American Economic Association

1988 Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession

NEWSLETTER

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IN THIS ISSUE:

*** * * * WELCOME TO NEW CSWEP BOARD MEMBER * * * ***

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COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE ECONOMICS PROFESSION
ANNUAL REPORT, 1988

The Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP), established by the AEA in 1972, was charged with monitoring women's position in the profession and undertaking activities to improve it. This report summarizes changes that have occurred in the position of women economists in academia during the 1980s and describes the Committee's activities during the past year.

The Changing Status of Women Economists

Overall, women economists are more numerous now than in 1980 and they are slowly advancing in academia, but few have reached the rank of full professor. These conclusions are based on data from a matched sample of colleges and universities that responded to the Universal Academic Questionnaire in both the 1980-1981 and the 1987-1988 school years.1/ Although the matched sample includes only half of all institutions reporting in 1987, the characteristics for the entire group are essentially the same as for the sample analyzed here.2/

As shown in Table 1, the proportion of Ph.D.'s in economics awarded to women by schools in the matched sample rose sharply between 1980 and 1987--from 12 percent to 19 percent, in part reflecting women's rapidly growing representation in economics at the Bachelor's degree level during the late 1970s.3/ The share of Master's degrees in economics awarded to women also increased substantially--from 21 to 29 percent--but the proportion of Bachelor's degrees was stable at about 30 percent. The gender distribution of graduate students shifted somewhat, from 18 percent of Ph.D. students in economics being women to 22 percent. Among students in both Master's degree and Ph.D. programs, women remained slightly more likely than men to receive aid.

As women have progressed through their careers, they have made up a growing proportion of faculty at the ranks of assistant, associate, and full professor, as shown in Table 2. Only in the case of full professors at undergraduate institutions did the proportion of women fall, and when this relatively small group is combined with full professors at graduate institutions that award Ph.D.'s, the overall proportion of women rose from 2.7 percent to 3.7 percent. Nonetheless, only 30 of 803 full professors at institutions in the matched sample were women.

Women made up a higher proportion of those who were hired in 1987 than they did in 1980, as shown in Table 3, but their progress to higher ranks has been limited. This is especially true at the institutions with Ph.D. programs, which employed 66 percent of all associate professors and 81 percent of all full professors in 1987. Only 1 of the 30 faculty members promoted to associate professor in 1987 at these institutions was female and all 28 who became full professors were men. Considering that women made up 12 percent of assistant professors at these schools in 1980, rising to 19 percent in 1987, it seems that they are not advancing within academia in the same way as men. Moreover, women were not "bidden away" to tenured positions at other universities in this

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1. The Committee thanks Charles Scott and Joan Haworth for their valuable contributions to this analysis.

2. The matched sample contains 80 of the 188 undergraduate institutions that responded in 1987, 20 of the 42 institutions that award only Bachelor's and Master's degrees, and 50 of the 71 institutions that award Ph.D.'s. The tables presented here are available for the entire 1987 sample on request.

3. See CSWEP Annual Report, 1985, American Economic Review, Papers and Proceedings, May 1986, pp. 452-457.

sample. Of the 20 full-time female faculty hired in 1987, 18 had the rank of assistant professor. In contrast, 18 men were hired with ranks of associate or full professor.4/

Although many hypotheses have been advanced about why women economists are not progressing more quickly in academia, few facts are available. An ongoing study based on longitudinal data from the Survey of Doctoral Recipients will describe the career patterns of male and female economists in academia and other types of employment and analyze factors that may be related to differences in these patterns.

The Committee's Activities

CSWEP pursued a number of activities in 1988. Several were designed to expand employers' use of CSWEP's roster of women economists, which contains information about their employers, educational background, fields of specialization, and publications. First, CSWEP's Board instituted the option of providing information from the roster in machine-readable form, as well as continuing to offer printed copies of it and the customized computer listings that were previously available. Thus, users may now obtain a diskette containing information about all CSWEP members and create their own listings of economists who meet specified conditions, or the diskette may be limited to information about members having characteristics specified by the user. Second, because employers often use the roster to expand their pools of job candidates, flyers describing how to obtain printed listings or diskettes will soon be sent to the chairs of Economics Departments and to the affirmative action officers for each state and for federal agencies likely to employ economists.

