

Union for Radical Political Economics

2018 Annual Report

Membership

At the close of 2018, we have 471 active members. While we have struggled to expand our dues-paying membership in recent years, we know that the reach and impact of our work extends far beyond our membership rolls. We are committed to remaining a dues-paying organization driven by the participation of its membership.

Over the past year, we successfully transitioned to a new and far more sophisticated member database, which allows us to keep better track of member involvement, donations, and communication. This new database also provides greater account access for our members, making subscriptions, donations, and membership renewals much easier.

It is important to stress the need for formal membership (which costs \$20 per year at minimum). As a small professional association within our discipline, we are only truly stronger when we are together, and our growth as an organization can only serve to increase our influence within our field. We encourage everyone who is engaged with URPE but are not currently members to join today.

For specific questions about your membership, please email Steve Theberge directly at urpe@urpe.org.

Review of Radical Political Economics

In 2018, the RRPE received 128 manuscripts (not including book reviews or conference proceedings). As of January 1, 2019, 5 of the 128 have been accepted, and 61 have been rejected, for an acceptance rate of 4 percent and rejection rate of 48 percent. The remaining manuscripts are either still under review or awaiting revision and resubmission by the author. By comparison, the RRPE received 111 manuscripts (not including book reviews or conference proceedings) in 2017, with an acceptance rate of 20 percent (22 papers have been accepted), and a rejection rate of 68 percent (75 papers have been rejected)—the remaining 2017 submissions are either under review or awaiting revision and resubmission. One reason for the growing submission (and rejection) rates is RRPE's transition to online submissions in 2016—online submission makes the journal easier to find and submit to, including papers that are not suitable for our journal.

The RRPE also received 28 book reviews in 2018, 9 of which have been accepted and 4 have been rejected as of January 1, 2018, for an acceptance rate of 32 percent and rejection rate of 14 percent. By comparison, the RRPE received 30 book reviews in 2017, with an acceptance rate of 67 percent (20 were accepted) and a rejection rate of 17 percent (5 were rejected). The remaining submissions are either under review or awaiting revision and resubmission by the author.

In 2018, the journal received 16 papers from the URPE Sessions at the Philadelphia ASSA and the Boston EEA meetings. Ten of these were accepted, for an acceptance rate of 63 percent. The fourth issue of the volume year is the Conference Proceedings issue, and these 10 papers were published in 50(4), Winter 2018, along with the David Gordon Memorial Lecture (which is delivered at the ASSA meetings) which, in 2018, was delivered by John Weeks with comments by Gary Mongioli.

In 2018, the RRPE published volume 50—its 50th anniversary volume—which included 38 regular original articles, 23 book reviews, 10 conference papers from the ASSA or EEA, and Weeks' David Gordon Memorial Lecture along with Mongioli's comments.

In 2018, the RRPE continued its practice of publishing special issues: volume 50, issue #3 (Fall 2018) carried the 50th Anniversary special issue, entitled *The Past, Present, & Future of Radical Economics: URPE at 50*, edited by Special Issue Collective members Marlene Kim, Mark Klinedinst, Gary Mongiovi, Shaienne Osterreich, and Ramaa Vasudevan. The special issue featured 7 original articles, 7 memoirs from founding URPE members, and a contribution to RRPE's What "Radical" Means in the 21st Century section entitled "What Is Radical Political Economics?" The release of the special issue coincided with URPE's 50th Anniversary Celebration in Amherst, MA in September 2018. Papers from the special issue are available for download (free until Fall 2019) from the SAGE website: <https://journals.sagepub.com/toc/rrpa/50/3>.

The RRPE is currently preparing another special issue on Precarious and Informal Work with an extended paper submission deadline of May 30, 2019.

Also in 2018, the Editorial Board continued its practice of selecting a paper from the previous volume year (in this case, volume 49, 2017) for the RRPE Best Paper award. This year the award went to "Job Quality Complexities: Self-employment within the Low-income Communities Surrounding Cape Town, South Africa" by Leanne Roncolato and John Willoughby, published in 49 (1): 30–53. All Best Paper award winners are available for download from the SAGE website: https://journals.sagepub.com/topic/collections-rrp/rrp-1-best_papers/rrp.

URPE 50th Anniversary Conference and Celebration

The URPE 50th Anniversary Conference took place September 27-30, 2018, at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Attendance was very good, with 302 paid registrations and 72 free student registrations. The program consisted of 71 panels and three plenary sessions, as well as an opening reception and conference dinner. All parts of the conference were well-attended. The conference drew a significant group of founding URPE members, as well as a large number of people becoming acquainted with URPE for the first time.

