



Association for Integrity and Responsible Leadership in Economics & Associated Professions

*Caring about what is most important in economic discourse, economic decision making,
and the career development of economists and related professionals.*

AIRLEAP® is a charitable and educational, non-profit organization that studies and promotes integrity and responsible leadership in economics and related professions. It plans to do so in a positive manner, by fostering and disseminating useful and influential thought. The Association is open to a variety of possible mechanisms for carrying out this mission. For example, it will sponsor and organize sessions at economics conferences where research findings on the topic are presented.

Our Mission

The motivation behind AIRLEAP derives, first and foremost, from the recognized importance of economics. Among all the occupations and fields of study, economics is surely quite unique in that it underlies the control and management of society's resources. Yet, it is common knowledge that the most important aspects of economics, as a force in our lives, are quite remote from the thoughts and actions that typically govern the daily business of the economics profession. The routine work of economists—whether those economists are academics, government officials, or private sector analysts—is governed by immediate factors that directly affect their careers. Such factors would surely include, for instance, economists' ability to promote the goals of their own institutions, to support and help popularize their subfields (or circle of colleagues), to publish in accredited (and, wherever possible, prestigious) journals, to acquire research funding, and to move up the career ladder wherever they are employed.

It remains an open question, then, whether the behavior of economists in their profession is consistent with the greater goals of society and the most basic principles of integrity and responsible leadership. Are economists actually doing the kind of work that the public believes they should be doing? More precisely, do economists (or the "clubs" to which they belong) operate in a manner that is beneficial to society, or, in some cases, are they serving their own narrow, career-oriented interests, independent of greater societal goals and expectations? If there is, in fact, a disconnect between the work of economists and the public good, then how could the economics profession, as a whole, bring itself to correct this problem? AIRLEAP represents a joint effort by scholars and practitioners alike to address these concerns, and to promote, in general, integrity and responsible leadership within the profession.

AIRLEAP surely recognizes that integrity and responsible leadership are goals that must be pursued by individual economists and by the institutions that employ them. The Association's existence is not meant to be a condemnation of the profession, nor an external criticism, for the sake of criticism alone. However, AIRLEAP does recognize, and does not hide from, the need for improvements in integrity and responsible leadership. Its goal is to work toward improving the profession in this respect—to help the profession, not harm it. It is our belief that this can best be achieved through transparent efforts to identify, analyze, and offer solutions, so that the work of economists can become as useful and beneficial to society as possible.

Frequently Asked Questions about AIRLEAP's Mission

1. By its very name, does the “Association for Integrity and Responsible Leadership in Economics and Associated Professions” (AIRLEAP) insinuate that the economics profession is inherently lacking in integrity and responsible leadership?

No. AIRLEAP fully recognizes that integrity and responsible leadership do exist in the economics profession. We are made up of economists and other professionals who work in economic areas. If our organization truly believed that economists and associated professionals inherently lack integrity and responsible leadership, then our strategy would have been to seek the support of non-economists, as opposed to economists. AIRLEAP recognizes that there are very many economists and related professionals who have a great deal of integrity, and who are responsible leaders. However, AIRLEAP does realize that there is room for improvement in the areas. In our view, our commitment to integrity and responsible leadership requires us to identify, and to act on, the situations that do warrant improvement.

As indicated in our mission statement, we are not running a “witch hunt.” Our goal is not to embarrass or demean particular individuals or organizations, but to help them achieve the recognition and respect that we believe they, themselves, would want to achieve. Our attitude is positive; we are “for” economics, not “against” it.

2. But don’t all professions have problems with regard to integrity and responsible leadership? Isn’t this common knowledge (and don’t the leaders of AIRLEAP realize this)? Why should economics be singled out?

