The Social Science Research Council (SSRC) held an unusual meeting in New York in December of 1931, which focused on social science research in the colleges. The participants included representatives from twelve liberal arts colleges, most in the northeastern United States. The meeting was the result of a number of factors: the expansion of social sciences into the colleges, the growth in social science Ph.D. production, and the increasing commitment of some colleges to supporting and encouraging faculty research over the previous forty years. The meeting came at the urging of Marion Edwards Park, President of Bryn Mawr College, an institution that had long supported faculty research and developed Ph.D. programs for young women when American universities denied them entry. Park, like other college presidents, was wrestling with the tension between research and teaching resources on college faculties. Research had long been considered the province of research universities and the production of new knowledge the province of their male faculty. But women had been completing Ph.D.s in the social sciences for nearly forty years prior to this meeting, most at the very same research universities as their male research counterparts: Columbia, the University of Chicago, Harvard (Radcliffe), the University of Pennsylvania, Yale, and the universities of Michigan, Wisconsin, and California. In economics alone, women Ph.D.s reached just over 20 percent of the total in the early 1920s, before declining to a low of
10 percent in the middle 1950s. Yet most of these same women were not perceived as continuing productive researchers worthy of university positions and, instead, were recommended for and pushed to take teaching positions largely in the women's colleges. The women economists who filled these positions are the focus of this paper.

The tension on college campuses, which was evident in the SSRC meeting report, had grown over forty years, as more faculty saw themselves as knowledge producers as well as teachers and as college budgets grew only slowly in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Universities had far more resources to support research and had begun accommodating faculty research by adjusting teaching loads, developing funding sources, expanding their libraries, and providing equipment for faculty and graduate students to use in their scholarly projects. Most of the beneficiaries of this expansion were male faculty and graduate students, although once admitted to graduate programs in the 1890s, women also enrolled and completed Ph.D.s. Unfortunately, they were only very rarely hired at research universities, despite the high praise they received for the quality of their work.

This paper examines women economists in the colleges and the strategies they developed to ensure strong economics programs in their institutions, to train young women in economics, to push their institutions to accommodate their research commitments, and to use their research to influence policy at the local, national, and international levels. Given women academic economists' relative marginality in this period, in the sense that they were not typically faculty in the research institutions where the leading economists were located from the 1910s to the 1940s in the U.S., it is useful to consider their work in relation to power and knowledge production. Foucault argued
that power is not a commodity, something to be possessed. Rather it is diffuse, relational and located not only in structures and laws, but also in practices, techniques, and processes of everyday interactions. These interactions, in particular institutional contexts and moments, can enable those seen as marginalized to call into existence bodies of knowledge that provide effective means of social participation, resistance, and critique. His theory of power is useful for exploring how women navigated their teaching institutions, developing practices and processes new to these institutions to make them receptive to both the production of knowledge in addition to teaching, and to women as producers, not only transmitters, of knowledge within them.²

The colleges that had the strongest economics departments and the most consistent support for women economists by the 1920s included Barnard under Emilie Hutchinson, Bryn Mawr under Susan Kingsbury, Mount Holyoke under Amy Hewes, Goucher under Elinor Pancoast, Smith under Esther Lowenthal, and Vassar under Mabel Newcomer. A very small number of women economists did find places in research universities, mostly as "lone voyagers," but there were two exceptions: the University of California at Berkeley and the Industrial Research Department at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, which I will address briefly in relation to the colleges. For the purposes of this paper, I focus on Smith, Mount Holyoke, and Goucher, with a brief mention of Bryn Mawr because they offer different kinds of strategies shaped by both the women themselves and by the institutional cultures in each. Smith developed a special research unit for historians and economists, and economists played a major role in this unit. Mount Holyoke and Goucher very slowly grew the economics faculty. But the women economists in each of those places made significant research contributions to
local and state agencies and typically worked with their sociology colleagues to do so. In addition, Mount Holyoke developed an externally financed statistics lab to support student and faculty research. Taken together, all of these colleges educated at least two generations of young women in economics in this period; among these women were those who pursued economics graduate degrees and then educated the next two generations until women economists were able to breach the departments in the research universities in the 1980s and 1990s.3

According to the SSRC report, colleges were at a distinct disadvantage as environments for social science research because their libraries, though quite adequate for students, lacked the depth and range faculty needed for their own research and for staying current with developments in their fields. Universities had local research councils financed by philanthropic foundations providing support for faculty research; colleges did not have access to these. In fact, few colleges provided research funds and the men’s and coeducational colleges tended to provide more funding for faculty travel for research and conference presentations. Moreover, at all the colleges, male faculty tended to receive higher salaries, which enabled them to better support their own research. By the early 1930s, seven of the twelve colleges represented in the report expected faculty to do research; four of these were women’s colleges and two of the remaining three were coeducational.4

The SSRC report recommended the following measures to support faculty social science research: colleges should develop sources of research funding among alumni, much like Wellesley’s alumnae fund; colleges should provide funds from administrative budgets for faculty research; the SSRC should consider rotating matching grants among
the colleges to encourage this development. Another factor was time for research. Most colleges did not have a paid sabbatical leave policy throughout most of the early twentieth century; faculty research occurred over the summer. Teaching loads were heavy and few adjustments were made, even for those who supervised undergraduate honors students and programs, which made research and writing more difficult during the academic year. The SSRC report recommended that shorter and more frequent sabbatical leaves be granted, that teaching loads be redistributed, and that students be supported in and encouraged to pursue research. In addition to rotating grants, the report recommended that the SSRC develop a clearinghouse for information about ongoing research projects at the colleges and at universities to counter isolation and enable faculty to develop networks to foster their work.

