

**American Economic Association
Committee on Economic Education**

**Minutes of the Meeting of January 5, 2008
Riverside Hilton Hotel, New Orleans**

Members Present: William Becker, David Colander, Kenneth Elzinga, William Greene, Alan Krueger, KimMarie McGoldrick, Wendy Stock, and Michael Watts (chair).

Members Absent: Benjamin Friedman, Paul Romer

Invited Guests: Richard MacDonald, Vice President for EconomicsAmerica, National Council for Economic Education; and William Walstad, immediate past Chairperson of the AEA CEE.

After a buffet lunch the meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m.

1. Membership

David Colander, Ken Elzinga, and Wendy Stock have agreed to serve a second three-year term on the committee. Sam Allgood will begin a new term immediately following the 2008 AEA meetings. These appointments were approved by the incoming AEA President, Avinash Dixit.

2. Approval of 2007 Minutes and Annual Report

Minutes of the January 6, 2007 meeting in Chicago, and the 2007 report of the Committee (which will appear in the May 2007 *AER Papers and Proceedings*) were approved. These documents will be posted on the CEE Website: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/AEA/AEACEE/index.htm>

3. Grant/Proposal Projects

a) 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 co-directed by William Walstad and Michael Salemi. The TIP project began in 2005 and features ten workshops (two per year) on interactive teaching strategies. The 2007 workshops were held in Santa Barbara and Boston, with 66 participants. The workshop staff included Salemi, Pat Conway, Denise Hazlett, Mark Maier, and McGoldrick. The 2008 workshops will be held in San Antonio and Chapel Hill. The second phase of the program involves on-line instruction for participants after they attend the workshops, to help them apply the teaching strategies in undergraduate courses. On-line Blackboard modules have now been developed on assessment, case studies, classroom experiments, context-rich problems, cooperative learning, discussion, and interactive strategies for large classes. Participants who complete two of these modules receive a Certificate of Achievement from the Committee; the recipients of certificates awarded in 2008 are listed at the end of this report. In Phase III of TIP, participants have opportunities to advance the scholarship of teaching and learning in economics. One session at the 2008 AEA meetings, described below, was organized by Salemi and McGoldrick. Other sessions organized by the TIP staff were presented at the 2007 Western and Southern Economic Association meetings. A home page on TIP with information, including how to apply for workshops, is posted at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/AEA/AEACEE/TIP.htm>.

b) The Teagle Foundation awarded a grant of \$74,500 to the Committee in November 2006, to investigate the role of economics, and especially the undergraduate major in economics, in relation to the goals of a liberal education. David Colander and KimMarie McGoldrick serve as the co-principal investigators, and developed a white paper that was first reviewed by a subset of Committee members in January, 2007. Subsequent versions of the paper were discussed at small conferences held at Middlebury College in May 2007 and at the University of Richmond in October 2007. Recommendations from the paper will be presented at various regional and national meetings throughout 2008. A summary of the final paper, with

reactions from a panel of prominent economists who have served as college and university administrators, will be featured at a session of the 2009 AEA meetings, and are tentatively slated for publication in the May 2009 *AER Papers and Proceedings*.

c) A Committee proposal to offer training on advanced econometric methods in economic education research is currently under review at the National Council on Economic Education.

d) The Committee approved a proposal to organize and host a small symposium in January 2009, with co-sponsorship from the Journal of Economic Education and the National Council for Economic Education (NCEE). The purpose of the symposium is to compare precollege and undergraduate economic education initiatives and research in four other nations (Australia, Japan, Korea, and the U.K.) where there are relatively “mature” and extensive programs to current U.S. practice. Several papers from the conference are expected to be published in JEE. Modest funding will be sought to help defray travel costs for the international speakers. Robert Duvall, President of NCEE, will serve as an opening speaker and welcome participants. NCEE has also offered to help secure the funds for international travel subsidies, if necessary.

