Center for Study of Public Choice

Annual Report 2017–2018
One of the pleasures of being the Director of the Center for Study of Public Choice is that I get to bask in the glow of my superb colleagues. The glow has been especially bright this year with many new books and award winning papers. Robin Hanson with Kevin Simler published the superb *The Elephant in the Brain: Hidden Motives in Everyday Life*. One reviewer had this to say:

*If you want to know what makes people tick, read *The Elephant in the Brain*. Simler and Hanson have created the most comprehensive, powerful, unified explanation of human nature and behavior to date.* — Jason Brennan, Professor of Business, Georgetown University

Not to be outdone, my colleague Bryan Caplan published his magnum opus this year, *The Case Against Education: Why the Education System Is a Waste of Time and Money*, one of the most talked-about and controversial academic books of the year and a landmark in education research. Love it or hate it, any serious research on the value of education will henceforth have to deal with the arguments and data in Caplan’s book.

I was also thrilled this year to learn that two more of my colleagues, Mark Koyama and Noel Johnson, joined by former GMU student Robert Warren Anderson, won the 2017 Royal Economic Society prize for best paper in the *Economic Journal* for their paper, *Jewish Persecutions and Weather Shocks 1100-1800*. This award-winning paper is one part of a book on the rise of the state, religious persecution and toleration, and economic development that Koyama and Johnson are hard at work on — more signs of good things to come!

No discussion of my Center colleagues would be complete without a mention of the amazing Tyler Cowen. It is hard to imagine anyone else in the world having such deep and informed conversations with as wide-ranging a list of people as Tyler has in his podcast, *Conversations with Tyler*. It is no surprise that Tyler can discuss economics with Larry Summers, but he is equally at home discussing chess with Gary Kasparov (Tyler was once the youngest chess champion of New Jersey), food with Fuchsia Dunlop (check out Tyler’s ethnic dining guide), and the bible with Rabbi David Wolpe! Look for future conversations this year with Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kahneman and Ethereum founder Vitalik Buterin.

It is my great fortune to be associated with such fascinating people and these represents only the tip of the iceberg. You will find lots more about my productive and challenging colleagues at the Center for Study of Public Choice in the following pages!

Alex Tabarrok

July 2018

*Cover: Photo of Acropolis of Athens by Evangelos Methenitis.*
Q: Your 2005 paper with Jeff Milyo, *A Measure of Media Bias*, in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics* pioneered the study of media bias by economists. Can you tell us a little about your methods and what you discovered?

A: In many ways the method is similar to the “ideological Turing test” proposed by my GMU colleague Bryan Caplan. His test asks if, for instance, a conservative could successfully act like a liberal in a conversation, or vice versa. Our method performs a similar thought experiment: Suppose a random person is given a news article and is asked, “Suppose the article instead was a congressional speech. If so, what is your best guess of the ideology of the would-be congressperson?” Our method actually uses a computer to conduct that thought experiment, which uses think tank citations as its main data. It finds that the average news story does not sound like that of a moderate in Congress—that is, for instance, someone with an ideology near Joe Manchin’s or Susan Collins’. Instead, it sounds more like a speech by a liberal member of Congress. In sum, journalists are not very good at the ideological Turing test. If they’re trying to act like moderates, they’re not doing a very good job at it.

Q: Is media bias bigger today than in the past?

A: My research only looked at a single time period—basically the early 00s—and it didn’t compare the bias over time. However, based on my casual observation, I’d say that the answer is “yes.” One piece of evidence is the behavior of journalists during White House press conferences. As I think anyone who watches a press conference will agree, they clearly hate Trump, and they don’t even try to disguise that. Again, if journalists are trying to act like their ideology is similar to that of a Joe Manchin or Susan Collins, they’re doing an awful job at it. I don’t remember journalists acting that way, at least not to the same degree, during the presidencies of Reagan, George H.W. Bush, or George W. Bush. Something’s clearly changed.

