

Committee on Economic Education of the American Economic Association

Minutes of the Meeting of January 4, 2004
Marriott Hotel and Marina, San Diego, CA

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 the status of the CEE membership. He reported that Alan Krueger and Paul Romer were new members this year. Michael Salemi had been re-appointed to a second three-year term.

2. Past Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of January 4, 2003 in Washington were approved as written.

3. San Diego Sessions

Bill asked for a report on the 2004 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: "Recent Research in Economic Education" was organized by Bill Walstad and Paul Romer served as chair. It drew about 70 attendees, but had strong competition from the Alan Greenspan session next door. The paper by Kim Sosin, Betty Blecha, Rajshree Agrawal, Robin Bartlett, and Joe Daniel reported on the cost-effectiveness of using technology to improve college economics instruction. The paper by Sam Allgood, William Bosshardt, Wilbert van der Klaauw, and Michael Watts presented a long-term effects study using survey and transcript data from four universities to investigate student remembrances and opinions of college economics years after graduation. The paper by W. Lee Hansen and Wendy Stock studied the match between the perceptions of graduate training by recent Ph.D. graduates and the desired skills and proficiencies sought in graduate education in economics. Michael Murray, Michael Salemi, and William Becker served as discussants for the session. The three papers are published in this issue of the AER Papers and Proceedings. Some concern was expressed by three discussants that the papers for this session were still works in progress and could use additional improvement. There was no action that could be taken at this late stage to address the issue.

Paper Session #2: "Economic Education and Journalism" was organized by Dan Hamermesh and chaired by Bill Becker. It attracted 170 attendees. The paper by R. Glenn Hubbard discussed the role that an academic economist can serve as a public intellectual in government or business. The second paper by Klaus Zimmerman described his experiences in advising policymakers through the news media in Europe. The third paper by Hal Varian explained the academic path that led him to become a columnist for The New York Times and the activities he undertakes to prepare such a column. The fourth paper by Daniel S. Hamermesh offered a media guide for economists so that they can increase the value of the economic content they provide through the media. The session discussants were Michael Mandel and Paul Solman. These four papers and the discussant comments will likely be published in a future issue of the Journal of Economic Education.

Workshop #1: "Teaching Methods for Principles" was organized and chaired by Michael Salemi. It was attended by about 40 people and included five poster contributions on teaching to literacy in the principles of economics course. (1) Strategies for teaching to literacy in the principles course: An overview (Michael Salemi); (2) Using position papers to assess economic reasoning skills and knowledge (Kay Strong); (3)

Active learning: Innovations from undergraduate courses at the open university (Paul Anand, Graham Dawson, Chris Downs, Ian Fribbance, and Mariana Mazzucato); (4) Promoting economic literacy through information literacy in introductory economics classes (Aju Fenn, Robin Satherwhite, David Schodt, and Jonathan Powers); and, (5) On the active learning curve: Using experiments and activities in the principles class (David Eaton).

Workshop #2: “Using Experiments in Classes” was organized by Charles Holt and chaired by Laura Razzolini. It focused on using experiments to teach new concepts and theories in the principles class. Lisa Anderson and Charles Holt made presentations at this active learning workshop that drew about 60 attendees.

Workshop #3 (held after the meeting): It was organized by Rae Jean Goodman and Mark Maier, and was entirely devoted to poster presentations of teaching ideas. The session included six interesting contributions from nine economics professors: (1) Active communication (E. B. Gendel); (2) Enhancing student reading of scholarly articles (Steven Greenlaw); (3) Using computer based technology for teaching game theory in a constructivist way (Carsten Lange and Amy Baylor); (4) Oxford’s interbeing project: Employing Eastern perspectives to teach principles of economics (Frank Mattox); (5) Six ways to use existing technology to enhance student learning and reduce faculty time (Steven Myers); and, (6) Student quantitative literacy: Importance, measurement and correlation with economic literacy (Peter Schuhmann, KimMarie McGoldrick, and Robert Burrus). There were about 60 attendees at this session.

High School Initiative. For the first 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 and John Morton from that organization. About 20 teachers attended an opening workshop session on Saturday morning. Bill Walstad and Bob Duvall gave a welcome to the group. Rae Jean Goodman conducted a workshop for the teachers, and Claire Melican and John Morton made presentations. Also, John Siegfried (AEA) and Bill Walstad put together a booklet for the teachers to identify ASSA sessions that might be of most interest from the many listed. The program included an opening breakfast session for high school teachers, a special ASSA program listing that identified sessions of particular interest to high school teachers, an evening reception, and a dinner meeting. Dan Hamermesh from the CEE gave a talk on “Economics as a Way of Life” at the dinner meeting. The CEE plans to sponsor a similar program for high school teachers at the 2005 ASSA meeting.

4. 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 (a copy of this annual report is available at the JEE website: <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 will now be included in JSTOR, a major accomplishment. He also expressed continuing concerns about publishing problems at Heldref (the JEE publisher). Also, the number of subscriptions are declining, perhaps because of availability of the JEE at the website. Bill Walstad reported that copies of the Summer 2003 and Fall 2003 issues of the JEE had been distributed at the Economics Department Chair’s breakfast and attention was given to the JEE in his chair report.

