

Real Colegio Complutense Cambridge, MA (USA)



April, 2008
Bulletin #31

Welcome to the monthly electronic bulletin of the Real Colegio Complutense at Harvard University. Its purpose is to provide, past and future researchers and interested friends, a sense of what is going on at the RCC, and to maintain the contact with our Alumni.

We invite your comments and suggestions at rcc-info@camail.harvard.edu (Elizabeth Kline)

Ángel Saenz-Badillos, Director



Major Activities in April

RCC was honored to host the Infanta Cristina Federica de Borbón y Grecia, daughter of King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia. After a meeting in RCC's conference room, the Infanta and her husband conversed with RCC researchers and invited guests. They were friendly, gracious, and generous with their time. They posed for photos.





Information about Harvard University

From the *Harvard Gazette*:

“A record applicant pool of 27,462 has led to an admission rate of 7.1 percent, the lowest in the history of Harvard College. Traditional admission letters (and e-mails) were sent on March 31 to 1,948 students. Last year 2,058 applicants were admitted from a pool of 22,955.

Harvard’s financial aid program next year will be the most generous in its history with \$125 million in scholarships for undergraduates, a 21.4 percent increase from last year and an 87 percent increase over the past six years. Two-

thirds of Harvard undergraduates receive some form of financial aid, including scholarships, loans, and jobs, with over 50 percent receiving a need-based scholarship. The average total student aid package will likely be close to \$40,000, over 78 percent of the total cost of attendance. More than 25 percent of the admitted group are eligible for the previous Harvard Financial Aid Initiative (HFAI), which asks for no parent contribution from those with annual incomes under \$60,000 and reduced contributions from those with incomes of \$60,000 to \$80,000.”

Upcoming Events

Lectures (All take place at RCC 26 Trowbridge Street Cambridge, at 7:30 PM and are in English. They are free and open to the public):

Lectures:

May 1: **Oriana Ramírez Rubio**, Harvard School of Public Health. *Spanish Health Care System: Reform Overview, Challenges and Possible Solutions.*

May 8: **Oscar Martínez-Tapia**, UCM, *The Center-Periphery Dimension in Spanish Political Parties (1977-2008)*

May 14: **Laura Giordano**, Harvard U, History Department. *Como águilas nos avemos de renovar: Hernando de Talavera y su idea de Reforma Eclesiástica en la España de los Reyes Católicos (1475-1504)*

May 15: **Ángela García Calvo**, KSG, *Lifetime employment and dual labor market in Japan: will it survive in the 21st century?*

May 22: **Elvira Massó**, Harvard School of Public Health. *Proton pump inhibitors educe the long-term risk of recurrent upper GI bleeding*

May 29 **Rafael Rodríguez Prieto**, U. Pablo de Olavide, Seville, *New Legal Decisionism_ The Authoritarian Roots of the Neocons.*

Films:

May 2: *Remando al viento*. Directed by Gonzalo Suárez (1988)

May 9: *Nos miran*. Norberto López Amado (2002).

May 16: *Los santos inocentes*. Mario Camús (1984).

May 23: *El calentito*. Chus Gutiérrez (2005).

May 30: *Mi vida sin mí*. Isabel Coixet (2003)

LAST FILM UNTIL SEPTEMBER

Current Researchers

Continuing Researchers (with Offices at RCC)

Prisca Castanyer-Bonnin, International Economy & Development, UCM

Xulia González, Industrial Economics, U. of Vigo

Jesús López Rodríguez, Economic Geography, U. of A. Coruña

Rebeca Barba Egido, Human Ecology & Pre-History, UCM

Rafael Rodríguez Prieto, Legal Theory & Political Philosophy, U. Pablo de Olavide de Seville

Eugenio Fedriani Martel, Mathematics, U. Pablo de Olavide

Celia Martínez, Law, U. of Valladolid

Javier Martínez Rosado, Commercial Law, UCM

Rafael Myro, Applied Economics, UCM

Laura Mayoral, Econometrics, Instituto de Analisis Economico (CSIC)

Susana Galera, Administrative Law, Rey Juan Carlos

Juan Francisco Fuentes, Contemporary History, UCM

Oscar Martínez Tapia, Political Science, UCM

Judit Targarona Borrás, Hebrew and Medieval Literature Studies, UCM.

New Researchers

Miguel Sánchez Morón, Administrative Law, U. of Alcalá

Madayo Kahle, Classics (Religious Studies), UCM

Interview with Eugenio Fedriani



Eugenio with Mark I (one of the first computers)
Taken at the Harvard University Science Center

“Most people both hate and love mathematics!” Eugenio Fedriani, *profesor titular* in the Department of Economics, Quantitative Methods, and Economic History at Pablo de Olavide University, faces two major challenges: How to motivate students to understand and learn his subject when their primary interests are elsewhere? How to deal with people’s discomfort (and often fears) about his chosen field? These are common problems for many teachers, regardless of their profession.

Eugenio has taught mathematics to students who focus on environmental science, business management, physics, architecture, and biotechnology. He believes that many people are exposed to mathematics in the wrong way at an early age. So, his approach is to find out what his students want to do with their studies and then tailors his Mathematics teaching to respond to their needs. “I help them realize how mathematics can make them more competitive business people, for example.”

Teaching came naturally to Eugenio. Both of his parents were teachers: his father was a professor in mathematics and his mother still teaches in a secondary school. Eugenio began his teaching career when he was only 15 years old. His mathematics teacher at that time was not trained in the subject. On the first day of school, she made a mistake and Eugenio corrected her. The next day, the teacher asked him to explain some of the lesson. Each day, his teaching time expanded. Eventually, the teacher was replaced but the experience was a preview of Eugenio’s future career.

