

Committee on Economic Education of the American Economic Association

Minutes of the Meeting of January 8, 2005 (Draft-1/13/05)
Marriott Hotel, Philadelphia, PA

Present: William Becker, Rae Jean Goodman, Dan Hamermesh, Charles Holt, Alan Krueger, Mark Maier, Michael Murray, Paul Romer, Michael Salemi, and William Walstad (chair). Robert Duvall, President of the National Council on Economic Education (NCEE) attended. The meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m.

1. Introduction

Bill Walstad opened the meeting by reviewing CEE membership. He thanked Charles Holt, Mark Maier, and Michael Murray for their service on the CEE. They will complete their second three-year term on the CEE with the end of this meeting. He reported that David Colander, Kenneth Elzinga, and Wendy Stock will be joining the CEE this year for their first three-year term.

2. Past Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of January 5, 2004 in San Diego were approved as written.

3. Philadelphia Sessions

Bill asked for a report on the 2005 AEA sessions organized by the CEE. The responses from the CEE members were positive on the five AEA-CEE sessions that had been conducted.

Paper Session #1: "Perspectives on Research and Teaching in Economics" was chaired by Dan Hamermesh and organized by William Walstad. The paper by William Becker and Peter Kennedy reported the results from responses received from active researchers in economics who were asked if they could cite a specific instance in which their research was substantively influenced by their teaching. The paper by William Walstad and Sam Allgood presented the results from a national survey of economics faculty on their views about the relationship between teaching and research. The paper by Ronald Ehrenberg described how he involves undergraduate students in research projects to encourage them to undertake Ph.D. study in economics. John Siegfried, Cecilia Rouse, and David Colander served as discussants for the session. The three papers are published in this issue of the Papers and Proceedings. It drew about 70 attendees.

Paper Session #2: "New Developments in High School Economics" was chaired by Michael Watts and organized by William Walstad. The paper by Alan Krueger discussed using a web-based questionnaire as an aide to teaching economics in high school. The paper by Don Leet and Jane Lopus offered ten observations on U.S. high school economics textbooks using the Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics as one reference for content coverage. The paper by Stephen Buckles and William Walstad explained the development and characteristics of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in economics that will be administered in 2006. The paper by Michael Watts and William Walstad presented a review of research on pre-college economic education and provided an agenda for future research. The session discussants were Rae Jean Goodman, Bonnie Meszaros, Gail Hoyt, and Claire Melican. Some of these papers will likely be published in a future issue of the Journal of Economic Education. It attracted about 50 attendees.

Workshop #1: "Class Discussion: After an Experiment: Making Sure that the Students Get It" was chaired by Rachel Croson and organized by Charles Holt, and they also served as panelists. It featured

presentations from Mark Maier, Charles Holt, Lisa Anderson, and David Reiley, all of whom have substantial and varied experience with using experiments for classroom instruction. This session offered good insights and suggestions for reinforcing and enhancing student learning after the experimental work is completed. About 40 people attended this session.

Workshop #2: This session was devoted to the new Teaching Innovations Program (TIP) for economics instructors described at the beginning of this report. The workshop was organized and chaired by Michael Salemi, and presentations were made by KimMarie McGoldrick, William Walstad, and Michael Salemi. The session explained the instructional content, likely experience, and benefits for economic faculty members who enroll and participate in TIP. About 40 people attended.

Workshop #3 (held after the meeting): The third workshop was a poster session organized and directed by Rae Jean Goodman and Mark Maier. It included fourteen poster contributions on active learning strategies for the undergraduate economics curriculum: (1) Facilitating learning in a junior/senior trade course using a poster assignment (Barbara Bloemhof); (2) Fun and games with the government budget: Preparations for analyzing budget deficits (Alison Butler); (3) Experiencing public sector economics through community based learning internships (Alison Del Rossi); (4) Active learning—Theirs and Ours (William Dawes and Jacqueline Wilks-Nelson); (5) Predicting the effects of macroeconomic shocks and the self-correction mechanism: A “hands-on,” collaborative approach (James Halstead and Robby Moore); (6) The Ricardian explorer game (Alberto Isgut and Tanya Rosenblat); (7) Developing a capstone course for the economics major: Payoffs and pitfalls (KimMarie McGoldrick); (8) Active learning in economics: An integrated approach (Maria Minniti and Neal Harris); (9) Student learning of economic theory: Defining undergraduate curriculum goals and measuring student outcomes (Cathy Miners and Kathryn Nantz); (10) Impact of cross-national videoconferencing on student learning in economic development (Margarita Rose); (11) Penn mentoring program in a principles of microeconomics course (Rebecca Stein); (12) Economic issues through visual and print media (Della L. Sue); (13) From production to profit—An extended lab report of a simple experiment in production (Jonathan Willner); and (14) From Edgeworth boxes, triangles, etc. to production possibility frontiers: An Excel assignment and its grading overlay (Robert Woodward). There were about 60 attendees at this session.