Our answer to this set of questions has separate parts. First, it should be noted that the prevalence of any problem should not, in itself, justify a tolerance for that problem. The fact that crime may be prevalent in every major city does not, in itself, justify a tolerance for that level of crime. Apathy, however, may grow in situations where people believe nothing can be done about a recognizable problem. Often, such pessimism coincides with the view that those who propose solutions are somehow naïve, or even foolish. Such has been the trend in human history. Yet, history has shown that the optimists can sometimes be right.

We are hardly “neutral observers of all areas of study,” who somehow decided to single out economics as the one field of study that needs attention. We focus on economics for a rather simple reason: it is our own field of study. In many other fields, in fact, associations similar to ours already exist. There is an Association for Integrity in Accounting, for instance, and there are numerous organizations devoted to promoting research integrity in the natural sciences, especially in biological and medical research. Our counterparts in these other fields want the same thing for their fields as we want for economics. Yet, the existence of our counterparts in other fields begs the question of why an organization like AIRLEAP has not already existed for some time? We do not have an answer to this question, except, perhaps, to say, “Well ... we are here now.”

3. How does AIRLEAP compare to organizations that critically examine the field of economics, such as the Post-Autistic Economics Network, the Econ Journal Watch, and the International Network for Economic Method?

AIRLEAP shares and applauds all efforts by organizations to improve economics and associated fields by making them as useful, as accountable, and as beneficial to society as possible. AIRLEAP welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with these organizations wherever it might be feasible, in mutual efforts to improve economic discourse. However, unlike several other organizations with similar goals, AIRLEAP neither advocates, nor criticizes, any particular school of thought in economics. Except for our stated ideological commitment to integrity and responsible leadership, we are otherwise “ideologically neutral.”

Amnesty International, for example, states that it is “independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion,” and “It is concerned solely with the impartial protection of human rights.” In a similar spirit, though AIRLEAP does not generally address human rights, we are focused on the promotion of integrity and responsible leadership, which, in our view, transcends across all subfields of economics and associated professions, in the same way that human rights issues transcend across all political perspectives.

We would like to see a more unified and direct effort across all subfields of economics, from econometrics to economic philosophy, to promote greater integrity and responsible leadership in the profession. We are not opposed to the debates that exist between different schools of thought, but we do not, as a group, take sides in those debates. In our view, this makes us unique among the many economic societies and associations that exist today.

One other, rather important, distinguishing feature about AIRLEAP is that we view our audience as the entire economics profession and other professions associated with economics. Our audience includes, but is not restricted to, academic scholars who are studying the history of economic thought. We address scholarly questions, but also address rather simple and basic questions about integrity and responsible leadership, in such down-to-Earth areas as the hiring of economists and fairness in peer review. Our work is not esoteric or prohibitive; we want whatever we produce to be read, understood, and appreciated by as wide an audience as possible.

4. But what if my own, personal opinions about the economics profession do not match the opinions of AIRLEAP? Shouldn't I support AIRLEAP only if our opinions match?

AIRLEAP has no specific opinions about the economics profession, so there are no opinions to match. Each individual who supports AIRLEAP has his or her own specific opinions, and such opinions vary widely across different AIRLEAP supporters. The only thing that AIRLEAP supporters have in common is the general perspective that there is room for, and cause for, improvement in economics in the areas of integrity and responsible leadership. Even if you think the economics profession is nearly perfect in these areas, as long as you believe there is room for improvement and that such improvement is worthwhile, then you ARE consistent with AIRLEAP, and are encouraged to join us.

5. Isn't \$75 per year for regular membership a lot of money, considering the fact that AIRLEAP does not even offer a technical journal yet (in comparison to other economic associations)? What does AIRLEAP do with the money it receives from membership fees?

AIRLEAP's expenditures are 100 percent transparent, and needless to say, AIRLEAP will comply with all of the requirements expected of a nonprofit organization. In particular, AIRLEAP will public release, each year, a detailed Treasurer's report, and will answer any questions about its expenditures to anyone who writes to us about it.

