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 presents information on the advancement of women economists in academia and reports on the Committee's activities during 1993. Currently, CSWEP has over 6,000 persons on its mailing list. This includes 1,400 students, 436 persons at non-U.S. addresses, and 245 men, as well as all women members of the AEA.

Recent Hiring and Promotion of Women Economists in Graduate Degree-Granting Departments

In 1992, 9.2 percent of all faculty in graduate degree-granting departments were women.[1] Among assistant professors in these departments, 19.1 percent were women; 9.6 percent of associate professors were women; and 3.9 percent of full professors were women. As Figure 1 shows, at the assistant and associate level, this share has been largely stable for the past five years, while there has been slow growth in the share of full professors.

Comparisons are often made between public and private schools. As Figure 2 indicates, public schools had a higher share of women faculty at all ranks in 1992. Because these numbers vary from year to year, a five-year average provides a better comparison than one year of data. Over the last five years, public schools had a 1.3-percentage-point higher share of women at the assistant

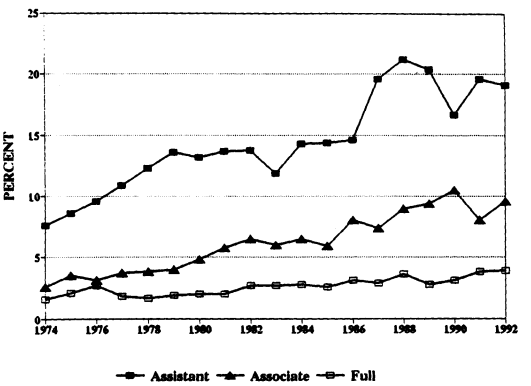

FIGURE 1. FEMALE FACULTY IN GRADUATE DEPARTMENTS, PERCENTAGES OF TOTAL FACULTY BY RANK, 1974–1992

Note: Graduate departments are those that award Ph.D.'s.
Source: American Economic Association, Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974–1992.

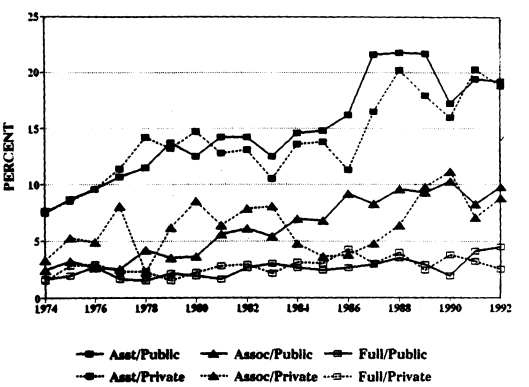

FIGURE 2. FEMALE FACULTY IN GRADUATE DEPARTMENTS, PERCENTAGES BY RANK AND TYPE OF INSTITUTION, 1974–1992

Note: Graduate departments are those that award Ph.D.'s.
Source: American Economic Association, Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974–1992.

[1]The data in this section are from the Universal Academic Questionnaire (UAQ), which collects information from Ph.D.-granting departments in economics. In each year, data are based on all economics departments that responded to the UAQ in that year. Agricultural economics departments are excluded.

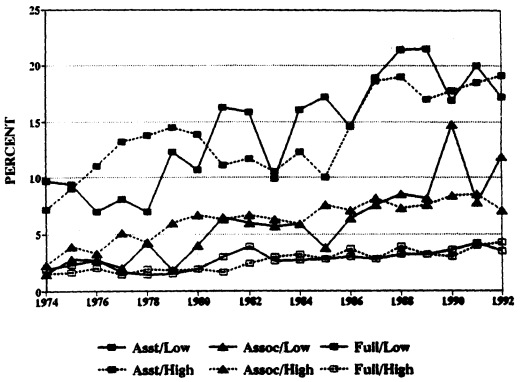

FIGURE 3. FEMALE FACULTY IN GRADUATE DEPARTMENTS, PERCENTAGES BY RANK AND QUALITY OF DEPARTMENT, 1974–1992

Note: Graduate departments are those that award Ph.D.'s. Quality of department is based on the National Research Council's rankings of 88 departments.
Source: American Economic Association, Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974–1992.

