

# Undergraduate Journals and Conferences

*Pathways to Understanding the Economics Profession*

ASSA – CEE Session

New Orleans, Jan 7, 2023

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THE MARTHA AND SPENCER LOVE

**ELON** | School of Business

# Background

- 26,000 students per year graduate with an economics degree
- broad consensus among economists that teaching undergraduates to *think* like economists is a worthy goal
- less agreement on how (or if) we can best teach undergraduates to *do* economics

# Doing Economics

Hansen (2001) articulated these proficiencies:

- (1) access existing economics knowledge
- (2) display understanding of economic knowledge
- (3) interpret and evaluate economic knowledge
- (4) interpret and manipulate economic data
- (5) apply economics to an analysis of an economic problem
- (6) create new economic knowledge

# Framing

Hoyt and McGoldrick (2017)

- A culture of undergraduate research
  - Ensures sustainability
  - Requires a change in goals
    - from content delivery to teaching students to become creators of knowledge

Culture is established and sustained through effective and intentional programming

# Focus

This paper focuses on how  
the practice of public dissemination  
*(i.e., conference & journal papers)*  
contributes to the  
culture of undergraduate research

# Outline

- Evidence on the impact for UGs who participate in public dissemination of research through conference presentations or journal submissions
- Issues in Political Economy - one successful model of UG research conference and journal
- Building a sustainable culture of undergraduate research

# Research Process

The research process is only completed when students participate in the dissemination of their work

Spronken-Smith, Brodeur, Kajaks, Luck, Myatt, Verburch, Walkington and Wuetherick (2013)

“...research is recognized as offering transformational experiences for undergraduates... **the dissemination phase is generally underplayed.**”

Kneale, Edwards-Jones, Walkington & Hill (2016, p. 160).

# Impact of Conference Participation

## Existing empirical research

- Mabrouk (2009), Hill and Walkington (2016) and Walkington, Hill, and Kneale (2017), Little (2020), Estien, Myron, Oldfield and Alwin (2021)

1. Skill development
2. Psychosocial development
3. Self-identity and “self-authorship”
4. Professional identity\*

\*especially important for the development of individuals from historically under-represented groups

# Issues in Political Economy

- Journal and conference
- Established in 1989 at Bellarmine
- EEA conference sessions in early 1990s
- 1998 took over by Elon and Mary Washington
- Journal volume 31 in 2023

<https://blogs.elon.edu/ipe/>

# Journal Goals

- Journal practices must differ for UGs
- Solicitation mostly through faculty \*
- Goals
  - Not to be a gate keeper
  - Re-enforce best practices with regard to methods and communication
  - Not expected to make a “significant contribution” to the field
- Life of UG differs from ours

# Editorial Practice

- Submissions come
  - Late spring (graduates)
  - January
  - March (post-conference)
- Refereeing
  - Staff selected and trained in fall
  - Seniors in fall capstone trained to referee papers (related to peer review but different)