Q: What is the influence of media bias on voters?

A: After the QJE paper, I wrote a book, *Left Turn*, which discusses not just the bias of the media but also the effects of the bias. I presented evidence that suggests that those effects are very large. But some recent anecdotal evidence has made me rethink that. Much of the press about Trump is extremely negative. Mainstream journalists portray him as a very bad person — at least as bad as Nixon and maybe as bad as Hitler. They don’t just call him a “racist”; they call him a “white supremacist” — as if he’s secretly a member of the KKK. Yet, despite that treatment, Trump’s approval rating is near 50 percent. Clearly, a large fraction of Americans are discounting, maybe even completely ignoring, what the media say about Trump. Consequently, the effect of the media doesn’t seem to be that large, at least not as large as I would have expected if you’d asked me a couple years ago. One of the great all-time contributions to game theory is the “signaling model” of Vincent Crawford and Joel Sobel, two economists at UC San Diego. One of their most novel insights is the notion of a “babbling equilibrium.” Here, the “signal receiver” doesn’t trust the “signal sender” and consequently ignores anything he says. The signal sender, as a consequence, doesn’t even try to be informative. In essence, he just babbles. I think the current relationship between the media and a large fraction of the American public is coming close to that notion.
Q: In your book, *Cheating: An Insider's Report on the Use of Race in Admissions at UCLA*, you found that despite California's Proposition 209, which made racial preferences in public college admissions illegal, UCLA continued to be biased in favor of African Americans and against Asians. Today, Harvard is being sued for bias against Asian Americans. What does the data say about bias against Asian Americans at universities like Harvard?

A: My book presents some clear evidence that UCLA has been discriminating against Asians. And the bias is fairly large. For instance, it appears that if it weren't for the bias, about 8% more Asian kids would receive acceptance letters from UCLA. Although I don't have proof, I suspect that the bias at Harvard is even larger.

Just after *Cheating* was published, I gave a few public talks at which Asian parents would sometimes ask what they could do about the bias. I'd answer, “Well, the first thing is not to check the Asian box when they ask your race on the application. Instead, just don’t answer.” Invariably, however, the parents would respond, “But the admissions people can tell by our names that we’re Asian.” I'm starting to hear stories of Asian kids changing their names just before they apply to college. If the Asian kids don't win their lawsuit against Harvard, I suspect that this practice will become more and more common.
The 2018 Public Choice Outreach Conference was one of our largest ever! We had forty-four students from twenty-two states and seven countries. About half of the participants were economics majors and candidates, along with several Law School students. Many of our undergraduates were pairing their econ majors with other fields, such as public policy, philosophy, international relations, and public health.

A third of our participants were brand new to public choice, but we also had PhD candidates and a participant who left the corporate world to go back to pursue a PhD after she was exposed to liberty programs and public choice. Public Choice ideas and scholarship have a vast influence and reach!

Here are just a few comments from student attendees:

*My experience at the public choice seminar outreach conference exceeded all of my expectations. I was afforded the opportunity to listen to insightful lectures by prominent scholars in public choice, network with students from plethora of intellectual/cultural backgrounds, and left with a stronger conviction in my decision to pursue graduate studies in economics. In addition, I came away with a deeper appreciation of political science and its complementary nature with regard to economics.*

Anthony Adkins

*I loved being able to meet so many people who share a passion for learning about economics, specifically public choice. I am so thankful I was given this opportunity to attend and I hope to attend future conferences.*

Rachel Bruce

*This conference was a very valuable learning experience for me, I could not take notes fast enough and found myself very much looking forward to reaching higher education and tackling ideas like this. I will be reading all of the books and telling friends and family back home about my favorite talks and seeking to continue to learn about these things for a long time. I am very thankful for the experience!* 