To ensure that the roster is as useful as possible, the Board has also devoted considerable effort to updating information about current members and expanding the number of women economists included in it. For example, questionnaires were sent to all current members and copies are also being distributed at the technical sessions and social events CSWEP organizes at meetings of the national and regional economics associations. Early next year, chairs of Economics Departments will be asked to help identify female graduate students, recent graduates, and new faculty.

Since the Committee's inception, one of the Board's goals has been to expand the participation of women economists on the program of the AEA's annual meeting. As in past years, the Board organized several sessions for the 1988 annual meeting, some on traditional gender-related topics such as equal employment opportunity for women and others on public policy topics such as the financial position of the elderly and long-term care that are of particular concern to women. At the suggestion of Joseph Pechman and with Gerard Debreu's concurrence, however, the Board has decided to expand the topics on which it organizes future sessions to include ones that are not related to gender. A different area will be covered each year, depending on the expertise of the Board. For 1989, we plan to focus on theory and applications in industrial organization. Another innovation in 1988 was sending each person asked by the President-Elect to organize a session lists of experienced women economists who specialize in the same fields as the organizer. These lists were intended as reminders of possible participants; whether relatively more women were represented on the 1988 program will be clearer when CSWEP's project to compare the AEA's programs for 1984 through 1988 is completed in 1989.

Another major activity was publishing the CSWEP Newsletter, one goal of which is to help young economists advance in the profession. Articles covered topics such as how to write grant proposals and how to pursue job searches involving more than one professional. Public policy topics such as child support, welfare dependency, and the changing income distribution were also addressed.

Finally, the Board thanks Joan Haworth, the Committee's Membership Secretary, and her staff for their many contributions--updating the mailing list, preparing listings from the roster, and

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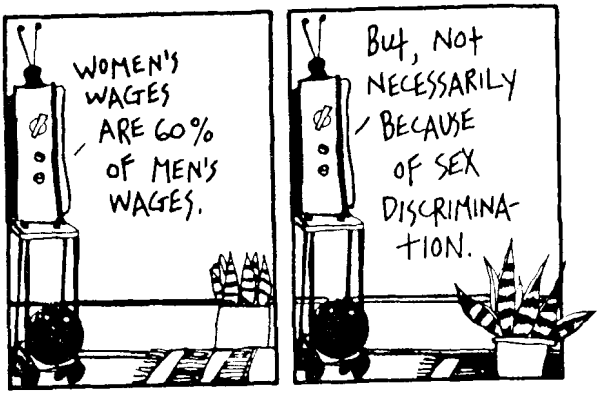
4. When all doctorate-granting institutions responding to the 1987-1988 survey are considered, 24 of the 26 women hired as full-time faculty had the rank of assistant professor.

completing special mailings, to name just a few. Three Board members, whose terms expire this year, have also contributed much to the Committee. Beth Allen has been the Eastern representative, written articles for the Newsletter, and arranged sessions for the annual meetings. Alan Fechter helped with access to the data necessary for the CSWEP-initiated project examining differences in the career paths of male and female economists and with arrangements for CSWEP's activities at AEA meetings. Katharine Lyall has been the Midwest regional representative throughout her term and has organized articles for the Newsletter during the last two years. The Board is also grateful to Toni Foxx, who continues to do an excellent job producing the Newsletter.