The SSRC's report made clear the challenges college faculty faced in sustaining research programs. But women faculty had already developed research programs in economics in the colleges by 1931. They had also increased the presence of economists on their campuses and established connections with state and federal agencies through the scholarship they produced. Moreover they had already brought students into their research programs and located funds to help support their work. These efforts represent the strategies that women economists used to transform their collegiate institutions from being largely focused on teaching to expecting faculty to sustain a commitment to research.
Mount Holyoke

Mount Holyoke College and the women economists there offer a telling example of how they accomplished this transformation. Appointed in 1901, President Mary Emma Woolley was committed to increasing the academic credentials of the faculty. She fostered an institutional culture in which women faculty exercised considerable power in shaping the social science programs in their departments, as well as the professional criteria for advancement of their colleagues. She sought women with demonstrated interest in research, and appointed a number of strong women scholars to the history department, from which economics and sociology and political science grew. At Mount Holyoke, women faculty received sabbatical leaves, supervised Master's students who were financed by graduate fellowships from their own colleges and from Mount Holyoke alumnae, and contributed their research expertise to local, state, national, and international agencies. Amy Hewes (1905-1943) provides a case in point for demonstrating how these strategies unfolded at Mount Holyoke.5

Hewes arrived at Mount Holyoke in 1905, after Woolley had begun encouraging faculty to complete doctorates and increase the academic quality of the college's programs. Hewes, a University of Chicago sociology Ph.D. (1903) appointed to teach economics and sociology, used two approaches to both justify her own research and encourage a research culture in the college. First, she taught seminar-style courses related to her own research interests, which had a field component in factories and other work places in the Connecticut River Valley. Second, she obtained funding to support the development of a statistical laboratory on campus for both undergraduate and masters-level research. Disputes with a colleague in the history department over Hewes's
focus on contemporary economics rather than economic history led Woolley to create a department of economics and sociology in 1908 for Hewes's work. Hewes's shift from sociology to economics suggests the fluidity of disciplinary boundaries in this early period of academic social science in the U.S.\(^6\)

Hewes included both undergraduate and masters' students in her projects, largely centered in labor economics. She conducted studies on such topics as women in arms industries, industrial home work, minimum wage law, working conditions in textile mills, trades unions in Russia and elsewhere, and regulation of the coal industry in Britain. She frequently was recruited by state and federal agencies to explore problems for them, and served on the Massachusetts Minimum Wage Commission in an investigation of seven industries, which resulted in passage of the first minimum wage law in the U.S. in 1912. In order to better prepare students for economic research, she began offering a course in statistics in 1912; enrollment grew steadily. Students subsequently conducted research into the "Occupations of Mount Holyoke Undergraduates during the Summer of 1918," and then, at the Holyoke Chamber of Commerce's request, completed a study of non-English-speaking workers in factories in the industrial town of Holyoke. She and students also completed a report on children leaving school for work in Holyoke, requested and partially financed by the Massachusetts Child Labor Committee. But because, like most colleges, Mount Holyoke did not have the capacity to do sophisticated data collection and analysis, Hewes sought support for a statistics laboratory on campus. When the student work was published and widely praised by a member of the United States Employment Service, and graduates working at the U.S. Department of Labor were seen as exceptionally skilled, trustee Joseph Skinner contributed financing for a
statistics lab in the basement of one of the classroom buildings. The fact that 68 students enrolled in the course by the late 1910s suggested high and increasing demand.\textsuperscript{7}

Within a year an additional donor appeared: Dorothy Whitney Straight, a wealthy New York philanthropist and social reformer, who, with her husband Willard Straight and a number of progressive scholars, published the \textit{New Republic}. She provided funding to expand the work of the lab and enable the college to offer graduate fellowships in statistical work. That Straight saw the work as important is significant; she was deeply interested in industrial problems and local economies. Students not only were invited into industrial work places in the Connecticut River Valley to collect data, but also were given access to data at social service agencies including the New York Charity Organization Society and research institutions including the Judge Baker Foundation. Such access for the purposes of research and publication was critical for these students and the faculty.\textsuperscript{8}

