Princeton’s Sims wins Nobel with colleague Sargent

Princeton economics professor Christopher Sims was awarded the 2011 Nobel Prize in economics along with Thomas Sargent, a New York University economist who is a visiting professor at Princeton, for developing tools to analyze the economic causes and effects of monetary policy. Sims (left) enjoys a laugh with Sargent during an Oct. 10 news conference in Princeton’s Richardson Auditorium, which featured many lighthearted comments by the longtime colleagues, particularly regarding their history of disagreements about their research. Sims and Sargent are teaching partners in Princeton’s Department of Economics this semester.

Their work has revolutionized the field of macroeconomics and how it is applied by central banks and governments around the world.

Sims, who is Princeton’s Harold H. Helm ’20 Professor of Economics and Banking, has been a faculty member at Princeton since 1999, and is the third tenured faculty member at Princeton to win the Nobel Prize in economics in the past decade. He and Sargent are longtime colleagues, and are currently teaching partners for a graduate course at Princeton.

The day was highlighted by the insistence of both men to proceed with teaching their classes — while also accepting the worldwide interest in their research — and lighthearted banter over their career-long history of disagreements within the field. Both Sims and Sargent remarked on the prize with humility.

“I couldn't be happier to be getting this prize, and especially to be getting it with Tom, who I've known a long time,” Sims said at a news conference in Princeton's Richardson Auditorium.

“I'm not so sure it's right to say we have worked together; it's more that we have a series of continuing arguments many of which are still going on as I slowly persuade him of the error of his earlier positions,” Sims joked.

Sims lauded Sargent and other colleagues who have contributed to empirical studies of the relationships between the economy and government policymaking, as well as those who have applied that research to real-world policymaking.

“I also like to think of the award as representing an award for an approach to economics that insists on recognizing the uncertainty surrounding our theories and trying to

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From diseases to drugs, Wailoo explores the nexus of health and society

In investigating public health issues, Princeton scholar Keith Wailoo assumes an array of roles: historian, scientist, anthropologist, sociologist and policy analyst.

He looks at cancer through the lens of race and gender in his new book, showing how a disease once believed to afflict mainly wealthy white women was transformed in the scientific, medical and public imagination. In his undergraduate course on drugs in America, he illuminates how legislation on narcotics such as opium and crack cocaine was tied to attitudes about racial and ethnic groups associated with their use.

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Committee formed to implement policy on fraternity, sorority freshman rush ban

By the numbers

Five top graduate students in Princeton's Department of Computer Science will receive a prestigious award and lifelong membership in a network of researchers. The program is one of the newly established Siebel Scholars program, funded by a gift from the Thomas and Stacey Siebel Foundation. The inaugural Siebel Scholars from Princeton are Ph.D. candidates Andrew Krasnitsky, Wyatt Lloyd and Chong Wang, and master's degree candidate Nicholas Jones. Each Siebel Scholar will receive $55,000 in support for their final year of study. The program also brings together current and past recipients, currently about 700 since the program's founding in 2000, for an annual conference and networking events. The program, one of 17 in academic departments at 12 universities throughout the United States and China, is designed to give special recognition, support and networking opportunities to students in bioengineering, computer science and related fields.
Wokie Nwabueze, who has managed conflict resolution, mediation and ethics issues in the corporate and nonprofit sectors, has been named Princeton's ombuds officer.

Nwabueze, whose appointment was effective Sept. 26, will provide assistance to campus community members who have concerns, complaints or other issues regarding their work or studies. The ombuds office provides confidential consultations and can help develop solutions to problems through mediation, individual coaching, group facilitation or training, or referrals to other University services.

“Wokie Nwabueze is an outstanding counseling and mediation professional. She has a demonstrated ability to work with people from a wide range of backgrounds, and she has a strong commitment to the ethical role of an ombuds officer,” said Christopher Eisgruber, to whom Nwabueze will report. “I am confident that this combination of values and skills will make Wokie an ideal ombuds officer for this University, and I am delighted that she has agreed to join us at Princeton.”

“I am honored to join Princeton as an ombuds officer,” Nwabueze said. “Throughout the selection process, I was struck by the level of the University’s commitment to equity and the importance of the ombuds role. This is an incredible opportunity, and I look forward to being of service to the entire Princeton community.”

