

Student Profile

Patrick Testa – Economics PhD Program



Your Time at UCI

What made you decide to pursue a graduate degree?

I had an economics professor who based his course design around the history of economic thought. After that, I saw economics as having a rich intellectual lineage to which I was motivated to contribute.

Why did you choose to come to UCI?

I noticed the cross-disciplinary nature of so many of economics' great contributions. UCI stood out to me as a department that appreciated the potential for positive spillovers from working across fields and disciplines. My time here has only reaffirmed this view.

If you are conducting research, how would you explain your research and its significance to your grandparent?

I would tell them that my research aims to understand why some places become developed while others remain poor or oppressed and, with that knowledge, what set of policies and institutions is most conducive to development and growth over the long-run.

What are your hobbies/passions outside of research?

Outside of research, I enjoy traveling to new places, practicing cooking, and learning about the history of popular music and film.

Reflections

What are you most proud of accomplishing (so far) in your graduate program?

My greatest accomplishment at UCI has been getting my second year research published in a top field journal. The whole process was a great learning experience.

What is your most memorable moment/experience at UCI to date?

The thing that stands out most to me about my time at UCI is the quality of the relationships I've developed with my advisors. Each of them has given me independence to grow and develop my ideas, while providing me with the structure as well as careful and constructive criticism needed to transform my ideas into legitimate and publishable works.

What advice do you have for a new graduate student in your program?

Based on my own failures and anxieties, my advice is to not worry too much about sounding stupid. Meet with professors and more advanced students early on and share with them your ideas. They will not judge you but rather will likely enjoy the process of helping you grow and develop your ideas.

Career

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

In the future, I envision myself working as a tenured professor at a university that values the substance of my research output.

How do you hope to make a difference?

My goal is to publish research content that contributes not just to narrow fields within economics but starts conversations across fields and disciplines. I believe that advances in the social sciences come most often when we are open to hearing and integrating different perspectives.