Straight's funding was not the only source of support for the economists at Mount Holyoke. Alzada Comstock (1913-54) and Ethel Dietrich (1917-41) were appointed under Hewes's leadership. Comstock's research focused on taxation and finance in modern states, received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1926 to study post-war financial reform in Hungary. Hewes, in contrast, financed her research in part by using the opportunities her public service commitments presented. Hewes studied labor and industrial economics through her work with the Industrial Service Sector of the U.S. Army during World War I and with the Massachusetts State Employment Service, among other public agencies. Dietrich studied international trade through her work as special investigator in the women's branch of the industrial service department of the Ordnance
Department during World War I, for the International Labor Office and for the Committee on International Peace, and, in the 1940s and 1950s, in the Office of Exports on the Board of Economic Welfare. She also served as an economic advisor for the Military Government of Germany in the post-war period and in other capacities as a member of international delegations on trade. In addition, faculty were able to supervise graduate students, brought to Mount Holyoke to study statistics and conduct statistical research in state and private social welfare agencies through the research program financed by Skinner and then Straight.9

Hewes's efforts to engage students in statistical and field research in economics and sociology increased their interest in research and expanded their understanding of social and economic issues. Her teaching put them in close contact with those who were dealing with these issues on the ground: in the declining industries of the Connecticut River Valley, in social service agencies working with the poor, young people, and others, and in municipal offices developing public policy, often based on research. Further, Hewes's own experiences conducting research and shaping policy had an impact on her teaching and increased the visibility of the college's social science research and encouraged expansion of the faculty. Emma Woolley noted that:

The theory that a college is sufficient unto itself, is a relic of a by-gone day. At a time when educational institutions must appeal to the public for support, it is only just for them to give freely in return.10

Smith

Smith College developed an early commitment to social sciences in departments headed by male faculty. By the early 1900s, the senior (male) faculty began to accept women with Ph.D.s to their departments. The economics department added sociology in
the 1910s, which was dominated by men. But the faculty of economics after 1910 was almost entirely composed of women. Although men created and developed social science programs at Smith, and used the college to launch their own scholarly careers, as women with doctorates were added and slowly promoted, they gained increasing power in shaping those programs from the 1910s through the 1960s. Esther Lowenthal (1911-52) developed the department, along with the sociologists and historians who worked with them.11

Lowenthal had studied economics at Oxford and completed her Ph.D. at Columbia before joining the faculty in 1911. Her dissertation on the Ricardian socialists was published in 1911, shortly after she obtained her Ph.D. at Columbia. She moved up through the ranks from assistant to full professor by 1920, and eventually served as Dean of the Faculty and chair of the economics department before retiring 41 years after arriving at Smith. She published one article and supervised the work of students and colleagues in the *Smith College Studies in History*. She also participated in bringing 2 additional women faculty into the department: Dorothy Wolff Douglas (1924-51) and Dorothy Bacon (1927-1954). A student remembered that Lowenthal was a scholar of "towering capability," who was "a superb teacher" and "somewhat aloof," but with "a logical mind which is sharp as a knife." This same student Elizabeth Stoffregan (May), who later completed the Ph.D. in economics at the London School of Economics and taught at Goucher College, was an economic analyst at the U.S. Treasury, a fiscal analyst at the U.S. Bureau of the Budget, and eventually returned to academe at Wheaton College, serving on the board of the Export/Import Bank of the U.S. in the 1960s.12
Bacon came to Smith in 1927, shortly before finishing her Ph.D. at Radcliffe in 1928. She took research and service sabbatical leaves to work for the Works Progress Administration and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation in the 1930s. She focused her research at Smith on money flows during the 1930s, cost price problems, and the development of credit institutions at the federal level. By the 1940s, she was working for and consulting with the federal Office of Price Administration. By the 1950s, she was consulting with the Brookings Institution, had been a research associate of the National Bureau of Economic Research, and received grants from the Social Science Research Council. She published a monograph on the recent economic history of five towns around Northampton, Massachusetts, in the late 1930s, and was completing on a book on the development of Philippine credit institutions by 1970.13

Dorothy Wolff Douglas was appointed instructor in the economics department in 1924, the year before she finished her Ph.D. at Columbia in French economic history. At that point she was married to Paul H. Douglas, who moved from a position at the University of Chicago to one at Amherst to keep their family together. Douglas was divorced and caring for four children by 1930, when she was promoted to assistant professor. Raised in a wealthy New York family, she had already been contributing from her independent income to social and political causes. Like Hewes at Mount Holyoke, her own research and politics focused on labor issues and labor legislation. With Katherine Lumpkin, for example, she published *Child Workers in America* (1937). She believed that it was critical to have a solid understanding of economic history to inform contemporary policy making with regard to labor issues, and decided to support such work at Smith in the 1930s. The focus was on the Connecticut River Valley. With a
$3500 donation from Douglas for the first two years and the promise of the same amount for the second two years, and the stipulation that the Smith committee guiding the work be composed of 5 faculty members from economics and history, the college established the Council on Industrial Studies. Douglas suggested that the College contribute up to $1500 beginning in the second two years, at which point her support would end and Smith could decide whether to continue to support the Council, which it did until 1948.\textsuperscript{14}

Katherine D. Lumpkin served as the Council's first director (1932-1939). Lumpkin had finished a sociology Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin in 1929, a study of delinquent girls, taught at Mount Holyoke, and conducted research with the SSRC and at Bryn Mawr College. By 1932, Douglas and Lumpkin were partners and lived together in a big house in Northampton with Douglas's four children.\textsuperscript{15}