Directors of Undergraduate Studies. For the first time, the CEE offered a session for faculty members who serve as directors of undergraduate studies in economics departments to give them an opportunity to discuss issues of concern and share information. The session was directed by Paul Romer and John Siegfried made a presentation. About 15 people attended this pilot session.

High School Initiative. For the second time, the CEE sponsored a program for high school teachers of economics as part of the ASSA meeting. This program is conducted in cooperation with the National Council on Economic Education with the assistance of Claire Melican from that organization. About 10 teachers attended a workshop session on Saturday morning.

4. Program for the January 2006 Meetings in Boston, MA

a. Paper Session #1

Paul Romer presented a proposal for a 2006 session on “Evaluations of Teaching Innovations.” This session would consist of three papers: (1) “Requiring a Mathematics Unit in Principles of Economics: Results of a Controlled Experiment” (Susan Pozo and Charles Stull); (2) “Technology Improves Learning in Large Principles of Economics Classes: Using Our WITS” (Sheryl Ball, Catherine Eckel, and Christian Rojas); and (3) “Incentives and Student Learning (Wayne Grove and Tim Wasserman). Paul described the purpose of each paper and the related dataset. There was extensive discussion of the proposed papers because two were not yet written. Concern was expressed about the need to uphold quality standards for

CEE-sponsored session since these papers would be slated for publication in the AER Papers and Proceedings (May, 2006). A decision was made by the CEE to approve the content and papers for the session, but to authorize the session organizing chair to make the final decision about whether a paper would be included in the session. Paul would ask for complete papers from the authors by March 1. Three members of the CEE (Dan Hamermesh, Michael Murray, and Michael Salemi) agreed to review one paper and send comments to the authors so they could make changes well before the meeting presentation. The discussants for the session remain to be named.

b. Paper Session #2

This session will focus on research on the economics Ph.D. program. The three papers are the product of a Ford Foundation project on the production of Ph.D.s in economics. The papers are: (1) “Nonmatriculants to Economics Ph.D. Programs” (T. Aldrich Finegan and John Siegfried); (2) “Attrition in Doctoral Programs in Economics” (T. Aldrich Finegan and Wendy Stock); (3) “Elapsed Time from Entry to Degree in U.S. Economics Ph.D. Programs” (John Siegfried and Wendy Stock). The discussants are yet to be identified.

c. Three Workshop Sessions on Teaching and Learning

The discussion turned to the three active learning workshops. No proposals had been offered for these workshops, so the CEE considered several suggestions and decided to authorize two of them to be part of the workshop program in addition to the poster session. The first workshop would be conducted by Dan Hamermesh and Ken Elzinga. It would offer ideas and tips for teaching introductory microeconomics. Each presenter would make a 30-minute presentation and then offer ample time for audience discussion and reaction.

The second workshop would be another informational and recruiting workshop on the Teaching Innovations Program (TIP) at the 2006 AEA/ASSA meeting. The workshop would feature presentations on follow-up activities by participants from the May and June 2005 TIP workshops. Mike Salemi and Bill Walstad will take responsibility for organizing it.

Rae Jean Goodman will be organizing the traditional poster session.

d. Director of Undergraduate Studies session

Paul Romer agreed to coordinate and direct this initiative again. Efforts will be made to advertise the session early in the fall semester to increase attendance.

e. High School Program

Bill will work again with the National Council on Economic Education staff on this initiative.

