

Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession

The American Economic Association (AEA) charges the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP) with monitoring the position of women in the profession and with undertaking activities to improve that position. This report compares the actual advancement of women economists in academia with cohort projections and describes the Committee's activities during 1991.¹

Hiring and Promotion of Women in Economics

Last year, CSWEP reported a summary of results from the AEA Universal Academic Questionnaire.² At that time, we concluded that the proportion of female assistant professors generally reflected the proportion of new female Ph.D.'s. We also presented evidence to suggest that women have not progressed through the academic ranks as rapidly as might be expected. Moreover, it appeared that there was a higher percentage of women at lower-ranked departments than at higher-ranked ones. This year, we present data that extend and sharpen these conclusions.

Figures 1-5 extend the data presented in the 1990 Annual Report to include the data for 1990.³ Figure 1 shows that, between 1990 and 1991, the percentage of women increased at the associate professor rank, fell at the assistant professor rank, and did not change at the full professor rank. Figure 2 shows that there is little difference in the status of women by type of academic institution (public or private). Figure 3 indicates

that women continue to be hired at the new assistant professor level approximately in proportion to the percentage of new female Ph.D.'s.

However, Figure 4 shows a sharp increase, between 1990 and 1991, in the proportion of women at the associate professor rank at lower-ranked graduate departments.⁴ In fact, the percentage of female associate professors at lower-ranked institutions is now nearly twice as high as the percentage of female associate professors at higher-ranked institutions. Moreover, this result accords with results presented in a recent paper by Van Kolpin and Larry D. Singell, Jr.,⁵ with data collected by Ivy Broder⁶ on women at top-tier economics departments, and with data on new hires by rank from the 1990 Universal Academic Questionnaire.

Kolpin and Singell find, over the last two decades, that women were less likely to be hired and promoted at top-ranked departments and more likely to be hired and promoted at lower-ranked departments. They go so far as to suggest that a number of lower-ranked departments may have strategically hired women in order to improve their average scholarly outputs.

Broder has identified every female professor at every economics department in the top three tiers. The following information is

⁴The scholarly quality of economics departments is based on data for 93 graduate departments reported in National Research Council, *An Assessment of Research-Doctoral Programs in the United States: Social and Behavioral Sciences* (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1982). Figure 4 presents data on 88 of those 93 departments.

⁵Kolpin and Singell, "Strategic Discrimination, Scholarly Performance, and the Gender Composition of Economics Departments," unpublished manuscript, Department of Economics, University of Oregon, July 1991.

⁶Tiers are based on the AEA ranking of graduate programs. Data are part of Broder's ongoing research project on the status of women at top-tier economics departments.

¹The Committee thanks Ivy Broder, Shulamit Kahn, and Charles Scott for their contributions to this report.

²Nancy M. Gordon, "Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession," *American Economic Review*, May 1991 (*Papers and Proceedings*), 82, 409-12.

³Data are based on Ph.D.-granting economics departments that have responded to the Universal Academic Questionnaire in any one year since 1973. Agricultural Economics departments are excluded.

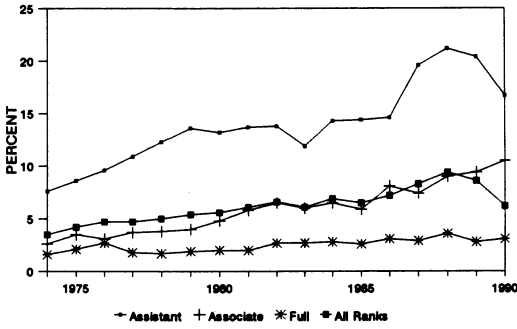


FIGURE 1. PERCENTAGE OF FACULTY IN GRADUATE DEPARTMENTS WHO ARE WOMEN, BY RANK: 1974-1990

Note: Graduate departments are those that award Ph.D.'s.

Source: American Economic Association, Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974-1990.

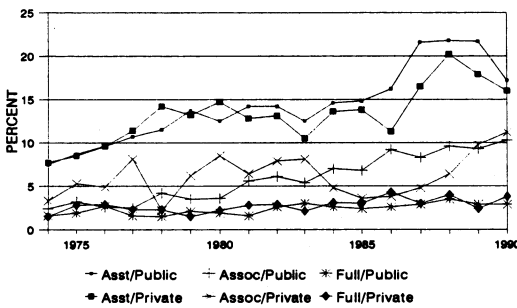


FIGURE 2. PERCENTAGE OF FACULTY IN GRADUATE DEPARTMENTS WHO ARE WOMAN, BY RANK AND TYPE OF INSTITUTION: 1974-1990

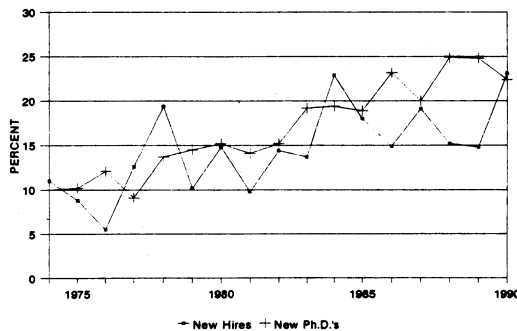


FIGURE 3. PERCENTAGE OF NEWLY HIRED ASSISTANT PROFESSORS IN GRADUATE DEPARTMENTS AND PERCENTAGE OF NEW PH.D.'S IN ECONOMICS WHO ARE WOMEN: 1974-1990

