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Welcome by the Editor

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Welcome to the second issue of the *Journal of Environmental and Resource Economics at Colby* (JEREC), an open access peer-reviewed journal publishing articles authored and peer reviewed by undergraduate students. The articles featured in this second issue of JEREC stem from senior seminar projects conducted by students in The Economics of Ecosystem services and Biodiversity (TEEB) Senior Seminar during Spring 2015.

The students conducted a wide range of projects where the students came up with their own research questions, conducted literature reviews, identified methods to answer the questions, collected data, analyzed data, presented results (oral presentations in class and posters at the Colby Liberal Arts Symposium), wrote an original research article, peer reviewed each other's work and finally published their final papers online.

The student's research topics ranged from studying the impact of beach dune width on property values, analyzing the impact of art museums on surrounding neighborhoods, studying beliefs about climate change to analyzing preferences for policies to protect coral reefs in Okinawa Japan. The students' used a wide range of methods including choice experiment surveys, hedonic analysis, cost benefit analysis, and advanced statistical techniques (the work is not at the methodological cutting edge, but the students used sound methods as best possible given their backgrounds) for their analysis.

This journal originated from efforts to help students understand and appreciate the research and publication process behind the journal articles they regularly read in classes. The journal helped facilitate the peer review process and provided a means to share final results. The students submitted first drafts through the journal submission system, conducted blind reviews of each other's work using the journal review system, and then finally submitted revised versions of the manuscripts. The peer-review process worked extremely well, with most of the students receiving substantial comments and on some occasions the referees writing four to five page referee reports.

Beyond the pedagogical benefits in the classroom, creating the journal has resulted in two outcomes that I did not foresee. First the journal has a large and global readership; during the past year the journal has received over 1200 visitors and papers in the inaugural issue has been downloaded over 850 times by readers from 43 different countries. Second the printed journal is being used by the Admissions Office to promote Colby and undergraduate research at Colby and by the Library to highlight how innovative tools can be used in the classroom. I am pleased that this classroom "experiment" extended beyond the classroom.

Finally a few acknowledgements before ending this Welcome. It would not have been possible to create this journal without the ongoing support by David Stienstra at BE Press, Martin Kelly at Colby Libraries, and Colby Libraries. I am very pleased that Professor Noelwah Netusil at Reed College, a leading environmental and resource economist at a premier liberal arts institute, has written an introduction to this issue. I would also like thank Colby Libraries, The Office of Admissions, the Department of Economics, and the Office of the Provost and the Dean of Faculty for providing funds to print the first and second issue of this journal. Thanks also to you, the reader, for engaging with the research process by reading articles in this issue. Finally, this journal would not exist without the dedicated work, long (very long) hours, constructive criticism and numerous revisions that were done by students in EC476 in SP2015; Alex, Brian, Carolyn, Connor, Dan, Greg, Jack, Jason, John, Matt, Nils, Paco, Rob, and Sarah Beth – Thank you.

I will end this welcome with a quotation that I like; *“The explorer who will not come back or send back his ships to tell his tale is not an explorer, only an adventurer; and his sons are born in exile.”* — Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*. This issue is the “ship” being sent back by students in the Spring 2015 TEEB senior seminar who have gone exploring beyond the frontiers of knowledge. Thank you for sharing in their efforts by reading this issue.

If you have thoughts or questions on any of the articles in this issues please contact me.

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