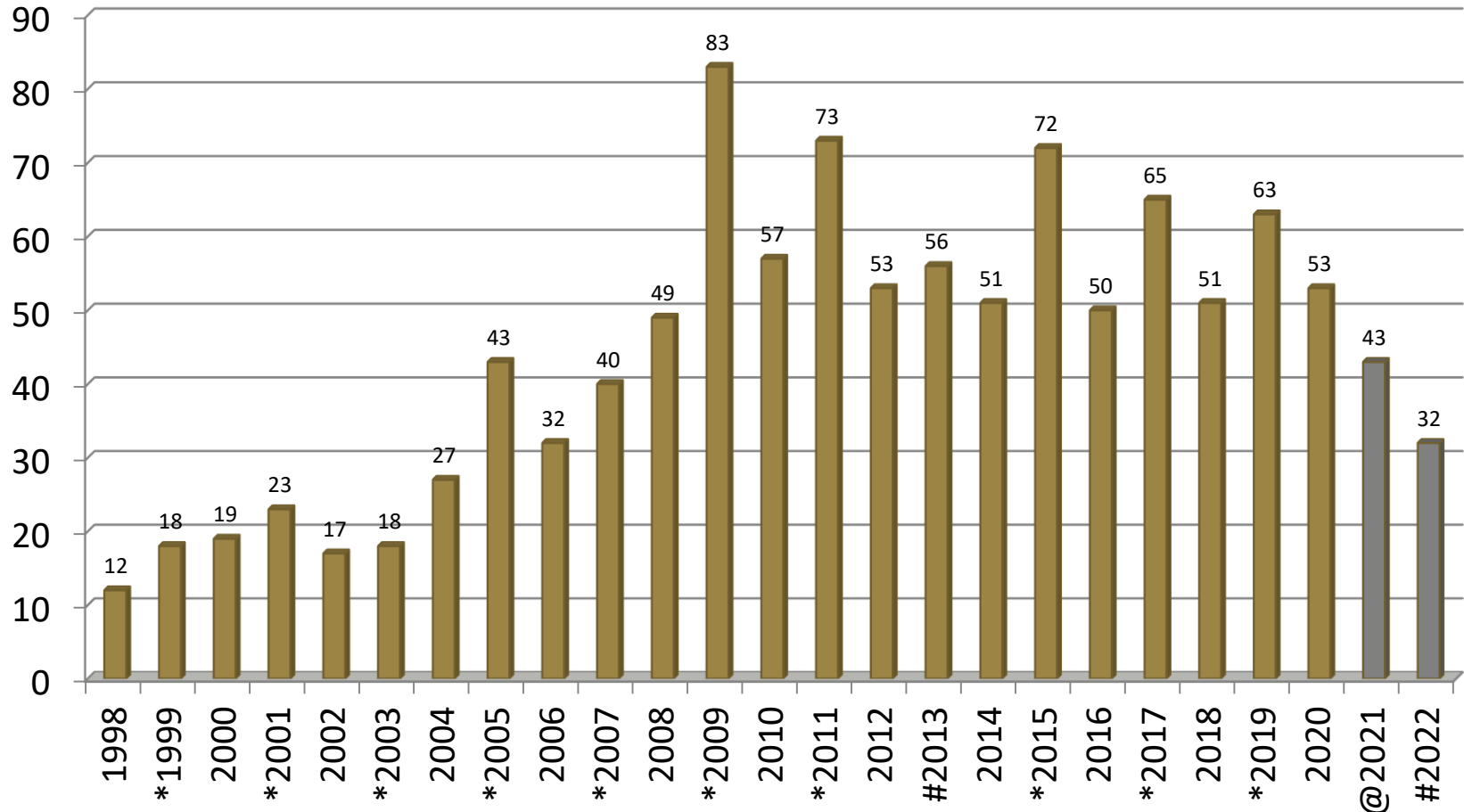
# Revisions

- Only papers with minor revisions are accepted
- Accepted papers due in final form June 1
- Editors write foreword
- Published online July (Issue 1) and September (Issue 2)

# IPE Conference

- Submissions due January 15
- All submissions accepted \*
- Conference last week in February
- Part of the Eastern Economics Association \*
- Sessions Friday and Saturday
- Student-Faculty Reception Friday night

