

OTPR

OFFICE OF TAX POLICY RESEARCH

THE OFFICE OF TAX POLICY RESEARCH is a research office at the Stephen M. Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan. OTPR supports and disseminates academic research on all aspects of the tax system, with the goal of informing discussion about the future course of policy. We are non-partisan and advocate no particular policies.

M-TAXI 2016

M-TAXI 2016 was held on June 10-11, 2016 with more than 50 people attending, including 20 alumni! The fourth biannual OTPR alumni conference featured sessions on political economy, behavioral public economics, behavioral response to taxation, evasion and enforcement, methodological issues, and international tax issues. One of the highlights of the conference was the get-together at the Slemrod house!



Some unposed photos suggest the warm and welcoming atmosphere!

The Economic Stakes in the 2016 Election

On October 5, 2016, OTPR hosted a non-partisan panel discussion on the key economic issues of the presidential election. More than 70 people from the University and southeast Michigan attended the event moderated by OTPR Director, Joel Slemrod. The topics and panelists included the following:

HEALTH CARE — Thomas Buchmueller, Waldo O. Hildebrand Professor of Risk Management and Insurance; Professor of Business Economics and Public Policy; Chair, Business Economics and Public Policy

TRADE — Alan Deardorff, John W. Sweetland Professor of International Economics and Professor of Economics and Public Policy, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy and Department of Economics

BUDGET — James R. Hines Jr., L. Hart Wright Collegiate Professor of Law; Richard A. Musgrave Collegiate Professor of Economics; Research Director, Office of Tax Policy Research

IMMIGRATION — Dean Yang, Professor, Department of Economics; Professor, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy; Research Professor, Population Studies Center



Jim's idea of a balanced budget is when JH (his unknown namesake) beats Ohio State!

NTA Alumni Dinner 2016

One of the highlights on the OTPR calendar is the Alumni Dinner held during the NTA Annual Conference each year, and this past year in Baltimore was no exception. We enjoyed a delicious dinner in the unique format of Fogo da Chao, with great company and great conversation. Over 80 people attended – the largest group ever!

The photos below tell the story of a very fun night with the best group of people.





Yes, Danny, you had a question?



Group picture – we need more room!

Taxing Ourselves – 5th Edition Off to the Presses

Joel Slemrod and Jon Bakija's 5th edition of their book titled *Taxing Ourselves* will be published in May of this year. Be sure to watch for it and check it out, as it has many new updates.

National Tax Association

For the third year in a row, the Office of Tax Policy Research (OTPR) sponsored a Short Session at the end of the National Tax Association Annual Meeting. The title of this year's speaker, Robert Moffit, was "Recent Research in the Distributional and Tax Rate Structure of the U.S. Welfare System." Once again the topic and speaker were well received.

OTPR will once more be sponsoring a Short Session at the end of the National Tax Association's Annual Meeting in Philadelphia. Stay tuned for further information.

COMMENTS ABOUT ATTENDING NTA

"I would highly recommend that any public finance student attend NTA. It is a great opportunity to network and to see cutting-edge research for a diverse array of subfields. It also provides an opportunity to gain exposure to areas of public finance that are less commonly taught in the second year public finance sequence, such as education and health. Perhaps most importantly, you can learn a lot from listening to the types of questions that members in the audience ask, which might lead to research ideas!"

"Attending NTA this year was incredibly valuable for two reasons: the opportunity to present work in progress and the chance to interact with lots of other tax researchers. This year I presented one paper (joint with Joel, Ugo, and Ron and John at IRS) and discussed another. The session on networks, where I presented, was excellent and well-attended even though it was on Saturday. There were many great questions and it was informative to see how similar projects are approaching the same problems we are. Discussing a paper was good practice for future refereeing assignments as well as my presentation skills. It really felt like I was involved in the nuts and bolts of the conference this year."

"Attending NTA is a great way to challenge what you already know in public finance and hear new ideas from researchers that you would not otherwise meet. It is also a nice occasion to bond more with students (and alumni) from other cohorts at the University of Michigan, and students from other universities. This was the second year I attended NTA and I loved being able to reconnect with some of the people I had met last year."

"I had a great time at the NTA Conference in Baltimore, and am looking forward to attending in the future. I learned a lot in the break-out sessions and met a lot of very interesting people during the conference and the OTPR dinner on Thursday. It is hard for me to pick the most "fascinating" person that I met during the conference; however, I was very well positioned at Fogo De Chao on Thursday night by sitting next to Nicolas Duquette and Sara LaLumia. I had a great conversation with Sara about her time at Michigan, as well as her experiences at Williams College. Often we do not get to hear from people who accept teaching jobs at, liberal arts schools so it was great to get her perspective on things. Nicolas Duquette was also very nice, and we discussed his job at USC in the Policy School. I am conducting transportation policy research so it was especially fun to discuss public transit in Los Angeles and other cities around the country."

