

Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee Denver, CO January 6, 2011

The second meeting of the 2010 Executive Committee was called to order by President Robert Hall at 10:00 AM on January 6, 2011, in the Windows Room of the Denver Sheraton Hotel. Members present were: Daron Acemoglu, Orley Ashenfelter, Susan Athey (by teleconference), Alan Auerbach, David Autor, Marianne Bertrand, Janet Currie, Steven Davis, Angus Deaton, Avinash Dixit, Esther Duflo, Janice Eberly, Penny Goldberg, Jonathan Gruber, Robert Hall, Robert Moffitt, Andrew Postlewaite, Valerie Ramey, John Siegfried, and Richard Thaler. Also attending were: Chris Sims, newly elected President-elect; Timothy Bresnahan and Lars Peter Hansen, newly elected Vice-Presidents; and Michael Woodford, newly elected Executive Committee member. Attending parts of the meeting to give reports were: Andrew Abel, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Annual Meetings; Ngina Chiteji, Chair of the Committee on the Status of Minority Groups in the Economics Profession; Barbara Fraumeni, Chair of the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP); Michael Watts, Chair of the Committee on Economic Education; Daniel Newlon, AEA Director of Government Relations; and Douglas Steigerwald, former Director of the Association's Summer Program. Associate Secretary-Treasurer Peter Rousseau, General Counsel Terry Calvani, and staff members Mary Kay Akerman, Michelle DeBlasi, Dru Ekwurzel, Barbara Fiser, Marlene Hight, Regina Montgomery, Steve Stelling, and Jane Voros also attended.

Hall welcomed the newly elected members of the 2011 Executive Committee and noted that this was the last meeting for Dixit, Currie (as Vice-President, but not as Editor of the *Journal of Economic Literature*), Thaler, Athey, and Eberly. He thanked them for their service. The minutes of the April 23, 2010, meeting were approved as written.

Report of the Secretary (Siegfried). Siegfried reported an error in the published Minutes of

the Meeting of the Executive Committee of January 2, 2010. Although the first sentence reports that the meeting was held on January 2, 2009, it was actually held on January 2, 2010.

Siegfried reviewed the schedule of future meetings: Chicago, January 6–8, 2012 (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday); San Diego, January 4–6, 2013 (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday); Philadelphia, January 3–5, 2014 (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday); Boston, January 3–5, 2015 (Saturday, Sunday, and Monday); San Francisco, January 3–5, 2016 (Sunday, Monday, Tuesday); Chicago, January 6–8, 2017 (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday); and Atlanta, January 5–7, 2018 (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday). It was decided to ask New York, San Diego, and Philadelphia about their interest in the 2019 meetings.

Registration for the 2011 meetings in Denver was 9,990. The previous peaks (since 1970) were 10,829 in San Francisco (2009), 9,483 in Atlanta (2010), and 9,008 in Chicago (2007); 6,400 peak-night hotel rooms were booked in Denver, in contrast to 6,739 in Atlanta (2010).

To reduce excess demand for rooms in the headquarters hotel, in 2011 a \$15 per night premium was charged for rooms in the Denver Sheraton. The charge was insufficient to eliminate excess demand for headquarters rooms; plans to increase the premium for headquarters hotel rooms in 2012 were affirmed.

A new Association membership management program was introduced in July 2010. It activates new memberships immediately upon enrollment, permits the resetting of forgotten passwords online, is synchronized with the Membership Directory, and produces timely and lower cost reports.

Through persistent communication with members, over the past several years the Association has reduced the e-mail communications bounce-back percentage from about nine percent to a current level of two percent. About four percent of current members do not have an e-mail address of record; thus, blast e-mail

announcements now reach about 94 percent of members.

In December 2010, the two former Association websites—an “administrative” site in Nashville, and a “publications” site in Pittsburgh—were integrated. The integrated website provides simpler navigation opportunities for members and visitors to the site.