4. Annual Report from the *Journal of Economic Education (JEE)*

As the editor of JEE Bill Becker serves as an ex officio member of the Committee. The 2007 JEE annual report was mailed to all CEE members in December, so only two points from the report were highlighted in Becker’s verbal report to the committee. First, developments in the general education literature on the scholarship of teaching and learning may be having some adverse effects on discipline-specific research on teaching and learning, and influencing accreditation bodies (such as the AACSB) that influence many economics departments. Second, Bill Becker announced that he will probably step down as the editor of JEE no more than a few months after preparing the 2008 annual report. The NCEE appoints the JEE editor, and has begun the search process to identify his replacement.

5. Annual Report from the National Council for Economic Education (NCEE)

Rich MacDonald reported on a wide range of new initiatives and developments, including the relocation (in New York) and renaming (to the Council for Economic Education) of NCEE in the relatively near future. NCEE is concerned about the need to support funding for administration of the second National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in economics in 2012. The first NAEP was built around the voluntary national standards for K-12 economic education published by the NCEE, and a committee of prominent economists has now been appointed to undertake revisions and updates to the standards document. Two federal grants are currently supporting many of the NCEE initiatives, one for domestic programs and one for international programs in developing and transition economies. A Committee session at the New Orleans meetings, described below, featured K-12 research papers funded under the domestic Excellence in Economic Education program. MacDonald announced that he would be leaving the NCEE in December, and Bill Becker asked if another PhD economist would replace him on the regular NCEE staff. That has not yet been determined. Finally, broader questions concerning the academic-based program delivery network of the NCEE were raised by its recent suspension of reaffiliation reviews for college and university Centers and state Councils that are affiliated with NCEE, and in a recent e-mail sent to that network describing preliminary plans for a new national Center that might include both the name of a corporate funder and the NCEE (or CEE). After those announcements were made, Mike Watts asked NCEE for clarification on the NCEE’s commitment to an academic, non-profit organizational structure for its program delivery network, which he views as a necessary condition for the continuing special relationship that NCEE and the AEA CEE have enjoyed since the 1950s. Bob Duvall asked MacDonald to report NCEE’s continued commitment to an academic delivery network, and asked that the minutes of this meeting include that statement. That message was well received and not unexpected, but it was also noted that the relationship between NCEE and AEA CEE has changed

substantially over time. For example, in the 1960s the NCEE (then named the Joint Council on Economic Education) regularly met with an Advisory Committee made up exclusively of CEE members. While the expectation is certainly that the academic structures and relationships between NCEE and the Committee will continue, Watts suggested that the new NCEE structures and policies now under discussion should be reported to the Committee and discussed when they are finalized. There was general support for the Committee to do that.

6. CEE Sessions and “Events” at the 2008 (New Orleans) AEA meetings

As in recent years, the CEE sponsored six sessions and a breakfast for directors of undergraduate programs at U.S. economics departments. The CEE Chair also makes an annual report at the AEA Breakfast for Department Chairpersons, and provides the committee report to the AEA Executive Committee.

The first of the six Committee paper sessions at the 2008 meetings dealt with “Assessment of Economics in U.S. High Schools and Undergraduate Programs.” The session was organized by Michael Watts and chaired by Wendy Stock. William Walstad and Stephen Buckles provided the first, preliminary investigation of factors related to student performance on the first National Assessment in Educational Progress (NAEP) exam in economics. A second paper, by Walstad and Ken Rebeck, reviewed national norming data from a new edition of the Test in Understanding in College Economics (TUCE). The third paper, by Georg Schaur, Watts, and William Becker, presented national survey data on assessment methods used by economists in four different types of undergraduate courses. Discussants for these papers, which will be published 2008 AER Proceedings, were Alan Krueger, Stock, and Tisha Emerson. Attendance at the session was about 35.

The second session was a panel discussion on “What Should Be the Core of Graduate Economics?” organized by David Colander. The panel members were Edward Glaeser, Susan Athey, Bo Honore, Blake LeBaron, Michael Woodford, and Derek Neal. Attendance was approximately 50. The Committee may explore ways to help continue this discussion in other settings and formats.