Nwabueze comes to Princeton after 10 years with Prudential Financial, where she served for the last four years as vice president for ethics and employee resolution programs. Her duties with Prudential Financial included resolving employment-related concerns through mediation, group facilitation, coaching and other technical managing and investigating business ethics allegations; coordinating an external mediation and arbitration program; and leading the management workshops and presentations.

Prior to joining Prudential, Nwabueze served as an independent consultant and trainer in alternative dispute resolution. As an Associate Ombudsman, she was a staff developer, trainer and mediator for Effective Alternative in Reconciliation Services, a Bronx-based youth organization.

Nwabueze, who holds a bachelor’s degree from Wellesley College and a law degree from Boston University, also was an associate with the New York law firm Pillsbury Winthrop LLP, and a pro bono fellow and staff attorney with Sanctuary for Families Center for Battered Women’s Legal Services in New York.

She succeeds Diedrick (D.A.) Graham, who left the University to lead an independent consulting firm.

Ruth Stevens, a member of Princeton’s Office of Communications staff since 2000, will join the University’s fund-raising staff in the Office of Development later this month. She has been promoted to director of development communications and will begin her new position Oct. 31.

“Ruth possesses broad knowledge of the University and the strong writing skills needed to eloquently express Princeton’s goals,” said Elizabeth Bocla Wood, vice president for development, to whom Stevens will report. “She also is an excellent strategic planner who will be a critical partner in Princeton’s fundraising enterprise.”

She has served as senior director for strategic communications in the Office of Communications since 2010, working closely with cabinet-level administrators and project teams from various offices on significant University-wide communications challenges. Her assignments have included communications for the March 2011 Report of the Steering Committee on Undergraduate Women’s Leadership; the ongoing work of the Alcohol Coalition on campus substance use, faculty and staff charged by the University administration to address high-risk drinking among undergraduates; and the University’s sustainability efforts.

In her new role, Stevens will lead a team of professionals charged with executing a comprehensive communications strategy in support of the University’s overall fundraising efforts. She will work in partnership with the Office of Communications, the Alumni Council and academic departments to ensure strategic alignment. The University is in the fourth year of the public phase of its five-year, $1.75 billion Aspire comprehensive campaign.

A giant Jupiter-like gas planet has been revealed to be the most light-thirsty object in the known universe — a finding that may help astronomers better understand a mysterious characteristic of similar planets found outside our solar system. Recent analysis on a planet dubbed 55C-26b has found that it probably absorbs 99.9 percent of the light that strikes it, more than any other known cosmic entity, according to a report by Princeton’s David Kipping, a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Astrophysical Sciences, and lead author David Kipping, a postdoctoral researcher at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics.

• Investment banking executive Benjamin H. Griswold IV, a member of Princeton’s Class of 1962, and his family have made a substantial gift to endow the Center for Economic Policy Studies at Princeton. The center, which supports economic policy-related research in the Department of Economics and fosters communication among experts in the academic, business and government communities, has been renamed the Benjamin H. Griswold III, Class of 1953, Center for Economic Policy Studies, in honor of Griswold’s father, a member of Princeton’s Class of 1933.

• Scientists looking to capture evidence of dark matter — the invisible substance thought to constitute much of the universe — may find a helpful tool in the recent work of researchers from Princeton University and New York University. The team, which includes postdoctoral researcher Christian Hansen and Princeton’s Department of Geosciences, unveiled in a recent report in the Journal Physical Review Letters a ready-made method for detecting the collision of stars with an elusive dark matter candidate. Such a discovery could serve as observable proof of dark matter and provide a much deeper understanding of the universe’s inner workings.

• Campus construction activity at Princeton during this academic year will focus on the Neuroscience and Psychology buildings, with important work also under way on the home for the Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment and Firestone Library, among other ongoing projects. In addition, construction of the new Cardwell Family Pavilion at the Lens Tennis Center has been completed, and the High-Performance Computing Research Center is opening in mid-October.

More news on the Web


• Princeton has enrolled the most diverse freshman class in the University’s history, with a record number of students from low-income backgrounds and minority backgrounds included in the 1,300 members of the Class of 2015. “At Princeton, access and affordability are core values, and we are extraordinarily fortunate to be able to hold firm to our commitment to the strongest possible undergraduate financial aid program in a period of significant fiscal stringency,” Dean of the College Valerie Smith said in her report on Class of 2015 admissions at the Sept. 19 faculty meeting.

