**Irish Economic Association AGM**

**Friday May 6th 2016**

**Report from the President**

**Donal O’Neill, Maynooth University**

In this report, I review the main activities of the IEA over 2015-2016.

I congratulate John McHale, Brendan Kennelly and their colleagues at NUIG for an excellent job in organising this year’s conference. It is particularly encouraging to see so many senior economists on the programme once again. The decline in the number of senior academics over the years was commented upon and discussed two years ago and efforts were made to reverse this trend last year. It is great to see that this upturn in participation by senior members of the Association has been maintained this year. The 2017 conference will be organised by UCD (with Frank Walsh and Orla Doyle as coordinators). The 2018 conference will be organised by the Central Bank of Ireland.

Throughout the year the Council made a number of decisions regarding the running and duties of the IEA.

After some discussion the Council agreed to take over the responsibility of hosting and maintaining the Irish Economy Blog, originally established and maintained by Philip Lane. Stephen Kinsella has taken the lead role in this initiative and in recent weeks Stephen has re-launched the Irish Economy Blog, complete with new interface.

Among the changes introduced are

* Upgraded to latest version of
* Improved security of individual files and folders.
* The site now produces static .html files and so should load much, much faster on people’s devices.
* Installation of a new, mobile friendly, theme which will load very quickly on any site.
* User profiles updated, posters can now add images.
* Equations can now be written in LaTeX format if necessary.
* Tables can be created easily now using this syntax.
* Categories can now be edited by individual posters, as can the comments on, comments off button (default is off).
* The entire site is now backed up nightly once a week.
* Added an auto-tweeting function for the new IrishEconomy twitter handle.
* Added a capability for live blogs installed (for budget days, etc). Details are here: <https://vip.wordpress.com/documentation/using-the-liveblog-plugin/>

I would like to thank Stephen for the huge amount of work he has put to this task and congratulate him on the new site.

Throughout the year the Council continued its support of the Young Economist of the Year (YEOTY) awards. These awards are run by Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) in association with Laois and Kilkenny Education Centres, Maynooth University, St. Angela's College, Sligo and the Irish Economic Association. This year there were over 300 entries from secondary school students, with over 600 students invited to the prize giving ceremony on 14th March at the Citywest hotel.  On behalf of the IEA I acted as a judge for the competition (along with Rowena Pecchenino, Maynooth University). The overall senior award was won by Mark Glynn and Cian Buckley (Patrician College Newbridge – Teacher Barry Moriarty) for their project “Is social media an addictive good?” The IEA was further represented on the day by Carol Newman who presented the keynote address `How economics can be used to fight global poverty’. I would like to thank Carol for an excellent presentation, one which very well received by all in attendance. The support of the IEA for YEOTY continues our renewed commitment to developing and assisting with the teaching of economics at second level in Ireland.

Following contact from the EEA regarding the use of a code of Ethics by national organisations, the IEA agreed to set up a committee to look into the merits of adopting a code of ethics for economists in Ireland. Orla Doyle, Adele Bergin and Carol Newman prepared a draft report which was presented and discussed at the April meeting of the Council. Following the meeting it was agreed to prepare a final report for presentation to members at this year’s AGM. This report will be discussed later in the AGM. I would like to thank Orla, Adele and Carol for the time and effort they put into preparing this document.

I would like to thank Novartis for their continued support of the prize for the best Health paper presented at the annual conference. Last year David Green (Novartis) presented the prize to Orla Doyle for her paper on (with N. Fitzpatrick, J. Lovett and C. Rawdon) titled “Early Intervention and Childhood Health: Evidence from a Dublin based Trial.” Michael Curran (TCD) was awarded the Conniffe  prize for the best paper by a young economist at the 2015 Irish Economic Association Annual Meeting for his paper titled “Interest Rate Volatility and Macroeconomic Dynamics.” I am pleased to report that the quality of papers submitted for both of these prizes is increasing year on year and reflect very well on the organisation.

As Kieran McQuinn has come to the end of his term on the Council I would like to him for all his work over the past 6 years. I am also pleased to nominate Professor Rowena Pecchenino for the position of vice-president of the IEA for the period 2016-2018. Rowena will take over as President in May 2018.

In closing, I want to express my thanks for the work of all Council members during my time as President. It was a pleasure working with everyone and all their support is greatly appreciated. I would like to thank outgoing Past-President Philip Lane for his assistance during my term as President and would also like to extend my best wishes to incoming President John McHale (NUIG).