Tess Beck

*Students and faculty at the 2018 Public Choice Summer Outreach Conference!*
The Seminar Series, now over thirty years old, invites scholars from around the world to share their work in a formal lecture, followed by a rigorous question-and-answer session with students and faculty. We thank Dr. Bryan Caplan for coordinating the program, and the following scholars for presenting papers in 2017–18:

### Fall 2017

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<td>Bryan Caplan</td>
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<td>Ryan Murphy</td>
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<td>Don Boudreaux, Dan Houser, Tim Groseclose</td>
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<td>Erik Snowberg</td>
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<td><em>Econographics: Towards a Refined Representation of Behavioral Economics</em></td>
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Jessi L. Troyan defended her dissertation, “Political Economy of Mining Reclamation.” Dr. Thomas Stratmann chaired the committee.


Paola Suarez defended her dissertation, “Essays in the Economics of Child-bride Marriage and the Economics of Governance.” Dr. Peter T. Leeson chaired the committee.

Joshua Pierson defended his dissertation, “The Economics of Marriage Contracts.” Dr. Peter T. Leeson chaired the committee.
Colin Doran defended his dissertation, “A Law and Economics Approach to Property Rights in the American West.” Dr. Thomas Stratmann chaired the committee.


Colin Harris defended his dissertation, “Essays on Property Rights and Governance.” Dr. Peter T. Leeson chaired the committee.
Don Boudreaux spent much of the past year pressing the case for free trade and against the cronyism that public-choice theory makes clear is both a cause and an effect of protectionism. Dr. Boudreaux did so at his blog, www.cafehayek.com, in public lectures, and in various newspaper columns, including an op-ed in the New York Times.

His primer on international trade, *Free Trade: A Reminder*, will be published in 2018 by the Institute of Economic Affairs.

Bryan Caplan *The Case Against Education: Why the Education System Is a Waste of Time and Money* was published in early 2018 by Princeton University Press – and has easily become the most discussed education book of the year. His articles based on the book have appeared in *The Atlantic, The Los Angeles Times, The New York Post*, and *Times Higher Education*. Dr. Caplan has been interviewed by *The Chronicle of Higher Education, The Wall Street Journal, Vox, Tucker Carlson Tonight* (twice), *The Glen Beck Program*, and almost a hundred other outlets. The book argues that the neglected signaling model of education explains most of what goes on in classrooms around the world. Contrary to popular and academic belief, the “return to education” largely reflects rent-seeking rather than genuine creation of human capital. Dr. Caplan’s book argues that government support for education largely rests not on interest-group politics, but “the political economy of Social Desirability Bias.” Education sounds wonderful, even though sober calculation of its social rate of return reveals massive waste of taxpayer dollars. Unfortunately, voters care far more about how policies sound than how well they actually work, making high and growing education budgets popular around the globe.

Dr. Caplan has also found a publisher for his next project, a non-fiction graphic novel on immigration. First Second Books, an imprint of Macmillan, will publish *Open Borders: The Science and Ethics of Immigration*, in fall of 2019. This work, co-authored with famed cartoonist Zach Weinersmith of Saturday Morning Breakfast Cereal, is now in its final stages. The script and pre-visualizations are complete, along with rough drawings of 90% of the book. The chapter on the political effects of immigration breaks new ground in public choice. *Open Borders* will provide an accessible survey of the social science of immigration for laymen and researchers alike, as well as an engaging secondary textbook for classes in labor economics, immigration, global justice, and public choice.

Publications


**Tyler Cowen** continued his position as economics columnist for *Bloomberg*, writing two columns a week. He also blogged every day at [www.marginalrevolution.com](http://www.marginalrevolution.com), the world’s leading economics blog. He will be publishing his book *Stubborn Attachments* this fall, and is continuing to work on mruniversity.com, the world’s leading site for free, on-line economics education.

**Robin Hanson**’s second book, *The Elephant in the Brain: Hidden Motives in Everyday Life*, co-authored with Kevin Simler, was published by Oxford University Press on January 2, 2018. It has sold 10,600 copies as of March 31, and has received 77 media mentions, including at the *Wall Street Journal*, *New Yorker*, *Boston Globe*, and *Spectator*.