• Two Princeton professors have received the 2010 Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers, the highest honor bestowed by the U.S. government on science and engineering professionals in the early stages of their research careers. Benjamin Sanai, an assistant professor in the Department of Molecular Biology and Amor Singer of the Department of Mathematics are among 94 researchers at American institutions selected by the Office of Science and Technology Policy within the Executive Office of the President based on the recommendations of 16 federal departments and agencies.

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Princeton endowment earns 21.9 percent return

Cass Clatt

Princeton’s endowment earned a 21.9 percent annual return on its investments and was valued at $17.1 billion in fiscal year ending June 30, 2011. The Princeton University Investment Co. (PRINCO), the University office that manages the University’s endowment, will certify the results at its directors meeting on Oct. 20.

The average annual return on the endowment over the past 10 years is 9.8 percent. This result is in the top percentile of 401 institutions reporting to the Trust Universe Comparison Service.

“The continuing strong performance of the endowment allows the University to sustain its signature commitments to world-class teaching and research and to an unsurpassed financial aid program that ensures that all admitted students can afford a Princeton education,” Princeton Provost Christopher Eisgruber said. “PRINCO’s excellent results and the budget cuts that the University implemented over the last two years have enabled us to return our endowment spend rate to the University’s target band more rapidly than we had anticipated. Nevertheless, the durable effects of the recession on the University and the persistent volatility in the financial markets make it essential that we continue to maintain budget discipline and that we begin to rebuild the financial reserves that enabled us to weather the last downturn.”

Eisgruber explained that the University currently has a spending policy that aims for spending between 4 percent and 5.75 percent of the market value of the endowment. In fiscal year 2011 the spend rate was 5.1 percent. The June 30 favorable returns has reduced the spend rate for the current fiscal year, 2012, to 4.4 percent.

Although market volatility has increased since its close, fiscal 2011 represented a period of continuing recovery for the endowment, which is up from a value of $14.4 billion in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010, when the investment return was 14.7 percent.

During the economic downturn, the University put in place a cost-savings plan that included a reduction of spending of $707 million over two years (the fiscal years ending June 30, 2010 and 2011).

By relying on budget cuts and support from alumni and friends, as well as its reserves, the University was able to continue programs in international study and research collaborations, and protect other key initiatives, including its generous, no-loan financial aid program, Eisgruber said. The University has budgeted $110.3 million this year to provide financial aid to 60 percent of undergraduates in the form of grants that do not have to be repaid.

Open enrollment lets employees evaluate benefits coverage

The annual benefits open enrollment period for the University’s health and welfare plans will run from Monday, Oct. 17, through Friday, Nov. 18.

Open enrollment offers faculty and staff an opportunity to review their current benefits and consider changes to their coverage that will become effective Jan. 1, 2012.

The open enrollment period, which in previous years ran through late October, now has been extended into mid-November to allow faculty and staff to coordinate enrollment more effectively with the open enrollment period, which in previous years ran through late October, now has been extended into mid-November to allow faculty and staff to coordinate enrollment more effectively with the open enrollment period.

Open enrollment packets with information on plan changes, along with the new rates, were mailed to benefits-eligible faculty and staff at their homes on or about Oct. 15. On Oct. 17, details also will be available on the open enrollment website at www.princeton.edu/hr/oe.

Employee retirements

Effective June 1: in Dining Services, Butler/Willson front of house manager Howard Cross, after 44 years.

Effective July 1: in information technology, senior IT project consultant Hetty Balz, after 15 years; in Housing and Real Estate Services, assistant director of faculty/staff housing Eugenia Evans, after 39 years; in physics, freshman lab technician James Ewart, after 33 years; in Carpenter shop, carpenter Julius Fowler, after 41 years; in the library, librarian Robert Milevski, after 19 years; in Dining Services, food service worker Marcia Oliver-Lopez, after 30 years; in the Council of Ivy Group Presidents, special adviser Jeffrey Ortean, after 26 years; in the Office of the General Counsel, senior university counsel Lorena Sciarra, after 20 years.

Effective Aug. 1: in the Lewis Center for the Arts, administrative assistant Janine Brande, after 10 years; in the library, librarian Rhoda Kesselman, after 23 years; in Dining Services, cook Sandra Spruill, after 38 years.

