

Western Undergraduate Economics Review

2014

The *Western Undergraduate Economics Review* is an annual publication containing papers written by undergraduate students in Economics at Western. First published in 2002, the *Review* reflects the academic distinction and creativity of the Economics Department at Western. By showcasing some of the finest work of our students, it bestows on them a lasting honour and a sense of pride. Moreover, publication in the *Review* is highly beneficial to the students as they continue their studies or pursue other activities after graduation. For many, it is their first publication, and the experience of becoming a published author is a highlight of their undergraduate career. The *Review* is a collaborative effort of the students, faculty, and staff of the Economics Department. All papers submitted to the *Review* are essays written for courses taken in the Department. Some are by students in the early stages of their Economics studies, while others are papers written by senior students for the Department's unique thesis course, Economics 4400. Selections are made by the edition editors, in consultation with a faculty advisor, based on creativity, academic merit, and the written quality of the article.

Editors

Christian Sgro
Victoria Turner

Faculty Advisors

Tai-Yeong Chung
Gregory Pavlov

Administrative Support

Leslie Kostal

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Editors' Comments

This year's edition of the *Western Undergraduate Economics Review* includes a selection of award-winning papers that showcase the talents of Western's Undergraduate Economics students. The topics covered in this year's issue are very interesting due to their relevance to the current overarching social and macroeconomic landscape.

This *Review* begins with an outstanding contribution made by Evelyn Baraké, winner of the Mark K. Inman Senior Essay Prize. Baraké evaluates the influence of several social factors on political protests and their ability to transcend national borders, which has strong relevance to current events occurring abroad. This paper is followed by an award-winning essay written by Tom Sykora, who contributed an engaging argument for the viability of the new disruptive Bitcoin technology and its implications on the future of payments and international trade. The third paper in this edition is a 4400E Thesis Paper submitted by Vybhavi Balasundharam and Courtney White that explores the incentives behind charitable actions, and how activities such as volunteering and donating money are influenced by overarching economic conditions. Lastly, James Balsillie contributed a detailed research paper on Chinese Venture Capitalism and its remarkable ability to enhance productivity and innovation in an otherwise decelerating Chinese economy.

We hope that you enjoy reading the 2014 edition of the *Western Undergraduate Economics Review*. The *Review* is truly a testament to the capabilities and dedication of the students of the Undergraduate Economics Department.

Christian Sgro
Victoria Turner
London, Ontario
April 2014

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