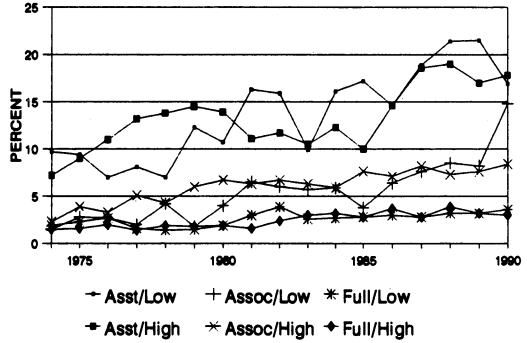


FIGURE 4. PERCENTAGE OF FACULTY IN GRADUATE DEPARTMENTS WHO ARE WOMEN, BY RANK AND QUALITY OF DEPARTMENT: 1974-1989

based on her data for either the 1990-1991 or the 1991-1992 academic year. No individual is counted twice, even if she changed departments. Broder finds that only 3 out of 148 or 2 percent of full professors at tier-1 departments⁷ are women. Only 15 out of 232 or 6.5 percent of all economists at tier-1 departments are women. Her data suggest that women have not risen to the very top of the economics profession, even in proportion to their low representation in the general population of economists at the full professor level. Moreover, at the Ph.D.-granting departments that answered the Universal Academic Questionnaire in 1990, there were 25 males hired at the full professor level in 1990 and 0 females.⁸ While this is a small sample, it provides further cause for concern about the status of women in the economics profession.

Figure 5 extends the simulation model presented as figure 6 in last year's Annual Report.⁹ At that time we suggested that the

⁷Tier 1 is defined as Chicago, Harvard, MIT, Princeton, Stanford, and Yale.

⁸This does not necessarily mean that no women were hired at the full professor level by any Ph.D.-granting department, as not all departments answer the Universal Academic Questionnaire every year.

⁹The simulation model is based on the flow of faculty into and out of different ranks. New Ph.D.'s are assumed to become new assistant professors; assistant professors are promoted to associate professors after 5

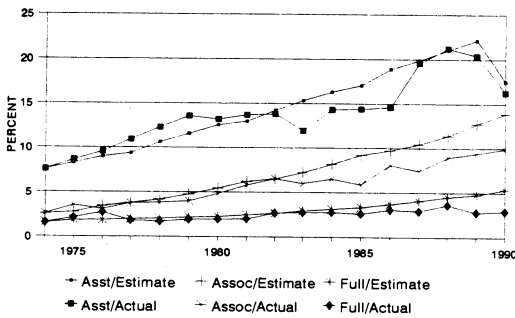


FIGURE 5. ACTUAL AND ESTIMATED PERCENTAGES OF FEMALE FACULTY IN GRADUATE DEPARTMENTS BY RANK: 1974-1990.

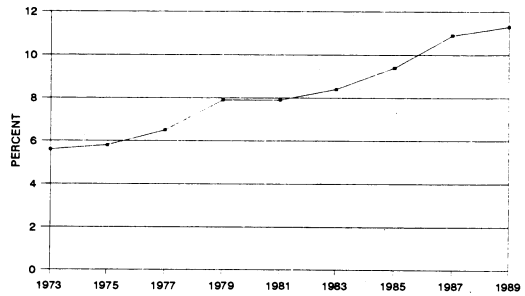


FIGURE 6. FEMALE PH.D. ECONOMISTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL PH.D. ECONOMISTS: 1973-1989.

gaps between actual and predicted percentages of women at the associate and full professor levels were likely to increase over time. Figure 5 confirms that prediction for 1990. Despite the jump in the percentage of women at the associate professor level at lower-ranked departments, both gaps continued to grow. These estimates provide further cause for concern about the status of women as they progress through their academic careers.

Using data from the National Science Foundation Survey of Earned Doctorates, compiled by Shulamit Kahn, Figure 6 shows that the percentage of all Ph.D. economists who are women has risen steadily, from less than 6 percent in 1973, to more than 11 percent in 1989. This compares with an increase from 4 percent of graduate faculty in 1974 to 8 percent of graduate faculty in 1989.