The third session featured papers selected from a call for papers on “Undergraduate Economics Courses and Majors,” organized and chaired by Watts. The three papers presented were: “30,000 Principles Students: Some Lessons Learned,” by Ken Elzinga and Daniel Melaugh; “Weathering the Perfect Storm or Thriving in a New Environment: Assessing a Proficiency-Based Economics Major,” by Steven Myers, Michael Nelson, and Richard Stratton; and “The Economics Classroom without Grades: Promoting a Learning Environment by De-emphasizing Grades,” by Lester Hadsell. Discussants for these papers were Colander, Buckles, and Mary Ellen Benedict. Attendance at the session was about 65.

Rich MacDonald of the NCEE and Bill Walstad organized a session on “K-12 Economic and Financial Literacy.” The papers in this session were: “District Level Mandates and High School Students’ Understanding of Economics,” by Paul Grimes, Meghan Millea, and Kathleen Thomas; “Is Financial Literacy Improved by Participating in a Stock Market Game? Preliminary Results,” by Cynthia Harter and John Harter; “Measuring the Effects of the Financial Fitness for Kids Program for Early Elementary School Students in Chicago,” by Helen Roberts; and “Establishing State Specific Benchmarks in Economic Education,” by Roger Butters and Tammie Fischer. Discussants in this session were Jane Lopus, George Vredeveld, James O’Neil, and Bill Bosshardt. Attendance was approximately 20.

As in the past 12 years, the Committee sponsored some sessions with papers or presentations on teaching. The first of these sessions at the New Orleans meetings was organized by KimMarie McGoldrick and chaired by Michael Salemi, and featured papers written by participants from the TIP program, described above. The papers presented were: “Formative and Summative Assessment in Economics Principles

Courses: Are Applied Group Exercises Effective?” by Dagney Faulk; “Student Effort, Feedback about Their Effort, and Learning,” by Wayne Grove and Jerry Evensky; “Using Cooperative Learning to Enhance Student Research and Writing,” by Gail Heyne Hafer; and “Engaged Learning with the Interpretive Question Cluster Discussion Technique: Student Outcomes in a History of Economic Thought Course,” by Kirsten Madden. Discussants for these papers were Yu-Mong Hsiao, Tom Scheiding, Brian Peterson, and Judy Smrha. Attendance in the session was about 40.

The second teaching session was the annual poster session, organized by Wendy Stock, with a record 27 presentations by: G. Dirk Mateer; Mine Cinar; Pródromos Prodromídis; Charles Rock; K. K. Fung; Joshua Hall, Robert Lawson, and G. Dirk Mateer; Nancy Brooks; James Bruehler and Linda Ghent; Osman Gulseven; Holly Fretwell, Noreen Lephardt, and Robert Reinke; Rebecca Summary; Laura Shinn; Marilyn Cottrell; Johnnie Linn III; Catherine Lawson and Larry Lawson; Tom Creahan; Steven Myers; Jay Corrigan; Gwendolyn Morrison, Gene Beyt, Thomas Inui, and Debra Litzelman; Carsten Lange; Lynn Hunnicutt and Karen Travis; John Crooker; John Kane; Zhifang Peng; Yelena Takhtamanova; Mike Allgrunn, David Carr, and Robert Reinke; and Barb Bloemhof. Attendance varies during the session in this format, but for the full session was estimated at well over 100.

The breakfast meeting for directors of undergraduate programs was organized by KimMarie McGlodrick, and drew 12 directors this year. The group has already set a preliminary agenda for the breakfast next year, focusing on the development, use, and assessment of explicit learning outcomes for the economics major.

Mike Watts gave the annual briefing on CEE activities at the Chairperson’s breakfast, and began by noting that since it being established as a standing committee in 1956, the CEE has never had or requested a regular budget from AEA. Instead it works with a number of different groups and organizations, or seeks funding for special projects through grants, such as the current TIP Program funded by NSF and the new grant from the Teagle Foundation (both described above). Copies of a recent issue of the Journal of Economic Education and a special offer for departmental subscriptions to JEE were distributed to the Chairpersons. Handouts on preliminary results were also provided by John Siegfried from the AEA annual survey of departments, suggesting that for the number of undergraduate degrees awarded in economics, and the share of those degrees awarded to women, have remained essentially flat for the past three years, after about a decade of steady increases. Those who wanted more information on these or other activities of the CEE were encouraged to access the CEE website. Attendance was approximately 110.

