

Daniel Crown of the Department of Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics, The Ohio State University, to Receive the Eighteenth Annual Benjamin H. Stevens Graduate Fellowship in Regional Science

Daniel Crown, a Ph.D. candidate in agricultural, environmental, and development economics at The Ohio State University has been selected as the winner of the Eighteenth Annual Benjamin H. Stevens Graduate Fellowship in Regional Science. The Fellowship will provide a 2018–19 Academic Year stipend of \$30,000 to support Mr. Crown in his dissertation research entitled, “Foreign-Born Graduates and Innovation at Domestic Institutions: Evidence from an Australian Skilled Graduate Visa Program.”

The research will investigate the effect of a unique Australian skilled visa program on the innovative output of domestic research institutions. The visa program grants foreign-born graduates temporary residency, post-graduation, and is one potential pathway to permanent residency. The results will be of interest to policymakers around the world as they consider implementing or refining skilled immigration policies.

Mr. Crown’s doctoral research is supervised by Professor Mark Partridge, Swank Chair in Rural-Urban Policy at Ohio State and formerly supervised by Professor Alessandra Faggian, Director of Social Sciences and Vice Provost for Research, at the Gran Sasso Science Institute.

Chair of the Selection Committee, Mario Polèse, Emeritus Professor at the Institut National de la Recherche Scientifique-Urbanisation, Université du Québec, details why Daniel Crown’s proposal stood out among an extremely strong field of 36 candidates for the 2018 competition:

“Daniel’s proposal topic goes to the heart of one the main conceptual and empirical challenges in regional science: measuring knowledge spill-overs between skilled workers. Does the presence of skilled workers, foreign-born graduates in this instance, boost the productivity of other workers and, by the same token, their propensity to innovate? To answer the question, Daniel combines a unique dataset, drawn from Australian administrative files, for the full population of approved skilled visa applicants with institution-level data on innovation and start-ups. The use of micro-data allows Daniel to follow the mechanics by which the presence, after graduation, of foreign-born graduates in Australian universities influences the innovative output of domestic researchers.

The Selection Committee was equally impressed by the methodological rigor demonstrated by the proposal. Daniel’s empirical strategy overcomes the potential bias of high-skilled foreign-born students sorting into high-quality research institutions by the introduction of instrumental variables and the use of fixed effects regression models. His preliminary findings, reported in the proposal, show a positive impact on the productivity of domestic researchers.

Finally, the policy-relevance of Daniels’s research requires little comment in a period in which immigration and its presumed impacts are high on the political agenda, not only in North America but around the world.”

In addition to selecting the Fellowship recipient, the Selection Committee identified three applicants as meriting special recognition as Finalists in the 18th Annual Competition: Wanyang Hu, Department of Urban Planning, UCLA, supervised by Rui Wang; Luke Petach, Department of Economics, Colorado State University, supervised by Stephan Weiler; and Seva Rodnyansky, Urban Planning and Development Ph.D. Program, University of Southern California, supervised by Marlon Boarnet.

The Fellowship is awarded in memory of Dr. Benjamin H. Stevens, an intellectual leader whose selfless devotion to graduate students as teacher, advisor, mentor, and friend continues to have a profound impact on the field of regional science. Fundraising efforts to increase the Fellowship's endowment are ongoing. Donations should be sent to: The Stevens Fellowship Fund, First Financial Bank, Attn. Trust Department, 1205 S. Neil Street, Champaign, IL 61820 USA. Checks should be drawn to The Stevens Fellowship Fund. Donations may also be made by credit card through the NARSC website at www.narsc.org/newsite/donations2.php.

This most recent Stevens Fellowship competition was judged by a Selection Committee composed of: Daoqin Tong, Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning, Arizona State University; Elena Irwin, Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics, The Ohio State University; Mario Polèse, Urban and Regional Economics, Université du Québec, Chair; Amanda Weinstein, Economics, The University of Akron; and Elizabeth Mack, Geography, Michigan State University. The Stevens Fellowship Committee administers the Stevens Fellowship Fund on behalf of the North American Regional Science Council; its members are: Tony Smith, Chair; David Plane, Secretary; Michael Lahr, Treasurer; Janet Kohlhase; and Neil Reid, Executive Director of NARSC.

The Committee thanks the 36 students who entered the competition in 2018, as well as their dissertation supervisors. Faculty at all North American Ph.D. programs related to the interdisciplinary field of Regional Science are urged to encourage their best students to apply for the Nineteenth Annual Stevens Graduate Regional Science Fellowship. The winning student's dissertation research in the field of Regional Science will be supported during the 2019–2020 year with a one-year stipend of \$30,000. The application deadline is February 15, 2019. Full submission guidelines will be posted at www.narsc.org/newsite/awards-prizes/stevens-graduate-fellowship/.

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