"I met Wei Cui, a lawyer from UBC. Wei sought me out following the seminar I presented on third-party reporting. I had not expected my talk to generate so much interest from the law community, but I am very glad that it did. Wei, along with a few other lawyers, was very eager to inform me of papers from the legal literature on my topic, which have been very useful. Wei was surprisingly well-informed about the economic literature on the topic (better informed than many economists), and I must say that I did not expect this from a lawyer. It was a very good lesson in the value of an interdisciplinary approach to research."

“It was a real confidence boost seeing graduate students from some other universities present and walking away thinking that the seminars that I see weekly at PFFLS...are, on average, more convincing. So that was cool.”

“The most interesting person I met was Louis Kaplow. His were some of the first public finance papers I had ever read, and so there was something surreal about putting a face to the name. There was also a satisfying humanizing aspect of having someone whose work had seemed very intimidating be so friendly and warm in person.”

“Two senior researchers I met were Christian Traxler and Jim Poterba. I just happened to sit next to Christian Traxler at lunch and we had a fascinating discussion about his research, being an academic in Germany. I was able to pitch him my own work and get feedback on this. He invited me to present at the Hertie School if I was ever in Berlin. I also spoke with Jim Poterba. My current work is closely related to some things he has previously worked on. So it was gratifying to hear his feedback on my pitch as well. He also invited me to speak with him if I was ever in Cambridge.”



OTPR is proud to announce the following:

- ☆ **Jeff Hoopes** has been hired by the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, where the Dean of the Business School happens to be our own Doug Shackelford. Good luck Jeff on your new adventure.
- ☆ **Eric Ohrn** received the IIPF Young Economist’s Award.
- ☆ Co-chairs for NTA 2016 were **Adam Cole** (OTPR child) and **Jennifer Bluoïn** (OTPR Grandchild).

UPCOMING EVENTS

OTPR’s 30th Anniversary

OTPR’s 30th anniversary year begins in July, 2017. At the NTA Dinner, we challenged you to come up with some special ways for us to celebrate. The person(s) who comes up with the chosen idea will receive their very own OTPR fleece jacket. This challenge is open to all, so please email Mary at ceccanes@umich.edu with your ideas asap!

Joel's Travels

This past fall Joel's travels took him to two very different and far apart continents – South America and Asia. Some of the highlights of the trip are captured in the following photos:



On the high way from Valparaiso to Santiago, Chile, a gratifying billboard about the importance of PF in Chile!



Joel contemplating a low-price lunch at a restaurant in Puerto Natales, Chile.



Joel and Ava with one of the musicians/singers who entertained the attendees at the 73rd Annual Conference of the Japan Institute of Public Finance in Kyoto, October 23, 2016, where Joel delivered the keynote address. Joel's suggestion that she sing "Taxman" by the Beatles was not accepted!

[Editor's comments: I've spent the last 28 years in the Office of Tax Policy Research and organized many conferences. This no more looks like a public finance conference than a barrel of monkeys! Just saying!]

LAST, BUT NOT LEAST

As we have mentioned before, we are always open to hearing about any collaboration ideas you may have regarding projects and/or conferences, and to hear of your accomplishments so we can proudly mention them in our next newsletter.

Office of Tax Policy Research
Stephen M. Ross School of Business
University of Michigan
701 Tappan, Rm. R5380
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1234
734-763-3068
otpr@umich.edu

Nondiscrimination Policy Statement

The University of Michigan, as an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination and affirmative action. The University of Michigan is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities, and admissions. Inquiries or complaints may be addressed to the Senior Director for Institutional Equity, and Title IX/Section 504/ADA Coordinator, Office of Institutional Equity, 2072 Administrative Services Building, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1432, 734-763-0235, TTY 734-647-1388, institutional.equity@umich.edu. For other University of Michigan information call 734-764-1817.

List of Regents for University Publications

Michael J. Behm
Grand Blanc

Mark J. Bernstein
Ann Arbor

Shauna Ryder Diggs
Grosse Pointe

Denise Ilitch
Bingham Farms

Andrea Fischer Newman
Ann Arbor

Andrew C. Richner
Grosse Pointe Park

Ron Weiser
Ann Arbor

Katherine E. White
Ann Arbor

Mark S. Schlissel (*ex officio*)