The Council offered the opportunity to examine the Depression's impact on the region and to assist women graduate students toward completion of their theses at a time when such financial support for women was particularly scarce. The Council chose doctoral students from other institutions to receive Council fellowships, and provided mentor and other support for the fellows. The studies produced under Council auspices examined the industrial history of the valley. One goal was to collect and preserve the papers and other materials that were being lost as various textile, metals, and paper making industries folded or moved out of the region in the 1920s and 1930s. Another was to encourage regional studies in the United States and, particularly, provide an institutional umbrella for coordinated and cooperative research. As Lumpkin framed it:

\begin{quote}
We want to study transportation, agriculture, business organization, the rise and in some cases the decline of particular industries, the movement of factories within the region and to the outside, and the shifting of industrial and farm labor, the sources and movement of local capital.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}
The studies uncovered more than Lumpkin, Douglas, and Lowenthal expected: diaries, collections of correspondence, oral recollections of older residents, going back to the colonial period, publications by mill girls in Chicopee, as well as the expected business papers and town records. To locate these sources and carry on the field work, industrial sites were crucial to the Council’s work. But Lumpkin and the first fellows encountered some reluctance from industries to open their books and records. Lumpkin placed advertisements in local papers and surveyed Mount Holyoke alumnae in the region for papers and other materials in private hands. In the end, researchers produced a mix of historical and contemporary studies that, together, resulted in a collection of related material and monographs. They examined a variety of topics, including the extent of manufacturing shut downs and worker displacement by the 1930s, the economic history of Chicopee, a history of industry on the Mill River, a history of early nineteenth-century metals industries and one of agricultural transformations in the nineteenth century. By 1938, five of approximately seven projects conducted by the research fellows were being used for dissertation work. In addition, in Douglas and the other five members of the Council’s executive committee, these students had regular contacts with economics scholars who could help guide and critique their work. When the fellowships overlapped, as a number did, they had each other as resources in completing the work. Many of the studies of the 1930s and 1940s were published in the *Smith College Studies in History* series.17

Lowenthal, Bacon, and Douglas provided leadership, substantial support, and scholarly recognition for research at Smith. Bacon’s work was largely independent of the Council’s, but garnered attention at the federal level for her expertise in banking and
finance. Douglas's financial support for developing scholars and scholarship in the Connecticut River Valley and her own ongoing research created opportunities for faculty to work closely with graduate students in economics. And Lowenthal provided the leadership and the commitment to rigorous teaching that enabled faculty and students to continue their work. Together, they ensured that women economists provided more than four decades of continuous commitment to economics research and teaching for women at Smith.

_Goucher_

Goucher College was one of the few southern women's institutions that offered a full four years of college work at the turn of the century. Goucher had historically modeled its curriculum on the undergraduate work at Johns Hopkins, though with fewer faculty and financial resources. Most southern women's colleges tended to hold more conservative views of women's proper roles; they all developed social science departments more slowly than the northern colleges. Although many of these institutions expanded economics courses in the 1930s, those courses typically emphasized women's roles as consumers. Goucher's economics and sociology department rarely had more than two faculty members throughout the 1920s and most of the 1930s. At the same time, the administration of the college tended to be paternalistic through the 1920s, which slowed potential growth of faculty scholarship. When economist Elinor Pancoast arrived at Goucher in 1924, President William W. Guth tightly controlled both faculty and curricular development, which left her little room to maneuver to expand teaching in economics. After he died in 1929, his successor William Allan Robertson willingly
entertained faculty suggestions about reorganizing the curriculum and relied on Pancoast's leadership, with other faculty, to reorganize the curriculum, which introduced a separation between the first and last two years of the undergraduate program, individual student course selection in accordance with the goals of the program, and general examinations at the end of the sophomore year. In addition it divided the faculty into three divisions, one of which was the social science division. Within this climate of reform, broadened goals for education, and openness to ideas, Pancoast pushed for innovations in economics and sociology instruction and in the college's relations with the community.18

Pancoast completed her Ph.D. in economics at the University of Chicago in 1927, three years after taking a faculty position at Goucher. Her research largely concerned labor conditions and industrial issues, as well as the impact of the economy on low-wage workers, the poor, the aged, and adult education. In a highly unusual move at a southern women's college, she introduced three kinds of activities: establishing an educational program in economics for women workers in industry, taking students on field trips to local government agencies, and establishing and maintaining a cooperative dormitory in which students reduced costs by performing much of the daily labor themselves. All the while, Pancoast moved from an instructor to full professor at Goucher and continued to publish until she retired in 1960.19

Pancoast's innovations provided Goucher's largely middle-class white students with opportunities to understand economic issues across class and on a practical level. In the educational program for women workers, although students were not directly involved in teaching, Goucher alumnae were and undergraduates did establish an
informal reading group with some of the women students in the program. On the field trips, students were introduced to wider possibilities for the application of social science research and policy. In the dormitory, students were given extensive responsibility for governing their domestic environment and contributing on average an hour and a half per day in labor to maintain the building.20