AIRLEAP is still a small organization that does not have a large membership base, and therefore, most of the funds collected from membership fees will be spent on basic administrative costs, such as legal and accounting fees, internet costs, postage, promotional materials (like pamphlets distributed at conferences), etc.

At this time AIRLEAP has no paid employees – all our work is performed by volunteers. Plans are in the works, however, for AIRLEAP to grow. It is our hope to be able to offer student fellowships, for example, and create part-time jobs that will expand the activities of our organization. Thus, we are also working on accumulating funds for this purpose, and our balance sheet will be a matter of public record as well.

Of course, we do not want to take money from anyone who would have difficulty paying for the membership. If you would like to help us, but cannot afford the membership fee, you are still welcome to participate as one of our volunteers. We need all kinds of volunteers who can help us through email, from anywhere in the world. So please contact us if you are interested.

SUPPOSE: Just suppose that the following questions were raised about economics:

Is the recognition of ideas in economics (in articles, dissertations, books, etc.) based on the actual usefulness, validity, and scientific merit of those ideas? Or is it based on homage being paid to prominent economists who already received recognition for similar ideas?

How much time and money are spent in the generation of esoteric research that is of little or no real value to society?

How many listed authors of economic articles and books contributed little to the work, but were in a position to receive credit for it, while those who deserved the most credit did not receive it?

How often are economic statistics prepared by organizations with vested interests in the values of those statistics, and to what extent are their results verified for objectivity and scientific validity?

Are positions in the economics profession filled by organizations trying to find the best-qualified individuals, or are they filled on the basis of connections and other noncompetitive means?

Now stop supposing.

These questions ARE being asked, because WE are asking them, and researching the answers. Please contact us, join us, and help us make economics better for everyone.

AIRLEAP's Monthly HAPPY HOUR AND DINNER MEETINGS!

Each month AIRLEAP members and friends get together at the Mai Thai restaurant (on 1200 19th St., Washington, DC) for a 6:00 Happy Hour Discussion, and a Dinner Meeting at 7:15. The Mai Thai is conveniently located in between the Farragut West and Dupont Circle metro stops.

Please join us for either of these events for friendly and interesting discussions on integrity and responsible leadership in economics.

If you plan to join us for dinner, the cost is \$20 — please let us know 24 hours in advance if you are joining our dinner meeting (by emailing us at AIRLEAP_News@airleap.org) and bring \$20 in cash. This will cover the full cost of a nice dinner and a soft drink (including tax and tip); people pay for their own alcoholic drinks.

Our Next Meetings are Planned for the following Wednesdays:

January 16, 2008
February 13, 2008
March 12, 2008
April 9, 2008



Call for Volunteer Authors, Copy Editors, and Researchers for a New Book

AIRLEAP is now organizing the production of a new book, entitled:

Hope for Economics: The Struggle for Integrity and Responsible Leadership in the World's Most Influential Discipline

This will be an edited volume, consisting of chapters from several authors. The chapters will address a wide range of topics that pertain to integrity and responsible leadership in economics and associated professions. The book will be designed under the guidance of AIRLEAP's Board of Directors (<http://www.airleap.org/BoardOfDirectors.htm>) who have extensive experience in this area.

Hope for Economics will cover the same major areas that are listed in AIRLEAP's annotated bibliography (<http://www.airleap.org/bibliography.cfm>): I. How Economics Classes Are Taught; II. Economics as an Objective Science; III. Breadth of Economists' Perspectives; IV. Usefulness of Economic Discourse; V. How Ideas are Recognized and Rewarded; VI. Funding of Economic Research; VII. Contracted Economic Studies; VIII. Economic Statistics; IX. Job Market for Economists; and X. Economics and International Relations. The book will include both newly written papers and reprints of published articles.

AIRLEAP will be the listed author of *Hope for Economics*, and will acknowledge the individual authors of each chapter. AIRLEAP will promote the book heavily in support of its mission.