Effective Sept. 1: in the Office of the Provost, office support staff member Antoinette Buttern, after 22 years; in the Princeton Institute for the Science and Technology of Materials, grants manager Virginia Czarnocki, after 11 years; in the plasma physics lab, pollution prevention coordinator Thomas McGauchen, after 30 years; in Building Services, janitor Theodore Nobles, after 11 years; in the Council on Science and Technology, academic manager Carol Prevost, after 20 years; in maintenance, HVAC mechanic Russell Snyder, after 27 years.

Effective Oct. 1: in the plasma physics lab, principal research physicists Morrell Chance and Gregory Rewoldt, after 38 and 36 years, respectively.

Effective Dec. 1: in information technology, electronic specialist Lee Hebert, after 13 years.

Former Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens (right) discussed his stance on several hot-button issues, the personal rapport justices have with one another and what drew him to the legal profession in a well-attended public discussion at Princeton with Provost Christopher Eisgruber on Oct. 10. At age 91, Stevens spoke fluent about the specifics of dozens of Supreme Court opinions, both recent and decades old, with Eisgruber, who served as a law clerk for Stevens from August 1989 to July 1990. Stevens retired from the Supreme Court in 2010 after serving as a justice for 34 terms, having written 1,400 opinions, roughly half of them dissent. To read more about the talk, visit www.princeton.edu/main/news.
Tromp to give first talk in President’s Lecture Series

Princeton geoscientist Jeroen Tromp will deliver the first talk in this year’s President’s Lecture Series at 4:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 27, in the Friend Center, Room 101.

Tromp’s lecture, titled “Earthquakes, Impacts and Seismic Imaging,” will discuss his work in using information contained in seismic waves from earthquakes to develop better maps of the Earth’s interior. Tromp, who is Princeton’s Blair Professor of Geology, leads a research team that has developed the capability to produce realistic movies of earthquakes based on complex computer simulations that can be made available worldwide within hours of a disastrous upheaval.

His lecture will focus on the examples of significant earthquakes that affected Japan in March and the eastern United States in August.

Tromp’s talk is the first of three scheduled for this year’s President’s Lecture Series. Sean Wilentz, Princeton’s George Henry Davis 1886 Professor of American History, and Susan Stewart, Princeton’s Avalon Foundation University Professor in the Humanities, will deliver the remaining lectures in the series. For more information, visit www.princeton.edu/president/presidents_lecture_series.

Movies of earthquakes created by Princeton geoscientist Jeroen Tromp’s research team show waves of ground motion spreading out from an epicenter. The videos are available for viewing on the team’s website at global.shakemovie.princeton.edu.

For additional events sponsored by specific departments, programs and offices:
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Nobel

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dead formally with these uncertainties using the tools of statistics, and, out of that, to develop ideas and insights and models that can improve real economic decisions-making," he said.

“There are many, many people who have contributed to the growth of these areas of economics, many of them working now both in academic departments and in central banks and governments around the world, and I hope they all feel that this award is in part to them.”

Said Sargent, “It’s wonderful to have this field recognized, and for me, it’s particularly heartwarming to share it with Chris.” He also teased his colleague on a variety of topics — such as their differing pronunciations of “econometrics” and Sargent’s critical comments in giving input on papers and in seminars — concluding that Sims’ critiques had improved his work.

“IT’s not a pleasant experience when you’re going through it, but today it feels really pleasant,” Sargent said.

Sims and Sargent were honored with the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel for their work in answering “questions regarding the causal relationship between economic policy and different macroeconomic variables such as GDP (gross domestic product), inflation, employment and investments,” the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences noted in announcing the award.

“Economic-policy decisions are influenced by expectations about developments in the private sector,” the Nobel announcement said. “The laureates’ methods can be applied to identify these causal relationships and explain the role of expectations. This makes it possible to ascertain the effects of unexpected policy measures as well as systematic policy shifts.”

Sims joins two other tenured Princeton faculty members who have received a Nobel Prize in economics in the last decade, following Paul Krugman in 2008 and Daniel Kahneman in 2002. In total, 15 members of the current Princeton faculty (including emeritus and visiting professors) are recipients of the Nobel Prize.

Using historical data about economic events, Sargent and Sims have independently worked to develop and critique models that seek to analyze the causes and effects of monetary policy. The laureates’ work has been largely based on the U.S. economy and has provided consistent results when applied to other economies.

