

THE ECONOMETRIC SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORTS, 2002

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

THE ECONOMETRIC SOCIETY is an international association that promotes research in economics using quantitative approaches, both theoretical and empirical. The Society's world-wide membership is organized in six regions, North America, Latin America, the Far East, Australasia, South and South-East Asia, and Europe. In pursuit of its objectives, the Society publishes a journal, *Econometrica*, and a World Congress meets every five years. The Society's web site, <http://www.econometricsociety.org/>, contains detailed information about its history, structure and operations, as well instructions on how to join.

1. *ECONOMETRICA*

Econometrica publishes high-quality papers in economic theory, econometric theory, and empirical economics. Many studies rank it at the top among economics journals for its impact; for example, see Glenn Ellison, "The Slowdown of the Economics Publishing Process," *Journal of Political Economy*, 2002, Vol. 110, No. 5, 947–993. *Econometrica* is currently edited by Glenn Ellison with the help of four Co-Editors, Costas Meghir, Eddie Dekel, Joel Horowitz, and Andrew Postlewaite, and several Associate Editors. On behalf of the Society, I am happy to thank all of these, and all the Associate Editors, for their contribution to the journal's success. Glenn Ellison will step down on June 30th 2003. A committee, chaired by the First Vice-President Eric Maskin, which included Richard Blundell, Glenn Ellison, and Lars Hansen, searched for a new editor. Suggestions from the members of the Society were solicited by e-mail. I am glad to report that Eddie Dekel will edit *Econometrica*, starting July 1st 2003. From the same date, David Levine has accepted to become coeditor. All my wishes accompany the renewed team. Dorothy Hodges continues in her invaluable role as Managing Editor, and I am happy to take this opportunity to express the Society's gratitude to her.

The issues of *Econometrica* have been substantially heavier than usual in 2001 and 2002, when the volumes contained about 40% more pages than usual. This has reduced the acceptance-publication delay from fourteen months to around nine months.

2. MONOGRAPH SERIES

The Econometric Society Monograph Series is published by Cambridge University Press for the Society, and members are eligible to a 40% discount on their purchases of volumes in the series. Matthew Jackson (for economic theory) and Andrew Chesher (for econometrics) edit the series since 2001. The 2000 World Congress volumes should be available at the time this report is in press. A promising idea of the editors is to include in the series shorter ventures of 100–150 pages surveying cutting-edge or important topics, written by eminent scholars.

3. MEETINGS

Six open regional meetings were held this year: the Winter (Atlanta, January) and Summer (UCLA, June) meetings of the North American Region, the Summer Meetings in Australasia (Brisbane, July), Latin America (Sao Paulo, July), and Europe (Venice, August) and a Winter Meeting in South and South East Asia (Lahore, December). It was

a real pleasure for me to attend five of these, all but the Atlanta meeting, and to observe the large attendances, the high quality of the papers, the efforts of the organizers, and the diversity of the themes and setups across the regions. I want to commend in particular the regional and local organizers of the Latin American region, Aloisio Araujo and Fernando Garcia, and their colleagues, for bringing in Sao Paulo senior researchers from all over the world and overcoming great difficulties of finance and logistics. I also want to thank Asad Zaman, who has organized in the South and South East Asian Region a meeting gathering both Indian and Pakistani economists in a period of international tension. All the program committees and local organization committees are listed on the Society's web site.

Three invited special lectures are presented at the regional meetings. The Walras-Bowley Lecture, presented at the North American Summer Meetings, was given by Richard Blundell in Los Angeles in 2002. The Fisher-Schultz Lecture is presented at the European Summer Meetings, and this year's speaker in Venice was Robert Porter. The Marschak Lecture is given at one of the other regions in rotation. This year the South and South East Asian region hosted the lecture in Lahore, and the speaker was John Moore. I commend all the speakers for their excellent presentations.

A few innovations in the organization of these meetings are noteworthy. David Levine and William Zame have made the proceedings of the Los Angeles meeting available on the web, on the Econometric Society web site. In Europe, it has been decided experimentally to run the summer meeting in parallel (instead of back to back) with the European Economic Association in 2003 and 2004. The management workload of the organizers has been much reduced in the recent past with the use of web based software: *Conference MakerTM*, designed by John Rust, specifically for the Econometric Society, is used by all the regions except Europe, which recourses to a commercial product, *Web MeetsTM*, which helps to coordinate with the European Economic Association.

The European and South and South East Asian regions hold small closed meetings, on top of the above large open meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to bring together a small group of senior researchers of the Econometric Society with bright young Ph.D's of the region who are potentially interested in the aims of the Society. The European meetings, which have a long history, will get more visibility in the future through their organization on the web (see the Budapest meeting, November 2002).

4. ELECTORAL COMMITTEES

The President begins his term of office by appointing several committees, which then do all the work to prepare the elections! I am very grateful to the chairs and members of all of these committees for their time, and the conscientiousness with which they performed their tasks.

Avinash Dixit, as the Past President, chaired the Council Nominating Committee. The current President, First Vice-President (Eric Maskin), Second Vice-President (Ariel Rubinstein), Treasurer (Robert Gordon), and Secretary (Julie Gordon) are ex-officio members of this committee. The others members were John Campbell, Fumio Hayashi, Andreu Mas-Colell, Torsten Persson, and Robert Porter. The committee produced a list of eight candidates from the North American region, four from the European region, three from Latin America, two from the South and South East Asian region and two from the Far East. The results of the election are listed on the back cover.