The goal of the worker's education program was to help both "industrial women" and college women "develop new powers of appreciation and understanding" that worked across class and experience. To that end, in 1932 Pancoast persuaded the Baltimore chapter of Goucher alumnae to work with Baltimore's Worker's Education Committee to establish night classes for women workers. The classes were held on the Goucher campus, and students were invited to make use of the library. The first classes focused on history, economics, and English. Goucher faculty and alumnae volunteered to teach, and the Goucher alumnae club raised funds for student scholarships, textbooks, and other needs. Undergraduate students became interested in the program and invited the women workers to meet with them to read poetry and discuss books. Although this may be read as a paternalist gesture from the middle class to the working class (and it may well have been that for many participants), Pancoast saw it as a potentially "enlightening experience to those college women who care to participate. It is the sincere testimony of one faculty member who has been meeting with these workers in industry this past year that they have much to teach." She suggested that it would not only be industrial women, "but college women," who "develop new powers of appreciation and understanding."21

Pancoast's approach to teaching economics and interacting with students suggests a broad understanding of the impact of a changing economy on both the working poor
and the middle class. The cooperative dormitory enabled many Goucher students to remain in college in the 1930s and provided them with help "in other than financial ways," presumably by exposing them to the rigors of building maintenance and appreciation of domestic laborers and to having to work with peers and the college administration to maintain the building. The outside field trips performed two functions: they demonstrated to students the ways that economics research could have an impact on the operation of government and the opportunities open to women researchers. One trip, to the Federal Bureau of Standards, introduced students to the application of statistical work and to a number of Goucher alumnæ working at the Bureau.22

Pancoast was widely admired by students for her rigorous teaching and prodigious research and publication as well as her innovations. One remembered that

Instead of a dead weight of knowledge which we undergraduates half expected to crush a young woman who knew all about trade unions, marginal costs, and the comparative theory of international trade, we discovered a sprotliness of spirit and an objectivity of thought that were challenging and disturbing. We were disturbed because Dr. Pancoast persuaded us to see that there were more things in the world of economic problems than we had dreamed of... Dr. Pancoast led us to perceive that it was not what we wanted to believe about economics that mattered; it was what was true.23

Pancoast’s research at Goucher was closely tied to the needs of Baltimore and Maryland. Similarly to Hewes at Mount Holyoke, Pancoast used her position at Goucher to open the college, its students, faculty, administration, and alumnae, to the kinds of contributions, through social science research, that faculty could make to state and local agencies. Her research focused on what was needed within particular historical moments. In the 1920s, she studied labor unions and employers’ lockouts, as well as protective labor legislation for women. In “The Prohibition of Night Work for Women,” for example, she argued that night work was not healthy for women or men, but was
particularly detrimental to women during childbearing years, largely because of the combined stresses on health of lower wages (than men) and reduced bargaining power, as well as social expectations for work in the home, rather than "greater innate physical weakness." In the 1930s and 1940s her work focused on the problems of economic stability and security for the elderly and low and middle-income families and their health, and on the impact on labor of industrial relocation. In the middle 1950s, working with five other colleges, she organized a three-weeklong workshop on economic education for sixty teachers from Maryland, Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., and Minnesota. She brought in thirty speakers from government, business, labor, agriculture, and universities to work with the teachers. The conference was exemplary of her teaching and research commitments—to broaden understanding of economics and to produce knowledge that could be used in making economic and other policy decisions affecting people's daily lives and life chances.  

Pancoast carried the study of economics at Goucher, but she did draw other women faculty working in areas of interest to economists, including Mollie Ray Carroll in sociology, who studied social insurance programs. Without institutional support for expanding economics (and other social sciences) and providing steady financing for research, though, Pancoast was limited in her ability to develop the kinds of strategies to promote research that women economists used at Mount Holyoke and Smith.

*Bryn Mawr*

Bryn Mawr College illustrates that last point. The only institution among the women's colleges with a longstanding Ph.D. program, the college added a graduate
Department of Social Economy and Social Research, headed by Susan Kingsbury, in 1915-1936), and financed with a bequest from an alumna. The department's program trained students for the Ph.D. as well as Master's degrees in social economy. By 1940, fifteen women had finished Ph.D.s and assumed academic posts as well as research and administrative positions in a variety of public and social service agencies. Forty had completed Master's degrees, becoming social workers, pursuing further degrees, or working in industry. The program manifested a commitment to social economy research and encouraged students to conduct research on local industries (as well as social service agency populations) in the Philadelphia area.³⁵

Kingsbury had already established a reputation as a scholar of economic history. Her Ph.D. from Columbia (1905) and her subsequent work as a professor of history and economics at Simmons College and as research director of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union in Boston gave her significant power in her three-year negotiation with M. Carey Thomas over the terms of her appointment at Bryn Mawr. She made clear that those making economic and social policies affecting workers and the poor needed a deeper understanding of the conditions of poverty and circumstances of workers and that she would only direct a unit that was committed to graduate research and training, that provided funds for faculty and student research. The alumna bequest assisted with the funding, as did solicitations from other sources, including John D. Rockefeller, whose $100,000 established the Grace Dodge Professorship of Social Economy. Kingsbury also brought in women economists as faculty, including Anne Bezanson, who subsequently headed the Industrial Relations Department at the University of Pennsylvania, and Eleanor Lansing Dulles, who was on the faculty between 1928 and 1935, before