URPE wishes to thank the following people and organizations for their work and support in organizing this conference: Steve Theberge (URPE Organizational Coordinator), URPE Steering Committee Conference Organizing Subcommittee (Al Campbell, Paul Cooney, Erik Olsen, Paddy Quick, Ramaa Vasudevan), Nicole Dunham (PERI), Nancy Caldwell (PERI), Robert Pollin (PERI), Gerald Epstein (PERI), Amber Paluk (UMass Conference Services), Haley Morin (UMass Conference Services), Rebecca Johnson (UMass Conference Services), Emily Pierce (Hampshire College), Zoe Pappenheimer Design, University of Massachusetts Amherst Department of Economics.

A donation to support the conference from the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) at the University of Massachusetts Amherst is also gratefully acknowledged.

URPE at the ASSAs

The ASSA 2018 was in Philadelphia from January 5-7. URPE had 16 sessions at the conference and continued to provide a venue for the presentation and discussion of current research in heterodox economics. One of the sessions was David Gordon Memorial Lecture by John Weeks on "Free Markets and the Decline of Democracy." Two sessions on gender were jointly sponsored by the International Association of Feminist Economics (IAFFE), one session on racial inequality was jointly sponsored by National Education Association (NEA). One session, participated by economists, political scientists and physicians, was a roundtable on single payer healthcare systems. The other URPE sessions were on Marxian political economy, Sraffian economics, the transformation problem, distributional issues, feminist radical political economy, development economics and a wide range of topics on the instability of capitalism. URPE held its annual membership meeting during the conference, as well as a well-attended reception.

URPE at the EEA

The Eastern Economic Association (EEA) 2018 Conference was March 1 – 4 in Boston. The “Easterns” are always an excellent venue for URPE presentations, in that the EEA is much more open to “other-than-mainstream” approaches to economics than the American Economic Association (AEA), which runs the ASSA meetings each January. URPE’s program at the Easterns continued to be very strong, notching up 3 panels over 2017 to 19. The papers presented were again of high quality, and covered a wide spectrum of topics typical (and some not so typical) for heterodox economics. Among the topics were the Political Economy of Race, The Political Economy of Gender and Feminist Radical Political Economy, various aspects of the Political Economy of Households, Cultural Communication in Commodity Form, Finance, Underdevelopment, the Rate of Profit and the Profit Share, Capital Theory, Fundamental Problems with Mainstream Economics, and panels focused of recent political economy books and symposium; *Money and Totality*, *Routledge Handbook of Heterodox Economics*, *A Short History of Economic Thought: Major Contributions since Adam Smith*, and the Sraffa symposium in *Research in the History of Economic Thought and Methodology*.

URPE at the SEA

On November 18-20, 2018, 4th annual URPE@SEA Conference was held at the Southern Economics Association 88th Annual Conference at the Marriott Marquis in Washington DC. We had a total of 8 panels with 21 people presenting. The presentations were well done, and the topics covered both broad and deep. We were able to garner interest from folks outside of URPE some of whom have come to expect URPE’s presence at what is generally thought of as a mainstream conference. Indeed, some of us are of the opinion that radical transformation of US society runs through the South, and having URPE’s presence at the regional Southern meeting will contribute to increased interest in organizers, activists, and academics from the South to develop a radical and alternative socio-political dynamics in the region and nationwide.

URPE at the ICAPE

For the second straight year, URPE organized sessions at the annual conference of ICAPE, the International Confederation of Associations for Pluralism in Economics. URPE organized 10 complete sessions, and URPE members were featured at the lunch plenary and on other panels. Indeed, URPE had the largest presence at ICAPE of any of the heterodox associations. URPE plans to continue to utilize ICAPE as an outlet for papers that we do not have space for during the ASSA conference, and to hold non-traditional sessions such as a workshop for graduate students on preparing for ASSA interviews. Contact Geoff.Schneider@bucknell.edu for more information about URPE @ ICAPE. The next ICAPE conference on January 3, 2019 at Agnes Scott College in Atlanta, will feature at least 6 URPE sessions and URPE members are featured prominently on plenary sessions and other panels.

URPE at the WSSA

URPE organized 4 panels at the Western Social Science Association meetings in San Antonio in April of 2018. This is part of URPE’s long term goal of having sessions at all major regional conferences. The panels were well attended, and attracted a diverse set of audience members ranging from UPRE members to mainstream economists and interested social scientists. URPE will organize sessions at the WSSA meetings again in 2019. That conference will be held April 24-27, 2019 in San Diego. Currently, URPE has 3 full panels and additional papers that will presented a joint URPE-AFIT sessions.

URPE Teaching and Job Placement Workshops

URPE has constructed materials to help graduate students and new faculty prepare for the job market. This includes advice on constructing cover letters, a workshop on constructing a teaching philosophy, and material on preparing for job interviews. We are also running workshops for those on the job market at the meetings of the Southern Economics Association and ICAPE. And, we have panels and workshops on teaching scheduled

for the URPE 50th anniversary celebration at UMass and the Eastern Economics Association meetings in 2019. Consult the URPE website for materials. Contact Geoff.Schneider@bucknell.edu if you are interested in participating in these initiatives or if you have any questions.

