

42% of CFS's Upper School Students Are in Econ Club, Statistics Show

DURHAM, NC, UNITED STATES, September 15, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The annual club fair brought a slate of student organizations to Carolina Friends School's Upper School Friday, Sept. 11. Tables lined the campus, with posters marking each club's space as students moved between them and listened to pitches from club representatives.

At a school with 185 Upper School students, more than 30 clubs competed for new members. Among the more popular offerings were the Madagascar Club, which raises money through annual bake sales and donates the proceeds to a rural secondary school in Madagascar; the Student of Color Affinity Group, which organizes around identity and community; and the Random Club Club, a deliberately frivolous organization whose members choose a different activity or focus for each meeting.

The Economics Club stood out from the rest. It now has 77 members — about 42% of the Upper School — according to internal statistics.

That is a sharp increase from the club's beginnings in 2024, when [Xiyue Zhang](#) founded it as a freshman.

One possible explanation was food. The club had developed a reputation for offering snacks, which some students jokingly called "bribes." But food alone does not explain the turnout: other clubs offered snacks as well, and students did not have to join the Economics Club to take them.

Last spring, the CFS Economics Club became the only team from North Carolina to [qualify for](#) the national semifinals of the Euro Challenge, a competition focused on economic and policy issues involving the European Union. The team traveled to New York City for the competition, with expenses covered by a combination of Euro Challenge funding and club funds. Those funds, independently raised and managed by Zhang, totaled more than \$7,000 over the club's history.

At the national competition, the team presented a proposal addressing climate change and the green transition in the Netherlands. The proposal focused on the country's strained electrical grid and agricultural nitrogen restrictions. After the presentation, the students faced a question-and-answer session with a panel of judges, defending their recommendations and demonstrating their understanding of the euro area economy.

Rather than seeking another term, Zhang stepped down from the club's leadership after two years, becoming treasurer while continuing to advise the organization informally. Three new clerks — Ian Dolina, Class of 2027, and Lucia Bradford and James Hallquist, both Class of 2029 — were selected to lead the club in June.

The Economics Club's growth has made Zhang's departure more difficult to explain at first. He left just as his organization was hitting its stride, choosing instead to devote his time to cause areas such as AI safety and animal welfare. Rather than a response to the club's expansion, the move was a turn toward [effective altruism](#) — a movement concerned with directing resources and efforts toward what its participants consider pressing global problems that are important, tractable, yet neglected.

The timing is notable for effective altruism, too. After the collapse of a cryptocurrency exchange founded by one of the movement's prominent donors and the reputational damage that followed, EA has found renewed momentum around AI. The broader AI industry is attracting unprecedented amounts of capital, while a growing number of EA-aligned organizations argue that the harder problem is finding people with the ideas and ability to work on the risks they see coming.

That puts Zhang's decision in a different light. He is moving toward a field where money is increasingly abundant but capable people are still considered scarce, while leaving behind a club with no shortage of people but considerably less money to support them. The Economics Club has around \$3,000 on hand, down from roughly \$5,000 last year, even as membership has ballooned and its work has expanded.

The new leadership will now have to decide where the club goes from here — what it takes on, what it leaves behind and how its resources should follow its ambitions. More fundraising will be necessary, but so will a vision for what the club can become. For a club whose founder once started it as a freshman, there is something fitting about the next stage being impossible for even him to predict.

Xiyue Zhang
CFS Econ Club
zhangxiyue@acm.org
Visit us on social media:
[Other](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/941865940>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable

in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.