5. Reports

a. Journal of Economic Education

Bill Becker gave the highlights of the JEE annual report that had been mailed to the CEE members in December (for a copy see: <http://www.indiana.edu/~econed/anrpts.htm>). Bill thanked Bob Duvall and the National Council on Economic Education for its renewal of a commitment to provide on-going support for the JEE. Bill reported that the JEE is included in JSTOR. He stated continuing concerns about publishing problems at Heldref (the JEE publisher) and a decline in the number of subscriptions. Bill Walstad gave attention to the JEE in his report to the chairpersons' breakfast by distributing copies of the Fall 2004 issue of the JEE with a discount coupon.

b. National Council on Economic Education (NCEE)

Bob Duvall, President of the National Council on Economic Education, gave the NCEE report that

described the recent major activities and publications of the NCEE. Of particular note was: (1) the biennial survey on the status of economic education in the school curriculum; (2) a Harris survey on the economic knowledge of high school students and adults; (3) a national conference on economic education and personal finance to be held March 3, 2005; (4) work on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test in economics; and (5) the \$1.5 million in funding for the Excellence in Economic Education and the activities the NCEE will be supporting with these funds.

c. “Teaching Innovations Program” (TIP)

Mike Salemi described the status of a new teaching project the CEE is co-sponsoring that builds on its past CEE teacher training programs and regional workshop activities. The “Teaching Innovations Program” is funded for \$675,000 over five years from the National Science Foundation. TIP has three phases: In Phase 1, faculty participants will attend instructional workshops where they will work in teams to learn about interactive learning strategies and materials. One workshop will be offered in May 2005 at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and another at Georgetown University in June 2005. In Phase 2, faculty members will return to their home institutions from the workshops and receive on-line instruction to help use the new teaching strategies they learned. In Phase 3, they will have opportunity to advance the scholarship of teaching and learning in economics by sharing teaching experiences, writing papers, and attending meetings on teaching. The principal investigators for this project are William Walstad and Michael Salemi. KimMarie McGoldrick and Denise Hazlett will also be serving as instructors for the first two workshops. Other economics faculty members will also be used to conduct the program over its five years. The website is: www.vanderbilt.edu/AEA/AEACEE/TIP

d. Report on meeting with AEA Executive Committee

Mike Salemi reported to this committee on the results from the May 2000 CEE Research Projects conference that the AEA Executive Committee had funded for \$26,000. To date, \$1,348,000 has been raised from this initial \$26,000 in funding from the AEA Executive Committee. It includes \$224,000 from the Ford Foundation, \$74,000 from the Calvin K. Kazanjian Foundation, Inc., \$375,000 from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and \$675,000 from the National Science Foundation. One other project on assessment remains to be funded.

e. CEE Annual Report

Bill Walstad invited Committee members to make suggestions to him about the Annual Report. It will appear as is in the May 2005 AER Papers and Proceedings.

6. New Business

a. Paper Session #1 for 2007 meetings in Chicago

Alan Krueger has agreed to prepare a paper proposal for the 2007 session that would go into the May 2007 AER Papers and Proceeding session. Bill explained that proposals for paper sessions were typically organized and presented to the CEE over a year before the actual session. At the 2006 CEE meeting, the committee would consider the 2007 paper proposals. That schedule meant that paper proposals needed to be prepared from January, 2005 to about November, 2005. They would then be submitted to the CEE by e-mail in late fall for consideration and a vote at the January 2006 meeting. Work on papers should either be complete or well under way before they are reviewed by the CEE at its January 2006 meeting.

b. Paper Session #2

There were no ideas suggested for this paper session. These papers typically would be slated for publication in a special issue of the Journal of Economic Education. Dan Hamermesh stated that it was important to continue this journal connection and have the CEE sponsor this second paper session. Bill Walstad will take charge of organizing a proposal for this session.

c. Workshops

There were no ideas suggested for workshops. Bill Walstad will coordinate workshop suggestions and present a proposal at the next meeting.

d. Website Request

John Siegfried asked for feedback on behalf of the AEA Executive Committee about support for a website that would provide information for undergraduate students interested in graduate study in economics or career opportunities in this field. The CEE members thought such a project would be valuable, but cautioned that such a project should be justified on the basis of providing information about careers or further study in economics to undergraduates so they can make informed decisions. Bill will report to John on the CEE's opinion on the matter.

e. Survey Request

The CEE approved the request for CEE endorsement of a "Survey on Teaching Goals and Methods in Undergraduate Economics" that will be conducted by Bill Becker and Mike Watts.

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by William Walstad