URPE Doctoral Fellowship

The recipient of 2018 URPE Dissertation Fellow is Samantha E. Sterba, Ph.D. candidate, Department of Economics, University of Massachusetts Amherst. Ms. Sterba is awarded this Fellowship and \$5,000 (USD) in support of her dissertation “Neoliberal Capitalism and the Evolution of the U.S. Healthcare Sector.” Her dissertation is being supervised by Dr. David M. Kotz (Committee Chair, University of Massachusetts Amherst) and Dr. Peter Spiegler (University of Massachusetts Amherst). Ms. Sterba’s dissertation uses social structure of accumulation (SSA) theory to analyze the ways in which neoliberal restructuring of US capitalism has affected the evolution of key parts of the US health care system, including the pharmaceutical industry, the health insurance industry, hospitals, and medical care provider institutions. The dissertation also undertakes case studies of three reform efforts: the passage of Medicare/Medicaid in 1965, the failed Clinton Health Security Act of 1993-94, and the passage of the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) in 2010. Ms. Sterba’s dissertation systematically connects developments in U.S. health care to the evolution of the institutional structures of U.S. capitalism, and promises to contribute significantly to our understanding of the political economy of health care.

Newsletter

The newsletter is now in its 50th year! It continues to be a vehicle for short articles, abstracts, and announcements relevant to the interest of our membership. It is now primarily available in electronic format (via email), though a paper copy via USPS can be requested. We are always soliciting submissions from members about their research, opinions, books, and activism. We are currently working on a project to have all issues of the newsletter from the past 48 years scanned and available online. You can access the last 13 years of the newsletter at urpe.org.

Website

We are pleased to announce that our new website will be launched in early 2019. We have partnered with Design Action Collective in Oakland, CA for this full redesign and are excited to share it with our members and supporters in the new year. The changes to the site are primarily about functionality and design and are focused on making our website more intuitive, user friendly, and contemporary. The new site will include all the content currently featured on our site.

The URPE website continues to be an important part of our outreach, communication, and organizing strategies. Content contributed by members is a central component of the site, and we appreciate the ongoing contributions. The course syllabi pages, the new books page, and the newsletters are among the most popular website pages. We hope that these pages will become an increasingly important way of disseminating information about radical political economy.

Social Media

By the end of 2018, the URPE blog (<https://urpe.wordpress.com/>) has reached 660 followers, with 48,931 visitors to the blog and 99,079 views of posts on the blog. The top search terms are "imperialism" and "sexism", top referral site is Facebook, top country for which visitors are viewing posts is US (second is UK). The top blog post of 2018 is “A Critique of David Harvey on Imperialism” by John Smith.

The official twitter handle of URPE (@urpe1968) has 3,358 tweets, following 2,155 other twitter accounts, with 2,388 followers. URPE Facebook group currently has 6,513 members.

Listserve

The URPE list serve is used for any sort of internal communication of information related to political economy that would be of interest to a significant number of URPE members, for example, job announcements, calls for papers, and announcements of conferences, and sharing resources such as syllabi or teaching methods. It is the best way to connect with more than 1,500 people in the URPE community via email.

Financial

At the close of 2018 URPE is in good financial health and we continue to operate with a surplus. We will not have a full picture for 2018 until we receive our final RRPE profit sharing figure in Q1 of 2019.

Our largest expenses continue to be the salaries and health insurance for our two paid staff people (URPE Coordinator and Managing Editor of the RRPE). In addition to salaries, travel expenses make up a significant part of our budgeted expenses. We provide travel subsidies to Editorial Board and Steering Committee members to participate in regular annual or semiannual meetings. In addition to our ongoing programmatic work, two projects this year had significant financial impact – our 50th Anniversary Conference and Celebration and the redesign of our website.

As for investments and assets, URPE has reserves available in a savings account as well as \$102,757 invested in a 48-month CD. Unfortunately, the CD does not offer more than 1.5% interest. We currently have \$42,670 in Equal Exchange shares and this investment has returned an average of 6% each year. Given the success of this investment we are open to the opportunity to increase our shares and would discuss that if Equal Exchange were to make that option available to us. The breakdown of URPE assets are: \$145,427 in investments, and approximately \$83,500 in liquid reserves (as of Dec 21st 2018).

People

We would like to acknowledge the following people whose efforts make URPE possible.

National Office: Steve Theberge

RRPE Managing Editor: Enid Arvidson

Steering Committee is made up of twelve members serving staggered three-year terms; the following are steering committee members by the end of 2018

Mona Ali (18-21)

Al Campbell (15-18)

Scott Carter (18-21)

Paul Cooney (17-20)

Ann Davis (18-21)

David Fields (17 - 19)

Armağan Gezici (17 – 20)

Erik Olsen (16-19)

Paddy Quick (16-19)

Jared Ragusett (17-20)

Geoff Schneider (17-20)

Ramaa Vasudevan (16-19)