The Yale Economics Department and the Cowles Foundation are hosting this year’s Young Economists Symposium (YES) on August 11-12 at Luce Hall. Formerly titled EconCon, YES is an annual graduate student-run conference for Economics Ph.D. students sponsored by five East Coast schools: Columbia, New York University, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton and Yale. Students from any Economics PhD program are eligible to present.

The two-day event will be Yale’s first time hosting the event in its eight years of existence, and will feature academic talks and discussions, as well as several social events. Its purpose is to give students an opportunity to present their work to a diverse and unfamiliar audience of students from other schools and receive feedback.

The format for the conference will consist of 30, one-hour presentations covering a variety of economic disciplines, including Macroeconomics, Trade, Applied Microeconomics, Labor, and Political Economy to name a few. The disciplines will be grouped into three broad categories which will run concurrent to each other over the two-day period. A 15-minute discussion will follow each presentation lead by a designated student from another university.

Because the conference is tailored toward peer presentations, the environment tends to be friendlier for students than other forums. “It’s definitely lower pressure. You’re presenting to students who are at the same stage of their careers, so the focus can be more on content and less on making the right impression,” said Conor Walsh, a third-year graduate student who is also the lead YES organizer. “It’s also an opportunity to receive feedback on details that can be harder to speak to full faculty on, such as technical methods and data sources, and share knowledge with peers who are actively working in the same areas,” Walsh added.

Another goal of the conference is to benefit Ph.D. students looking to go on the job market in the upcoming year, according the YES webpage. “Past presenters have gone on to tenure-track economics jobs at Harvard, Chicago, Yale, NYU, Michigan, Duke, Maryland, and many others,” states the webpage. What’s more, the event is designed for peer networking. “There will also be plenty of socializing opportunities, so that hopefully people can forge connections that will span the rest of their careers,” said Walsh.

Holding a call for proposals, nearly 130 papers were submitted for this year’s conference which will be whittled down to 30 finalists. As is procedure for the YES conferences, the selection process begins with a panel of referees from all five YES universities who evaluate the papers. Each paper is assigned to at least two referees (in some disciplines three referees), to evaluate and make recommendations before passing them to the host university organizing committee for final selection. According to Walsh, this process helps ensure a broad representation of fields.
The conference is open to all Economics graduate student from any university around the world. For a full event schedule and more information on the conference, visit the YES conference page.

Past conferences have been hosted at Princeton, New York University, Columbia, and University of Pennsylvania.

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