His first book, *The Age of Em: Work, Love, and Life when Robots Rule the Earth*, continues to sell, and an extended paperback version was released on June 5, 2018. Prof. Hanson presented on it at the main TED conference in April 2017 — the video of that talk has now been viewed 1,275,000 times. Prof. Hanson also gave forty other talks, and posted dozens of posts at his blog OvercomingBias.com.
Dr. Heiner continued his research on the evolution of cooperation, combining standard game theory with signal detection theory from behavioral psychology. He is currently finishing a book titled *Cooperation in Prisoners’ Dilemmas: the Critical Case of One-Shot Interactions* (World Scientific Press). During last year, Dr. Heiner solved certain problems about how to combine signal detection analysis with standard game theory.

Standard game theory assumes individual players of a given type will behave in the same way—including all the contingent cooperators in a larger population that also includes always defecting players. However, an individual player could still behave contingently (and thus is still part of the contingently cooperative sub-population) — yet reduce its probability of cooperating — by choosing to detect signals from its partner more cautiously than another contingent cooperator.

Such a more cautious contingent cooperator may also have higher expected payoff than less cautious ones (causing more cautious contingent cooperators to grow faster than less cautious ones) — thereby destabilizing behavior within the contingently cooperative sub-population. Eventually, such instability might lead all the continent cooperators to become totally cautious and thereby never cooperate. Similar "unraveling" within a given sub-population is possible in many game theory models (an unsolved issue in standard literature).

Dr. Heiner has developed a more general version of signal detection theory — allowing for simultaneously shifting signal distributions — caused by choosing to detect signals more cautiously, as noted above. On the other hand, standard signal detection theory assumes players' signal distributions remain fixed as they vary their degree of caution in detecting signals.

The generalized signal detection analysis implies there will always exist a unique Nash equilibrium within the contingently cooperative sub-population: where all continent cooperators choose to be equally cautious in detecting signals from their partners. So no continent cooperator can benefit from unilaterally becoming more cautious in detecting signals.

The resulting stable Nash equilibrium among continent cooperators guarantees they will grow until they take over the whole population, eventually cooperating at the maximum frequency possible without being outperformed by always defecting players. Dr. Heiner is finishing revisions from the editor’s comments about the generalized signal detection analysis, and the resulting implications that establish stable cooperation (within the contingently cooperative sub-population) in one-shot prisoners’ dilemmas.
During the 2017-18 academic year, **Tim Groseclose** served as an expert witness on bias in universities for the U.S. House’s Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice. He continued to work on two game theory models. One examines bargaining between two players in which—like the president and Senate when bargaining over a judicial appointment—only one player can make proposals. The other examines the “Coase Conjecture,” a model of a monopolist’s pricing decisions over time. Dr. Groseclose also began work on a new project, “Tax Leakages and the Rule of t over 1-t.” The latter examines the degree to which “static analysis” overestimates expected revenue from tax increases. He gave public lectures at Princeton University, University of Utah, and the Mercatus Center. His work was mentioned by several media outlets, including *Time magazine*, *Fox News’ Hannity* television show, *Bloomberg View*, and thecollegefix.com.

During the spring 2018 academic year, **Noel Johnson** was a visiting fellow at the Center for Economic Studies in Munich. During this time, his paper with Mark Koyama, *Jewish Persecutions and Weather Shocks, 1100-1800*, won the Best Paper of the Year award from the Royal Economic Society. Dr. Koyama and Dr. Johnson also submitted the final manuscript of their book, *Persecution and Toleration: The Long Road to Religious Freedom*, to Cambridge University Press. It is in production now and expected to be released later this year. Dr. Johnson also wrote a book chapter with Dr. Koyama, “The State, Toleration, and Religious Freedom,” for an edited volume in *Advances in the Economics of Religion* (Palgrave MacMillan), edited by Lakshmi Iyer, Jared Rubin, and Jean-Paul Carvalho. Finally, Dr. Johnson also wrote a chapter on “Geospatial Information Systems” for the volume *An Economist’s Guide to Economic History* (Palgrave MacMillan), edited by Matthias Blum and Christopher Colvin.