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becoming Chief in the Division of Old-Age Benefits Research at the Social Security
Board in Washington, D.C. Mildred Fairchild Woodbury (1929-1947) was another
Kingsbury appointment; she chaired the department after Kingsbury retired in 1936.26

The Bryn Mawr case suggests what a women’s college, with a historic
commitment to providing for research as well as teaching, and access to philanthropic
research funding, could accomplish in the first four decades of the twentieth century. At
the same time, it was not a research university. It was a college, which meant that it did
not work under the same set of expectations as universities. By the late 1920s, when
Rockefeller funding for social science research was centered in the foundation units, the
Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial (LSRM) and later the Rockefeller Foundation
(RF), rather than the Rockefeller family, those funds were directed to the research
universities and only rarely to the colleges. The Social Economy and Social Research
Department continued its work, but finding support for that work became more difficult
in succeeding decades.

Women Economists at Universities: Penn and Berkeley

*The University of Pennsylvania*

The University of Pennsylvania, whose Industrial Research Department (IRD)
was well financed, presents a contrast to the college cases. Research in industrial
relations was the focus. Penn’s IRD was initially financed by the Carnegie Corporation,
the Philadelphia Association for the Discussion of Employment Problems, and the
university, under the direction of Joseph Willits in 1921, who co-founded the department
with Anne Bezanson and appointed her as his assistant director. In 1928-1929, after the
Carnegie Corporation ended its support, the department received a five-year grant from 
the LSRM, effectively tripling the budget for that period. The grant was given on 
condition that the University increase its support over the same period.27

The department was established to offer courses in industrial relations, to pursue 
“co-operative industrial research in the Philadelphia community” and into “the economic 
and social problems of business.” As funding grew throughout the 1920s, the purposes 
expanded to include conducting “fundamental studies of the economic and human 
problems and phenomena of industry.” This expansion gave the faculty and research 
associates considerable latitude in designing projects, a latitude always tempered by the 
idea that the research itself would be done in a coordinated fashion rather than by lone 
scholars in isolation.28

Rockefeller support for Penn’s Industrial Research Department continued into the 
middle 1940s, although at a reduced level. As a result of this financing, approximately 
one-third of its total budget over two decades, the department created an enormous body 
of research. This work encompassed personnel and labor relations; the hosiery, 
upholstery, textile, and bituminous coal industries; and community labor studies that 
included examinations of labor market trends, personnel relations, wages, and 
transportation. Anne Bezanson was the driving force in the department, particularly by 
the late 1920s, and she effectively ran it after Willits became Dean of the Wharton School 
in 1933. She had finished her Ph.D. at Radcliffe in 1929, and was appointed professor of 
industrial research in the department, the first woman tenured at the University of 
Pennsylvania. She became associate director of the department until 1939, when Willits 
left for the Rockefeller Foundation and she became director (and consultant to the RF).
Willits called her the “real architect of the Industrial Research Department.” Bezansom herself focused on “a massive, two-decade undertaking that in the end produced one of the foundation-pieces of modern scholarship in economic history: her five-volume history of prices in Philadelphia between 1720 and 1896.”

Under her and Willits’s leadership, the department hired several women to conduct research, including Eleanor Lansing Dulles, who contributed a number of studies, and Gladys Palmer, who directed the research after Bezanson’s retirement. These appointments occurred at a time when the University of Pennsylvania appointed no women to its social science faculty. Converted to a unit in the Wharton School in the 1960s, the DIR’s work continued into the 1980s.

*Berkeley*

Women economists at the University of California at Berkeley between 1904 and 1960 offer another example to suggest how university support contrasted with the experiences of women economists in the colleges. The Berkeley women conducted social economy research and they sustained a policy reform commitment in the economics department, even as that department increasingly went the way of academic social science—less and less reform-oriented over these decades, and more and more focused on developing theory and quantitatively-based methodologies. These latter emphases in the department distanced faculty research from both the social context of economic activity and from state policymaking. The women principally responsible for sustaining the policy orientation in the department were Jessica Peixotto, Barbara Nachtrieb Armstrong, and Emily Huntington. Peixotto, who had obtained her Ph.D. in political economy at Berkeley in 1900, remained in the department from 1904 to 1935, when she
retired. Armstrong worked in the department from 1914 to 1919 as an assistant (during which time she also completed law school and practiced law), and 1919 to 1928 as a doctoral student in economics, and then instructor and assistant professor of law and economics; in 1928, after she completed her economics Ph.D., she moved full-time to the law school, but continued her economic research and participated in committee and other work related to the economics department’s activities. She was one of the significant designers of the old age pension portion of the Social Security Act in the 1930s. Huntington was an undergraduate at Berkeley who returned in 1928 after completing her doctorate at Radcliffe, and remained until her retirement in 1961.

