



COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Department of Agricultural & Consumer Economics
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April 14, 2020

Dear Dr. Haile He,

As a current Executive Editor, I am writing this letter to show my strong support of Dr. Calla Wiemer, as the current Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Asian Economics*. I strongly recommend that she be offered a 3-year renewable contract instead of her current 1-year extension that is terminal at the end of this year.

As you are aware, the Journal was founded in 1990 by the American Committee on Asian Economic Studies (ACAES). At that time, the goal was to establish a leading academic journal to provide a publication outlet to the growing number of scholars conducting research in the subfield of Asian Economic Studies. As a U.S. economic scholar who has spent over 15 years conducting research and global policy within Asia, I am deeply appreciative of the contributions that JAE has made to improving our understanding of the major economic challenges facing this region of the world. In its 30-year history, it remains one of the leading voices in Asian economic research. Moreover, the journal has thrived under the leadership and tenure of Dr. Wiemer. This is largely due to her long history of commitment to ACAES. Dr. Wiemer was a protégé of the organization's founder Dr. Jan Dutta and was appointed to the Board of ACAES as a lifetime member. Through a formal review process, she was selected in 2015 by the Association (in consultation with Elsevier) to serve as the next Editor-in-Chief for JAE – the position which she currently holds.

I was recently informed that Elsevier may not renew Dr. Wiemer's contract at the end of the year. I urge you to strongly reconsider this decision. I met Dr. Wiemer a few years ago at an academic seminar on Asian and Pacific economies hosted by the research branch of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). She was there as an invited guest and prominent scholar. I was immediately impressed with the thought leadership and passion for Asian economic research that she brought to the discussion, especially in terms of the need for more academically rigorous research within the field. Since that time, Dr. Wiemer has asked me to serve as a reviewer for the journal and subsequently as an Executive Editor. I have worked closely with a number of editors of similar applied economic journals. I have also served on a number of association board's where we have undergone searches to find highly-qualified editors. Dr. Wiemer is most notable among them. I have found her to be an exceptional and highly-professional editor – and one of the most hands-on editors I have had the privilege of working with. She goes to great lengths to work with authors, especially those from smaller developing countries. She takes painstaking care to mentor them through the review process – helping them to develop their ideas and respond to reviewer comments to push them to turn out the highest-quality publication possible. My personal observation is that several of these authors would not have been able to get their work published had it not been for her efforts. In addition, I would like to add that Dr. Wiemer is one of the hardest working and inspiring editors I have ever met. Her commitment to the journal is second to none. All the above-mentioned qualities are rare to find in an editor, which makes it that much more perplexing as to why Elsevier is offering her a terminal contract at the end of this year.

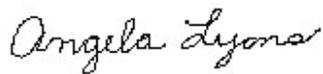
As a scholar in the field and an Executive Editor for JAE, I would be very disappointed if Elsevier did not extend Dr. Wiemer's contract, and I believe it would be detrimental to the Journal, ACAES, and the field of Asian economics in general. In particular, I am concerned that without Dr. Wiemer's editorial leadership, the journal would lose its credibility and prominence within the field, such action would also lead to

instability in the journal and possibly its demise. She has been instrumental in actively improving the quality of the papers published in the journal. A change in leadership at this time would not be wise for JAE, especially at such a critical time when the journal is making great strides in its impact factor and other publication metrics.

This situation brings to light a further concern that ACAES may be losing its decision-making power when it comes to deciding current and future Editors-in-Chiefs. The membership of ACAES is comprised of the world's leading scholars in the field. These members elected Dr. Wiemer to currently serve as the association's President. The association's board selected her – in fact, actively pursued her – to serve as JAE's Editor-in-Chief. To take this power away from the Association is in essence taking the power away from the leading scholars that make up the field – they know best who among them is well-positioned to assume such an important role as Editor-in-Chief, especially in terms of scholarship, subject matter knowledge, academic integrity, and professional conduct. All of which Dr. Wiemer exemplifies.

I strongly recommend that you grant her a 3-year renewable contract, at which time Elsevier can assess the Journal's progress in terms of readership, rankings and citations. I am confident that she will be able to meet and even exceed Elsevier's expectations – as she has already been able to significantly improve the quality of the journal in her short tenure. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require additional information or elaboration: anglyons@illinois.edu.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Angela Lyons".

Dr. Angela Lyons
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