

Report of the Committee on Economic Education

The Committee on Economic Education presented five sessions at the 2009 AEA meetings in San Francisco, followed by a day-long symposium on International Economic Education. A session on “The Economics Major as Part of a Liberal Education” was organized by David Colander (Middlebury College) and KimMarie McGoldrick (Richmond). The session featured a white paper by Colander and McGoldrick, who served as principal investigators for a grant awarded to the Committee by the Teagle Foundation. The grant funded several small conferences and presentations of early drafts at various professional meetings to develop and refine the final white paper. Several past and present Committee members participated in one or more of those meetings. At the San Francisco session responses to the final version of the white paper were offered by three economists who have served as administrators at prominent schools with strong liberal arts programs and traditions: Catherine Hill (Vassar), David Breneman (Virginia), and George Daly (Georgetown). The paper and responses will be published in the May 2009 *AER Papers and Proceedings*.

A second session, on “Training and Assessing the Effectiveness of Teaching Assistants in Economics,” was organized and chaired by Kenneth Elzinga (Virginia). Four papers were presented: “Preparing Graduate Students in Economics for Teaching: Survey Findings and Recommendations” by William Walstad (Nebraska-Lincoln) and William Becker (Indiana); “Are Female and Postgraduate Teaching Assistants More Effective? An Investigation of How the Gender and Experience of Teaching Assistants Affect Students’ Performance” by Ada Jensen and Petronella Horn (both at Stellenbosch University, South Africa); “Do Recent PhD Economists Feel Prepared to Teach Economics?” by James McCoy and Martin Milkman (both at Murray State); and “Group Differences in Performance: The Effects of Teaching Assistants on Collegiate Grades” by Sara Hastedt (Virginia). Discussants for the four papers were James Gwartney (Florida State), Gail Hoyt (Kentucky), Dirk Mateer (Penn State), and Sarah Turner (Virginia).

The third session featured papers selected from a call for papers on “Research in Economic Education,” organized and chaired by Sam Allgood (Nebraska-Lincoln). The four papers selected for presentation were: “Does Graduate or Undergraduate Teaching Load Affect Faculty Size?” by William Becker (Indiana), William Greene (NYU), and John Siegfried (Vanderbilt); “In-Class versus Out-of-Class Experiments in Microeconomic Principles: Is There a Difference in Student Learning?” by Tisha L. N. Emerson (Baylor); “Does Living Near Classmates Help Introductory Students Get Better Grades?” by Jeffrey Parker (Reed College); and “Survive Then Thrive: Talent, Research Motivation, and Completing the Economics PhD” by Wayne Grove (LeMoyne College), Andrew Grodner (East Carolina), and Stephen Wu (Hamilton College). Discussants for these papers were William Bosshardt (Florida Atlantic), Myra Moore (Georgia), and Julie Hotchkiss (Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta).

As in the past 12 years, the Committee sponsored sessions of teaching workshops as part of the AEA program. The first of these sessions was organized and chaired by KimMarie McGoldrick (Richmond), featuring papers by participants in the NSF-funded teaching innovations program (TIP), which is sponsored by the Committee and described in more detail later in this report. The papers presented were: “Base Groups versus Formal Groups in Cooperative Learning” by Tom White (Assumption College); “The Effect of Group Composition on Individual Student Performance in an Introductory Economics Course” by Robbie Moore (Occidental College); “Classroom Discussion in Intermediate Macroeconomics: Does the Use of Interpretative Question Clusters Impact Student Learning?” by Roisin O’Sullivan (Smith College); and “Pseudo-Socratic Dialogues in the Teaching Of Economics: Does It Work? And How?” by Neil Sheflin (Rutgers). Discussants for these papers were Brian Peterson (Central College), Lori Bell (Blackburn College), Denise Robson (Wisconsin-Oshkosh), and Dirk Mateer (Penn State).