“I am delighted that the exceptional scholarly work of Professor Sims and Professor Sargent has been recognized with a Nobel Prize,” said Princeton President Shirley M. Tilghman. “Characteristically, on the day of the announcement they were both in the classroom teaching. Professor Sims is the third permanent member of our faculty in the past decade to win the Nobel Prize in economics, and Professor Sargent is the second visiting member to be so recognized. These recognitions pay tribute not only to these individuals, but to the leading role that Princeton plays in scholarship and teaching throughout the field of economics.”

Sims and Sargent each taught individual classes in the morning just hours after learning of their awards, and they followed the afternoon news conference and a celebratory reception by heading to Fisher Hall to co-teach a graduate course on advanced macroeconomic theory.

Mark Watson, a Princeton professor of economics and public affairs and acting chair of the economics department, said of Sims and Sargent, “They’ve changed macroeconomics in the biggest way possible, and allowed us to credibly answer questions that we just couldn’t have answered before.”

Citing their work in evaluating cause and effect in macroeconomics, Watson said, “It’s always difficult to sort out cause and effect when the effect feeds back on causes. Sims developed methods that allow us to look at data and tease out cause and effect, as though you were doing a controlled experiment.”

At the news conference, which drew hundreds of colleagues, staff and students, Sims and Sargent fielded questions from local, national and international media on a range of topics, including fiscal and monetary policies that should be adopted to boost the U.S., European and Chinese economies; how their work has influenced Latin American economies; the nature of their academic arguments; how the laureates learned that they had won the Nobel and what they planned to do with the prize money; the Occupy Wall Street protests; their plans for what they had won the Nobel Prize for; and how their work has provided consistent results when applied to other economies.

Economics is vital to understanding the nature of the modern global economy and to policy making. To put it another way, one of the best ways for our students to understand the world is by studying the economics of the world.”

Krugman, who received the 2008 Nobel Prize in economics for his work on international trade, came to the reception to congratulate them on a day that, he said, is much like “an out-of-body experience.”

Regarding the importance of the Nobel award for the University, Krugman said, “Princeton’s is actually the best economics department in the world, but this is a bit of external validation of that.”

“Chris and Tom, your accomplishments exemplify in the best possible way what Princeton University and New York University seek to do through their research missions. I know that I speak for my colleagues here on the platform in saying that we feel very fortunate to have you here and that we are overjoyed to celebrate this moment with you.”

New York University President John Sexton traveled to Princeton for the news conference and praised both economists as well.

“This is a great day for the world and it’s a great day for our two universities. ... Great universities work together, great minds work together for the advancement of humankind,” Sexton said. “Congratulations to both of our laureates, and onward and upward together.”

Sims and Sargent followed the news conference by meeting with colleagues and students at a reception, where Watson offered a champagne toast.

“I’m just going to thank them on behalf of the profession for everything they’ve taught and done for us,” Watson said. “You want to copy these guys. They’re excited about their latest paper, whatever it happens to be. That just rubs off on all of us in the department — keeps the excitement high among all the faculty and all the students.”

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Simons influences others — without fanfare

When asked about the "fanfare" that greeted Simons at his first class he taught on the day of his Nobel announcement, "Money and Banking," Simons had a ready reply. "The precept has, I think, six students registered, five showed up. There wasn’t that much fanfare," Simons said. One of the students present was Daniel Lewis, a Princeton junior who is majoring in economics. Of the 30 students in the course, 18 are among the handful of students randomly assigned to a precept with Simons. "This is what it means to be at Princeton — to have a precept with a Nobel Prize winner," Lewis said. "It’s just amazing." Simons, who is president-elect of the American Economic Association, came to Princeton in 1999 after teaching at Yale University, the University of Minnesota and Harvard University. "Sims returned Harvard as an undergraduate and doctoral student, earning his Ph.D. in 1968 — in the same year as I, but we began our work on analyzing monetary policy not long after," he said. "Since the Great Depression, most economists have been aware that things can go very wrong with the macroeconomy, and also we didn’t completely understand why they go wrong or how to repair things when they go wrong," Simons said. "I’ve always thought this was an important problem to work on, and very difficult and fascinating."

The Royal Swedish Academy specifically cited Sims’ work on vector autoregression and the ideas developed to analyze how the economy is affected by temporary changes in economic policy, such as an interest rate increase. Regarding the impact of his research, Simons said, "The most extensive applications have been by central banks that are trying to work out the effects of monetary policy."

