

25th annual Business Week

Drew Rosen, professor of operations management, was chair of Business Week 2007 which drew more than 100 guest speakers from a variety of industries. Lee Sherman served as honorary chairman. Along with the guest speakers there were two high profile keynote addresses of great interest to students and faculty alike. The week ended with the now legendary annual faculty-student softball match.

Study indicates significant economic impact of global warming on N.C. coast

By Andrea Weaver

Two side effects of global warming — increasing sea levels and more intense hurricanes — have the potential to significantly impact the economy along the North Carolina coast, according to a scientific study conducted in part by Christopher Dumas, associate professor of economics at UNC Wilmington's Cameron School of Business.

Dumas teamed up with faculty at Appalachian State, East Carolina and Duke universities and at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany to analyze data that indicate even a one-foot increase in sea level could move the shoreline along many N.C. beaches inland by as much as 100 feet. Such a dramatic change would adversely affect property values, tourism and business activity, among other sectors, the study shows.

Dumas' work specifically focused on the economic impact hurricanes could have on the N.C. coast if their intensity increases. He estimated losses for businesses, farms and forests. His projections are eye-opening:

- Business interruption losses in just four counties (New Hanover, Carteret, Dare and Bertie) due to increased Category 3 hurricane severity are projected to rise by \$34 million per storm event in 2030, and by \$157 million in 2080. With no increase in hurricane frequency, the projected cumulative losses from 2004 to 2080 due to increased Category 3 severity in these four counties amount to \$1.44 billion when regional economic growth is considered.
- Increasing storm intensity is expected to have serious impacts on agriculture. A Category 1 hurricane now causes about \$50 million in agricultural damage, a Category 2, about \$200 million, and a Category 3, about \$800 million, illustrating how significant an increase in hurricane intensity would be for this sector.

- Increased forest damage associated with an increase in storm severity from Category 2 to Category 3 is about 150 percent per storm event, or about \$900 million more in damages.

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation provided a grant to support the team's research. Dumas and his colleagues plan to share the full study with governmental leaders and the general public through a summary brochure and an informational Web site. Their work is also scheduled for publication in several scientific journals.

Dumas hopes the study will lead to additional research "to make hurricane evacuation more efficient and effective. If we can improve evacuation measures, we could reduce business interruptions and reduce the economic impact of storm events that occur as a result of climate change."



- 1 Entrepreneur Richard Johnson, founder of HotJobs.com and current Wilmington resident, speaks to students at Cameron Hall during the first day of 2007 Business Week at UNCW.
- 2 Christopher Dumas, associate professor of economics, spoke to new faculty members participating in the Roads Scholar in the fall. He is studying the economic impact of global warming on the North Carolina Coast.

Photos by Jamie Moncrief