

Minutes
SOLE Board Meeting
Arlington, Virginia
5/3/19

Present: Joseph Altonji, Katharine Abraham, Robert Moffitt, Martha Bailey, Dan Black, Charlie Brown, Nicole Fortin, Jeff Smith, Chris Taber, Paul Oyer, Alexandra Spitz-Oener, Andrew Seagram, Danielle Staudt

By Agenda item:

1. Recap of Final Agreements with U. of Chicago Press and PAA

Joe Altonji reviewed the final agreements between SOLE and the University of Chicago Press and the Population Association of America. Both agreements had been previously approved by the Board.

2. Summary of SOLE finances

Joe Altonji summarized the 2018 budget provided by Maggie Newman, showing a slight surplus of \$20,000, and there was a short discussion of future finances after the UCP and PAA agreements are in place. Andrew Seagram commented on projected revenues from the UCP, noting that the revenues are on track to meet the projections that had previously been made. There was discussion of the need to increase SOLE's reserve fund. Income from UC-Press in advance of PAA's takeover of management of SOLE will allow accumulation of a bigger reserve. But this is a longer term issue.

Part of the current reserve should be placed in a low cost diversified fund. Joe Altonji indicated that he would review the Vanguard funds and suggest one.

3. Discussion of Proposed Changes in the Bylaws

Robert Moffitt summarized the proposed changes in the Bylaws. The Board voted unanimously to approve the changes and to put them before the Membership for a vote. Danielle Staudt will check if there are any Washington DC or Virginia rules that might affect how the Bylaws need to be written.

4. Report on 2020 Berlin meetings with EALE

Alexandra Spitz-Oener reviewed the proposed procedures for the 2020 joint meetings with EALE in Berlin, with commentary by Robert Moffitt. All procedures were found acceptable by the Board. EALE will keep any conference surplus and cover any deficit, and SOLE will do the same for the future that it organizes. The Board also approved inclusion of AASLE on the Program Committee and for one earmarked session to be given to AASLE. AASLE will participate as a "collaborative partner." AASLE participants will be required to be a member of either SOLE or EALE. Consideration of arrangements for participation of AASLE in joint meetings after 2020 will be discussed by the Executive Boards of SOLE and EALE.

5. Report about paper submissions and attendance at 2019 SOLE meeting

Katherine Abraham reported that 738 submissions were received for only 225 regular paper slots (excluding posters) and that many good submissions had to be rejected. The number of submissions was somewhat below that in Toronto last year (820).

6. Preliminary Discussion of Possibility of Expanding Annual SOLE Meeting to 3 Days

Joe Altonji led the discussion and there was general approval of his proposal to study the costs and feasibility of extending the Meetings to 3 days, adding more parallel sessions on each day, or both. Planning for the 2022 meetings will start this summer and these issues can be discussed more at that time.

7. Discussion of if, when, and how SOLE should take positions on issues related to research in labor economics. Consider whether to take a position in support of a new NLS.

There was a discussion of the merits of different types of statements that SOLE might make in support of different issues. A wide variety of opinions were expressed. There was broad agreement that only issues related to the production and dissemination of research should be considered. The main points that came up are as follows.

1. Approval Process: Should authority to take positions be delegated to the Executive Committee? Or should approval of the membership of a recommendation from the board also be required? Simple majority or super majority?

2. Content:

a. Should SOLE simply notify members about an issue along with information about whom to contact to express an opinion? Or should SOLE publish statements?

b. Statement Content: If the latter, should those statements be limited to providing information about the existence of a question or issue, or should they advocate for a decision. For example, the issue of whether SOLE should provide a statement of support for a new NLS cohort was part of the motivation for the discussion at the board meeting. Should such a statement simply highlight the scientific value of the NLS cohorts and the potential contribution of a new one, or should it in addition say that BLS should fund it?

3. There was some concern about how SOLE would pick and choose among issues that fall within the scope of the policy. For example, there are many data collection projects that might ask for a statement of support.

It was agreed that further discussion is needed.

8. Other business

Martha Bailey suggested that SOLE might adopt a code of conduct. One option would be simply to adopt that recently adopted by the American Economic Association. Members of the board are to read the AEA code, and the issue will be given further consideration.