7. CEE Sessions and “Events” at the 2009 (San Francisco) AEA meetings

At the 2008 meetings the CEE plans to sponsor six or seven sessions and the breakfast for directors of undergraduate programs. The first session will feature the Teagle white paper and responses, as described above, and will be organized by Dave Colander and KimMarie McGoldrick. This session is slated for publication in the 2009 *AER Papers and Proceedings*.

The second session will feature papers selected from a call for papers on teacher training programs for graduate teaching assistants in economics, or research papers with results on the effectiveness of TAs in economics courses. The session will be organized by Ken Elzinga. The papers will be slated for publication as a special feature in the Journal of Economic Education, subject to usual editorial reviews.

The third paper session will be organized by William Walstad and an NCEE representative, and will again feature papers on K-12 economic education funded under the Excellence in Economic Education project, described above.

Sam Allgood will organize a session of research papers in economic education, focusing on undergraduate or graduate economics, based on responses to a call for papers.

One or two sessions will feature presentations on teaching innovations by participants from the NSF-funded TIP project, discussed above. KimMarie McGoldrick will oversee the organization of these sessions, with Mike Salemi and Bill Walstad helping with the selection of presenters.

The annual poster session will be offered, with Wendy Stock overseeing the selection of presenters from those who respond to the call for posters.

The Committee will also co-sponsor the small symposium on international economic education, described above. It is also possible – pending funding and timing decisions – that a roll-out session for modules on using advanced econometric methods in economic education might be offered at or just before or after the AEA meetings. But it is also quite possible that, even if such funding is forthcoming, this event will be scheduled for the 2010 meetings in Atlanta.

8. Preliminary Plans for CEE Sessions and “Events” at the 2010 (Atlanta) AEA meetings

Bill Greene agreed to organize a session of research papers, tentatively slated for publication in the *AER Papers and Proceedings* – pending decisions by the AEA Executive Committee related to the *Proceedings* volume, described below. It is anticipated that the Poster session, one or more paper sessions based on Calls for Papers, one or two teaching sessions based on the TIP program, and a paper session based on the K-12 Excellence in Economic Education program, all described above, will also be continued. Additional sessions for these meetings may be developed over the next year to 18 months.

9. AEA Executive Committee Discussions on the CEE AER Proceedings Session (and Other Sessions “Dedicated” to AEA Committees)

Mike Watts and Alan Krueger reported on deliberations by the AEA Executive Committee concerning the *AER Papers and Proceedings* sessions that have been allocated to AEA Committees. The session allocated to the CEE dates back to a formal decision by the Executive Committee approved in March of 1964, but for other committees reflects recent practice/custom. There is some chance that some or all of these sessions could be terminated, offered in some years but not others, or moved to another AEA journal (such as the *Journal of Economic Perspectives*). A subcommittee of the AEA Executive Committee is to be appointed by the AEA President, to bring a recommendation on this question to the Executive Committee at its April 2009 meeting. All AEA Committees were invited to prepare a one-page rationale for continuing their session(s) – the CEE report is attached here. Alan Krueger stressed the importance of keeping the economic education session in the *AEA Proceedings* volume, rather than a journal with a different format for these articles, or a different readership or citation history. This issue obviously affects how the CEE will deliver future sessions at the annual meetings, its ability to commission papers that provide key information to department administrators and faculty members as a service to the profession, and the ability to recruit prominent economists to serve on the CEE.