In addition to these accomplishments, Dr. Johnson kept busy giving talks around the world — including at Ludwig Maximilian University, the University of Copenhagen, Southern Denmark University, and Wake Forest University. He also participated in several conferences designed to review new manuscripts by James Robinson, Daron Acemoglu, Hilton Root, and Hank Clark. Dr. Johnson also attended or presented papers at several conferences, including the Economic History Association, the Association for the Study of Religion, Economics, and Culture, the Brown University Conference on the Deep Determinants of Development, the American University Celebration of the Reformation at 500, and the Public Choice Outreach Conference.

In addition to his research activities, Dr. Johnson sat on the dissertation defense committee for Yasin Arslantas at the London School of Economics. He also continues to be one of the organizers for the monthly Washington Area Economic History Seminar, as well as for the bi-yearly Economic History and Development Workshop.
Focus on Faculty

Associate Professor **Garett Jones** wrote the preface to the 3rd edition of the *New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*, the famed 125-year-old encyclopedia of economics. The preface for the 20-volume Dictionary was the culmination of Dr. Jones’s eight years as an associate editor with the Dictionary, a position from which he stepped down this year. Dr. Jones also published an essay in the *Independent Review* entitled, “The Populist Revolts of 2016: A Hidden Cost of Immigration?” Dr. Jones argued, in part, that the political dysfunction and institutional weakening spurred in part by the backlash to immigration in the U.S. and the UK is still an underappreciated cost of current immigration policies.

Dr. Jones continues his work on his second book, *10% Less Democracy*, under contract with Stanford University Press. His first book with Stanford, *Hive Mind: How your nation’s IQ matters so much more than your own*, was recently reviewed in the *Review of Austrian Economics* by Professor Zac Gochenour, who received his Ph.D. from GMU. Gochenour wrote that “Jones’s book represents the best in social science writing ... While some implications might be controversial, especially for libertarians, the ideas in the book are worth grappling with.”

**Mark Koyama** spent the 2017-2018 academic year on leave as the W. Glenn Campbell and Rita Ricardo-Campbell Fellowship at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. During this year, Dr. Koyama completed his book manuscript (co-authored with his colleague Noel D. Johnson), *The Birth of Religious Freedom: Liberalism, Rule of Law and State Development, 1100-1800*, which will be published in late 2018 or early 2019.

Dr. Koyama also won the Royal Economic Society Prize for best paper published in *Economic Journal* in 2017 for his paper with Warren Anderson and Noel Johnson, *Jewish Persecutions and Weather Shocks, 1100-1800*. His paper with GMU grad Theresa Finley (now at Susquehanna University), *The Black Death, Fragmented states, and the persecution of Jews in the Holy Roman Empire*, was accepted for publication in the *Journal of Law and Economics*.

In spring 2018, Dr. Koyama gave the Epstein Lecture at LSE. This lecture is named for Larry Epstein (a distinguished professor in economic history at LSE who died prematurely) and is awarded to up-and-coming scholars. On the same trip, he attended the Royal Economic Society Conference in Brighton and a conference on Cultural Transmission and the Economics of Cultural Change at the Paris School of Economics, as well as giving a seminar at Queen’s University, Belfast. Dr. Koyama also presented his work at Chapman University, Colorado Boulder, Colorado Springs, Hoover Institution, UC Davis, UC Irvine, Santa Clara University, Stanford (political science and economics), and University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Koyama was also a guest lecturer at Northwestern University and the University of Pennsylvania.
**Peter T. Leeson** is the Duncan Black Professor of Economics and Law at George Mason University and the North American Editor of *Public Choice*.