Nancy M. Gordon
Chair



More Sylvia by Nicole Hollander

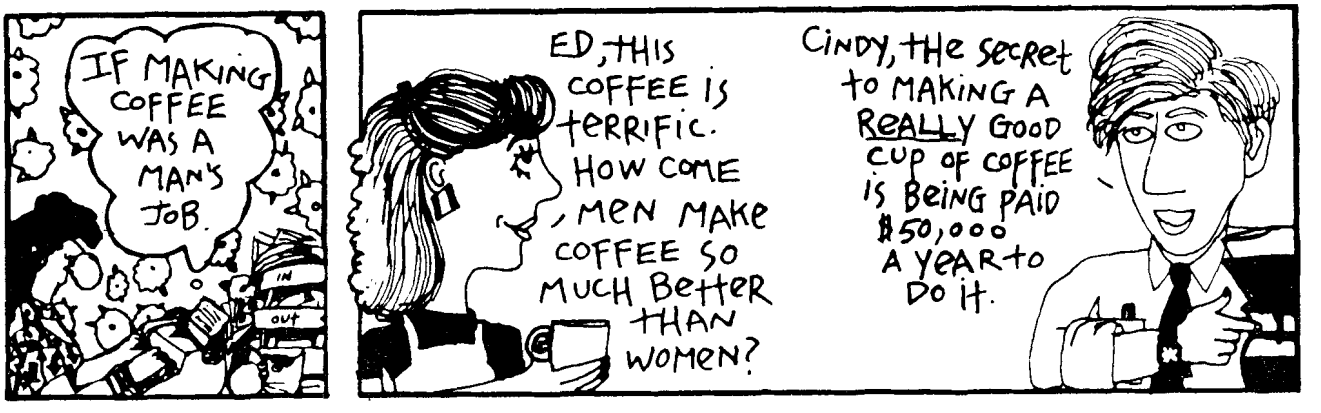


TABLE 1. SELECTED DATA ON STUDENTS IN ECONOMICS

	1980-1981		1987-1988	
	Total Number	Percent Female	Total Number	Percent Female
Recipients of Degrees in Economics a/				
Bachelor's	5,889	29.2	6,910	31.4
Master's	710	20.7	719	29.1
Ph.D.	410	12.4	368	19.4
Graduate Students in Economics b/				
Enrolled				
In Ph.D. Program	2,279	18.0	2,886	22.3
In MA Program	861	26.0	691	24.7
Receiving Aid				
In Ph.D. Program	1,582	19.2	1,997	23.6
In MA Program	271	29.5	188	27.1
Distribution of Employment for Ph.D. Recipients (in percent) c/				
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Educational Institutions	66	68	57	69
Government d/	8	6	11	5
Private Sector e/	12	18	12	10
Other f/	15	9	21	16
Total	100	100	100	100

SOURCE: Data from the Universal Academic Questionnaire for institutions responding in both the 1980-1981 and 1987-1988 school years.

a. From 80 institutions awarding only Bachelor's degrees, 20 awarding Bachelor's and Master's degrees, and 50 that also award Ph.D.'s.

b. Full-time students attending the 50 institutions in the matched sample that award Ph.D.'s.

c. Excludes recipients whose subsequent activity is not known. Based on the 50 institutions in the matched sample that award Ph.D.'s.

d. Includes federal, state, and local governments.

e. Includes business, industry, banking, finance, consulting, and research institutions.

f. Includes recipients employed in international agencies and other countries, as well as those in post-doctoral programs, seeking employment, or out of the labor force.

TABLE 2. NUMBER OF FULL-TIME FACULTY AND PROPORTION WHO ARE WOMEN, BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION AND RANK

	1980		1987	
	Total Number	Percent Female	Total Number	Percent Female
Undergraduate Institutions a/				
Full Professor	110	8.2	155	7.1
Associate Professor	128	3.9	151	8.6
Assistant Professor	150	10.7	150	20.7
Instructor	42	21.4	27	11.1
Total	430	9.1	483	12.0
Graduate Institutions b/				
Full Professor	624	1.8	648	2.9
Associate Professor	278	6.5	287	8.7
Assistant Professor	341	12.0	326	19.3
Instructor	45	24.4	22	18.2
Total	1,288	6.3	1,283	8.7

SOURCE: Data from the Universal Academic Questionnaire for institutions responding in both the 1980-1981 and 1987-1988 school years.

a. Based on 80 undergraduate institutions that award bachelor's degrees in economics but do not have graduate programs.

b. Based on 50 institutions that award Ph.D.'s in economics.

