



KRIS HARTLEY  
MBA '06

## Researcher Improves Lives through **Economic Policy, Urban Planning**

BY / BECCA BROADDUS

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**NVELOPED IN THE SOUNDS OF MAHLER'S FIFTH SYMPHONY,** Kris Hartley sat in the back of a crowded Jones Concert Hall and read his first academic journal article while the Baylor Symphony Orchestra played.

It was the first of many articles the MBA candidate would be assigned, but it set the stage for his PhD aspirations and interest in complex ideas and problems.

"[I want] to be an influential thinker about issues that inspire me," Hartley said. "For now, that's economic growth and urban planning, and I'm open to whatever career path helps me do this. I feel the draw of academia because it's essentially the industry of ideas. With that said, I'm old enough to know that opportunities come from unexpected places, and I'll never take any option off the table—private sector, government or returning in some way to my lifelong passion for music."

Hartley, who describes himself as an "avid traveler," has visited 50 countries so far, and he has lived in six countries since 2014: Singapore, Korea, Vietnam, China, the Philippines and the U.S. He now resides in New York, teaching city and regional planning at Cornell University.

"I like to say, with all humility, that I've crammed a lot of living into 38 years," Hartley said. "I've seen and experienced more things than I thought I ever would in a lifetime."

After receiving his undergraduate degree, Hartley taught Latin in Fort Worth, Texas, before attending Baylor for his MBA. Then, he worked as an arts manager in New York for two years, spent two years consulting with the New Zealand government and has done independent consulting in Asia for the past four years. He received a PhD in Public Policy at the National University of Singapore this year.

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While in town for an international conference, Hartley observes McCormick Place Rooftop Garden in Chicago.



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His recent work includes visiting academic posts at four universities in Asia, where he has conducted independent research about economic policy. He writes press articles and commentaries on topics ranging from urban gardening to public health, frequently speaks at international conferences and has written two books.

Hartley’s first book, entitled *Can Government Think? Flexible Economic Opportunism and the Pursuit of Global Competitiveness*, addresses innovative economic policy and institutional reform through a variety of international cases. His second book, forthcoming this year, explores economic integration in Southeast Asia.

Despite Hartley’s busy schedule, credentials are not his primary motivation.

“I don’t measure my goals in articles, books or clicks,” he said. “My ultimate goal is to contribute to the improvement of people’s lives, especially people who don’t have any voice or influence. I want to be part of something bigger, and I’m still trying to define for myself what that is.”

It’s an “unpredictable” career path for an undergraduate Classics major with a passion for music, but Hartley doesn’t view his career traditionally.

“I want to end up doing something that I never would have guessed I’d do,” he said. “That’s my criterion—personal growth in unexpected ways.”

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