Dr. Leeson’s work studies the economics of non-market decision making, in particular law and legal systems. In 2017, Dr. Leeson published a new book on this subject: *WTF?! An Economic Tour of the Weird*. Steve Levitt calls it “Freakonomics on steroids,” and Tim Harford says “It’s one of most original books I’ve ever read.” Also in 2017, Dr. Leeson was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

To find his work or press coverage, visit Dr. Leeson’s personal website: [www.PeterLeeson.com](http://www.PeterLeeson.com).

Last academic year was devoted to technical work on the Levy & Peart *Escape from Democracy*. This academic year has been devoted to our documentary history of the early Virginia School. Two chapters are coming out in edited volumes and we presented an analysis of the role of the Earhart Foundation in supporting the classical liberal tradition, broadly, and the Virginia School, narrowly. The biggest surprise in that research was the interconnection between the Virginia School and the National Bureau of Economic Research. The surprise simply shows how Rutledge Vining’s role in forming the Virginia School has been forgotten since the great debate between T. C. Koopmans and Vining is still remembered. We were less surprised since we talked with Richard Ware, the longtime head of Earhart, he stressed the important of Arthur Burns. We also discovered how to distinguish the Earhart Fund from the Volker Fund, two organizations inevitably lumped together.

**Chapter in books published:**


Conference presentations:


“George Stigler as a Reader of Adam Smith” with Sandra Peart. International Adam Smith Society, Chile.

Cesar Martinelli has worked last year on political economy models of accountability and media, on empirical studies of unintended consequences of policy interventions, and on experimental studies of collective decision-making under uncertainty and of the effects of deliberation in collective decisions. His work has been published in journals of the American Economic Association such as American Economic Journal: Economic Policy and the Journal of Economic Literature, as well as in Public Choice.

List of publications in 2017-2018:


John Nye and the Mercatus Center hosted a special conference in honor of Douglass North's work at GMU in March 2018. Dr. Nye also spoke at the Gaidar Economic Forum in Moscow in January 2018. He was invited to be a fellow of the Economic History Center at Northwestern University in March 2018 and participated in a manuscript workshop for a new book by Daron Acemoglu of MIT and James Robinson of Chicago. Dr. Nye lectured on economic history for a week at Peking University’s China Center for Economic Research. He also served as a lecturer at the Ronald Coase Institute Workshop in Xiamen, China in 2017 and at the RSSIA Summer School in Institutional Economics in Moscow from June 30 to July 6, 2018. His work on Dragon Children was featured on Freakonomics Radio.
During the 2017-18 academic year, Thomas Stratmann has worked on several projects. He ran a voter turnout field experiment, testing the effect of messages that appeal to norms to motivate citizens to participate in elections and comparing the effect of these messages to those that remind citizens that whether they voted is a matter of public record. The latter type of messages were found to be most effective in motivating citizens to get out and vote on election day.

Dr. Stratmann is also continuing his work on laboratory experimental public choice. Here, he developed a theory of strategic voting when a committee member faces a tradeoff in whether to vote truthfully or not. Dr. Stratmann then tests this theory in the laboratory.

Dr. Stratmann pursues another active research agenda in the area of law and economics. Here, for example, he studies the effects of secure property rights on economic value. Property rights are akin to a bundle of sticks. Each stick being of the rights. Dr. Stratmann documents the ways in which uncertainty about who can make claims to particular sticks of the bundle results in real economic costs and loss of value.


Cites:


In 2018, my paper “Is regulation to blame for the decline in American entrepreneurship?” appeared as the Editor’s Choice paper in *Economic Policy* (co-authored with my former student, Nathan Goldschlag, now at US Census). Using a new database of regulations from the Mercatus Center, Goldschlag and I find, perhaps surprisingly, that regulation is *not* a major cause of declining dynamism in the United States. The upshot of the paper is that dynamism, as measured by startups and job reallocation rates, has not only declined in highly-regulated sectors of the economy, but also in lightly-regulated sectors. Indeed, the decline in dynamism is widespread, as evident in manufacturing, services, hi-tech, low-tech, high-import, low-import sectors, and so forth. We do not fully understand why dynamism has declined but the explanation will have to be broad-based and systemic.