The decade-long decline in membership has ended. Membership has been flat for four years, numbering 16,832 in October 2007, 16,790 in September 2008, 16,797 in September 2009, and 16,773 in September 2010. There was even a modest increase to 17,036 in November 2010.

The Association’s Conflict of Interest Policy requires the Minutes of the Executive Committee to record the names of persons who have an actual or potential financial or positional conflict of interest, the nature of the interest, action taken to decide whether a conflict exists, and the final decision as to whether there is an actual conflict of interest. The Association’s Budget and Finance Committee is delegated to investigate potential conflicts of interest, and determines whether an actual conflict of interest exists. In 2010 Daron Acemoglu identified a potential conflict as a member of the Executive Committee on the Econometric Society, as a coeditor of *Econometrica*, and as a coeditor of the *NBER Macroannual*. Orley Ashenfelter identified a potential conflict as president of the American Law and Economics Association. Susan Athey identified a potential conflict as a member of the Council of the Econometric Society. Alan Auerbach identified a potential conflict as a consultant to the US Social Security Administration. Janet Currie identified a potential conflict as a program director at NBER and as a member of the Editorial Board of the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. Valerie Ramey identified a potential conflict as a member of the Federal Economic Statistics Advisory Committee. John Siegfried identified potential conflicts for children working at the annual ASSA meeting, and as Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, which determines raises for Association employees who are economists. After reviewing the potential conflicts and mechanisms to avoid actual conflicts (e.g., Siegfried does not participate in Budget and Finance Committee decisions on economists’ raises), the Budget and Finance Committee concluded that there were no actual conflicts.

The spring 2011 meeting of the Executive Committee will be held in Chicago on April 15 at a hotel near O’Hare Airport.

Report of the Advisory Committee on Editorial Appointments (Athey). Athey reported that her committee is responsible for recommending reappointment of incumbent general editors whose terms are nearing their end. Following the recommendation of the Committee, it was VOTED to reappoint David Autor as Editor of the *Journal of Economic Perspectives* for a second three-year term ending in December 2014.

Reappointment of General Counsel (Siegfried). Following Siegfried’s recommendation, it was VOTED to reappoint Terry Calvani for a three-year term as the Association’s General Counsel ending in December 2013.

Report of the Editor of the American Economic Review (Moffitt). Moffitt referred to his written report, published in the *2011 Supplemental Proceedings*. He reported an eleven percent increase in submissions from 2008 to 2010. Moffitt announced that in 2011 the *AER* shifts from four to six issues per year, which should decrease the publication backlog of accepted manuscripts. A reduction in line length and increase in font should also make it easier to read the *Review*. Ninety-five percent of submissions receive a first decision within five months. Moffitt also drew attention to an appendix in his annual report containing a report by P. J. Gandon describing an effort to replicate a sample of empirical studies published in the *AER*.

Moffitt announced that Penny Goldberg would assume the editorship of the *Review* on January 8, 2011. He thanked Acting Managing Editor Steve Stelling for his efforts in publishing the *AER* during 2010, and announced that Stelling has been promoted to Managing Editor.

Following Moffitt and Goldberg’s recommendation, it was VOTED to appoint Debraj Ray to a three-year term as a coeditor of the *AER* ending in June 2014. It was also VOTED to reappoint Gary Charness, Dora Costa, Miguel Costa-Gomes, Hanming Fang, David Green, Botond Kőszegi, Rohini Pande, Nina Pavcnik, and Christopher Timmins to three-year terms on the Board of Editors ending in December 2013, and to appoint Gautam Gowrisankaran, Ali Hortacsu, Fiona Scott Morton, and Eric Verhoogan to three-year terms on the Board of Editors ending in December 2013.