TABLE 3. CHANGES IN STATUS OF FULL-TIME FACULTY a/

	1980-1981		1987-1988	
	Total Number	Percent Female	Total Number	Percent Female
Undergraduate Institutions b/				
Hired	45	15.6	43	20.9
Promoted				
To Associate Professor	13	7.7	16	6.3 c/
To Full Professor	11	27.3	13	30.8 c/
Graduate Institutions d/				
Hired	78	12.8	93	21.5
Promoted				
To Associate Professor	28	10.7	30	3.3
To Full Professor	27	0	28	0

SOURCE: Data from the Universal Academic Questionnaire for institutions responding in both the 1980-1981 and 1987-1988 school years.

a. Reflects changes for full-time faculty with ranks of assistant, associate, and full professor.

b. Based on 80 undergraduate institutions that award bachelor's degrees in economics but do not have graduate programs.

c. Whether the entire group or the matched sample is considered, the number of women being promoted is small--5 or less in each category. Because of the small number of promotions at the undergraduate institutions, however, the share of women among faculty promoted to associate professor is three times as large in the entire group, and the share promoted to full professor is one-third the size, as in this matched sample.

d. Based on 50 institutions that award Ph.D.'s in economics.

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OLDER WOMEN'S WORK

Barbara Wolfe, University of Wisconsin-Madison

A rapid upward trend in female labor force participation has been observed both in the United States and in other western industrialized countries. Analysis of the determinants of female labor force participation--labor supply--has been described as a major "cottage industry."1/ In a recently completed study, "Labor and Transfer Incomes and Older Women's Work: Estimates from the United States" by Robert Haveman, Philip de Jong, and myself,2/ we analyze older women's labor force participation focusing on the question: To what extent do older women (those ages 45-62) with work experience respond to market and transfer income opportunities when deciding between work and nonwork options? Because the bulk of public transfers available to older women are targeted on workers with health problems or disabilities, this question concerns the effects of disability-related transfers on labor supply. The issue has been extensively studied for older men, motivated by the observed secular decline in their labor force participation rates and assertions that this reduction in work effort has been caused by the growth and generosity of disability transfers.

The issue of the effect of transfer income--especially disability transfers--on women's work has seemed less urgent partly because its importance has been camouflaged by the generally increasing trend of women's work and partly because, until recently, only a small percentage of women have worked long enough to accumulate the necessary quarters of coverage to be covered by Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), the largest source of disability-related transfer income.3/ In 1960, only 27.4 million women were covered under Social Security on the basis of their own earnings record. By 1986, however, this number had grown to 69.7 million.

As the incidence of women's work continues to grow, eligibility for SSDI will expand, as will the potential for disability transfers to influence women's work decisions. Hence, both for appraising the future of older women's work patterns and forecasting future costs and caseloads of public disability transfer programs, it is important to analyze the work-transfer linkage for older women. The common finding that women's labor supply response to wage and other income changes is substantially larger than men's suggests that future aggregate cost, caseload, and welfare impacts of various Social Security policies will be increasingly dominated by women and their decisions about work.

Method

The responsiveness of older female labor supply to the level of income available if not working (primarily disability-related public transfers), and to expected income if working, is estimated. Because the circumstances and the process of choice is likely to differ between married and unmarried women, our estimates are done separately for wives and household heads.

The model is based on the standard utility maximization assumption in which individuals face a choice between working, with its associated income flow, and not working, with its available income

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1. For references, see Robert Haveman, Philip de Jong, and Barbara Wolfe, 1988, "Labor and Transfer Incomes and Older Women's Work: Estimates from the United States." NBER Working Paper No. 2728.