The second teaching workshop was the annual poster session, organized by Wendy Stock (Montana State). Presentations were made by: Rojhat Avsar (Utah); Steven J. Balassi (St. Mary's College of California); Kevin Beckwith (Salem State College); Christopher Bell (North Carolina–Asheville); Catherine Boulatoff (Saint Lawrence); Marilyn Cottrell (Brock); Paul Dalzie (Lincoln University, New Zealand); Aju Fenn, Daniel Johnson, Mark Smith, and Larry Stimpert (Colorado College); Joshua Hall (Beloit College) and Mark Gillis (Duquesne); Christiana Hilmer (San Diego State); Eric Jamison and John Smith (both at the US Military Academy); Valerie Kepner (King's College); A. Wahhab Khandker (Wisconsin–La Crosse); Robert Lawson (Auburn); Dirk Mateer (Penn State); Rod Raehsler (Clarion); Geetha Rajaram (Whittier College); Julia Sampson (Malone College); Michael Seeborg (Illinois Wesleyan); Olga Shemyakina (Georgia Institute of Technology); John Spry (St. Thomas); and Sue Stockly (Eastern New Mexico).

The Committee sponsors the “Teaching Innovations Program” (TIP) for faculty members in economics, funded by a \$675,000 grant over five years from the National Science Foundation and codirected by William Walstad (Nebraska-Lincoln) and Michael Salemi (North Carolina). The project began in 2005 and features two workshops a year on interactive teaching strategies. The 2008 workshops were held in San Antonio and Chapel Hill. The 2009 workshops will be held June 5–7 in Santa Fe, NM, and June 12–14 in Rosemont, IL. Online modules on assessment methods and innovative teaching methods (such as case studies, classroom experiments, context-rich problems, cooperative learning, discussion, and interactive strategies for large classes) are completed by TIP participants following the on-site workshops. Of the 203 participants who completed workshops by January 1, 2008, 64 had completed one on-line module and 38 participants had completed two modules, which qualified them for a certificate of achievement awarded by the Committee. The list of those who received the certificates for work completed in 2008 appears at the end of this report. Participants are also encouraged to develop papers to advance the scholarship of teaching and learning in economics. One session for these AEA meetings, described above, was organized by KimMarie McGoldrick

(Richmond). Other sessions organized by the TIP staff are presented at regional meetings. A home page on TIP is posted at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/AEA/AEACEE/TIP/TIP.htm>. Walstad, Salemi, and McGoldrick will shortly submit a proposal to NSF for Tip 2.0, a program to construct and operate a distance learning facility in economic education.

In 2008 a revised version of a proposal developed by the Committee to create training modules on advanced econometric methods in economic education research was funded as part of annual grants on Excellence in Economics made by the US Department of Education to the National Council on Economic Education. William Becker (Indiana) has now developed two online modules, the first on data management and heteroskedasticity issues, and the second addressing endogenous regressors with natural experiments, instrumental variables, and two-stage estimators. These modules will soon be posted on both the NCEE and Committee Web pages. In 2009, working with William Greene (NYU) and John Siegfried (Vanderbilt), Becker will develop a module on panel data. The final module will deal with sample selection issues. Each of the modules includes datasets from published papers and programs written in LIMDEP, STATA, and SAS, specific to the module's topic. A formal “rollout” of all four modules is planned as a paper session and luncheon at the 2010 AEA meetings in Atlanta.

On January 6, 2009, with cosponsorship from the Council on Economic Education, the *Journal of Economic Education*, and the Senesh Endowment in Economic Education at Purdue University, the Committee hosted a day-long symposium comparing precollege and undergraduate economic education initiatives and research in four other nations (Australia, Japan, Korea, and the United Kingdom) where there are relatively “mature” and extensive programs with current US practice. Michael Watts (Purdue) and William Walstad (Nebraska-Lincoln) were the codirectors of the symposium. Papers were presented by David Round and Martin Shanahan (both at South Australia); Michio Yamaoka (Waseda University), Tadayoshi Asano (Yamamura Gakuen College), and Shintara Abe (Josai International University); Peter Davies and Guy Durden (both of Staffordshire University); and Jinsoo Hahn (Gyeongin National University of Education) and Kyungho Jang (Inha

University). Several members of the Committee and other prominent economic educators served as discussants or on a panel discussion of the issues raised in the four papers. A closing dinner featured a keynote address by John Taylor (Stanford). The four papers presented at the symposium are slated for publication in the *Journal of Economic Education*.

