Australasian Journal of Economics Education

MISSION STATEMENT

The Australasian Journal of Economics Education is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes papers on all aspects of economics education. With a view to fostering scholarship in the teaching and learning of economics, it provides a forum for publishing high quality papers and seeks to bring the results to a widening audience. Given both the increasing diversity of the student clientele, and increasing calls for greater attention to the quality of tertiary teaching, this Journal seeks to foster debate on such issues as teaching techniques, innovations in the teaching of economics, student responses to such teaching, and the incentive systems which influence the academic teaching environment. The AJEE is interested in research involving both quantitative and qualitative analyses and also in interpretative analyses based on case studies. While the Journal is Australasian-focussed, it encourages contributions from other countries in order to promote an international perspective on the issues that confront the economics discipline. AJEE aspires to:

1. Report research on the teaching of economics, and cultivate heightened interest in the teaching of economics and the scholarship of teaching. Pedagogical issues will be a central feature, and will encompass work on the teaching of economics in diverse contexts, including large and small classes, undergraduate and postgraduate classes, distance learning, issues confronting foreign students on-shore and off-shore, and issues related to the teaching of fee-paying MBA and other post-graduate groups from diverse disciplinary backgrounds. Though economics is the prime focus, consideration will also be given to work on other subjects that have a demonstrated relevance for the teaching of economics. Such issues will also involve evolutionary issues in the teaching of economics, in terms both of effective ways to teach evolving theory and of evolving technology with which to teach that theory (including on-line teaching).

Recognition will be given to the fact that economics as a discipline has not fared well in CEQ results (course experience questionnaire results) since the reporting of those results began in Australia. Nor has economics teaching typically been well received in the USA or UK, according to survey evidence. In that context the relevance to teaching of changing administrative arrangements in universities will also be highlighted (eg in terms of contemporary quality assurance procedures and other government policy changes in Australia and New Zealand).

2. Report research on the nexus between teaching and research (including research on the diverse, changing and potentially conflicting incentives within
the academic industry). Papers exploring the extent to which research and teaching activities are complementary or competitive will be welcomed.

3. Recognise the relevance of some more deep-seated implicit assumptions and issues of economic philosophy embedded in what is commonly taught, (as in Sen’s work on economics and ethics, for example). Inter alia, the question arises as to the way in which students respond to economics taught as a path to scientific certainty, as against economics taught as reflecting unsettled debate and vigorous controversy.

4. Recognise the place of history in the teaching of economics. Both HET and economic history tend to play a diminishing role in professional economics training, as emphasis on technique dominates. This a-historical approach to the teaching of economics has been criticised by many influential economists (including Joan Robinson, Leontief, Myrdal, Colander, and Robert Clower in his acerbic remarks about the value of much that is published in such prestigious journals as the AER). This line of criticism has been continued in the recent growth of heterodox economics associations in a number of countries (including one for Australia and New Zealand) and on the web through the Post Autistic Economics (PAE) newsletter. Historical and institutional factors will thus provide one focal interest.

5. Recognise interdisciplinary issues important to the presentation of economics in various contexts. On the one hand, economics students are not systematically exposed to the insights of other social sciences and the conformity or otherwise of their conclusions with those of economics. On the other hand, other disciplines within the social sciences and humanities (e.g. the Social Work profession) do not always include even an introduction to economics for their students, notwithstanding that economic issues are often very important determinants of the environment within which they operate. More fundamentally, questions arise as to whether social science is more than the sum of its respective parts, and as to whether the roots of economics can be fully understood in isolation from the history not only of economics but also of politics and philosophy.

6. Establish a link to the teaching of economics in the secondary schools, given that tertiary enrolments in economics reflect fluctuating enrolments in economics in the secondary schools.

7. Encourage on-going surveys of student response to the teaching of economics across Australasian (and other) institutions, including response to experimental teaching and to differences between institutional approaches. (c.f. Colander and Klamer’s 1988 survey of economics students at USA ivy league institutions.)

8. Monitor trends in the teaching of economics both globally and in the Australian and New Zealand university systems (such as enrolments, staff-
student ratios, international-domestic student ratios, offshore offerings etc), and the implications of those trends for various funding arrangements.

9. Promote a series of papers on specialised themes within the overall province of the teaching of economics e.g. on the teaching of Principles courses, the teaching of History of Economic Thought, the teaching of intermediate microeconomics and macroeconomics, the teaching of development economics, and likewise regarding teaching in such streams as Quantitative Methods, large first year classes, non-English speaking background students, the teaching of economics to non-economists, product differentiation in teaching economics, and professional education in economics in executive education programs outside conventional university contexts.

10. Monitor the measuring and rewarding of quality (economics) teaching within Australasian universities.