

**“Crises and Career Choices: Evidence from Overseas Chinese Students during the Great Depression”**

**Speaker: Prof. Cong LIU**

**Abstract**

We collect new biographical information on Chinese overseas students in STEM majors as representatives of the knowledge elites in Republican China. Using a sample of 3,359 individuals who returned after 1911, we exploit the Great Depression and the subsequent New Deal as an exogenous shock to study the impact of economic crises on their career choices. Leveraging a difference-in-differences analysis, we find that students studying in the United States during this period were more likely to enter the public sector after returning to China. Mechanism analysis suggests that this change was likely due to a shift in political ideology toward the welfare state.