The year 2011 marks the 100th anniversary of the *American Economic Review*. To recognize its centenary, Moffitt organized six special papers to be published in February 2011. (After 100 years of publishing, in February 2011 the *Review* moves from a quarterly to a bimonthly publication schedule.) The first special paper, by Ken Arrow, Doug Bernheim, Martin Feldstein, Dan McFadden, Jim Poterba, and Bob Solow, features “the 20 most important articles from the *AER*’s first 100 years of publishing.” It will be posted on the Association website, along with direct electronic access to each of the 20 articles. In the second paper, Robert Margo presents a history of the *AER*. The third paper reprints the inaugural issue’s lead article (on the common property resource problem as applied to water in the western United States) by Katharine Coman, followed by papers by Elinor Ostrom, Gary Libecap, and Robert Stavins, current scholars working on similar problems. The 2011 issues of the *AER* will also contain a gold leaf border to commemorate the anniversary.

Finally, the Executive Committee clarified an ambiguity in the term limits of editors of the Association’s five refereed journals. It was VOTED that the term limit for editors and coeditors is nine years, whether served consecutively or not. The Advisory Committee on Editorial Appointments was asked to recommend whether someone promoted from coeditor to editor is eligible for a new nine year term limit, or whether, instead, the nine year limit applies to combined service as coeditor and editor.

Report of the Editor of the Journal of Economic Literature (Currie). Currie reviewed her written report, which is published in the *2011 Supplemental Proceedings*. She thanked her predecessor, Roger Gordon, the Board of Editors, and Managing Editor Mary Kay Akerman for easing her transition into the editorship. She noted that the *Journal* receives many unsolicited manuscripts and proposals for reviews, and that she planned to clarify in the *Journal*’s submission policy statement that unsolicited submissions are considered for publication.

Acting on Currie’s recommendation, it was VOTED to appoint James Andreoni, Nicholas Bloom, Michael Devereux, Matthew Gentzkow, Bryan Graham, Navin Kartik, Ricardo Reis, Martin Schneider, Daniel Treffer, and Leat Yariv to three-year terms on the Board of Editors ending in December 2013.

Report of the Editor of the Journal of Economic Perspectives (Autor). Autor referred to his report, which is published in the *2011 Supplemental Proceedings*. He thanked Timothy Taylor and Ann Norman for their help in publishing the *Journal*. He noted that the 100th issue of the *JEP* would be published during 2011 and that it will include articles by the *JEP*’s founders.

Acting on Autor’s recommendation, it was VOTED to appoint Katherine Baicker, Ray Fisman, Chang-Tai Hsieh, and V. Kerry Smith to three-year terms as Associate Editors ending in December 2013.

There followed a discussion of the policy of the Advisory Committee on Editorial Appointments that limits the number of members of a journal’s Board of Editors normally to three, and under special circumstances four, per institution. Inquiries were made as to whether the limit was three or four, whether coeditors were considered in counting representatives of a specific institution, and whether editors were expected to clear names with the Advisory Committee prior to inviting a candidate to join the Board. The Advisory Committee was asked to review and clarify these issues and report to the Executive Committee at the April meeting.

Report of the Editor of the American Economic Journal: Applied Economics (Duflo). Duflo referred to her written report, which is published in the *2011 Supplemental Proceedings*. She noted that the submission rate to *AEJ: Applied* continues to rise, the acceptance rate is about nine percent, and the *Journal*’s short turnaround time on submitted manuscripts is being maintained.

Acting on Duflo’s recommendation, it was VOTED to appoint Seema Jayachandran and Jesse Shapiro to three-year terms on the Board of Editors ending in December 2013.

Report of the Editor of the American Economic Journal: Economic Policy (Auerbach). Auerbach referred to his written report, which is published in the *2011 Supplemental Proceedings*. He reported that the acceptance rate for manuscripts submitted to *AEJ: Policy* is about 13 percent. After explaining that coeditor Hilary Hoynes had accepted an appointment as coeditor of the *AER*, Auerbach recommended, and it was VOTED, to appoint John Karl Scholz to a three-year term as coeditor ending in December of 2013.

