

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

The American Economic Association (AEA) charges the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP) with monitoring the position of women in the profession and with undertaking activities to improve that position. CSWEP held its first official meeting at the December 1972 AEA Annual Meetings. Thus, this year marks the 20th anniversary of CSWEP's activities. This report compares the actual advancement of women economists in academia over the past 20 years with cohort projections and describes the Committee's activities during 1992.¹

Changes in the Status of Women in Economics over Twenty Years

For the last two years CSWEP has reported a summary of results from the AEA Universal Academic Questionnaire.² Figure 1 summarizes those data for the period 1974–1991.³ The long-term trend indicates that women have made substantial gains at the assistant professor level and modest gains at the associate professor level. The percentage of women assistant professors in Ph.D.-granting institutions rose from 7.6

percent in 1974 to 19.6 percent in 1991. The percentage of women associate professors rose from 2.6 percent to 8.1 percent. However, the percentage of women full professors only rose from 1.6 percent to 3.8 percent over the same time period. As we show below, some of this difference is due to the long period of absorption from assistant to full professor. However, CSWEP continues to be concerned about the progress of women through the profession and the potential for a “glass ceiling” at the senior faculty ranks.

Recent Hiring and Promotion of Women in Economics

In the last two annual reports we concluded that the proportion of women assistant professors generally reflected the proportion of new women Ph.D.'s. We also presented evidence to suggest that women have not progressed through the academic ranks as rapidly as might be expected.⁴ Moreover, it appeared there was a higher percentage of women at lower-ranked departments than at higher-ranked ones. This year, we present data that extend, correct, and sharpen these conclusions.

Figures 1–6 extend the data presented in the 1990 and 1991 Annual Reports to include the data for 1991. Figure 1 shows that, between 1990 and 1991, the percentage of women increased at the assistant and full professor and fell at the associate professor ranks. Figure 2 shows that there continues to be little difference in the status of

¹The Committee thanks Charles Scott for his contribution to this report.

²Nancy M. Gordon, “Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession,” *American Economic Review*, May 1991 (*Papers and Proceedings*), Volume 81, pp. 409–12; Hoffman, “Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession,” *American Economic Review*, May 1992 (*Papers and Proceedings*), 82, 610–14.

³Data in Figures 1–3 and 6 are based on Ph.D.-granting economics departments that have responded to the Universal Academic Questionnaire in any one year since 1973. Data in Figures 4–5 are based on all economics departments that have responded to the Universal Academic Questionnaire. Actual data⁴ for Figures 1–6 can be found in the Winter 1992 CSWEP *Newsletter*, or by writing to Elizabeth Hoffman. Agricultural Economics departments are excluded from the data.

⁴This conclusion was based on a simulation model of the flow of faculty into and out of different ranks. New Ph.D.'s are assumed to become new assistant professors; assistant professors are promoted to associate professors after five years; associate professors are promoted to full professors after seven years; full professors retire after 20 years in rank. In addition, the model assumes that the probability of being hired and promoted is independent of gender.

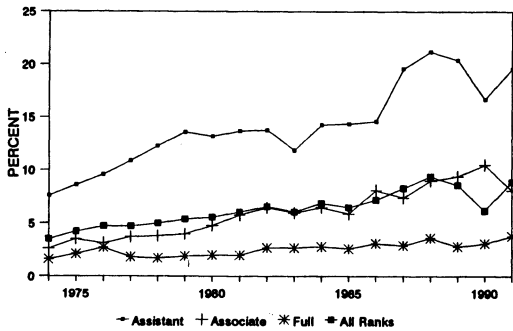


FIGURE 1. PERCENTAGE OF FACULTY WHO ARE WOMEN, GRADUATE DEPARTMENTS, BY RANK: 1974-1991

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

Source: American Economic Association, Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974-1991.

