Report of the Editor: Journal of Economic Perspectives

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Report of the Editor
Journal of Economic Perspectives

This year marked the 25th volume of the *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. Indeed, since the journal started in mid-2007, the Spring 2012 issue will be the 100th issue. The journal seeks to contribute to the economics profession along multiple dimensions: introducing readers to state-of-the-art thinking on theoretical and empirical research topics; encouraging cross-fertilization of ideas among the fields of economics; providing analyses of public policy issues; providing readings for students; offering illustrations that are useful in lectures; sparking discussion among colleagues; suggesting directions for future research; and analyzing features of the economics profession itself.

In 2011, the journal continued its pattern of publishing a mixture of symposia, individual papers, features, correspondence, and other material. During the year, the *JEP* published seven symposia: Financial Regulation After the Crisis, Constraining Health Care Costs, Field Experiments, Emigration, Neuroeconomics, Genetics and Economics, and After Retirement.

These symposia were complemented by a mixture of articles on a wide array of topics, including selection in insurance markets, obesity, economic lessons from the kibbutz, offshoring, the legal drinking age, charitable giving, the effects of fetal origins, migration, the case for tax progressivity, the Clark medal awarded to Esther Duflo, and others.

In addition, the journal continued several ongoing features in 2011. Joseph Persky of the University of Illinois at Chicago managed the "Retrospectives" feature on topics in the history of economic thought. *JEP* Managing Editor Timothy Taylor contributed the "Recommendations for Further Reading" column. As in years past, the journal continued to publish "Notes."

The issues of the journal in the year 2011 totaled 992 pages. Table 1 shows the breakdown of the space between regular articles, feature articles, comments, notes, and miscellaneous items like advertisements and announcements, with comparisons over the last five years.

At the end of 2011, five Associate Editors completed their three-year terms. They are: Benjamin G. Edelman, Harvard University; Robert Feenstra, University of California at Davis, Susan Houseman, Upjohn Institute for Employment Research; Anil Kashyap, University of Chicago; and Rohini Pande, Harvard University. In addition, Fiona Scott Morton took a year of leave at the U.S. Department of Justice. We thank them for their efforts and for their contributions to the journal. The incumbent Associate Editors are: Katherine Baicker, Harvard University; Ray Fisman, Columbia University; Chang-Tai Hseih, University of Chicago; Jonathan Morduch; New York University; Bruce Sacerdote, Dartmouth College; and Kerry Smith, University of Arizona. The expiration dates for the terms of the incumbent Associate Editors are listed in Table 2.

Although the Editors and Associate Editors solicit the bulk of the articles appearing in the journal, a number of unsolicited proposals and papers arrive directly at the journal's administrative office. The journal charges no submission fee and thus attracts a wide range of proposals. Unsolicited articles are read by the *JEP* editors and discussed during conference calls. All unsolicited submissions to *JEP* receive a response, but no referee reports are produced. Many submissions are inappropriate for the journal for one reason or another, often including level of specialization, style of exposition, or narrowness of focus. Others are good ideas that overlap to some extent with plans that have already been made. Still other suggestions offer possibilities, and spark a discussion between the Editors, the Associate Editors, and the author that sometimes leads to a *JEP* article.

Two issues to which *JEP* must be perpetually attentive, in its role as a primarily solicited journal, are the diversity of authorship and the openness to the economics profession as a whole.

On one side, one tendency of the *JEP* editors, when they are considering papers on a possible topic, is to invite papers from those whom they already know to be acknowledged authorities on that issue. The outcomes of such a practice can raise concerns about diversity and openness. On the other side, a solicited journal has far greater flexibility than a standard double-blind refereed journal to invite papers from those with alternative views, those from neighboring fields, or just those who seem to have something interesting to say.