"Monetary policy tries to control inflation, and as a result interest rate trends tend to be high when inflation is high," he explained. "But we think that raising interest rates lowers inflation. The challenge then is how to do this work to provide a way to untangle the relationship between interest rates and inflation. My research and Simons clearly values an empirical approach to economics, and he was pleased to have students at central banks all over the world, and they are applying this work." Though Sargent and Simons have had their intellectual disagreements, “we each see the other as part of the same intellectual family,” Simons said. They served together on the faculty of the University of Minnesota for more than a decade.

Richard Rogerson, a professor of economics and public affairs at Princeton, was a graduate student at the University of Minnesota in the same period that Sims and Sargent taught there. “Sims and Sargent were in the prime of their careers, but you could knock on their doors and they would spend as much time with you as you wanted talking to you. They always had time to talk to students,” Rogerson said. “These faculty were in a seminar room, interacting with each other and arguing about ideas. I was lucky just to be able to witness that.”

Sims and Sargent will share the award of 10 million Swedish kronor (currently $1.5 million). The awards will be handed out Dec. 10, the anniversary of Alfred Nobel’s death.

Additional reporting by Jennifer Greenstein Altmann, Cass Chast, Eric Quiñones and Ruth Stevens

More Nobel coverage online

Video of the Nobel Prize reception: www.princeton.edu/main/news/multimedia/
Photos of Sims and Sargent: www.princeton.edu/pr/pictures/l-r/nobel/2011
Quotes from colleagues and students: www.princeton.edu/main/news/archive/s31/82/63619
List of Princeton’s Nobel Prize winners: www.princeton.edu/main/about/facts/nobel/

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Name

Four named to endowed chairs

Four faculty members have been named to endowed professorships. They are: name:

• Sergio Kanielman, the Thomas D. Jones Professor of Mathematical Physics, for the period of Sept. 1, 2011, through June 30, 2012.

• Zoltán Szabó, the Henry Burchard Fine Professor of Mathematics, for the period of Sept. 1, 2011, through Jan. 31, 2012.

• David Gabai, the Henry Burchard Fine Professor of Mathematics, for the period of Feb. 1, 2012, through June 30, 2012.

Manuel Linás, molecular biology and the Lewis-Sigler Institute for Integrative Genomics; Assistant professor (for a term of three and a half years) — Kathryn Gin, religion. All promotions were effective July 1, 2011, except for Gin’s, which was effective Feb. 1, 2011.

People

Continued from page 3

Sargent focuses on two-way expectations

Sargent walked into his “Macroeconomic Theory” class the morning of Oct. 10 to sustain his applause and hushed attention when he began speaking to the first-year graduate students in the course. "You’re paying much more attention to me today — and it’s the same stuff," Sargent said, tapping on the board. "The nervous excitement of his students."

Sargent is a visiting professor in Princeton’s Department of Economics this fall and was a visiting professor at Princeton last year as well. "In addition to doing path-breaking research, Sargent is an inspirational classroom teacher," Watson said. "Students leave his class so excited. He really turns graduate students on to macroeconomics. He’s been doing that his entire career."

Sargent is widely known for his work coordinating monetary and fiscal policy, stabilizing inflation and fighting unemployment. In conferring the award, the Royal Swedish Academy focused on his work in structural macroeconomics, a method that can be applied to study how households and firms adjust their expectations at the same time as economic developments and policies.

Sargent said he focuses on using statistical models to judge the success and failures of time with them,” Watson said.

He brings out the best research in our students, and he cares and spends lots of time with them," Watson said. He began his career at Carleton College as director of the news bureau from 1980 to 1983. During the next 15 years, she served as director of news services and director of academic communications at Western Michigan University. From 2000 to 2002, she was the director of public relations counsel- ing at George Dehne & Associates, a health and environmental communications firm.

A graduate of Central Michigan University with a B.A. in journalism, Stevens earned an MBA from Western Michigan University.

“I’ve grown to deeply care about the University’s fundraising goals,” she said. “I’m thrilled that when I was ready for a new professional challenge, I was able to find it right here at Prince- ton. I look forward to working with my colleagues in development to achieve the University’s fundraising goals.”

Stevens will succeed Justin Harmon, who now associate vice president for university communications and market- ing at the University of New Hampshire.