women by type of academic institution (public or private). Figure 3 shows that there also is little difference in the percentages of women faculty by rank of institution. This is in contrast to last year's data which suggested a higher percentage of women at the associate professor level at lower-ranked graduate institutions.⁵

Figure 4 shows a dramatic new development in the status of women. While 22.1 percent of new Ph.D.'s in the 1991-1992 academic year were women, 31.8 percent of faculty hired at the new assistant professor level were women. Moreover, this trend is even more pronounced at Ph.D.-granting institutions, where nearly 50 percent of the new assistant professors hired were women. Figure 5, on the other hand, shows a sharp decline between 1990 and 1991 in the percentage of women among new hires at the associate and full professor ranks. Thus, women are being hired more than in proportion to new women Ph.D.'s; but the pro-

⁵See Hoffman, "Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession," *American Economic Review*, May 1992 (*Papers and Proceedings*), Volume 82, p. 610.

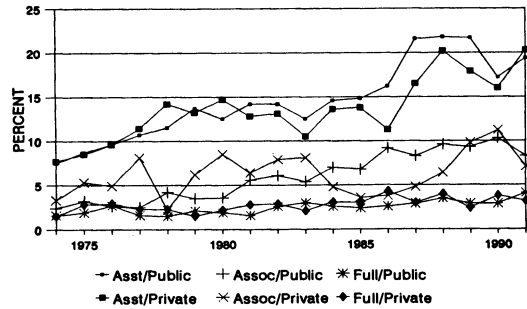


FIGURE 2. PERCENTAGE OF FACULTY WHO ARE WOMEN, GRADUATE DEPARTMENTS, BY RANK AND TYPE OF INSTITUTION: 1974-1991

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

Source: American Economic Association, Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974-1991.

portion of new hires at the senior levels appears to have fallen.⁶

Figure 6 extends the simulation model presented in the previous two Annual Reports. In both reports we suggested that the gaps between actual and predicted percentages of women at the associate and full professor levels were likely to increase over time. Figure 6 confirms that prediction for associate professors, but not for full professors, for 1991. Despite the jump in the percentage of women at the associate professor level at lower-ranked departments in 1990, the gap at the associate professor level continued to grow; the gap at the full professor level narrowed slightly. These estimates continue to cause concern about the status of women as they progress through their academic careers.

Using longitudinal data from the National Science Foundation's Survey of Earned Doctorates, Shulamit Kahn studies the trends identified above in more detail.⁷

⁶Among the institutions which responded to the Universal Academic Questionnaire for the 1991-1992 academic year, only three of 142 new hires at the associate and full professor levels were women.

⁷Shulamit Kahn, "Gender Differences in Academic Career Paths of Economists," *American Economic Review*, May 1993 (*Papers and Proceedings*), Volume 83, pp. 52-6.

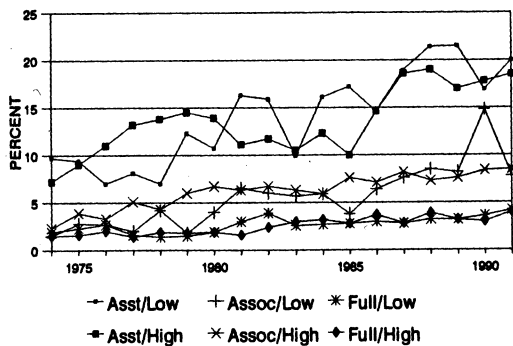


FIGURE 3. PERCENTAGE OF FACULTY WHO ARE WOMEN, GRADUATE DEPARTMENTS, BY RANK AND QUALITY OF DEPARTMENT: 1974-1989

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

Source: American Economic Association, Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974-1991; The rankings are based on the National Research Council's rankings of 88 departments.