2. The research for this paper was supported by a grant from the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

3. Recipients of Social Security Disability Insurance are allowed $280 of earned income per month without calling into question their eligibility. Earnings beyond this amount are considered "substantial gainful employment" and are viewed as inconsistent with being "totally and permanently disabled."

flow. The income associated with each option, together with other sources of utility (such as time spent in leisure and the stigma associated with public transfer recipiency), determine well-being.

The model is a three-equation simultaneous equation system where the first two equations estimate the income flows expected in the two options, and the third is the selection equation. The selection rule presumes that individuals know the outcome if either the work or the transfer recipiency option is chosen and that a long-run equilibrium has been achieved. The selection equation, however, recognizes that for some individuals search may be incomplete, so that the realized income flow in an option may fall short of or exceed the ex ante estimate of expected income. The equation also reflects the cost of applying for benefits and the discretionary role of employers and administrators, to the extent that either depends on the observed characteristics that are included. In other words, the model is an example of a "switching regression," where the switch is endogenous. All coefficients, including the error covariance matrix, are estimated by iterative maximization of the log of the appropriately defined likelihood function.

This approach to modeling the work-nonwork choice is the result of simplifications--such as the use of one global nonwork income variable and a linear utility function--that preclude the specification of the complete and nonlinear budget constraint and the estimation of utility maximizing work-nonwork choices with respect to it. These simplifications are dictated by the complexity of the various transfer programs and by the interdependence of one family member's decisions about labor market participation with the incomes of other family members. For example, any person can receive benefits from a number of the programs simultaneously (such as, SSDI, Supplementary Security Income, and Worker's Compensation), depending on widely disparate coverage and eligibility provisions.

We use data for women aged 45-62 in 1978 who have worked full time for seven years or more, indicating a strong labor market attachment. This work history generally provides them with disability coverage by the Social Security system. The observations are from the Michigan Panel Study of Income Dynamics. The choice of work status in 1978 is taken as the dependent variable. Being a labor market participant is defined as having at least one of the following labor market characteristics: (1) labor income (earnings plus hours unemployed or on strike times average hourly earnings) greater than zero and no disability-related transfers, (2) being self-employed and reporting 500 or more hours worked last year, or (3) having disability-related transfers greater than zero but labor income greater than $3,360. The panel character of the data allows the use of time-related information before and beyond 1978 to reflect both prior work history and expectations of future outcomes.

The variables included reflect demand-side and supply-side characteristics of both the labor market and the transfer-recipiency "market" that are likely to affect the presence of an individual in either group. Education, family background, and disability status capture the individual's perception of potential work capacity and productivity, as does age. They also describe important determinants of eligibility for transfers. The presence of children reflects the income requirements of the household and influences the opportunity cost of working. The area-specific unemployment rate, region, and urban-rural background reflect the employment opportunities open to the individual and, hence, the likelihood of obtaining a job or gaining eligibility for transfers.

The response to income incentives is also captured by including another independent variable to measure the expected growth or change in income based on actual experience between 1978 and 1981. Change is included to reflect the long-term consequences of the work-nonwork choice at any point in time.

Location variables also reflect varying application of the criteria for determining eligibility for transfer benefits by site. Previous usual occupation and the cause of single status (for household heads) are used to proxy transfer program coverage, past earnings, and the probability of receiving child support or alimony income. The race variable captures the effect of potential labor market discrimination in employment opportunities and the resulting impact of lowered transfer payments.

Religion is used as a proxy for taste. In the estimate for wives, the effect of joint household considerations on the woman's work choice is captured by the age difference between the wife and her husband, the asset income of the family, and by the earnings capacity of the husband (as opposed to his actual earnings, which tend to be endogenous to the wife's labor market decision). A measure of disability is also included to capture earnings potential and eligibility for certain transfers.