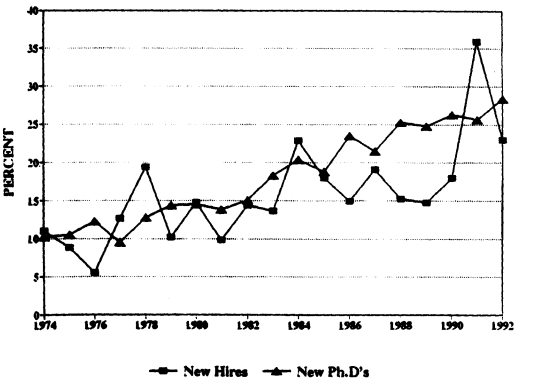

FIGURE 4. NEW FEMALE PH.D.'S AND NEW ASSISTANT PROFESSORS AS PERCENTAGES OF TOTAL NEW PH.D.'S AND NEW ASSISTANT PROFESSORS, 1974–1992

Sources: American Economic Association, Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974–1992; National Research Council.

level; a 0.8-percentage-point higher share of women at the associate level, and a 0.2-percentage-point higher share of women at the full professor level.

Between higher- and lower-ranked graduate departments,[2] there is not a consistent pattern by gender. As Figure 3 shows, over the last five years higher-ranked departments had a lower share of women at the assistant and associate level but had a slightly higher share of women at the full professor level.

Over the last five years the number of new Ph.D.'s who were women has been relatively constant, averaging 26.1 percent. The share of new associate professors hired in graduate departments has been 5–10 points below this, except in 1991 when there was a substantial positive blip in the share of women hired. Figure 4 presents these numbers. The fact that a smaller share of women are hired into graduate departments than receive Ph.D.'s is somewhat disturbing

[2]The National Research Council ranks degree-granting departments in economics. Figure 3 shows ranks for higher- and lower-ranked departments and omits the middle ranks.

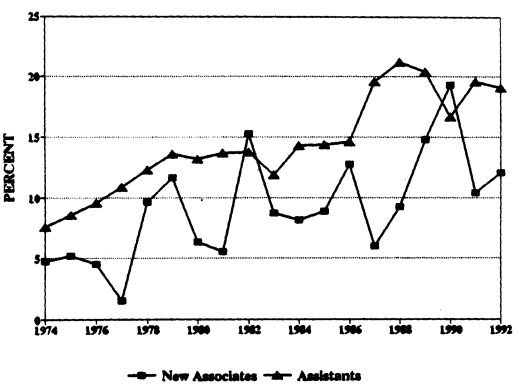

FIGURE 5. NEW FEMALE ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR APPOINTMENTS VERSUS STOCK OF ASSISTANT PROFESSORS, 1974–1992

Source: American Economic Association, Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974–1992.

and is consistent with other evidence indicating that women Ph.D. economists are less likely to enter an academic position as their first job.

The promotion and retention of women is as important as new hiring. Among the degree-granting departments in the sample, 19.2 percent of assistant professors were

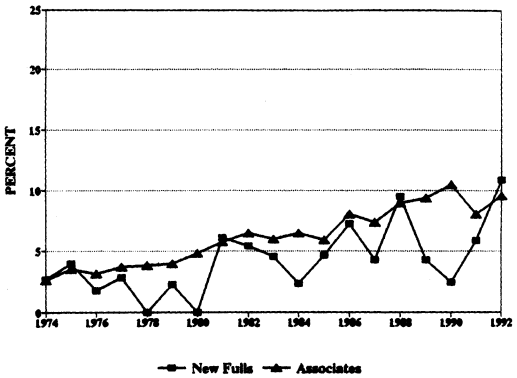

FIGURE 6. NEW FEMALE FULL PROFESSOR APPOINTMENTS VERSUS STOCK OF ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS, 1974–1992

Source: American Economic Association, Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974–1992.

female over the past five years. Only 13.2 percent of internal promotions or new hires of associate professors were female, however, as shown in Figure 5. Thus, women were a consistently smaller share of those who became associate professors than would be expected given their share of assistant professorships. Similarly, although 9.2 percent of all associate professors were female on average over the past five years, only 6.0 percent of those internally promoted or hired into full professor positions were female, as shown in Figure 6. As has been true for many years, this evidence indicates that a declining share of women move into progressively higher ranks in the profession.

Research on the Advancement of Women in the Economics Profession

A growing body of research is studying gender differences among academic economists. A recent meeting, sponsored by the National Science Foundation and organized by Shulamit Kahn (Boston University), brought together a group of scholars actively engaged in this research. While there are substantial gaps in the available data, a number of studies seem to be uncovering similar patterns.