Contact Airleap_news@airleap.org if you would like to help as a volunteer author, copy editor, or researcher, writing in the subject line, "Volunteer for HFE."

Please join and/or help support the *Association for Integrity and Responsible Leadership in Economics and Association Professions (AIRLEAP®)*.

Membership or Purchase	Cost	Membership Includes	
		Mugs	T-shirts
Student Membership*	\$25 / year (or \$60 for a 3-year membership)	1	
Regular Membership*	\$75 / year (or \$200 for a 3-year membership)	1	1
Family Membership (best value)*	\$100 / year (or \$250 for a 3-year membership)	2	2
Purchase 15-Ounce Ceramic Mugs	\$10 for one; \$18 for two		
Purchase T-shirts (choose small, medium, large, or extra large)	\$12 for one; \$21 for two		

(Only checks, payable to “AIRLEAP,” or cash will be accepted at this time.)

*The cost of membership, minus the value of the gifts included, is exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. (The EIN for AIRLEAP is 36-4600302.)



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AIRLEAP's Summer Intern Program

AIRLEAP® is a newly formed, international, nonprofit association that is headquartered in the Washington, DC area, and incorporated in Virginia. The acronym stands for the Association for Integrity and Responsible Leadership in Economics and Associated Professions. (See www.airleap.org.) AIRLEAP will be hiring a summer intern in 2008, for 8 weeks at \$10/hour (assuming a 40-hour work week). The intern may work outside the Washington, DC metropolitan area, but must be located within the United States. Responsibilities will include improving AIRLEAP's annotated bibliography (<http://www.airleap.org/bibliography.cfm>) and authoring a literature review for AIRLEAP's website (which the intern may later revise and publish elsewhere). Both graduate and undergraduate students who have completed at least four economics courses may apply. Economics majors with proven writing skills are preferred. Interested candidates should email steven.payson@airleap.org with "Summer Intern" in the subject line, a cover letter mentioning ranges of possible starting and ending dates, a 200-word essay on why the applicant would like the position, a resume that lists academic and employer references, a copy of college transcript(s) (official or unofficial), and one to three writing samples. The candidate must be legally able to work in the United States. The deadline for applying: March 20, 2008. AIRLEAP is an equal opportunity employer.

AIRLEAP Board of Directors

Connie Chang (Chair); Former Research Director and Chief of Staff for the Under Secretary of Commerce for Technology, Technology Administration, Department of Commerce (Commerce); and Adjunct Assistant Professor of Economics at Georgetown University. Before that, Connie was the Acting Director for the Office of Technology Policy at Commerce's Technology Administration and Supervisory Economist at the Advanced Technology Program of the Commerce/Technology Administration's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). She received the U.S. Department of Commerce Bronze Medal Award, the highest honorary recognition at NIST, in 2000.

George DeMartino; Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, Graduate School of International Studies, University of Denver, and Associate Professor, GSIS, University of Denver. "Professor DeMartino's research interests include global political economy, industrial relations, the ethical foundations of economic theory and policy, and political economy theory. He has published widely in these areas, including his book *Global Economy, Global Justice: Theoretical Objections and Policy Alternatives to Neoliberalism*. ... He teaches courses on the political economy of globalization, the normative foundations of global economic policymaking, theories of political economy, and professional ethics and international affairs. At present, he is at work on a book *'I Do Solemnly Swear': On the need for and content of professional economic ethics*, to be published by the University of Michigan Press, and on several papers related to ethical questions that arise in the context of international economic integration."

Gary Hoover; Associate Professor of Economics; Assistant Dean for Faculty and Graduate Student Development; University of Alabama, College of Commerce and Business Administration. Professor Hoover was a visiting scholar at the Institute for Research on Poverty, and he is also a leading authority on plagiarism in economics. Some of his articles have been published in the *Journal of Economic Literature*, *Journal of Income Distribution*, *American Economic Review* P&P, *Journal of Labor Research*, and *International Tax and Public Finance*.

