

IFEP Team

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IFEP NEWSLETTER



Orientati

IFEP Orientation Picnic



The IFEP Orientation Picnic was an important event that allowed our first-year community of IFEP candidates to meet, learn about each other's backgrounds, and begin mapping out our interests over a glass of wine in Central Park. I am still friends with those I met at the picnic and I appreciated the opportunity to meet with our dear program assistants, Radhika and Kristina, who have been a wonderful resource as part of the IFEP journey. I look forward to the next picnic and meeting all the incoming first years to learn about their experiences and share insights about our concentration.



—Denis Bravenec

Internship Panel

—Kanak Lata Tripathi

One of the highlights of the year was the IFEP internship panel that provided us with insights on how to navigate through professional opportunities. It entailed valuable advice by Maria Gabriela about her journey at the World Bank, Osman Syed's experience at the Albright Stonebridge Group and Desmond Lee's internship at Goldman Sachs. Moreover, the event allowed students to interact with the panelists to have their specific queries cleared. Thank you to the IFEP managing team for putting together the panel and helping students in gaining clarity about their career trajectories.

Emerging Financial Markets

with Professor Charles Calomiris

Emerging Financial Markets is easily one of the most intellectually stimulating courses I have taken at SIPA. I initially enrolled solely to be in a class with Professor Charles Calomiris, who is an eminent academic who has worked extensively with multiple central banks and multilateral organizations. However, only a few lectures in, my high expectations had already been exceeded. The course aims to prepare students for investing careers focused on emerging markets. We used history and academic research to understand the financial systems in these countries. The course emphasizes economic development success stories, lessons learned from historical financial crises, and analysis of a country's political and institutional characteristics.

The assignments were refreshingly practical. We debated whether Brazil was backsliding on its development trajectory. We analyzed the investment implications of China's dual currency system. We critiqued the investment strategy of Ghana's sovereign wealth fund. We even formulated an investment thesis responding to a capital flight crisis that simultaneously hit multiple countries. And we did a whole lot more. Another great feature is that this class is offered jointly with Columbia Business School. It is a unique opportunity for MBAs and SIPA students to come together. Networking opportunities aside, I also met some of my closest friends in this classroom.

—Pranav Shivanna

Markets Discussion on Green Financing

One of the first in-person events we were able to have since the pandemic, this markets discussion was particularly exciting. Students all came very eager to learn more about the future of green financing and the role of financial markets in the energy revolution. In a way, it felt as if we ended the event with more questions than answers, which was a result of deeply insightful discussion that opened the door for future debate. Markets discussions in general quickly became one of the favorite IFEP events as they are a unique opportunity for students to informally discuss issues we are passionate about with one another.

— Kristina Nedelkova



IFEP Gala

The IFEP concentration hosted the 17th Annual IFEP Gala at the Lotos Club sponsored by Christofferson, Robb & Company on March 31st. The Lotos Club's formal dress code inspired SIPA's next cohort of finance leaders to dress, as goes the Club's motto "where timeless elegance and contemporary style meet". The evening began in the opulent library where guests feasted on a veritable smorgasbord of hors d'oeuvres, cheese alongside flowing prosecco and live jazz. Students were joined by members of the IFEP faculty and recent graduates making use of their newly minted Columbia degree.



Trading Morningside for the Upper East Side, the gala offered a taste of the good life many IFEP students were in relentless pursuit of. First and second years had a chance to mingle, take pictures among the ornate decor, and network with graduates. Popular faculty members such as Professor Robb and Professor Bubula entertained crowds of students gathered around them with tales of the Gala from years prior and assuaged fears of being on the wrong side of the curve for the midterms and finals ahead. Former SIPA Dean Merit Janow made a special appearance flitting through the crowds and interacting with fellow guests.

By the end of the night, the IFEP Gala had become the gold standard for all future SIPA events and guests crowded into Ubers back home giddy with the optimism that they had chosen the right concentration and excited with the new friends and contacts they had made me a better understanding of how to identify my own personal strengths, develop industry expertise, and build strong networks with alumni.

—Aryadita Balakrishnan

IFEP Policy Discussions

with Professor Jacob Lew

Attending Professor Jacob Lew's policy discussion on "international economic challenges emerging from Covid-19" has been one of my highlights at SIPA. Coming from an emerging country, I am always interested in learning about what issues are posed by continued Covid-19 outbreaks, a record high debt levels, and rising income inequality. It was interesting to hear from Professor Lew how the pandemic has affected the economy globally. The significant challenges facing the post-pandemic economy revolve around rising inequality, demographic shifts, digitization, weakening of democracy, and climate change. Professor Lew's policy discussion also shed valuable insight on how the global financial system needs to become more resilient and the importance of rebuilding domestic and international institutions.

—Radhika Bhambi

with Professor Jorge Mariscal

Professor Mariscal's event on "global economic trends and future of emerging markets" was very valuable. Professor Mariscal talked about the key trends in emerging markets in automation and AI, climate change, cryptocurrency, and investment opportunities. It was interesting to learn about these trends and understand how developed nations also play a role in devising these strategies.