There is evidence that new women Ph.D.'s are hired into a different mix of jobs than men. Among those hired into academic jobs, women are promoted at a slower rate than men, and the determinants of their promotion are different from those of men. For instance, research by Larry D. Singell and Joe A. Stone (1993) and Daniel P. McMillen and Singell (1994) indicates that the determinants of first job placement and subsequent promotion differ between men and women. They find evidence of greater mismatch between women and their job characteristics, consistent with the theory that women are "underplaced" in academic jobs. Debra A. Barbezat (1992) indicates that there are consistent differences in the placement of new male and female Ph.D.'s and that these reflect both differences in job-market behavior and differences in the judgment of men and women about the attractiveness of different job options. Looking at promotion, Kahn (1993) finds that the median time to tenure among women is three years longer than among men.

A key issue in much of this research is to measure effectively the productivity-based determinants of promotion or hiring. Most evidence indicates that women publish less, on average, but the evidence is mixed on how fully this explains male–female academic differences. Work by Rachel A. Willis and Paul J. Pieper (1993) indicates that promotion differences between male and female academic economists in the 1970's were insignificant when numbers of publications are accounted for. In contrast, Ivy E. Broder (1993) finds that in 1989 current rank and prestige of department was lower among women, even after controlling for quality of publications. This effect is smaller and insignificant among current assistant professors, however. This latter finding is consistent with other evidence indicating that there has been an improvement in the position and salary opportunities for women in economics.

In general, the evidence indicates that substantial male–female differences in economics continue to exist in a number of areas, but there is less evidence on how and why these differences occur. For instance,

lower publication rates among women lead to the inevitable question of why women produce less research after graduate school. There is remarkably little evidence on how the publication and research environment differs for men and women in academic economic positions. Good research is needed in a variety of areas, measuring the extent to which women experience and are affected by differential family responsibilities, differential teaching and academic demands, and differential support from within the profession.

The Committee's Recent Activities

CSWEP is involved in a wide range of activities designed to help women advance in the economics profession. As part of its ongoing efforts to increase the participation of women on the AEA programs, CSWEP organized seven sessions for the January 1994 meetings, three on gender-related topics, three on public-economy-related topics, and a roundtable discussion on "Getting Ahead in the Economics Profession." CSWEP also held a business meeting and reception at the meetings and sponsored a hospitality suite. At the regional level, members of CSWEP organized sessions and receptions at the Eastern, Southern, Midwestern, and Western Economics Associations.

One of CSWEP's most important activities is the publication of three issues of the *CSWEP Newsletter* each year. Each issue contains articles about women in economics and information of interest to younger economists about professional advancement, as well as information on jobs and on research funding. CSWEP also maintains a *Roster of Women Economists*, providing information on all women members of the AEA. Employers particularly interested in female candidates can receive the entire *Roster* or selected portions, available in print or on disk.

CSWEP's major new effort this year was to identify CSWEP contacts in all degree-granting departments. These are (typically) senior women in the department, or senior men where there are no senior women. This fall these contacts were asked to distribute information about CSWEP and its activities to all women graduate students and women faculty. CSWEP has also initiated an annual departmental questionnaire, filled in by these contacts, to provide our own tracking of the promotion and retention of women faculty, as well as the composition of entering and exiting graduate students. This should provide useful complementary data to the Universal Academic Questionnaire available through the AEA. For instance, in next year's report we shall be able to indicate how many degree-granting departments have no senior women or indicate how the number of women entering graduate programs compares to the number of women finishing their Ph.D.'s.

The Committee wishes to thank a number of people who made major contributions to CSWEP's work over the year. Joan Haworth, the Membership Secretary, and her staff maintain the *Roster*, send out annual membership reminders, and create customized listings from the *Roster* for potential employers.

Elizabeth Hoffman, after two years of service as the Chair of CSWEP, resigned in July to move to a position as Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Iowa State University. In addition, four members left the Committee at the end of 1993: Jennifer Reinganum, Leigh Tesfatsion, Frank Levy, and Ethel Jones, who had served as the representative to the Southern Economic Association. CSWEP appreciates the work of all these individuals on its behalf.

Finally, CSWEP thanks Helen Goldblatt, on the staff of Northwestern University, who has provided administrative support for CSWEP and who has served as Assistant Editor of the *Newsletter* since August. Christina O'Bannon filled this role during the spring and summer while Elizabeth Hoffman was still chair. The Department of Economics at Northwestern also provided support to the operations of CSWEP.

REBECCA M. BLANK, *Chair*

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