Deirdre McCloskey; Distinguished Professor of Economics, History, English, and Communication; University of Illinois Chicago. Professor McCloskey is an author of numerous books and articles in economics, including her most recent book, *The Bourgeois Virtues: Ethics for an Age of Commerce* (University of Chicago Press, 2006). She is a leading authority on the rhetoric of economics and on many other AIRLEAP-related topics. Professor McCloskey has held a wide range of leadership positions in the economics community, including, for example, serving as a member of the Executive Committee of the American Economic Association in 1994–1997.

Francis McFaul; Private Consultant in Information Technology. He is a specialist in database development for major organizations (both private and governmental) in the Washington DC area. Mr. McFaul is actively involved in designing the advanced information systems that AIRLEAP will be using for its website and database management. He has earlier experience as an economist in the Bureau of Economic Analysis, International Trade Administration, National Association of Home Builders, and in other for-profit and nonprofit organizations.

Doug Palo; Program Manager. Office of Policy, Program, and Employee Development; Food Safety and Inspection Service, US Department of Agriculture. Mr. Palo is a leading expert on food safety issues, as an economist, animal scientist, and public policy analyst. He has represented the United States in negotiations with other nations on treaties associated with food safety and technological barriers to trade, and has lectured on these topics to various audiences. Mr. Palo is also the former President of the Hollin Hall Citizens Association in Virginia.

Steven Payson; Executive Director (and founder) of AIRLEAP, and ex officio member of the AIRLEAP Board of Directors. Dr. Payson is currently a Commerce Department, Commerce, Science and Technology Fellow at the U.S. National Institutes of Health

He has served as an Adjunct Professor of Economics at Georgetown University between 2003 and 2007, for a course on the Economics of Technology, Innovation, and Growth. He is the author of *Quality Measurement in Economics: New Perspectives on the Evolution of Goods and Services* (Edward Elgar, 1994) and *Economics, Science and Technology* (Edward Elgar, 2000). Dr. Payson is also currently serving as Executive Secretary of the Society of Government Economists.

Brooks Robinson; Economic Advisor to the U.S. Pacific Command. Recently, Dr. Robinson served as Vice-President and Senior Research Economist for Analysis, Institute for Triple Helix Innovation, where he performed research on the topics: “Triple Helix Innovation Economics,” “Innovation Indicators,” “Innovation Metrics,” and “Social Networks and Innovation.” He was Chief of the Government Division of the Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce from 2002-2006, where he managed a staff of over 30 economists measuring the government sector of the National Economic Accounts. Dr. Robinson also represented the U.S. on an International Task Force on the Harmonization of Public Sector Accounting. He is the principle contributor and developer of the website and forum “BlackEconomics.org.”

Zhi Wang; Senior Economist, International Trade Commission; Research Fellow, Global Trade Analysis Project. Dr. Wang is a leading expert on computational general equilibrium modeling (CGE) and data reconciliation, and on US-China trade in Advanced Technology Projects. His extensive research in these areas have been published in the *Journal of Regional Sciences*, the *Journal of Comparative Economics*, *China Economic Review*, the *Journal of Policy Modeling*, *Urban Studies*, and the *World Economy*. Dr. Wang has been a Consultant to the World Bank, and had served on the Board of Directors of the Chinese Economists Society. In July 2007 he was awarded a Fulbright Senior Specialists grant, to serve in Tsinghua University, Beijing under an International Exchange of Scholars Program.

Endorsements for AIRLEAP



“I certainly support the goals of AIRLEAP, and think it can be an effective response to a problem: that economists think that ethics in their works and in their policies is optional, or is so easy (utility rules!) that nothing needs doing. In the dear, dead days the customs of integrity in the society got embodied in young economists. But that's no longer true. The supposition nowadays is that Greed is Good, that dishonest refereeing or a misuse of statistics will be corrected by an ethical invisible hand, or by evolution, that an adversarial system of science is the only protection we need. I don't think so, and neither does AIRLEAP.”