—Sanyukta Sharma

with Professor Keiko Honda

The event with Professor Honda was a great opportunity for students to learn more about ESG investing and discuss developments in the field. As I am particularly interested in the subject and looking forward to pursuing a career related to ESG, it was great to hear Professor Honda's opinions and perspectives on the matter. I thought the event was a dynamic way for IFEP students to interact with Professor Honda in a more intimate setting and I truly enjoyed the discussion.

—Tristan Chabas

Markets Discussion on Labor Shortage & its Impact on Economy

At the Market Discussion: Labor Shortage and its Impact on the Economy, IFEP students had the opportunity to meet and discuss the ongoing labor supply and demand issues and their economic implications, especially in the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic which has aggravated it. The discussion was stimulating as it brought about myriad perspectives about the pros and the cons of the phenomenon by exploring whether the crunch can serve as an advantage to the workforce to demand better opportunities and compensation, the role of the private sector, and the government to address the gaps. It also inspired questions about the future of employment for students as prospective employees entering the workforce by discussing the role of the private and the public sector.

—Devangi Rathod

IFEP Happy Hours at Amity Hall



The IFEP socials at Amity were gifts as the transition from virtual to in-person university life took place. They provided great opportunities to bond with course mates whom I had previously met only on Zoom as well as the new cohort, who are an eager bunch, brimming with questions. Sharing experiences about SIPA and beyond over wine and great food broke the ice in ways that classroom interactions cannot. I am thrilled that IFEP hosted a few socials over the semester as they were much-needed breaks amidst assignment deadlines and exams. .

—Aditi Rukhaiyar

Alumni Panel

Early in the Spring semester, I attended the IFEP alumni panel. The zoom panel included alumni from both the private and public sector, representing organizations such as the World Bank, IFC, Morgan Stanley and McKinsey. I found the panel to be very helpful in gaining insight into life after SIPA, and the day-to-day into each of the panelist's roles. The alumni also had great tips on how to utilize our time at SIPA (e.g., helpful classes to take, and how to utilize the career advancement center for interview prep and resume guidance). The alumni were very engaging and it was helpful for IFEP students to see the range of possible career fields.

—Kiran Kaul

Markets Discussion on Cryptocurrency

This is Markets Discussion allowed students of various backgrounds to discuss benefits, risks, and personal outlooks on the role of cryptocurrency in the future global economy. Discussion centered around current events and controversies in crypto markets and the incentives for central banks to adopt digital currencies. Students from both the US and international backgrounds debated the future of regulation for cryptocurrency. Overall, the discussion was interesting and left everyone with a lot of food for thought.

—Divya Walia

IFEP Student Abhay Sharma Wins Harvey Picker Prize for Public Service

—Abhay Sharma interviewed by Jagganadh Mellacheruvu

Congratulations on winning the Harvey Picker Prize for Public Service! Please tell us about your public service journey.

Thank You! It started after my undergrad in 2008 when I was deciding between writing the civil services exam and pursuing an MBA. After a candid philosophical discussion with my mother, I decided to go for the former. I joined the civil services of India in 2012 after a grueling examination in which half a million students competed for 1000 or so positions. I joined the prestigious Indian Railway Traffic Service - the operations, revenue, and public interface arm of Indian Railways. There I got the opportunity to manage 24/7 operations serving millions of passengers and tons of freight and handled many emergency situations involving human lives. Also, during my different postings, I aimed to make the services more accessible to the differently abled, managed crisis communication during the early stages of COVID-19, and got to work for the welfare of six hundred team members.

How and why did you decide to take a break from service and pursue higher education?

I always look forward to learning new things and implementing them in my public service. Eventually, I felt the need for a more structured way to do so and a degree in public affairs made sense to me. I took a sabbatical from work to pursue MPA at SIPA. Therefore, I see this study leave as a continuation of my journey in public service.

Is there any reason that motivated your decision to opt for IFEP, and how did it impact your SIPA experience?

Finance and Economics were new fields for me before coming here, but I was fascinated by their mathematical rigor. At SIPA, I focused on the most practical (and challenging!) courses offered. Economics and finance (along with data analysis) revealed a newer dimension of thinking for me. They also hold immense practical value in today's era of digital and financially prudent governance. I was lucky to study under star faculty like Prof. Gerratana, Prof. Bubula, Prof. Panagariya, Prof. Palliser, and Prof. Mclean. I liked IFEP and DAQA combination so much that I ended up taking 67 credits against the mandatory 54.

What are the key lessons from SIPA that you will take back to public service?

They are too many to enumerate. Some course-driven learnings are: evidence-based policymaking and advocacy, policy evaluation, knowledge of finance and economics, machine learning and data analysis, negotiation, and leadership skills. Besides, I learned immensely in my interactions with faculty and friends (including civil servants from different countries). Going back, I will continue to serve the people of India in my professional and personal capacity. I also hope to guide younger civil servants towards avenues of skill augmentation in India and abroad, who, armed with their learnings, can form a critical mass for improved 21st-century governance in India.

Congratulations to our May Graduates!



Sincerely,
The IFEP Team