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; (2) a national conference on economic education and personal finance to be held in May 2004; (3) funding to revise the CD-ROM Virtual Economics; (4)

developments in the NCEE's work on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test in economics; (5) the organization of the Global Association of Teachers of Economics (GATE) for pre-college teachers; and (6) EconomicsInternational that works on economic education in transition economies.

c. Regional Teacher Workshops

Mike Salemi presented a report summarizing the status of the regional workshops that had been conducted under the sponsorship of the Committee and the NCEE. Over the three years of the project, \$73,500 in funding was provided by the Calvin K. Kazanjian Foundation, Inc. In 2003, nine new workshops were conducted and 327 participants attended. Over the three years of the project, 24 workshops were conducted and 777 participants attended. The participant ratings were very high: 74% said it was better than the next best alternative and 25% said it was as good as the next best alternative.

d. New Workshop Initiative

The new teaching project the CEE is co-sponsoring builds on its past teacher training programs and regional workshop activities, and is a direct result of the CEE Research Project. A proposal for "Interactive Teaching in Undergraduate Economics Courses" is under consideration by the National Science Foundation. This five year project has three proposed phases. In Phase 1, faculty participants will attend instructional workshops where they will work in teams to learn about interactive learning strategies and materials. In Phase 2, faculty members will return to their home institutions and receive on-line instruction to help use the new teaching strategies they learned at the workshops. 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, Michael Salemi, and Robin Bartlett. They will be aided in their work by many economics faculty with special expertise in teaching.

e. CEE Annual Report

Bill Walstad invited Committee members to make suggestions to him about the Annual Report that he had sent out prior to the meeting. A few minor corrections were offered. These changes will be made and the report will appear as is in the May 2004 AER Papers and Proceedings.

5. Program for the January, 2005 Meetings in Philadelphia, PA

a. Paper Session #1

Bill Walstad presented a proposal for a 2004 session on "Perspectives on Research and Teaching in Economics." This session would consist of three papers: (1) "Does Teaching Enhance Research in Economics?" (William Becker and Peter Kennedy); (2) "Economics Faculty Views of Research and Teaching Trade-offs" (William Walstad); and (3) "An Increased Usage of Contingent Faculty Doesn't Have to Mean Less Undergraduate Student Involvement in Research" (Ronald G. Ehrenberg). The papers from this CEE-sponsored session would be published in the AER Papers and Proceedings (May, 2005). The discussants are yet to be decided. The CEE approved the session proposal.

b. Paper Session #2

This session will focus on high school economics and there would be three papers: (1) "Using a Web Questionnaire for Interactive Economics Instruction with High School Students" (Alan Krueger); (2) "A Review of High School Economics Texts" (Don Leet and Jane Lopus); and (3) "The National Assessment of Educational Progress in Economics: Framework, Features, and Specifications" (Stephen Buckles and William Walstad). The discussants are yet to be identified. The set of papers would be slated for publication in the JEE. (This arrangement for publishing papers from AEA-CEE sessions in the JEE has a long history.)

c. Three Workshop Sessions on Teaching and Learning

The discussion turned to the three active learning workshops. Given the likely funding for the “Interactive” project noted above (4.d.), one workshop session will be reserved for the purposes of this new project. Mike Salemi will take responsibility for organizing it.

Charlie Holt also agreed to conduct another workshop on web-based experiments and strategies that would be similar to the one he led this year. The major difference is that these games would not require the use of technology to conduct them.

Rae Jean Goodman and Mark Maier will be organizing the traditional poster session. Efforts will be made to increase the number of poster submissions. Michael Murray agreed to help with this poster session.

d. High School Program

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

6. New Business

The main subject for new business was to begin considering ideas for sessions for the 2006 ASSA meetings in Boston. There were questions from several members about the schedule and process of organizing sessions. Bill explained that proposals for paper sessions were typically organized and presented over a year before the actual session. So, at the 2004 CEE meeting, the committee was considering the 2005 paper proposals. At the 2005 CEE meeting in Philadelphia, the CEE would consider the 2006 paper proposals. That schedule meant that paper proposals needed to be prepared from January, 2004 to about November, 2004. They would then be submitted to the CEE by e-mail in late fall for consideration and a vote at the January 2005 meeting.

a. Paper Session #1

For this session, the CEE decided that it wanted an open competition. Several topics were considered to give the session focus. An ad would be placed in the AEA publications inviting the submission of abstracts. There would be screening of abstracts to select potential papers. The selected authors would be contacted and invited to prepare papers. The papers from this session would be slated for publication in the 2006 AER Papers and Proceedings. [Note: Paul Romer will be in charge of preparing the proposal for this session.]

b. Paper Session #2

There was no initial proposal for this session. The papers would be slated for publication in a special issue of the Journal of Economic Education. [Note: Bill Becker and Bill Walstad will take charge of organizing this session.]

c. Workshops

Several suggestions for workshop sessions were offered. For example, Dan Hamermesh suggested that a workshop session be organized on innovations in teaching large classes in principles of economics. [Note: Bill Walstad will coordinate workshop suggestions and present a proposal at the next meeting.]

d. Other initiatives

The CEE also briefly considered the suggestion from John Siegfried (AEA Secretary) that the CEE organize sessions at the next meeting for directors of undergraduate studies and directors of graduate studies. There was some interest in this among the CEE, especially with sessions for undergraduate directors. Paul Romer volunteered to explore the possibilities of organizing a meeting with this group. Bill Walstad would work with him on this project. A session for graduate directors would be discussed further at next year’s meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.