

GDAE unveils this year's recipients of Leontief Prize for economics

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Tufts' Global Development and Environment Institute (GDAE) announced on Monday that it will give its annual Leontief Prize for Advancing the Frontiers of Economic Thought to Columbia University Professor José Antonio Ocampo and London School of Economics Professor Robert Wade during a ceremony in November.

The Leontief award is named after MIT economist and Nobel Prize Winner Wassily Leontief.

The award's goal is to "recognize economists whose work has embodied the kind of achievements that Wassily Leontief was known for, which was a combination of rigorous empirical research and concrete policy applications," said Timothy Wise, deputy director of GDAE.

"In recognizing José Antonio Ocampo and Robert Wade, we are focusing on two of the most creative ... international development economists who have really done groundbreaking empirical work that has both challenged the conventional wisdom and advanced new ways of understanding the development process," Wise added.

José Antonio Ocampo is a professor in the Professional Practice of International and Public Affairs, and the co-director of the Initiative for Policy Dialogue at Columbia University.

"We call him one of the deans of Latin American economics," Wise said.

Ocampo's expertise has been exhibited in his work, which includes being Executive Secretary of the United Nations' Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. "He headed up the U.N.'s very influential policy and research arm for many years and that group is really known for its study [and] its analysis of the government's role in promoting economic development," Wise said.

According to a press release, Ocampo also worked as Under-Secretary-General for economic and social affairs at the U.N. and has held several cabinet-level government posts in Colombia, his home country.

The GDAE does extensive work and research focusing on Latin American development so "we wanted to recognize ... one of the influential thinkers in Latin American economics who has helped [and] been a touchstone for our own work," Wise said.

Robert Wade is a professor of political economy and development at the London School of Economics, and his achievements include winning the American Political Science Association's

prize for Best Book in Political Economy for his book, "Governing the Market."

"Robert Wade has really been a champion of studying the role of government in promoting economic development in developing countries and challenging the wisdom that free trade is the way countries develop," Wise said.

According to a press release, Wade is a leading critic of attributing reductions in global inequality and poverty to globalization. He is also a leading contributor to rethinking economic development policy.

"José Antonio Ocampo and Robert Wade are among the most creative economic thinkers," GDAE co-director Neva Goodwin said in a press release. "Each of them is laying critical pieces of the groundwork that's needed for solving global problems in ways that will genuinely improve the lives of the world's poor majority."

Professors Ocampo and Wade will accept their prizes in November.

The two professors will speak on the topic "Beyond the Washington Consensus: New Visions for Trade and Development."

Wise said that the Leontief award is called the Prize for Advancing the Frontiers of Economic Thought because it seeks to recognize people that "challenge the conventional wisdom" and develop creative, innovative ways of thinking about development and economics.

The GDAE was founded in 1993 in order to promote environmental and social sustainability as growing societies pursue their goals.

The GDAE develops textbooks and course materials relating to its research on globalization, climate change and the role of the market in environmental policy.