— Deirdre McCloskey (July 8, 2007) <http://www.deirdremccloskey.com/>



“Having done quite a bit of research on plagiarism in the economics profession, I can say definitively that there is a great and pressing need for an organization like AIRLEAP. In a recent survey, 67 percent of professional economists agreed that a code of ethics is needed in the profession. It is time to make that a reality.”

— Gary Hoover (July 12, 2007). <http://www.cba.ua.edu/personnel/GaryHoover.html>



“In public debate over political issues, economics is often perceived as the most important field there is. And yet, in reality our work is largely confined within isolated clubs, where we are asked primarily to imitate and pay homage to our clubs' selected leaders. Can leadership within economics transcend the self- servitude of our clubs, and encourage more relevant and useful work? Can we venture beyond our pride in our mathematical aptitudes, and our complacency in playing the games that advance our careers? I think we can, and this is why I support AIRLEAP.”

— S. Payson (July 15, 2007) <http://myprofile.cos.com/spayson>



“The economics profession has by now achieved enormous influence in domestic and international affairs. From the training of countless undergraduates in how to think about economic matters, to contemporary debates over public policy, to what can be thought of as nothing less than economic experimentation and social engineering in developing countries, economists are more powerful today than at any time in the past. But with this influence come ethical and professional obligations for which the practicing economist, by virtue of the narrowness of his/her training, is poorly equipped. AIRLEAP can do much to correct this professional failing. Not least, it is working to promote an ethical awakening of the profession that is by now long overdue.”

— George DeMartino (August 7, 2007) <http://www.du.edu/gsis/faculty/demartino/index.html>



“Economic information is transmitted at the speed of light and is acted upon instantaneously in our post-modern world. Therefore, it is paramount that we receive and respond to economic information that satisfies ‘efficacious’ criteria, i.e., information that is evidenced-based, accurate, and does not violate ethics principles. When non-*efficacious* economic information enters our resource set, it increases the risk that our decisions will produce undesired outcomes. Because decisions are often accompanied by linked-decisions, non-*efficacious* economic information has the potential to bring down the ‘house of cards’ that we call our economic system, which is based, in large measure, on trust and credit. AIRLEAP will help reduce the probability that we will awaken in the morning with our roof in our lap.”

— Brooks Robinson (August 13, 2007) http://www.triplehelixinstitute.org/aboutUs/ithi_team.html



“The use of economic principles, methodologies, and models in the evaluation of publicly funded research and development has grown with increased attention to government performance and accountability. Millions of taxpayer dollars are spent on evaluation, and millions of dollars of research funding are at stake. The validity of these evaluation efforts depends on not only the appropriateness of the approach and methodology employed to the question at hand, but also on the integrity of the evaluator. An organization like AIRLEAP shines a light on the issue of ethics and integrity in the economics profession which is vitally important. This issue must be addressed in order to ensure that our policymakers continue to trust the work that we do in helping to govern our nation's research enterprise and to guarantee our future innovative capacity.”

Connie Chang (August 14, 2007) <http://www.itl.nist.gov/Healthcare%20Summit/chang.htm>

Volunteers

AIRLEAP plans to organize sessions and, if feasible, maintain an exhibitor’s booth at upcoming economic conferences. As these plans unfold, information about them will be provided on our website, including information about how people can apply to have a paper presentation included in our organized sessions. In the meantime, or if you have any suggestions for us, if you have an idea for a paper you would like to present in an AIRLEAP session, or if you are interested in organizing an AIRLEAP session contingent upon AIRLEAP’s approval, please let us know.

Please contact us if you would like to help us in organizing our meetings, preparing our newsletter, contributing to our research efforts, or participating with us at economic conferences. You do not need to be a member of AIRLEAP to join us as a volunteer.

Contact Email Address: AIRLEAP_NEWS@airleap.org

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