Report of the Editor of the American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics (Davis). Davis referred to his written report, published in the *2011 Supplemental Proceedings*. He reported that *AEJ: Macro* received 222 submissions during 2010, and that 90 percent of submissions receive a first decision within four months. In June 2010 Maurice Obstfeld was re-appointed by an e-mail vote to a three-year term ending June 2013 on the Board of Editors of the *AEJ: Macro*.

After it was discovered that the tables in the reports of the editors do not all contain the same information, it was decided to ask the editors of the five refereed journals to try to develop a template that would coordinate the reporting of information about the journals.

Report of the Editor of the American Economic Journal: Microeconomics (Postlewaite). Postlewaite referred to his written report, published in the *2011 Supplemental Proceedings*. He reported that submissions to *AEJ: Micro* increased by about twenty percent during 2010. Following Postlewaite's recommendation, it was VOTED to appoint Michael Ostrovski to a three-year term on the Board of Editors of *AEJ: Micro* ending in December 2013.

No Poaching Rule (Moffitt and Goldberg). Since January 2009 the editors of the Association's five refereed journals had been operating under an agreement not to make offers to each other's Board of Editor members to switch journals. The agreement was initially implemented in order to assist in the development of the new *American Economic Journals*. The *AER* editor proposed to relax or eliminate the rule because the *AEJs* had successfully established themselves and no longer needed protection from competition for editorial board members. After an extensive discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of protecting the journals from efforts to "poach" editorial board members, it was VOTED that "If a member of the Board of Editors of the *AER* or an *AEJ* is approached to change boards, the requesting editor will first consult with the editor of the current journal of the member to learn possible reasons for hardship to that journal." This procedure eliminates the constraint on "poaching," while providing additional information to the Advisory Committee on Editorial Appointments to consider when it is asked to clear the editorial board candidate for appointment to the new board.

Report of the Director of Job Openings for Economists (Siegfried). Siegfried reviewed his written report, published in the *2011 Supplemental Proceedings*. He reported that new jobs listed returned to 2008 levels, recovering from a 21 percent annual decline in 2009. New academic job listings in 2010 exceeded the 2008 level, while new nonacademic job listings remained about six percent below 2008 levels. The largest increase in jobs listed in 2010 was in the business/industry sector. Academic jobs increased 17 percent in 2010. Listings in banking and finance declined from 2009 to 2010. Siegfried also reported for the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Job Market for Economists (Al Roth, Chair). He referred to the Committee's written report that accompanied the report of the Director of *JOE*. In 2006–2008 new PhD economists applied to an average 80 employers annually. The Committee recently conducted a review of the Association's signaling mechanism and late-market scramble. Signaling appears to, on average, raise the prospect of securing an interview with an employer by 25 to 32 percent. For the 2009–2010 job market, it appears that there were at least 15 job placements facilitated by the scramble.

Siegfried also reported that the Committee is concerned that the proliferation of required communications methods by which various employers accept letters of recommendation for job candidates is greatly increasing costs to those who serve as references for job candidates. Some institutions still require paper letters of recommendation, some require the use of Econjobmarket.org, some require personal e-mail transmission, and some require the use of electronic employer-specific letter deposit sites. The last, in particular, undermine economies of scale in letter distribution. There followed a brief discussion of alternatives to reduce costs of recommending graduate students for jobs, including the possibility of using the privilege of advertising in *JOE*, coordination with Econjobmarket.org to lower these costs, and an appeal to the Council of Graduate Schools to work on the problem, with no resolution to the problem.

Report on Association's Relationship with the Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (COPAFS) (Deaton and Fraumeni). The Association has been a member of COPAFS for decades. COPAFS organizes

workshops and conferences at which users of statistics interact with employees of government statistical agencies. After an extensive discussion of the benefits derived by economists from COPAFS, it was VOTED to continue the Association's membership in COPAFS, but to reduce the amount the Association contributes to COPAFS from \$15,000 to \$350 per year.

Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP) (Fraumeni). Fraumeni highlighted several items from her written report, published in the *2011 Supplemental Proceedings*. A regional CeMent mentoring conference will be held in conjunction with the November 2011 Southern Economic Association meetings in Washington, DC; a national CeMent conference will be held after the January 2012 American Economic Association meeting in Chicago. The Summer Fellows program continued in 2010 with the placement of eight fellows at cooperating organizations. The fraction of new PhDs who are women peaked in 2008, declining slightly to 33.4 percent in 2010. Thirty percent of senior economics majors at PhD producing departments are female; at liberal arts colleges the percentage of graduates in economics who are female is 37. The fraction of untenured assistant professors who are female is 27.8 percent at PhD granting departments. The comparable figures for tenured female associate and full professors are 21.8 percent and 10.7 percent, respectively. The proportions of untenured assistant professors, tenured associate professors, and tenured full professors at liberal arts colleges that are female in 2010 were 39.3, 32.7, and 25.0 percent, respectively.

There followed a brief discussion of the possibility of the Association fully funding CSWEP, which in 2010 was supported by a combination of \$35,000 from the Association and approximately \$15,000 raised from contributions of CSWEP associates. CSWEP requested an additional \$5,000 from the Association for 2011. The funding of CSWEP was referred to the Budget and Finance Committee to consider in April 2011; in the meantime, CSWEP was authorized to continue operating as usual.

Report of the Committee on the Status of Minority Groups in the Economics Profession (CSMGEP) (Ngina Chiteji). Chiteji referred to CSMGEP's written report, published in the *2011 Supplementary Proceedings*. She reported that the University of California, Santa Barbara

completed its contract to host the Summer Program in 2010. The Committee did not, at this time, have an acceptable proposal to host the Program after 2010, and, accordingly, the program will be suspended for 2011. She expressed optimism that the Committee would have a proposal to present to the Executive Committee at its April 2011 meeting to resume the Summer Program in 2012. Doug Steigerwald, who directed the Summer Program in 2008–2010, urged the Executive Committee to give careful consideration to what it hoped to achieve with the Summer Program. He emphasized that the foundations-level program helps to encourage an interest in graduate economics study among some students who, in spite of their ambition and effort, would not otherwise have pursued such study. The advanced level of the Program is directed at improving the preparation of already committed students sufficiently for them to succeed in the most demanding economics PhD programs. Chiteji also reported that the Mentoring Program, which works with students who currently are enrolled in economics PhD programs, had received a new grant from the National Science Foundation.

Report of the Committee on Government Relations (Moffitt for Abraham). Moffitt referred to Abraham's written report, published in the *2011 Supplemental Proceedings*. He reported that the Committee represents the interests of economists in Washington, DC, and other locations around the country. As is true of the Association more generally, the Committee does not take positions on questions of economic policy or on partisan matters. It is charged with informing the Association's leadership and economists about legislation, regulations, and agency decisions relevant to their scientific interests, coordinating with other organizations that share an interest in social science research, and promoting the value of economic analysis within the policy community and encouraging it to draw on the intellectual resources of the economics profession.

The Committee meets regularly by teleconference with Dan Newlon, the Association's Washington representative. It has created a website, encourages economists to apply for vacancies in government research and statistical agencies, and has encouraged economists to respond to a call from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for white papers advising

on “grand challenges on future research in the social, behavioral, and economic sciences” to be used by the NSF to plan future research support. In response to a request for advice on what actions to take if the 2011 Congress should attempt to target economic research with *disproportionate* budget cuts, it was decided that the Committee should provide information about the benefits of specific economic research rather than take a general position on budgetary cuts.