10. “Sunsetting” Sessions on Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI)

Since the early 1990s, two sessions on computer assisted instruction have been offered at the AEA meetings, for the last decade or more organized by Betty Blecha. These were never counted as CEE sessions per se; but to promote information sharing and better coordination of topics and speakers the CAI the sessions were submitted to AEA by the CEE Chair each year. In recent years attendance at the CAI sessions fell notably, in large part because CAI had become such a well established instructional method/topic that papers featuring CAI often appeared in sessions focusing on particular content areas or themes. Following discussions by Blecha, AEA Secretary-Treasurer John Siegfried, and Mike Watts, the AEA decided to end the CAI sessions. Given that long history of service, the Committee voted to adopt

the following resolution, and to request that the AEA distribute the resolution to each of the persons mentioned in the resolution:

Be it resolved that:

The American Economic Association's Committee on Economic Education expresses its sincere thanks to Betty Blecha, Todd Porter, Mike Lovell, and William Yohe for initiating and continuing, for over 15 years, sessions on Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) at the annual meetings of the Association. Initially these sessions anticipated and promoted opportunities for developing innovative ways to teach economic concepts and issues in a wide range of courses and degree programs. Then, especially through Betty Blecha's persistence and care, the sessions were continued until, today, CAI has become a well established instructional tool in economics.

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Watts

Recipients of 2008 TIP Certificates of Achievement:

Joann Bangs, College of Saint Catherine
Gerald Baumgardner, Pennsylvania College of Technology
Kate Silz Carson, U.S. Air Force Academy
Xiaofen Chen, Truman State University
Michael Curme, Miami University
Craig Heinicke, Baldwin-Wallace College
Kristen Madden, Millersville University
Shreemoy Mishra, Oberlin College
Robert Moore, Occidental College
Sean Mulholland, Moravian College
Brian Peterson, Central College
Chris Phillips, Somerset Community College
Roisin O'Sullivan, Smith College
Robert Rebelein, Vassar College
Thomas Scheiding, Saint Louis University
Judith Smrha, Baker University
Andrew Tucker, Tallahassee Community College
Geoffrey Woglom, Amherst College
Richard Wood, Stetson University

The *AER Proceedings* Session on Economic Education

1) The Executive Committee accepted a policy statement on the role of the Association in economic education, and voted to include one session on economic education in the annual *Proceedings* volume, at its meetings on March 3-4, 1964. Since then, there is evidence that the share of annual raise and promotion and tenure reviews based on teaching – for academic economists at almost all Carnegie classifications of schools – has increased. The range of topics and fields covered in economics courses

has expanded, as has the available mix of teaching methods and technologies. The number of sessions on economic education at AEA meetings, and meetings of regional economics associations, has also increased – as has average attendance at the sessions. In sum, the demand for papers dealing with research on teaching and assessment, and on teaching innovations and techniques, has likely increased since the AEA Executive Committee first recognized the importance of including this session in the *Proceedings* volume.

2) Many of the *Proceedings* papers in economic education are commissioned as a service to the discipline, including recent papers on such topics as what courses are typically required in economics and business economics majors; how economics departments evaluate teaching; what standardized assessment instruments in economics are available for use in undergraduate and secondary economics, and how they are structured; factors determining the success of students in graduate programs, their initial placements, and success after graduation; and what programs are available to train graduate students and faculty members to be more effective teachers.

3) Some of the most cited and prominent papers in economic education are published in the *Proceedings*, unlike many other fields in which papers are published in a much larger number and wider range of journals. The AEA Committee on Economic Education (CEE) tries to choose papers for the *Proceedings* session that will be widely read and cited in the profession.

4) Having the *Proceedings* session plays an important role in being able to entice prominent economists to serve on the CEE – by asking them to organize and/or contribute to a session of papers.

5) Many professional associations do considerably more to promote better teaching and assessment in their disciplines, such as sponsoring regular conferences, journals, or special issues of journals. The CEE does not have (and has not requested) an annual budget from the AEA. Appointing the CEE, including six CEE sessions (in recent years) and several other economic education sessions at the annual meetings, and publishing papers from one of the CEE sessions in the *Proceedings*, constitutes the bulk of the direct support provided by the AEA for better teaching and assessment in economics.

6) Ultimately, the quality of the papers published in these sessions must speak for itself. We believe the great majority of papers published from the annual CEE sessions clearly pass this test.