Findings

For both female heads and wives, the results suggest that expected income from work positively affects the decision to work outside of the home, but it is statistically significant only for wives. While the sign of the coefficient indicates that expected income if not working may deter a decision to work outside the home for both female heads and wives, the coefficient is not significant in either case. Older females, then, appear somewhat responsive to income incentives in both the labor market and the "transfer" market in making their labor force participation choice; however, in three of four cases, these concurrent market incentives are not significant.

Other coefficients provide evidence that health status is an important determinant of the decision to work; women with health problems are less likely to be labor force participants than healthier women. This effect is in addition to the impact of the health variables on the work choice, which operates through the expected income and income-change terms. The number of children borne by a woman before age 25 is also a significant determinant of the labor supply decision in later years, but has a quite different impact for heads and wives. For female heads, births early in life tend to discourage labor supply in later years. In our data, many female heads are widows, so the relation to early births suggests an income effect from the availability of Social Security survivors' and dependent benefits. For wives, having children early in life tends to encourage work in later years; for such women, child-rearing responsibilities have been significantly reduced by age 40. In the estimate for wives, husband's permanent wage rate and asset income, designed to control for the effect of nonwork income on the labor supply choice, are significant and have the expected signs.

Response elasticities suggest that the better (worse) the health or disability status of older women, the higher (lower) is their predicted probability of working and the lower (higher) is their response to income incentives, whether offered in the labor or "transfer" market.

Women with poorer labor market prospects (and hence superior income transfer opportunities) are estimated to be about twice as sensitive to income incentives as are those well up in the potential earnings distribution. Changes in income opportunities--either from working or through transfers--appear to elicit substantially greater response from low-skilled women than from those with more skills and higher earnings potential.

To obtain a rough estimate of the potential effects of changed expectations regarding both current transfer incomes and future transfer income prospects, we simulated the effect of a 20-percent increase and a 20-percent decrease in these variables. The results suggest that a 40-percent increase in total nonwork income flows could produce a 5-percentage-point decrease in older wives' labor force participation, and a 13-point decrease in older female heads' participation.

These estimates suggest that income opportunities, whether in the labor market or the "transfer" market, have an effect on the work choices of older women, both household heads and wives. The rapid increase in female labor force participation during the 1970s, which accompanied increased relative female wage rates and an improved outlook for women's work opportunities, are consistent with these results.

Given recent trends in women's work patterns, a far greater proportion of older women in the 1990s will be eligible for benefits. The results reported here suggest that eligible women--especially low earners, wives, and those with health problems--do respond to changes in the generosity and availability of transfer income. Sizable increases in expected benefits, deriving from increases in either program generosity or leniency in administration, may well have substantial impacts on older women's work patterns.

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TRANSLATING A C.V. TO A RESUME

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Although the words are often used interchangeably, a curriculum vita (c.v.) and a resume are not the same. "Curriculum vita" translates to "the course of a life" and, as applied to an academic life, is precisely that--a passive description. There may be differences in form among vitae, but they all contain information about education, publications, research interests, work in progress, community service, and teaching experience. Little changes in the vita's format with time; it simply expands. Since a c.v. is the accepted academic form, most researchers have developed a fairly good one and simply add new material periodically.

A resume, on the other hand, is a representation of skills and abilities, an active representation of a life, rather than a chart of its course. It shows results, not merely activities. Resumes, therefore, do not grow significantly longer with time; they are pruned. Typically, a maximum of two pages, they are more commonly used in business and government circles, where the name of the chair of your dissertation committee, for example, may be considered extraneous. Since most business and government employees consider themselves "bottom line" people, they usually feel that all the information in a vita is not necessary.

To meet the needs of those other than academics, researchers may wish to have a resume in addition to their curriculum vita. It will be useful in obtaining employment in another sector, whether that work be complementary or represent a career change. Turning a c.v. into a resume is not difficult, but will require some time and thought.