At 17 years old, Eugenio had to decide what to study in college. He considered engineering and a career in telecommunications, but ultimately went with his love of mathematics. “It was a difficult choice because you don’t earn as much money in mathematics and the curriculum at the time was the hardest one. But, I chose what I liked most.”

While getting his PhD at the University of Seville, he had another unusual teaching opportunity. He was asked to teach mathematics to physics students, to replace a woman who went out on maternity leave. Although he did not know the curriculum, he

bravely agreed. The next course that he taught was mathematics for architecture students. Again, he received this assignment when the regular teacher had to be replaced. In this instance, the teacher broke his arm in a bicycle accident. On the day that the teacher returned to his classroom, Eugenio was asked to teach his own course at the University of Seville.

After teaching for several years, this adventurous mathematics teacher took another bold step in his career: He applied to teach at a new university, Pablo de Olavide which had opened a year before as an expansion of the University of Seville. When he began, there were only two mathematics teachers. He had to design his own curriculum. "It was very creative work. I had to find ways to motivate students who study environmental sciences and business." He teaches mainly Mathematics, but also Statistics, Financial Mathematics, etc.

"I could have returned to the University of Seville, but decided that I preferred being in a place where I have become one of the senior members and have lots of responsibilities. I really like this new university. Everyone is young and enthusiastic. We are creating new degrees and new curricula. I love teaching. I also enjoy being in charge of entry exams, coordinating with other academic persons throughout Andalucía."

During the interview, Eugenio was asked to explain the key difference between mathematicians and economists. "Basically, economists use statistics to make predictions; whereas, applied mathematicians use facts to analyze and model situations. Mathematics is an exact science where everything needs to be proven. Economists often use data to justify their theories." In trying to describe the distinction more clearly, Eugenio gave the following example. "In measuring poverty, economists use statistics to indicate things like income levels and gross domestic products. As a mathematician, I am trying to use mathematical tools to analyze the complexity of variables resulting in poverty and understand its underlying causes."

When pressed to give an even more specific example, Eugenio described a real world problem that he worked on while in Australia for three months several years ago. Locust infestations caused major damage to crops and humans. The question was how to predict when, where, and in what quantity they would appear next. As a mathematician, he was able to collect, analyze, and model many variables including past weather conditions (droughts versus rains affect the timing of the hatching of locust eggs), locust outbreaks, bird surveys, and pesticide applications. From the model based on facts, people were able to have a better sense of what to expect and then to figure out how best to respond.

While at RCC/Harvard University, Eugenio is learning from the world's expert economists about the use of statistics especially in measuring poverty so that he can broaden his teaching and his work with graduate students. "I needed to study statistics to deal with economic problems and Harvard has 15 or so professors in the Economics Department who are leaders in their specialties. For example, I am learning from a professor who is skilled in dealing with time series analysis. This kind of information will help me understand how to deal with poverty where variables change over time. I attend many lectures on mathematics at the Science Center – sometimes 3 or 4 per week."

"When I return to Spain, I will be able to provide better guidance to my graduate student who is measuring the evolution of poverty. I will also incorporate in my teaching a vast amount of knowledge about what is happening all around the world and try to use

some of the teaching techniques that I found at Harvard. Students are active participants in classes, asking many questions. Also, they do homework before class and are then able to ask questions about the assignment during the class. In Spain, students do the homework after class – which has its benefits because they can listen to the lecture and then apply it afterwards. Perhaps, I will experiment with both techniques.”

As he prepared to leave RCC/Cambridge, Eugenio offered the following comments: “I like this place a lot. I’m thankful for the resources and support that I’ve received at RCC and at Harvard University. It is a really good idea to have a place such as RCC that connects with Spain. Here, you have some of the best universities in the world. You can come and see, in-person, how people develop their research projects; how they work together across different universities and fields of interest; and how they teach. Spaniards are lucky to have this special partnership with Harvard and to have a comfortable place like RCC to work in and meet with other Spanish researchers.”

Interview with Alumni, Angel Alañón Pardo



“I am Profesor Contratado Doctor at International Economics and Development Department at Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

I arrived to RCC as member of the Advanced Research Group on International Economics (July-August, 2005) conducted by Rafael Myro, and came back to Spain at the end of September. I had heard about RCC two years ago. In fact, before joining the group I was preparing an application to be a visiting researcher at Harvard.

I have wonderful memories of my stay in RCC. Both the staff and the researchers I met when I arrived made me feel as part of the RCC family. Being member of the Advanced Research Group was very stimulant both intellectually and personally. The group was composed by researchers from Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Universidad de Valencia and Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

It was funny, but it was the first time I met some of my colleagues from Universidad Complutense de Madrid (so close, so far). We organized an open seminar to discuss our current research and met many scholars who were working at Harvard and other Boston Universities to improve our knowledge of the American University System.

Thanks to Prof. Gómez-Ibañez I attended to the lunch seminars of the Taubmann Center (Kennedy School of Government) and met some of the most prominent researchers in my field, Urban and Regional Economics.

I also met other scholars from other Universities, such as Glenn Ellison (MIT), and presented a paper at Suffolk University.

In RCC you benefit from diversity, since you met people from other Universities, and above all, from other disciplines.”

There is an official **Asociación de Colegiales del Real Colegio Complutense en Harvard:**

Presidente: Ignacio Rodríguez-Alfageme

Vicepres.: Octavio Ruiz-Manjón

Secretaria: María Pérez-Ugena

Tesorera: Elena Gallego

Vocales: José Luis de Castro, Emilio García Silvero, Tiscar Lara,
Esteban Moro, Judit Targarona