Committee on Economic Education (Watts). Watts reported that the Committee has organized what is anticipated to be an annual conference on teaching economics at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and research on economic education at all levels. The first conference is scheduled for June 1–3, 2011, at the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research. Fifty concurrent sessions and three plenary lectures are scheduled. Following the Committee’s request it was VOTED to provide a \$25,000 annual subvention to support the convention.

Ad Hoc Committee on the Annual Meetings (Abel). Abel reported that his Committee (members Jonathan Gruber, Lars Peter Hansen, and Joseph Quinn) met in October and formed preliminary recommendations about several issues posed to them, including the name of the Annual Meeting and the distribution of its revenues. He reported that the Committee would meet with the five “founding members” of ASSA during the Denver meetings. There followed a discussion of the Committee’s preliminary recommendations that the Committee will take into consideration in preparing its final report to the Executive Committee at its April 2011 meeting.

Standing Committee for Oversight of Operations and Publications (Eberly). Eberly reported that the committee (herself as chair, Autor, Hall, Lawrence Katz, and Dennis Epple, members) had recommended expanding the *AER* from four to six issues, changing the line length, font, and paper color of the *AER* to improve readability, and changing the Association’s dues structure to a lower level for a default no-print-journals membership. Remaining agenda issues include the appropriate level of net unrestricted assets for the Association, whether a print copy of the *Papers and Proceedings* issue of the *AER* should continue to be sent to all members of the Association after January 2012, and an appeal

from the Data Preservation Alliance for Social Sciences, asking the AEA to participate in an effort to create a consistent citation format for datasets. In the ensuing discussion, it was suggested that the Committee periodically survey editors and authors for ideas to improve the Association’s publication process.

The 2011 Program (Ashenfelter). Ashenfelter thanked his Program Committee for its help organizing the 2011 program. He noted that 39 percent of 287 submitted complete sessions and 17 percent of 897 submitted individual papers made the program. To further open the program to a wide range of participants, Ashenfelter organized 30 five-paper sessions with no discussants for 2011. This permitted him to include 150 individually submitted papers on the program.

The 2012 Program (Sims). Sims announced that he has a Program Committee appointed. Maurice Obstfeld will deliver the 2012 Ely Lecture, and Nobel Laureates Peter Diamond, Dale Mortensen, and Chris Pissarides will be honored at a luncheon on the second day of the meetings. He indicated that he plans to follow the procedure used for the 2010 and 2011 meetings of creating a number of five-paper sessions without discussants in order to increase participation by those who submit individual papers.

Report from the Representative to the International Economic Association (IEA) (Acemoglu). The IEA is a federation of over 60 national and regional associations, including the American Economic Association. Its purpose is to enhance personal contacts and mutual understanding among economists of different nations. Following Acemoglu’s recommendation, it was VOTED to continue the Association’s membership in the IEA through 2013.

Report of the Treasurer (Siegfried). Siegfried reported that the projected financial results for 2010 show a \$465,000 operating surplus. He presented the proposed 2011 budget, which is in Table 1 accompanying the Treasurer’s report that will be published in the May 2011 issue of the *AER*. It projects an operating deficit of \$206,000. Following a recommendation from the Budget and Finance Committee, it was VOTED to approve the 2011 budget.

Following Siegfried’s recommendation, it was VOTED to authorize Marlene Hight, the Association’s Convention Manager, as a second signatory on Association checks exceeding \$10,000.

The Association's net unrestricted assets on September 30, 2010, were \$17.9 million, 2.0 times budgeted expenditures (including ASSA) for 2010. The Association's target ratio of unrestricted assets to gross expenditures established by the Executive Committee is in the range 1.5 to 2.5.

Ethical Standards. After an extensive discussion of the appropriate role of the Association in matters concerning the ethical behavior of

economists, it was VOTED to create an ad hoc committee to consider the Association's existing disclosure and other ethical standards and potential extensions to those standards.

There being no further business to conduct, it was VOTED to adjourn at 5:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
JOHN J. SIEGFRIED, *Secretary*