To amend the common (mis)perception that *JEP* is exclusively a solicited journal, we have striven to increase knowledge of how authors can submit paper proposals to *JEP* and how these proposals will be evaluated. We published a set of revised proposal guidelines in the Spring 2011 issue of the *JEP* ("Considerations for Those Proposing Topics and Papers for *JEP*") and will publish them again when there is space at the back of issues in the future. We have made these guidelines readily accessible in text form at the *JEP*'s homepage (see http://www.aeaweb.org/*JEP*/submissions.php). We have over the last three years compiled statistics on which of our published articles started out as unsolicited proposals. Looking at the most recent data, we find that 19 percent (16 of 83) articles that were published in 2011 or are currently slated for future issues began as unsolicited proposals.

The editorial leadership of the journal was unchanged in 2011. David Autor of MIT continued as editor of *JEP*, while Chad Jones of Stanford University and John List of the University of Chicago served as coeditors. Chad Jones will conclude his term of service as *JEP* coeditor at the end of 2011, and his replacement will be named at the 2012 ASSA meeting.

Following the AEA's new subscription and dues model, paper copy mailings of the *JEP* will be discontinued for AEA members at the time of membership renewal (or initial membership for new members) unless they elect to pay $15 annually (for domestic readers) to receive the journal in print. As one way to reduce the effect that this change might have on *JEP*'s visibility, the AEA elected in 2010 to make all past and future *JEP* issues freely available online from the journal's home page. At present, articles from 1994 forward are accessible at this site.

We are considering several additional mechanisms to increase reader awareness of the *JEP* in the postpaper era. In 2012, we will explore the idea of sending postcard mailings of *JEP*'s tables of contents to AEA members to explore whether this form of notification increases *JEP* downloads relative to the regular AEA Table of Contents e-mail "blast." In addition, the AEA is moving toward providing for electronic access to full *JEP* issues in PDF, Amazon Kindle and Barnes and Noble Nook formats. Because Amazon and Barnes and Noble do not currently allow for no-cost subscriptions to copyrighted material, it is likely that AEA will charge a modest price to users who choose to subscribe to electronic delivery of *JEP* in Kindle or Nook format.

During 2011, Ann Norman continued in her role as Assistant Editor. Her combination of professionalism, attention to detail, persistence, and good humor has served the journal well. The journal's editorial offices are geographically divided. Ann Norman is based at the Pittsburgh office of the American Economic Association. Managing Editor Timothy Taylor is located at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. We thank Macalester for administrative and computer support, and for providing a good home for the journal.

Timothy Taylor continued as Managing Editor of the journal in 2011. As in years past, the Editors feel that they cannot overstate the role that he has played in the operation of the journal. He has managed the day-to-day operations of the journal smoothly and ensured that the fundamental objectives of the journal are satisfied. He has performed the difficult task of persuading authors to amend and rewrite their articles with vigor, verve and skill, and has shown that it is possible to edit papers in such a way as to increase their clarity and accessibility, while still retaining the distinctive voice of each author.

David Autor, Editor

TABLE 1—PAGE DISTRIBUTION FOR THE *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 2007–2011

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total pages	1,024	992	976	1,008	992
Pages of full-length articles	852	844	828	864	824
(number of articles)	(39)	(40)	(38)	(45)	(37)
Pages of introductions and comments	0	0	2	0	14
(number of items)	(0)	(0)	(1)	(0)	(1)
Pages of features	112	86	84	94	92
(number of features)	(10)	(7)	(8)	(8)	(8)
Comments/correspondence	2	14	6	0	6
Notes and index	20	18	18	16	12
Table of contents	8	8	8	8	8
Advertisements and announcements	30	22	30	26	36

TABLE 2—SCHEDULED EXPIRATION OF TERMS FOR ASSOCIATE EDITORS

January 2012	January 2013	January 2014
Benjamin Edelman	Jonathan Morduch	Katherine Baicker
Robert Feenstra	Bruce Sacerdote	Raymond Fisman
Susan Houseman		Chang-Tai Hseih
Anil Kashyap		Kerry Smith
Rohini Pande		