The Officers' Nominating Committee consists of four Past Presidents, and the current President, First Vice-President, and Second Vice-President as ex-officio members. This year's committee was ably chaired by Robert Wilson, and Elhanan Helpman, Jean-Jacques

Laffont, and Christopher Sims were the other members. Thomas Sargent was elected as the incoming Second Vice-President.

Vincent Crawford chaired the Fellows' Nominating Committee, and the other members were Michihiro Kandori, Hashem Pesaran, Jose Scheinkman, and Xavier Vives. The outcome of the resulting elections is announced in this issue.

5. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee decides on the ongoing business of the Society. I report below on the main decisions taken this year.

The 2005 World Congress will take place in London and will be hosted by University College.

The Marschak Lecture, hosted by the Latin American region in 2003, will be allocated to the Australasian region in 2004.

The Econometric Society relies on decentralized regional standing committees to maintain and develop its activities around the world. Alan Woodland in Australasia and Bhaskar Dutta in South and South East Asia, long time chairs of the standing committees, wanted to step down. After consultation with the regional committees, the Executive Committee proposed the job to Trevor Breusch (Australasia) and Arunava Sen (South and South East Asia) for a three year term, and I am glad to report that both have accepted to take this responsibility.

On top of regular business, I have appointed two committees to look in depth into specific issues.

Ariel Rubinstein has accepted to chair the first of these committees whose mandate is best described by the e-mail that I sent him at the beginning of January 2002:

The Web has transformed the way scientific knowledge is disseminated. I am glad that you agree to head a committee to see how the Econometric Society can best use this new means of communication. The committee could fruitfully work along three directions:

1. Reviewing modes of publication that have appeared on the Web;
2. Establishing new publication methods, appropriate to the aims of the Econometric Society;
3. Constructing new forums of communications.

It would be great if the committee's proposals would help furthering the influence of the Society in regions of the world where it is underrepresented and/or in subfields which are not well covered by *Econometrica*.

Bhaskar Dutta, Glenn Ellison, David Levine, and John Rust have worked on the Rubinstein committee, to which Robert and Julie Gordon also contributed. The report of the committee should be available, appropriately on the Web, in the middle of 2003.

The report contains a lot of useful information and a number of suggestions. Based on the report, some decisions were taken in the Venice Executive Committee Meeting in August 2002. To pursue further, a special meeting of the Executive Committee convened in Washington DC in January 2003. There remains a number of open questions (organization of discussion groups, electronic journals, etc. . .), which will be brought in the future. I shall only mention here some of the decisions that were taken in Venice.

There was a gap in the contents of *Econometrica* that could be accessed on line, between the JSTOR and the Basil Blackwell sites. The 1997 and 1998 volumes of *Econometrica* have been added to the contents of JSTOR, thus eliminating the gap prior to the Blackwell-managed electronic access, which begins in 1999.

It was decided to establish an electronic data archive for articles that have appeared in *Econometrica*. This archive might also contain details on experimental papers, and material judged to be too long for the printed version. *Econometrica* papers will be posted in pdf format on the ES web site as soon as they are accepted. To implement these developments, it was decided in Washington to hire an electronic editor to *Econometrica*.

There was some discussion as to what it means to be a member of the Society, at a time where we might give electronic access to *Econometrica* to libraries, so that a large fraction of the current membership would be able to access *Econometrica* electronically without subscribing individually. The Kreps committee (see below) will investigate this question. In the meanwhile, it was recalled that participants at regional meetings should be members of the Society (while this was indeed the rule, it was not enforced in some regions). Moreover, effective January 1, 2003, in order to submit a paper to *Econometrica*, at least one of the authors must be a member of the Society.

A committee was set during the Fall 2002 to look into the election of Fellows to the Econometric Society. The outcome of the 2001 election is unusual: the number of elected fellows was very low (10), while participation (the proportion of returned ballots) was the highest in the decade. There are also longer run worries. I have heard a variety of comments at the various Econometric Society meetings, some arguing that the fellows were getting older, that the age at which one could expect to become a fellow gets higher and higher, so that young US professors are not interested anymore in the Econometric Society, that the number of fellows taking an active part in the functioning of the Society (meaning aged less than 65) is not large enough as a proportion of members, finally that the Society should have a larger number of Fellows to accommodate the needs of new subfields and developing regions.

It is not known whether any of these remarks stands to the facts, but the Executive Committee of the Econometric Society found that they need to be investigated thoroughly and, in the event, change(s) be proposed to the procedure for the election of Fellows. Later the mandate of the committee was extended to look into the status of the members of the Society.

We were fortunate that David Kreps accepted to chair this committee, and that Salvador Barbera, Faruk Gul, Bo Honoré, and Kenneth Wallis accepted to participate. The report of the committee should be presented in August 2003 at the Stockholm meeting of the Executive Committee.

Other decisions taken by the Executive Committee on matters of editorial succession, etc., are reported in the appropriate sections. Matters concerning membership and finances are discussed in the Secretary's and the Treasurer's reports in the January issue.

6. ADMINISTRATION

Finally, it has been a delight for me to work with Robert Gordon, the Society's Treasurer, and Julie Gordon, the Secretary and Executive Director. For more than 25 years, they have been the Society's continuity and memory. Their dedicated work, and their supervision of the excellent staff and helpers in the Society's Evanston office, are to a considerable extent responsible for the strength and stability that the Society enjoys today.

Guy Laroque
PRESIDENT IN 2001