

## Alumni Profile

### Cathy Zhang – Economics PhD Program



#### Career

Please provide a brief overview of your career path since graduating from UCI.

*I am currently an Assistant Professor in the Economics Department at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. I have been at Purdue since graduating from UCI in 2013.*

What do you see yourself doing in five or ten years?

*I hope to be continuing with research as I am doing now. I'm lucky to be in the best profession for my personality and work style, and am not ready to trade it in for another career!*

#### Your Time at UCI

When did you attend UCI?

*I started the PhD program at UCI in 2008 after graduating from college at UC Berkeley and received my PhD in 2013.*

What program were you in?

*The Economics PhD program*

Why did you choose to come to UCI?

*I wanted to be in an active research environment with excellent faculty (and loved the extra benefit of staying in California close to my family).*

#### Reflections

Did you do any research while at UCI and what was it?

*At UCI, my main research focus was my dissertation and producing the papers that would go in it. Fortunately, I was able to publish my job market paper that was completed during my time at UCI shortly upon graduation, which really helped free up time for starting new projects and wrapping up ongoing ones. I was also able to develop relationships with researchers in my field, many of whom are current coauthors. My time at UCI was very productive and definitely helped start off my current job as a tenure-track professor on the right track. This was of course not without the support of my advisors and the faculty at UCI who helped me along the way.*

### **Alumni Life**

What advice do you have for a new graduate student?

*Be open and keep pushing yourself. Being a graduate student is a very exciting experience: you are at the frontier of knowledge and with so many possibilities. At the same time, it's important to recognize that you are responsible for what you can accomplish, so always try to push yourself beyond what you think is possible. Don't make excuses, be humble, and take the advice of your advisors.*

How do you balance work/life?

*I'm lucky to enjoy the work I do, but also know to make time to do things that take my mind off work, like spending time with my partner, friends, and family, cooking, listening to music, and exercise. There are definitely times where the balance is harder to achieve, but some off-time is an important input in the research process!*