However, Kahn also finds that the percentage of all female economists employed in business and industry has risen faster than the percentage of all male economists employed in business and industry. Between 1973 and 1989, the percentage of all female economists employed in higher education fell from 73 percent to 61 percent, while the

percentage employed in business and industry rose from 7 percent to 18 percent. During the same time period, the percentage of all male economists employed in higher education fell from 74 percent to 67 percent, while the percentage employed in business and industry rose from 10 percent to 15 percent. Thus, a lower proportion of both male and female economists are working in higher education, and a higher proportion are working in business and industry; but, the change has been more pronounced for women. If these trends turn out to be significant and consistent, they raise research questions for CSWEP regarding 1) the reasons for women choosing business and industry over academia; and 2) the status of women economists in business and industry.

To summarize, women continue to be hired at the new assistant professor level at about the same rate as they earn new Ph.D.'s. This is encouraging, especially in light of the recent poor job market. However, CSWEP continues to be concerned about the progress of women through the academic ranks and about the status of women at the highest ranks of the profession. Women are not achieving the rank of full professor as rapidly as expected and they are not being employed by top-tier departments even in proportion to their representation at various ranks. CSWEP is also concerned that women may be leaving academia at a faster rate than men, for reasons as yet unexplored. Since employment as a full professor at a top-tier department is generally considered to be the high-

years; associate professors are promoted to full professors after 7 years; full professors retire after 20 years in rank. In addition, the model assumes that the probability of being hired and promoted is independent of gender.

est-status employment in the economics profession, CSWEP continues to be concerned about the status of women in the economics profession.

The Committee's Recent Activities

CSWEP was involved in several activities designed to help women advance in the economics profession during 1991. As part of its ongoing efforts to expand the participation of women economists on the program of the AEA Annual Meetings, the CSWEP Board organized six sessions for the January 1992 Meetings: three on gender-related topics and three on public finance. CSWEP also sponsored a hospitality suite and a reception following the annual business meeting. These facilitate networking among economists at the annual meeting.

CSWEP has also been actively involved in the regional economic associations. Members of the CSWEP Board include representatives to the Eastern, Southern, Midwest, and Western Economic Associations. These Board members organize sessions and receptions at the regional meetings, facilitating the participation and networking of women economists at these meetings.

Another major activity was the publication of three issues of the *CSWEP Newsletter*, the contents of which are designed to help young economists advance. Each issue contains information about sources of research funding and calls for papers, as well as articles on such topics as the annual job market and advice on publishing papers. In 1990 the Board reprinted a number of popular past articles on how to get ahead on the profession in a special issue available free to all dues-paying members, and for \$8 to the general public. The Board continues to give copies to new members.

CSWEP maintains a *Roster of Women Economists*, including information on employers, educational backgrounds, fields of specialization, and publications. It is used, for example, by employers searching for job candidates and by organizations seeking members for advisory committees. The entire *Roster*, or selected portions, is available

either on disk or as mailing labels. In addition, the *Roster* appears in a printed volume every other year. It was completely updated and printed in 1990. The Board also continues its recent practice of informing advertisers in *Job Openings for Economists* and the *CSWEP Newsletter* about the *Roster* and how to use it.

CSWEP thanks the editorial board of the *American Economic Review (AER)* for its decision to institute a double-blind referee policy for the *AER*. Double-blind refereeing has been a CSWEP agenda item for many years. Rebecca Blank, a current CSWEP Board member, undertook the *AER's* study of double-blind refereeing.

The CSWEP Board wishes to thank a number of people who served the Committee. Joan Haworth, the Committee's Membership Secretary, and her staff make it possible for the Committee to maintain contact with the membership and the profession as a whole. They maintain the *Roster*, prepare special mailings, and create customized listings from the *Roster*, just to name a few activities. Nancy Gordon retired from the Board in August, after seven years of tireless service as Editor of the *Newsletter* and four years of service as Chair. During Nancy's term as Chair, the Committee greatly expanded its activities in support of women in the economics profession. Shulamit Kahn continued to work for the Committee, even though her term on the Board expired in 1990. She continues to coordinate information about the availability of child care at the AEA Annual Meetings, and she contributed the data from the National Science Foundation Survey of Earned Doctorates for the Annual Report.

The terms of three other members of the Board expired in 1991: Shelly Lundberg, June O'Neill, and Dan Newlon. Shelly served the Board as the representative to the Western Economic Association, co-edited an issue of the *Newsletter*, and helped organize sessions at both the WEA and the AEA meetings. June served as the representative to the Eastern Economic Association, co-edited an issue of the *Newsletter*, and helped organize sessions at both the EEA and the AEA meetings. Dan served

the Board in many ways. He opened contact between CSWEP and the National Science Foundation, calling for more research on the status of women in the economics profession and greater representation of women at NSF and in other prestigious positions. He also wrote articles for the *Newsletter* on research support, co-edited an issue of the *Newsletter*, and helped organize sessions at the AEA meetings.

Finally, the Board thanks Jill Bury, who works with Nancy Gordon, and Christina O'Bannon, who works with Elizabeth Hoffman. Their contributions made it possible for each Chair to maintain the activities of the Board and produce the *Newsletter*, in addition to other professional and scholarly activities.

ELIZABETH HOFFMAN, *Chair*