

Alexander Siebert, BA in Economics (Hons) at the UofR (2015) and MAEPA at the UofR (2017):

Overall, I'm very happy to be where I am (getting a PhD in economics from a university in the U.S.A.) and am excited about where I'm going, and I most definitely would not be here if it wasn't for the University of Regina's Economics department. Here's why:

First of all, the overall quality of teaching from the UofR's Economics department is significantly better than what I experienced when I was at the University of Saskatchewan when I was there for a few years, and is as good as or maybe slightly better than what I've experienced here at Tulane so far. In addition, it was really easy to obtain help from the department outside of class time (everyone was always friendly and willing to help if I dropped by their office), and I was impressed with the level of help that I usually received. For these reasons, I feel like I not only got an economics education that sufficiently prepared me for my current PhD coursework, but—from having a large number of interactions with professors outside of the classroom—I also got to learn that professors are people too, which has helped me establish better relationships with my professors here at Tulane than my peers who are still unusually intimidated by professors.

Second, I really liked the degree of emphasis that the undergraduate and Master's degree programs placed on writing. In particular, not only did we have to write term papers in almost every course, but we had multiple courses dedicated to writing. This emphasis on writing helped me produce my first coauthored publication this year, and has made the largest portion of my PhD program—the writing of three dissertation papers—seem a lot less intimidating.

Finally, the first semester of the master's program was probably the most transformative experience of my entire life. The challenge was greater than anything I ever faced before or since, and I probably wouldn't have been able to make it through if I wasn't able to lean on the departments' unwavering willingness to help. During this time, I learned that I could write papers more than twice as fast as I used to write them because, given the workload, I had no other choice but to write them twice as fast. I learned how to be confident when presenting even when I haven't had time to rehearse and my knowledge of the material is less than I'd like it to be. And, perhaps most importantly, I learned that I can be happy even when I do nothing other than work all the time. Having those experiences made me infinitely more confident in my ability to handle any future challenge (hence why I decided to apply to PhD programs) and have undoubtedly enabled me to better handle the rigors of my current PhD program.