A second major project was the completion of the 4th edition of my textbook, *Modern Principles of Economics* (with Tyler Cowen). The 4th edition integrates all of the work that Tyler Cowen and I have been doing over the past few years producing economics videos at *Marginal Revolution University* (MRU). Tyler and I have now completed a course in the Principles of Microeconomics and one in the Principles of Macroeconomics. Speaking of MRU, it continues to grow by leaps and bounds and we are excited to have new courses and professors such as Josh Angrist join us.

**Publications**


**Yong Yoon** has been working on two topics of his research agenda. One is “Ethics and the Market.” One of his articles on this topic will appear in *James Buchanan: a theorist of political economy and social philosophy*, edited by Richard Wagner. His second topic has been “from the impeachment of Park Keun-hye to Singapore.” Dr. Yoon’s article on this topic appeared in an internet newspaper, *Pennmike*, in South Korea. This article was ranked 6th for a while among the most popular articles. Yoon will spend this summer working on the liberalism in modern Japan.

**Publications:**

“Bad Dream” in *Pennmike* (in Korean) March 15, 2018

Lisa Hill-Corley supports the main resident faculty at Carow Hall with administrative, visitor, and office manager tasks. She also manages the main budget and grants for Center as well as the Wednesday Seminar and the website.

Lisa also coordinated another successful Outreach Conference in June. This year’s conference at the Hyatt Arlington in Rosslyn and welcomed forty-four students from twenty-two states and seven countries.

She is excited to welcome Kashiff Thompson to the admin staff and grateful for the support of Julie Roberts. Here’s to a successful 2018-2019!

Kashiff A. Thompson assists with providing administrative support to resident Carow Hall faculty. Kashiff also serves as co-coordinator of the weekly Public Choice Seminar. He has truly enjoyed his first year on staff at the Center.
The Public Choice Center would like to thank the following contributors:

Capital Group Co Charitable Foundation
Chris Rufer
Goodrich Foundation
James C. Miller III (CSPC, Emeritus)
Sarah Scaife Foundation
The Patriot Lodge No. 1957, Fairfax, VA

Thank you for your support of the center!
The Center for Study of Public Choice is a unique research institution at George Mason University. It provides a single location where eminent scholars conduct innovative research, publish their findings and conclusions in a variety of print and electronic media, and teach the science of public choice. The Center builds on the groundbreaking economic and political science theories for which James Buchanan was awarded the Nobel Prize in economics. The Center draws both visiting and resident scholars and students from all over the world. Its faculty and researchers lecture and conduct seminars locally, across the United States, and abroad.

The Center serves as the institutional home for the Public Choice Research Program, which has developed and matured over the past half-century. Created in 1957 at the University of Virginia, the Center was initially called the Thomas Jefferson Center for Studies in Political Economy. In 1969, the Center was reconstituted at Virginia Tech under its present name. In 1983, the Center shifted its operations to George Mason University. The Center's alumni includes doctoral students from George Mason, Virginia Tech, and the University of Virginia. From its historical association with three of Virginia's major universities, the Center's academic footprint is often dubbed the "Virginia School of Political Economy."

Public Choice scholarship has profoundly influenced thinking in the scientific community and the formation of public attitudes. Economics traditionally focuses on the behavior of firms and consumers and how individuals interact in market settings. As a research program, public choice extends the tools of economics to analyze the behavior of voters, candidates, legislators, bureaucrats, judges, and expert economists themselves. Research by scholars at the Center also focuses on other non-market institutions such as religion, the family, clubs, and culture.