

Why a Student Journal in the History of Economic Thought?

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Oikonomos was created to provide a new space for student writing. I had originally planned to start an online student journal on Economics in general that would accept work in the history of economic thought (HET). Several such journals already exist, but there is no such journal dedicated to student work in HET. The choice of the title *Oikonomos*, the Greek word for household management and stewardship, which evolved over time to political œconomy to economics, was intentional as a reminder of the long history of economic ideas and their change over time. I wanted to start a journal that not only focuses on the history of economic ideas in a broad sense, but also, as the journal title implies, reflects upon the discipline itself. The goal of the journal is to invite essays and book reviews by students so that they can gain experience in research in HET. It equally seeks to support and encourage students' interest in topics in HET and provide experience with the review and publishing process. Papers on both the science and the art of political economy, to borrow terms from Sir James Steuart's *Principles of Political Economy* (1767), that use a variety of modes of inquiry will always be welcomed.

The reasons for starting a student HET research journal are manifold, but the main reasons are to develop and invest in the next generation of professional scholars in HET and to encourage all students in the exploration of economic ideas. Research by Sharon Weiner and Charles Watkinson (2014), among many others, has shown that involvement in both publishing a student research journal and preparing research for an undergraduate research journal positively influences students' career decisions to pursue scholarly research and publication in the future. The journal provides multiple opportunities for all students to receive feedback and publish, to serve as an assistant editor, and to serve as a student reviewer. In addition to the gains in knowledge and research skills from writing papers in HET, and persisting through the review and editing process that authors receive, student editors and reviewers also gain experience from learning the publishing process and working as a team alongside faculty, which is also beneficial to their future professional lives both inside and outside academia.

While the journal seeks to provide useful preparation for students after they graduate, it also serves as a practice in an intellectual *oikonomia*, in the sense of managing our disciplinary household and stewarding our resources. What does this mean for the university professor? Part of our work as faculty is to teach students the content of the history of economic thought and methodology, but another is to teach them modes of inquiry and techniques to conduct research and refine their writing. My wish is for the journal to act as an incentive for faculty and students to continue to promote research and writing in the field as a means of intellectual formation while cultivating students' interest in different approaches to the history of economic ideas.

As many colleagues in the field can attest, our students write outstanding papers in our courses but do not have a platform to share their research beyond student panels at conferences and symposia at our schools. While there are a number of undergraduate research journals in economics, they, like many professional academic journals in Economics, may overlook and under-publish submissions in HET. Thus, *Oikonomos* provides a unique opportunity to showcase

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undergraduate HET research in its own publication and a place where students can refine their ideas through the review and publication process.

Just as the research and rounds of review have been a learning process for the student authors and editors, so too has starting a new journal been a learning process for me. I am grateful for the patience and persistence of our student authors and for their contributions. According to Adam Smith in *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, there are several criteria to be a good writer:

1st—That he have complete knowledge of his Subjects; 2^{dly} That he should arrange all the parts of his Subject in their proper order; 3^{dly} That he paint or describe the Ideas he has of these severall in the most proper and expressive manner...(45).

Another mark of good writing, Smith says, is that “all the thoughts are justly and properly expressed in such a manner as shews the passion they affected the author with” (55). Our authors have fulfilled all of Smith’s criteria, and I am pleased to be able to publish their work.

The team of student editors (Mary Catherine Bridges, Emilio Montalvo, Lupe Torres, Corey Gunter) provided helpful input in the selection, review, and editing process and were trained on the finer points of our publishing software for our initial issue, and I am very grateful for their work. Each paper was reviewed by a set of faculty and student reviewers from around the world, and I am grateful to everyone who volunteered their time and expertise to work with us. It has been heartening to see how large and enthusiastic the international HET community is.

My thanks also go to the editorial board members, Edward Nik-Khah, Daniel Saros, Kyu Sang Lee, and Thomas Scheiding for their support of this project in its early stages and in its revival. Finally, I wish to thank the University of Dallas for its support of the journal in its startup phase through the King-Haggard Award and the History of Economics Society, without whose New Initiatives Grant the journal would not be possible.

After working with the student authors, reviewers, and editors, the view from here indicates that, as long as we as a field continue to foster it, the future of explorations into the history of economic thought remains bright.

References

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