring a contracted diver, and experimental trap technologies. With research proving native species cannot stop the developing invasive species, market-oriented solutions are more than warranted: they are necessary.

Collaboration between the public and private sector is optimal. The sectors can work together to attack the problem at various angles: from the deregulation of lionfish hunting to specialized private training and culinary involvement!

Arnel Garcesa is pursuing his master's in Statistics and researching the economic implications of solar energy in Florida. Via cost-benefit analysis, Arnel investigates the projected profitability of solar efforts conducted by the leading electricity provider in Florida, Florida Power and Light (FPL).

Arnel found that the profitability of solar is contingent upon the support of a significant government subsidy and specific conditions. Of approximately 111,000 scenarios with stable base rates, only 2.4% are profitable. Arnel found that achieving profitability requires specific conditions, including, but not limited to, 21 years of operation.

With this research, Arnel hopes the public will recognize the consumer impact of utility-scale solar projects. The Florida population is increasingly calling for more environmentally cognizant operations; however, they should be informed about profitability and base rate changes as well.

Arnel looks forward to continuing his research and presenting it when the health crisis is resolved.

Jason Blackthorne

Jason is an applied masters student in Economics. He works with Dr. Crystal Taylor to examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the residential permitting process in Tallahassee, Florida.

He explores factors substantiated in the urban economics and housing policy literature that influences residential construction.
Patrick Martin is double majoring in Economics and Political Science with a minor in Psychology. Patrick intended to present his research on tax incentives and the state’s film industry.

Patrick’s research provides important quantitative insight concentrating on a specific industry in a region compared to the nation. He also used longitudinal data to estimate Location Quotients (LQs) across time to observe the employment impact of the incentive program.

In his analysis, Patrick calculates the impact of the film incentives program in Florida by calculating location quotients and performing a shift-share analysis. He observes the differences between the national growth effect, competitive effect, allocation effect, and the employment effect. Patrick explores these varying avenues to exemplify how different methodologies yield different analysis of programs.

The observed difference in the effects between two periods - the start and end of the incentive program - provides results that can inform the debate of film and TV incentives in Florida.

Mazi Rhodes is an International Affairs major minoring in Urban Planning. With the DMC, Mazi is involved in a research project concerning the Franklin Boulevard Flood Relief project.

Renovations for Franklin Boulevard in Tallahassee were successfully completed in 2013, eliminating flooding during major storms. His research investigates the projected versus actual cost of the project.

Mazi explores time and cost overruns for public infrastructure as the result of the relationship between the action of policy makers and public planners. He hopes that this research will provide a synopsis to address the underlying public planning inefficiencies in the local government that occur with the implementation of publicly funded infrastructure.

Mazi’s research emphasizes accurate forecasting and proper management of publicly funded projects in order to stimulate greater investment in public work projects.

Prior to the conference, Jason was awarded the 2020 Young Scholars Award by APEE: a prestigious, competitive honor awarded to up-and-coming researchers.

Jason was selected from a pool of talented applicants via his academic and written submissions. The DMC is proud of Jason’s accomplishments and the center looks forward to supporting his future endeavors.