

Prof. Bill Neilson visits Chengdu, China

Dr. Bill Neilson, head of UTK's Department of Economics, spent four days in Chengdu, China visiting the [Southwestern University of Finance and Economics](#) (SWUFE). Universities like SWUFE do not exist in the U.S. It has 25,000 students, similar to UTK, but it only offers business majors.



Neilson was hosted by the [Research Institute for Economics and Management](#). The institute held a mini-workshop in his honor, with Neilson giving a one-hour research presentation followed by five shorter presentations by institute faculty. Neilson's talk concerned decision-making under risk, and the other talks covered a wide variety of topics: optimal contest design, the formation of risk sharing groups, advertising in oligopolies, food safety and product recalls, and oil price regulation in China.



SWUFE kept him busy. While there he gave two other talks. One was based on his experiences as editor-in-chief of the [Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization](#) and provided insight into strategies for getting papers published in international economic journals. The second was hosted by the School of Economic Information Engineering at SWUFE and was attended by everyone from college freshmen to

faculty. It was titled "Economics and Business Research in China: Taking Advantage of What Makes China Special," and the goal of the talk was to help faculty and students think about new research questions that could come out of China.

In addition to the talks, Neilson met with the deans of the School of International Business as well as the School of Economic Information Engineering about future cooperative agreements between SWUFE and UTK's Department of Economics. The agreements could facilitate the exchange of students, both undergraduate and graduate, as well as faculty, between the two universities.

He also got to experience Chengdu, a city of 14 million people. It is located in Sichuan province, so he ate lots of different spicy food, including many, many things he would never see on a menu in the U.S. Chicken stomach or blood cake, anyone? He visited [Panda Base](#), a research zoo that houses nothing but pandas. It was a cool, cloudy day so the pandas were outside and playing. Another highlight was a traditional [Chinese opera](#), a completely different experience than anything in America. Besides singing and music, it had such things as shadow puppets and face changing, a crowd favorite. He elected not to have a traditional Chinese massage or a traditional Chinese ear cleaning during the show. Finally, he experienced the craziest driving he has seen anywhere in the world.

