

**Alliance to Advance Liberal Arts Colleges  
Faculty Workshop Proposal 2018**

Submitted May 15, 2017 by:

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**Researching and Teaching the Economics of Development: Health, Education and Wellbeing in Developing Economies**

In his book *An Uncertain Glory*, Nobel Prize winning economist Amartya Sen asserts that “economic growth without investment in human development is unsustainable - and unethical.” In this workshop, we will explore the theoretical underpinnings and the empirical evidence for investments in human development as drivers of economic growth in low-income economies. Many development economists at liberal arts colleges are at the forefront of this inquiry. For example, among the organizing committee for this proposal there is recent research on the impact of malnutrition in India, the effect of reproductive health access on teen pregnancies and later life outcomes such as education and employment in Sub-Saharan Africa, and a study of bilingual education in Latin America.

Development economics incorporates many of economics’ disciplinary sub-fields including the economics of health, education, labor, migration, and trade, as well as environmental economics and the economics of gender. In recent years, the field has become increasingly influential in policy design, largely through use of randomized experiments to test program and policy interventions in areas such as education, public health, and microfinance. This workshop will leverage a series of annual research conferences on development economics held since 2013 at liberal arts colleges in New York and New England. Our goal is to build upon the success of those conferences in three ways: i) increased geographic representation of participating institutions; ii) enhanced links to pedagogy and engaging students in research-based learning; and iii) a new focus on junior faculty development.

The workshop will provide an opportunity for a dozen or so development economists from AALAC liberal arts colleges to present their research and receive critical feedback as they extend it for publication. The scientific organizing committee will solicit and select research papers for presentation. Accepted papers will be assigned to discussants in advance, enabling detailed feedback alongside the expected active participation from the small-group audience. An institutional challenge many of us face is that there is only a single or at most a few development economists at LACs. It is essential for career advancement to interact with fellow development economists at other liberal arts institutions to build avenues of communication and develop collaborations. We expect to expand the scope of participation beyond colleges on the East coast to include faculty from the Midwest and West, as evidenced by our workshop leadership team and indications of interest from faculty from around the country. Additionally, a prominent development economist will be invited to attend all sessions and to give a keynote address.

The workshop will also include a session dedicated to teaching development economics in the liberal arts. We envision two or three presentations on tested classroom techniques and projects including demonstrations, sample handouts, and syllabi. Beyond the formal classroom, many of us involve our students in our own research or promote other forms of research-based learning—sharing our experiences with these approaches will be a valuable component of the session. Where feasible, we will invite student research assistants from Middlebury and other proximate institutions to attend one or more of the research sessions to gain first-hand exposure to an academic conference.

As PhD economists, the vast majority of us trained at large research universities. The transition from that setting to an assistant professorship at a small liberal arts college can be jarring. Therefore, we plan a deliberate focus on junior faculty development during the workshop. We will organize a roundtable discussion to address topics such as balancing research and teaching, the challenges of publishing in top journals, managing international fieldwork, and tackling the tenure review process at a Liberal Arts College. We will solicit participation from senior development economists to host a mentoring breakout session with junior faculty after the roundtable.

We will use this workshop as a model for workshops in future years hosted at the colleges of the other members of the organizing committee. Finally, we propose up to three small awards of \$750 to encourage collaboration in the year following the conference. Workshop participants would apply for an award to travel to a fellow participant's institution to collaborate on a new research project or to plan a new development-related course project. We will introduce the awards at the opening of the workshop and encourage participants to brainstorm about proposals during coffee breaks and meals. Participant teams would apply to the organizing committee in the month after the workshop and, if awarded, would be required to submit a report on the outcome of the collaboration.

Date of Workshop: Late summer or early fall 2018

Location of Workshop: Middlebury College

## **Proposed Schedule**

### **Friday**

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7:00            Welcome Dinner

### **Saturday**

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8:00-9:00      Breakfast  
9:00-10:30     Session 1: Research Presentations  
10:45-11:00   Coffee break  
11:00-12:30   Session 2: Teaching Economic Development in the Liberal Arts Classroom  
12:30-2:00     Lunch and Keynote Speaker  
2:00-3:30      Session 3: Research Presentations  
3:00-5:00      Break, informal interactions  
5:00             Roundtable discussion and Dinner: Junior Faculty Development

### **Sunday**

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8:00-9:30      Breakfast in senior/junior mentoring groups  
9:30-11:00     Session 4: Research Presentations  
11:00-11:15   Coffee Break  
11:15-12:45   Session 5: Research Presentations  
12:45-1:00     Closing Remarks  
1:00             Lunch

In each research session, three presenters will have 15 minutes to summarize their papers followed by a response from an assigned discussant and a question and answer session.