Peixotto, Armstrong, and Huntington developed three strategies to continue their policy commitment and train students in research. First, as they moved into the department, they claimed an area of economic research that was not well developed in the department and then developed it. Peixotto focused largely on consumer economics, Armstrong on social insurance programs and then the intersection between law and economics, and Huntington in labor and industrial economics. Moreover, they supported each other within the institution and fully involved themselves in departmental activities alongside their male colleagues. Second, they conducted their research in a department that also maintained a commitment to a clinical program in social work, which Peixotto had developed with another colleague Lucy Stebbins. This social work program also enabled them to offer course work based on their policy research and to hire other women to work in clinical as well as research, service, and teaching capacities, thereby increasing the presence of colleagues dedicated to related work, and establishing an institutional justification for their own teaching and scholarship. Third, they received and sustained
external as well as internal funding for their research. In addition, they disseminated it to the relevant local, state, and federal government departments and offices.30

Rather than go into great detail here, suffice it to say that all three women continued to be productive scholars and to provide opportunities for others through the social economy program in the department. Peixotto's work attracted financing from a local wealthy woman donor, Clara Hellman Heller. The Heller Committee on Research in Social Economy was a crucial source of support for both Peixotto's and Huntington's work. It provided the funds and internal legitimacy that enabled Peixotto to expand studies in social economics, to contribute to the graduate curricular program in social service, and to employ research and teaching assistants for both programs. The committee allowed them to define projects and carry them forward through the worst years of the Depression. It also helped them acquire an external reputation. As a result of the research she conducted under the committee's auspices, Peixotto was known as one of the pioneers of consumer economics and was elected vice-president of the American Economics Association in 1928.31

Huntington assumed leadership of the Heller Committee when Peixotto retired in 1935 and headed the committee's work throughout most of the next 16 years, until its funding ended in 1951. Her research included economics and policy, social insurance, consumer economics, and labor market and employment problems. Her work was in part shaped by her commitment to "the problems and deprivations of the low income population," an area of study that held "little interest" for economic analysts "until well into the 1930's."32
Peixotto, Armstrong, and Huntington used the kind of institutional legitimacy Berkeley provided in academic economics to support their research. They created a significant place for women economists at the University of California, which expanded women social scientists' capacity to pursue research that influenced public policy and reform into the 1960s, when Huntington retired. The university appointed no women to economics between Huntington's retirement and the 1980s.

Yet the presence of these women in economics at Berkeley for nearly sixty years is significant in itself. Their accomplishments in the institution, in the field of economics, and in the public policy and reform arenas are noteworthy. Geraldine Clifford has argued that one important reason for examining the history of women in higher education institutions is to analyze how they changed those institutions. Peixotto and her female colleagues transformed the economics department and the university in a number of ways that increased the contributions of the university to social and economic research and policy in both prosperous and troubled times. Their presence in economics meant that male and female students had female academic professional role models, which proved to be a decisive influence on men students, including Paul Taylor, Charles Gulick, and Clark Kerr. Kerr took four seminars with Peixotto and recalled that her subject matter was not in the mainstream of classical economics, and that she spent a great deal of time with her students. In the bullpen of faculty desks in economics—open to students and faculty—she was "respected and accepted." Moreover, the economics department was more diverse than most in the 1930s, he noted, in viewpoints and in gender. Their female mentors profoundly affected women who studied at Berkeley, many of whom went on to graduate degrees or social service work. Alice O'Connor
suggests that such efforts to develop "poverty knowledge" challenged a fundamental assumption classical economics: that poverty was a natural outcome of economic processes. The researchers at Berkeley also refused to succumb to the theories developing in the 1920s that offered cultural rationales for group and individual poverty. Instead, they continued to see poverty and unemployment as systemic phenomena that occurred as a result of larger economic and labor market forces, as well as the distribution of wealth—a "problem of political and social economy." 34

Conclusion

As this analysis of women economists at Mount Holyoke, Smith, and Goucher and the comparison to women economists at Berkeley and Penn, suggests, women economists in the colleges worked with a number of obstacles in their efforts to sustain their identities as productive scholars. Women faced a constrained employment market for women academic economists in this period when almost no tenure-line positions were open to women scholars in the research universities. Unlike their counterparts at Berkeley and the DIR at Penn, they did not have the benefits of research university status and recognition of scholarship as a primary faculty commitment. Nor did they have access to the resources increasingly available at the research universities. Except for Bryn Mawr, they could have no expectation of training doctoral students or the research assistance doctoral students routinely provided their mentors in the research universities. They could not take the research sabbaticals increasingly available at the universities, which provided institutional and philanthropic support. Finally, they lacked the prestige conferred on scholars in the research universities in this period, as social sciences were gaining ground in the academy and losing the connections to the social service and social policy commitments that were at their roots in the United States.
Yet, when they took positions in the colleges, women economists continued to be productive scholars. They developed strategies to support their research. They raised funds from alumnae and other donors and used the funding to spur institutional financial contributions. They trained students, some of whom later joined college and university faculties and government and nonprofit agencies as economic and social researchers. Except in the most financially constrained context, of which Goucher is an example, they increased the presence of women economists and they ensured the continuation of women's leadership within their departments and institutions.

