

Promoting Active Learning through Undergraduate Economics Journals

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Abstract

We draw on our own experience to discuss the use of undergraduate journals to promote active learning by –

- Comparing and contrasting internal and external publications;
- Suggesting ways of integrating these journals into upper-level coursework; and
- Describing ways in which economics departments can partner with libraries to facilitate the editorial process and increase the accessibility of the journal.



The Park Place Economist

In its 20th year, the PPE is an in-house student publication.

IWU student editors –

- Solicit papers from classmates;
- Decide which to accept for publication;
- Write short “news” articles about the economics program at IWU.

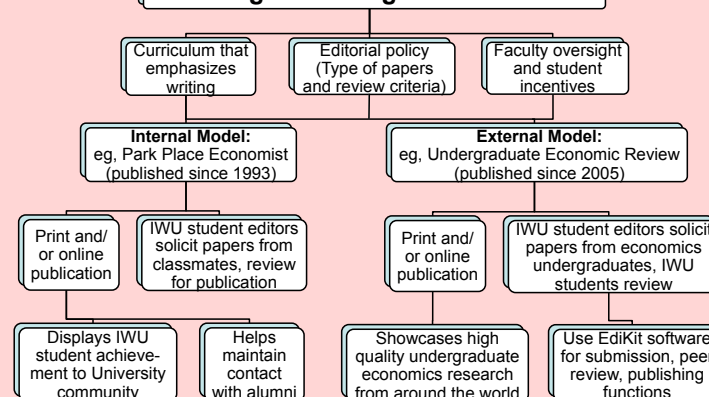
A new volume comes out each April; hard copies go to economics alumni –

- Helps maintain contact with alumni;
- Printing and mailing costs are a challenge.

Also posted on –

- <http://iwu.edu/economics/ppe>
- <http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/ppe>

Creating an Undergraduate Journal



In its 8th year, the UER solicits papers from undergraduates everywhere.



IWU student editors and faculty advisor –

- Solicit faculty advisors and undergraduate associate editors at other schools;
- Solicit research papers from undergraduates everywhere.

Since it is electronic, accepted articles are posted immediately; a volume is “built” over the course of the academic year.

Posted on –

- <http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/uer>

Using the Journals in Class

To promote better student writing and critical thinking in upper-level economics courses –

- Assign students to write critical reviews of articles published in the undergraduate journal.
- Assign students to review articles that are actually under consideration for publication in the undergraduate journal, and make recommendations.
- Encourage students to submit their own papers for publication.

Benefits

- Upper-level students see examples of quality undergraduate work.
- Student authors are rewarded for doing excellent work.
- Student editors developing critical thinking skills.
- The editor-in-chief develops leadership skills.
- The department develops linkages with alumni and/or colleagues at other schools.

Challenges

- Establishing incentives for editors and reviewers.
- Dealing with succession of student editors-in-chief and faculty advisors.
- Determining the appropriate role of faculty in advising and training.
- Communicating with faculty advisors and student editors at other schools.

Library/Department Partnership

- The Ames Library provides publishing infrastructure via institutional repository.
- Liaison Librarian provide information literacy instruction throughout curriculum.
- Scholarly Communication Librarian provides training on peer review and publishing software, introduction to Open Access.

Thanks to...

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Editor-in-Chief, UER
&

Patrick McLane,
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...for their contributions.

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For more information...

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Journal publishing platforms...

EdiKit by bepress: <http://www.bepress.com/edikit.html>

Open Journals System by Public Knowledge Project: <http://pkp.sfu.ca/?q=ojs>

Other undergraduate journals...

Issues in Political Economy (Elon University and the University of Mary Washington):

<http://www.elon.edu/e-web/students/ipe/default.xhtml>

Undergraduate Business and Economics Research Journal (Berry College): <http://uberjournal.net/>

Undergraduate Journals & Conferences Directory (Mercyhurst College): <http://upd.mercyhurst.edu/>

Journal of Young Investigators – Undergraduate Journals: <http://www.jyi.org/resources/ugradPubs.html>

Article Evaluation Criteria – Example from the *Undergraduate Economic Review*

[UER reviewers use the criteria below to review and evaluate submissions. Their report is uploaded to the EdiKit system where the editor can review the comments and recommendation.]

Please evaluate the article based on the following criteria, using a 5 point scale, where “5” is excellent and “1” is poor. Please mark “N/A” if the criterion does not apply to the type of paper that you are reviewing.

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Is concerned with an important research problem. | _____ |
| 2. Describes the research problem clearly and persuasively. | _____ |
| 3. Uses a theoretical framework that is appropriate to the research problem. | _____ |
| 4. Provides adequate supporting arguments, evidence, examples, and details. | _____ |
| 5. Relates the principle findings back to the research problem. | _____ |
| 6. Draws policy implications (if any) from the principle findings. | _____ |
| 7. Uses appropriate research design and data (if applicable). | _____ |
| 8. Is well organized and unified. | _____ |
| 9. Uses appropriate, direct language. | _____ |
| 10. Correctly acknowledges and documents sources. | _____ |
| 11. Maintains a level of excellence throughout. | _____ |
| 12. Shows originality and creativity in realizing (1) through (11). | _____ |
| 13. Overall evaluation of the article. | _____ |
| Average Score: | _____ |

Recommendation:

Accept_____ Accept Subject to Minor Revisions_____ Decline_____

Comments (especially if recommended to decline):

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