# Number of Student Presenters at IPE Conferences

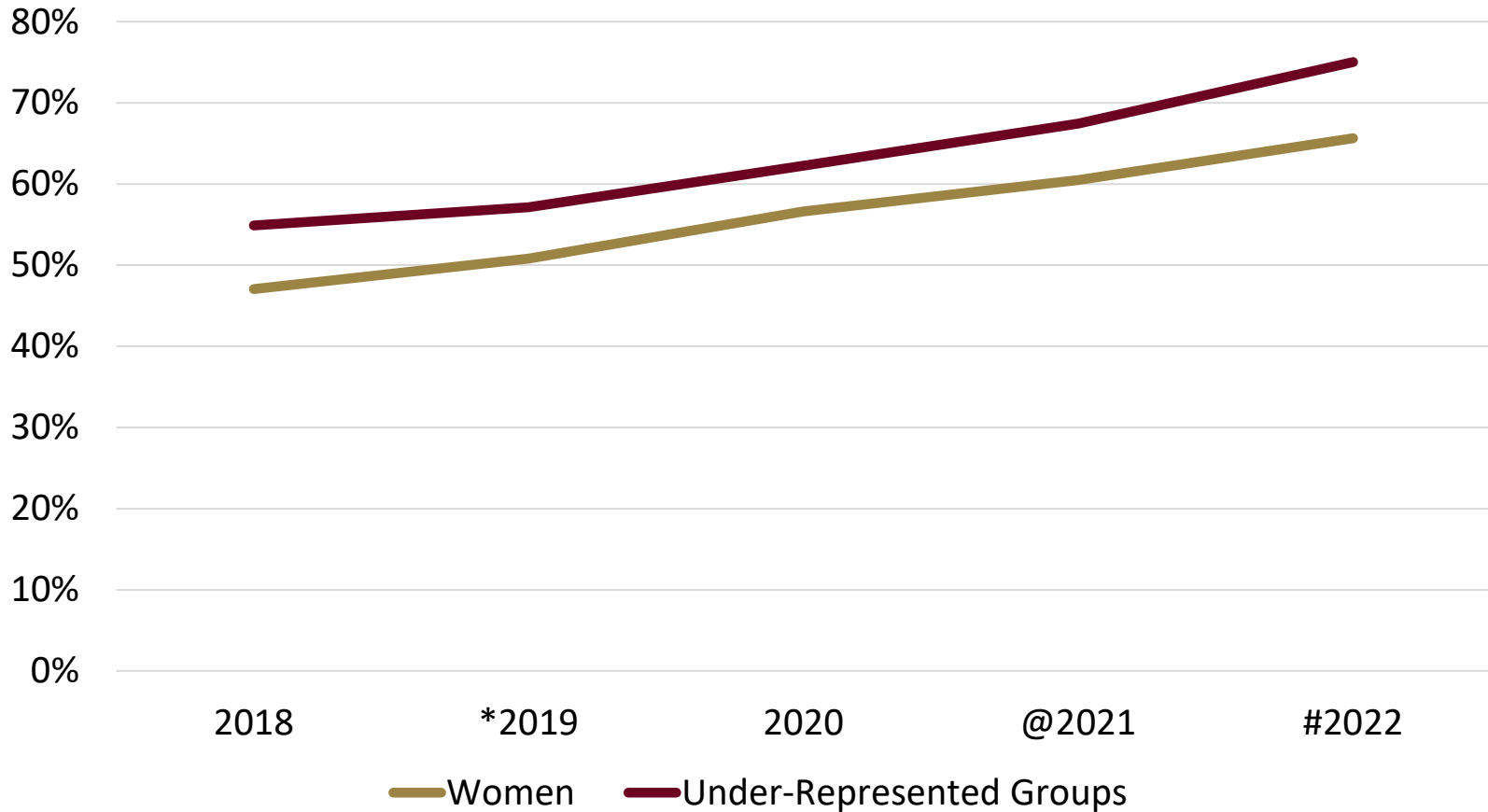


\*NYC location

# IPE separate from EEA

@ Virtual only

# Percentage of Women and Members of Under-Represented Groups Presenting at IPE Conferences



# A Culture of Research

UG participation in professional conferences and peer-reviewed journals is an effective, necessary part of building a vibrant culture of research

- Completes the research cycle
- Builds psychosocial skills
- Helps develop professional identities
- May help increase diversity in the profession

# Next Steps

We need to expand access for undergraduates to professional conferences and journal participation

- ~ 50 percent of private institutions require a research-based capstone
- ~ 30 percent of private institutions require a thesis
- ~ 30 percent of large PhD granting institutions at least require a senior seminar

Siegfried and Walstad (2014)

*Too few economics majors have the opportunity to participate in a professional conference*