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Board approves four promotions

The Board of Trustees has approved the promotions of four faculty members and their departments, by the aca- demic rank to which they are being promoted:

Professor — M. Zahid Hasan, physics. Associate professor (with continuing tenure) — David Gabai, computer science; Maniel Linás, molecular biology and the Lewis-Sigler Institute for Integrative Genomics; Assistant professor (for a term of three and a half years) — Kathryn Gin, religion. All promotions were effective July 1, 2011, except for Gin’s, which was effective Feb. 1, 2011.
This multifaceted approach has brought Wailoo — a professor in the Department of History and the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs — to the forefront of the study of the history of science and medicine, health care decision-making, and teaching tackle issues at the nexus of health and society, with particular attention to the role of race.

“I’ve always been drawn to study science and technology as a way of understanding power, culture, conflict and the impact of new knowl-
edge on society,” Wailoo said. “As a historian, I’ve also been fascinated by the intended and unintended impli-
cations of scientific and technological and medical innovation.”

Angela Creager, a Princeton profes-
sor of history who, along with Wailoo, is an executive committee member of Princeton's Program in History of Science, said, “What I admire about Keith is that he is able to bring together analysis of technological developments in medicine with the history of a specific period, showing how the social and technical sides of medical change are closely related, often in unexpected ways. His work in the history of science and medicine on race and medical research absolutely leads the field.”

Wailoo joined the Princeton fac-
ulty in 2010 as the Townsend Martin Professor of History and Public Affairs after spending the previous year as a visiting fellow in the University’s Center for African American Studies. Previously he taught at Rutgers Uni-
versity, where he founded the Center for Race and Ethnicity, and at the Uni-
versity of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, where he taught in the history depart-
ment and the medical school.

In recognition of his work in bringing history to bear on health policy, Wailoo in 2007 was elected to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies — an indepen-
dent nonprofit that works to educate decision-makers and the public — and serves on the institute’s health sciences policy board.

Moving to Princeton has enabled Wailoo to forge new relationships with other scholars and students who share his multidisciplinary interests. This past spring, for example, he taught a graduate course in the Wilson School on “Controversies in Health Policy,” covering subjects such as direct-to-
consumer advertising, end-of-life care, the role of the courts in health care reform and the history of Medicare.

“The students in this diverse group made up of physicians, students with policy experience, others with law degrees and heading to clerkships, some with science backgrounds and others who are going off to study policy and science, after completing the public policy degree,” Wailoo said. “It’s an ideal setting for teaching and learning. We’ve linked up on a common interest in the complex and sometimes adversarial pathways by which health policies emerge, and I think there’s a lot of interest in how the past has both constrained and created opportunities for reform in the present.”

More broadly, Princeton “is a perfect place for me to be in that it makes good use of all the opportunities that have developed in terms of my teach-
ing and research,” he added. “It is an exceptionally stimulating intellectual setting drawing me into sustained interaction with leading figures in history and policy.”

From science student to journalist to professor

Wailoo began to amass his diverse scholarly interests as an undergradu-
ate at Yale University, where he was a chemical engineering major but also was fascinated with the philosophical and social history, and developed a deep love of writing.

After graduating from Yale in 1984, he worked as a freelance writer for American Scientist magazine, scientific research organizations and Yale Alumni Magazine. He then decided to pursue a Ph.D. in the history and sociology of science and medicine at the University of Pennsyl-
vania, which he earned in 1992.

“As a freelance I found myself liv-
ing hand-to-mouth. It struck me that having a Ph.D. would provide a stable basis for having a writing career, which has indeed turned out to be true,” he said with a laugh. “Little did I know that I would love being a professor and that this would be the kind of environment that teaching brings. But, truth be told, I still think of myself primarily as a writer.”

Wailoo’s output as a writer and editor has been prolific and he has received numerous awards for his books, most notably “Dying in the City of the Blues: Sickle Cell Anemia and the Politics of Race and Health” (2001). Set in the city of Memphis, the book examines the history of sickle cell anemia’s association with African Americans and the sociological fac-
tors that affected the diagnosis and treatment — or lack thereof — of the disease in black patients.

“Dying in the City of the Blues” is “probably his most famous con-
tribution to the literature — a truly spectacular book,” Creager said.