Certain key factors enabled these women to transform the colleges to accommodate their work as scholars and, more important, develop institutional resources to sustain their work. All of these economists introduced economics into the college curriculum and engaged students in examining local economic institutions and phenomena as part of their undergraduate or graduate training. Extending faculty activity into the rich variety of local and national research venues of the 1910s through 1930s was a means of demonstrating to college administrators the importance of economic research to their identities and of illustrating for local leaders the importance of research to their planning and policy making. As Woolley of Mount Holyoke argued, women economists in the colleges created productive, often research-based town-gown relationships where they had not existed before. They helped to address pressing local, state, and federal problems. Their students joined them in the research or, at the very least, benefited from it in their classrooms. Administrative and trustee support, emerging in response to faculty's research, also were significant in furthering women economists' scholarship in the colleges.

Locating sources of funding, working with local, state, and federal agencies, increasing the presence of economists, and drawing students into research programs were successful strategies that generated support for their own work and for developing the next generation of women economists. Taken together, these kinds of strategies enabled
women economic scholars in the women's colleges to extend their power into the male world of academic scholarship and to contribute to shaping knowledge in the discipline and in social sciences for the first four decades of the twentieth century.


4 "Summary of the Conference on Research in the Social Sciences in Colleges Held at the Social Science Research Council, December 12 and 13, 1931," Ethel B. Dietrich papers, File 1, Faculty Files, Mount Holyoke College Archives (FF, MHCA).

5 Mary Ann Dzuback, "Gender and the Politics of Knowledge," *History of Education Quarterly* 43 (summer 2003): 185-86.


8 *Report of the President, 1920-1923, Mount Holyoke College Bulletin* (Series 17, November, 1923); *Report of the President and Treasurer, 1923-1924, Mount Holyoke College Bulletin* (Series 18, November 1924); "Report of the Department of Economics and Sociology, 1923-1924," ESDR, MHCA.

9 See Faculty Biographical Files, Mount Holyoke College Archives (FBF, MHCA), for vitas and other college material on Comstock and Hewes. Amy Hewes, "Report of the


12 On Bacon, see Faculty Files, SCA. She published articles in the Review of Economic Statistics, the Journal of the American Statistical Association and the National Encyclopedia in her areas of expertise. Her study Recent Economic History of the Five Towns (1937) was published by the Works Progress Administration in April 1938.

14 "Suggested plan," ca. 1932 (n.d.), Box 38, W.A. Neilson Papers, Smith College Archive (WAN, SCA); and other materials in Box 398, Presidential Papers (William A. Neilson) (PP, WAN), SCA.


17 See, for example, Lumpkin, "Brief Resume of the Work of the Council of Industrial Studies, 1932-1938," Box 398, PP (WAN), and "Report of the Director of Research of
the Council of Industrial Studies" in Report(s) of the President, 1933-1938, SCA. See also Smith College Studies in History, vols 19, 21, 23, 24, 26, 28, 33, 37


22 Knipp and Thomas, Goucher College, 548.


25 Bryn Mawr College, Carola Woerishoffer Graduate Department of Social Economy and Social Research: Degrees and Certificates Conferred, 1915-1930, Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research Records, Bryn Mawr College Archives (BMCA); 11 of the 15 theses were published in some form by 1939. See Mary Ann Dzuback, "Women and Social Research at Bryn Mawr College, 1915-1940," History of Education Quarterly 33 (winter 1993): 579-608, for a full account of the department.

26 Toba Kerson, "Susan Myra Kingsbury", Florence Peterson and Frederica de Laguna, "Susan Myra Kingsbury," both in Susan M. Kingsbury Papers (SMK)-BMCA; Amey

27 The Carnegie Corporation shifted support from research institutes to popular education in the mid-to-late 1920s (Lagemann, *The Politics of Knowledge* on the LSRM grant: Josiah H. Penniman to Beardsley Ruml, 13 June 1927, and other materials in box 75, file 792, Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial File, series 3, RAC. The university's obligation increased from $10,000 (1928-1929) to $40,000 (1931-1932); the LSRM's decreased from $50,000 (1927-1928) to $10,000 (1931-32). See also Dzuback, "Creative Financing in Social Science: Women Scholars and Early Research," in *Women and Philanthropy in Education*, ed. Andrea Walton (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 105-26.


29 *Moving into the Eighties, 7*; Sass, *The Pragmatic Imagination*, 210, for quote. The Rockefeller Foundation appropriated $50,000 over two years in 1932 and $75,000 over five years in 1935; see "Minutes," 9 May 1932 and 17 April 1935, box 5, file 78; in 1939, the Foundation gave $11,000 for two specific projects and in 1940, $105,000 for three years (Thompson to Williams, 25 October 1939, box 8, file 112, and "Minutes" 17 May 1940, box 5, file 78); all in RFA, RG 1.1, series 241, RAC.


32 Emily H. Huntington, "A Career in Economics," 40; *Doors to Jobs: A Study of the Organization of the Labor Market in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1942), v. Huntington, too, was an equality feminist, believing that women should have opportunities equal to men's and be judged equally based on the merits of their performance.


34 Emily H. Huntington, "A Career in Economics and Social Insurance," v. See essays in *Essays in Honor of Jessica Blanche Peixotto* by former students on topics such as the