Begin by determining the audience(s) for your resume. Are you looking for consulting jobs in your area of expertise? A management or administrative position? For each target, your resume will be different. Each time you construct a resume, ask yourself what skills, interests, and background are necessary to do the type of job for which you are applying or for the occupation you are considering. Determine which of your many qualifications meet those needs; then only include them. Your research in progress, for example, no matter how fascinating, may not be of interest to every potential employer.

Since each case is different, there are no absolute rules about what to prune from your c.v. Generally, the sections about academic honors (membership in prestigious national honoraries can be recorded under your degrees), research interests, and teaching experience can be eliminated or, at least, condensed substantially. Conversely, your community service section, if it addresses your management experience, may be expanded on your resume.

You may choose to categorize your experience in sections that do not typically appear on a c.v. Grouping your abilities into sections such as "Technical Skills," "Management Experience," and "Communications Skills," for example, might be an extremely important element of landing an interview with a consulting firm. Think carefully about the experiences you want to present and choose sections that do so. A reverse chronological order resume (with work experience listing most recent job first) that includes a brief background summary section to highlight your skills and experience works well for many academics.

Some of the sections of your resume will be identical to those of your c.v., but their placement will be different. A vita usually begins with a list of your degrees; that may not be true on a resume. Leading off with the most important information is the key. If a Ph.D. is required for the job, put it first. But since many nonacademic employers often prefer to know first what kinds of relevant work experience you have had, your educational background may be last on your resume. Again, by looking at the needs of a potential employer, you will know how to place the sections on your resume.

When you have identified and placed relevant sections, make sure you adequately convey the kinds of experiences you have had. Nonacademics often have no idea of the time, effort, and abilities necessary to perform effective research and teaching, so it is important you use terms that they will understand. Avoid insider jargon, unless you are sure your audience will comprehend it. "Directed 22-person team in analysis of local welfare delivery system," for example, may have far more impact than "taught project course."

Amplify the one- or two-line description in your vita's "Other Professional Positions" section, if you are considering a nonacademic job. It may be sufficient for an academic search committee to know that you spent a year "assisting corporation with strategic planning." That description will probably not be enough for a nonacademic employer. She will want to know what kind of strategic planning you did, the tools you used, and, above all, the outcomes of your work. "Developed budgeting model that resulted in a yearly savings of 32 percent," is far more likely to impress her.

When you have done a first draft of a resume, have nonacademic colleagues in your field of interest critique it. Based on their knowledge of the job market, they will probably be able to suggest refinements. Consider taking it to a career counselor at your university; chances are she will also be able to assist you. It may take several iterations, but with practice and assistance, you will develop an excellent resume to take its place alongside your already excellent vita.

Further information about resumes and vitae is available in The Corporate Ph.D., by Carol Groneman and Robert Lear (Facts on File, 1985) and Finding a Job in Your Field, by Rebecca Anthony and Gerald Roe (Peterson's, 1984). Good luck!

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LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION:
CSWEP Needs Your Help

CSWEP is developing material for a series of articles on letters of recommendation for graduate students seeking their first jobs and for faculty being considered for promotion. We believe that good letters of recommendation are informative, accurate, and objective and that they contain sufficient specific material to portray the individual's strengths and weaknesses without repetition or banal generalities.

Many of CSWEP's members who have been active in searches conducted by their departments are concerned, however, that often these standards are not met. While this issue first arose in the context of women economists' advancement, we believe that the entire profession would benefit if both the requestors of such letters and many of their authors knew more about how to achieve these standards.

We are, therefore, interested in obtaining examples that are particularly good or particularly bad for some reason. Please send extracts from letters you have received that illustrate what you consider to be good and bad approaches. Or, if you prefer to send complete letters, we will make sure that no private material about the author or the subject is revealed. We would also be pleased to have your comments or suggestions.

Please send examples or letters and any comments or suggestions to: Nancy M. Gordon, Congressional Budget Office, United States Congress, Washington, DC 20515.

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