Wailoo’s other award-winning books include “The Troubled Dream of Genetic Medicine: Ethnicity and Disease in 20th-century America” (1997). He is currently com-
pleting a study of the politics of pain medication and has co-edited books on transplantation and immigration; the impact of Hurricane Katrina; and genetics, race and history.

“Keith never starts from a polemic position when investigating the social forces at work in the field of medicine,” said Carolyn Rouse, a Princeton professor of anthropology who is his co-author on “How the Color Line” (2011). Wailoo traces the history of cancer diagnosis, treatment and awareness over the past century, from a time when it was seen as a disease largely affecting well-to-do white women.

“In a world where the poor were more likely to die younger of infectious disease, the mantra then was that you were lucky to live long enough to get cancer,” Wailoo said. “So for people who were better off and had higher expectations of longevity, there were higher rates of cancer. And given the diagnostic tools that were available — 100 years ago, cancers of the breast and cervix — which were the main kinds of women’s cancer, there were far more likely to be diagnosed.”

At that time, cancer diagnoses also were more likely to be made by urban doctors, so whites were over-
represented among cancer patients compared to African Americans, who lived predominantly in the rural South, Wailoo noted.

“At the birth of cancer awareness, the malady was not seen as an equal opportunity disease, and the story I tell is of how that perception took shape and changed over the course of 100 years and is still changing,” said Wailoo, who cites the 1979 death of popular soul singer Minnie Ripper-
ton from breast cancer as a seminal moment in raising cancer awareness among African Americans.

The book is an example of what Rouse calls Wailoo’s greatest strengths: “his brilliant questions, values, and evolving ideas about the users themselves.”

Quinn, a Wilson School major, said students learned that, in terms of understanding the genetics of drug poli-
cies, “it is very easy for certain perceptions to form that are also interesting to examine the government’s role in shaping perceptions.”

“Keith is a master lecturer, using images, newspa-
paper/magazine articles, video clips and popular cultural references to convey sometimes complex information about drugs and policy,” she said.

Wailoo leads a precept discussion for his class “Race, Drugs and Drug Policy in America,” which examines drug policies and their relationships to debates over immigration, identity, cultural and biological differences, and criminality.

Addressing controversies in the classroom

As with his research, Wailoo brings a curiosity about wide-ranging medi-
cal, scientific, social and policy issues into the classroom. As a visiting pro-

fessor at Princeton he taught a course on “Race, Drugs and Drug Policy in America” in spring 2009, drawing positive reviews from among the 60 students who enrolled. In spring 2011, the course attracted 172 students.

The course explores how controver-
sy substances become the subject of debates over immigration, identity, cultural and biological differences, criminality and other issues. Ranging from the Colonial era to the present, Wailoo and his students discuss con-
troversies that swirled around opium and Chinese immigration, the impact of Prohibition on today’s drug policies, differences in sentencing patterns for crack and powder cocaine convictions, and the interaction of drugs, youth rebellion and social change.

“I’m fascinated with the ongoing set of debates about what defines the line between permissible and imperma-
nible drugs — from medical marijuana to Ritalin — and how that line shifts over time, and what it tells us about the role of government in determin-
ing health care choices and options,” Wailoo said. “Controversies about drugs are never only about the drugs — they’re also about social norms and racist thinking.”

Tomiko Ballantyne, a graduate stu-
dent in history and preceptor for the course, added, “As a scholar, Professor Wailoo’s entire process is inspiring for me. His work ethic is unend-

able but, aside from that, he is able to use the richest historical details one can possibly find to build meaning-
ful, teachable narratives. In that way, Professor Wailoo is everything a great historian should be. He mentors his students, he provides great leadership for his preceptors and his lectures are full, exciting one-hour journeys.”

This fall, Wailoo is teaching a Wilson School junior policy task force titled “Hazard or Not? Chil-
dren and Drug Policy,” which will analyze trends and policy dilemmas in not only drug use but also other issues such as attention deficit hyperactivity- disorder disorder, learning disabilities and brain injuries. The task force will examine policy recommendations for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the New Jersey Department of Youth and Fam-
ily Services. “I want students to understand the multiple ways in which the thing we call public policy takes shape,” Wailoo said. For policy students, in particular, the course’s goal is to help them understand not just the history of those discus-
sions but the stakes involved, their implications for patients and people who suffer from illnesses, and also to look ahead to anticipate the con-
sequences of the kinds of policy developments which they presumably will be part of making.”

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