The Committee annually tracks the number of bachelor's degrees conferred in economics. Preliminary data collected from the AEA Universal Questionnaire, thus far from a sample of 164 schools that have responded from 1991–2008, show the number of economics degrees rising again. That resumes a trend that began after the 1996–97 academic year, following a plateau in the number of degrees awarded from 2005 to 2007. In 2006–07 there was a drop in graduates at public schools, and especially schools with PhD programs. In 2007–08 increases were seen at both public and private schools, including the public PhD schools. The share of degrees in economics earned by women has dropped slowly in recent years, despite the rise in the share of women among all college graduates. More detailed information, based on all responses to the survey, will be provided in a forthcoming report (Siegfried, *Journal of Economic Education*, Summer 2009).

In 2008, the Committee devoted a considerable amount of time responding to a policy review by the AEA Executive Committee of the annual sessions in the *AER Proceedings* that have been allocated to the AEA standing program committees. The economic education session in the *Proceedings* was put in place by the Executive Committee in the mid-1960s, but as other committee sessions were added in later years the program committee for the annual meeting was concerned about having enough space in the *Proceedings* for other sessions. An ad hoc committee was appointed by the AEA President to develop recommendations in April 2008, and by early May the Executive Committee determined that “There will be no change in the publication of one session organized and designated for publication in the May *AER* by the Committee on Economic Education. Also, the annual report from the Committee on Economic Education will be moved from the published *Papers and Proceedings* to a new *Proceedings* section of the Association Web site.” Beginning in 2009, all

AEA Committees will have their annual reports posted on the Proceedings section of the AEA Web site.

For the fifth consecutive year the Committee offered a continental breakfast at the AEA meetings for departmental directors of undergraduate studies in economics, to provide an opportunity to discuss issues of concern and share information. The session was organized by KimMarie McGoldrick (Richmond) and Sam Allgood (Nebraska-Lincoln).

The Committee Chair makes an annual presentation at the AEA Breakfast for Chairs of Economics Departments, to review the key activities of the Committee and call special attention to programs such as TIP or the econometrics training modules that are available or open to applications from economists at colleges and universities all across the United States. Preliminary results from the annual survey of economics majors are distributed to the department Chairs, and articles and sections in recent or upcoming issues of the *Journal of Economic Education* that are likely to be of particular interest to undergraduate and graduate instructors are noted.

Members of the Committee are called on to provide time and service each year, and they regularly and generously answer that call. For their commitment and support, I sincerely thank Sam Allgood, William Becker, David Colander, Kenneth Elzinga, Benjamin Friedman, William Greene, Alan Krueger, KimMarie McGoldrick, and Wendy Stock. Special thanks are due to Paul Romer who leaves the Committee in January 2009 after completing his second term. Paul led the way in establishing the annual Breakfast for Directors of Undergraduate Programs, and was involved in many other Committee projects over his six years as a member of the Committee. Staff members at the Council on Economic Education, including CEE President Robert Duvall and Senior Program Advisor Richard MacDonald, are also regular participants in the Committee meetings and projects, and the CEE regularly cosponsors special projects with the Committee, as noted at several points above in this report. Finally, I am pleased to announce that William Greene has agreed to serve a second term on the Committee, and that Doug Bernheim (Stanford) will be joining the Committee as a new member after the meetings in San Francisco.

Current information and past reports about the Committee and its activities are available at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/AEA/AEACEE/index.htm>.

Respectfully submitted,
MICHAEL WATTS, *Chair*

FOR WORK COMPLETED IN 2008, THE COMMITTEE AWARDED
TIP CERTIFICATES OF ACHIEVEMENT TO:

Sarah Cosgrove, University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth
Peggy Dalton, Frostburg State University
Dagney Faulk, Indiana University Southeast
Monica Galizzi, University of Massachusetts-Lowell
Julie Holzner, Los Angeles City College
Kathy Paulson Gjerde, Butler University
Tinni Sen, Virginia Military Institute
Natalia Smirnova, College of Mount Saint Vincent
Meghan Starbuck, New Mexico State University
David Vera, Kent State University