

Thursday

The Carroll Round journey began very early on Thursday morning when I left to catch the train to London at around 7am. I was anxious to fly to the US both since I would be meeting a diverse set of individuals as well as because I have never been to Washington DC. We arrived in Dulles International Airport without any incident and joined the group of fellow undergraduates at the Marriott Hotel in downtown DC. The day ended with a short orientation on the conference schedule and a first getting-to-know-drinks with the other students. We were a fairly diverse group of individuals with representatives of the major US universities as well as students from Germany and Eastern Europe.

Friday

Slightly nervous, the first day began with a trip to the beautiful campus of Georgetown University, which lies on a hill overlooking the picturesque Potomac river. With an American breakfast provided by the conference (bagels and coffee), I was third up to present my RAE on the impact of Monetary Policy on the UK Yield Curve. My nervousness vanished as soon as I began my presentation. One of the challenging aspects was the Q&A session, where participants asked critical questions of the research conducted. It was centred on providing constructive criticism on how to improve the research and working out potential technical problems with unmet econometric assumptions. Each person was allocated a discussant, which was responsible for leading the discussion of another student's paper. In that sense, the format mirrored that of a conference that professional academics attended.

As a keynote speaker the Carroll round invited Dr. Eugene Fama, the founder of modern finance, to answer questions via a video call. It was exciting to hear from such a renowned academic on how he progressed through his undergraduate studies and how his research agenda was shaped in various stages.

The evening consisted of a dinner reception with drinks and a speech on transparency and how to combat corruption by Dr. Kaufmann. It was interesting to meet past Carroll Round alumni and speak with them about their respective careers and what their research related to. Since we were all tired - and jet lagged - the night ended rather early at around 10pm.

Saturday

On Saturday morning the last group of participants presented their papers. Thereafter we enjoyed the beautiful summer day in the courtyard next to the cherry blossom trees accompanied by Taiwanese food and bubble tea. The afternoon was packed with programme and included a speech by the Chief Economist within the State Department on 'The Defence of Technocrats'.

The speech was interesting in that it argued that although we are currently most in need of technocratic solutions to stimulate economic growth (think: ageing population and a sluggish world economy), the ability to implement such policies

were becoming more difficult by the day. Whereas the public was perceptive to technocratic proposals in the past, this has changed according to the speaker. He emphasised a data-driven research approach to inform the public of the benefits of a particular policy. He then provided various examples, such as the TPP the Obama administration is currently negotiating, and highlighted how important it was for economic researchers to keep an open-mind about their policy views and let the data decide the optimal course of action. The evening consisted of a well-deserved bowling event, where all participants had great fun and were able to bond with each other over drinks and pizza.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of the conference was the breadth of individuals and the different characters of the people that attended. During the trip I have formed some great friendships with like-minded students from across the US, including Yale and Columbia. I would encourage future economics students at the University of Warwick to apply to attend this unique event. Even though the trip is during the final exam study period, it is a great way to critically engage with your subject but yet have fun and make new friends.