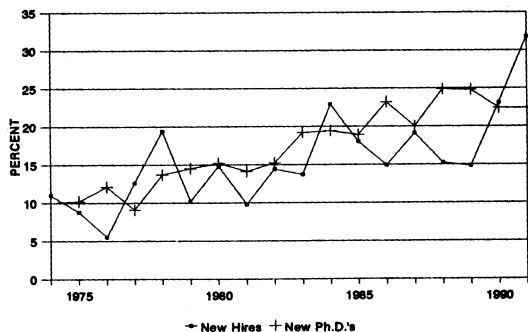


FIGURE 4. FEMALE NEW PH.D.'S AND NEW ASSISTANT PROFESSORS AS PERCENTAGES OF NEW PH.D.'S AND NEW ASSISTANT PROFESSORS: 1974-1991

Sources: American Economic Association, Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974-1991; National Research Council.

Starting at the new assistant professor level, she finds that only 58.1 percent of women entering academia enter tenure-track jobs, as compared to 73.3 percent of men. Using a nonparametric Kaplan Meier hazard rate analysis, she finds that men in tenure-track jobs have been more likely to achieve tenure after seven years as assistant professors than women. Women have eventually "caught up" to men; but the median time to tenure

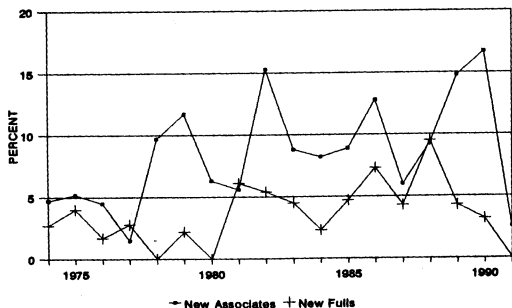


FIGURE 5. NEW FEMALE ASSOCIATE AND NEW FEMALE FULL PROFESSORS AS PERCENTAGES OF NEW ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS AND NEW FULL PROFESSORS

Source: American Economic Association, Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974-1991.

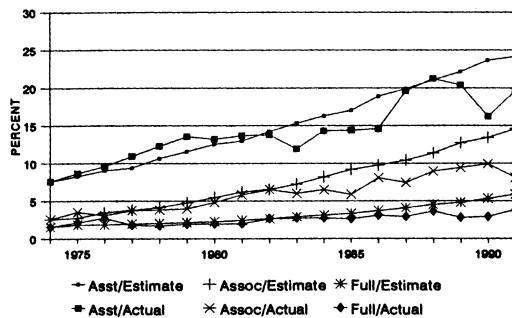


FIGURE 6. ACTUAL AND ESTIMATED PERCENTAGES OF FEMALE FACULTY IN GRADUATE DEPARTMENTS, BY RANK: 1974-1991

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

Source: American Economic Association, Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974-1991.

was ten years for women and seven years for men for all academics in 1989. Recent data suggest this gap is narrowing, but there are too few data points for confirmation. Conditional on receiving tenure and promotion to associate professor, however, Kahn finds no significant difference in the likelihood or median years to promotion to full professor. She concludes that the major hurdle for women in academia is tenure.

To summarize, in 1991-1992 women were hired at the new assistant professor level at a higher rate than they earned new Ph.D.'s. This is encouraging, especially in light of

the recent poor job market. However, CSWEP continues to be concerned about the progress of women through the academic ranks. Women have not been achieving tenure as rapidly as men. The simulation data suggest they are still lagging behind. CSWEP is also concerned that women are more likely to enter non-tenure-track positions than men. Since full professor is generally considered to be the highest-status position in the economics profession, and since women are more likely to enter non-tenure-track positions and take longer to achieve tenure than men, CSWEP continues to be concerned about the status of women in the economics profession.

The Committee's Recent Activities

CSWEP was involved in several activities designed to help women advance in the economics profession during 1992. As part of its ongoing efforts to expand the participation of women economists on the program of the AEA Annual Meetings, the CSWEP Board organized seven sessions for the January 1993 Meetings: three on gender-related topics, three on macro-finance, and a roundtable discussion on women's progress in the profession. CSWEP also sponsored a hospitality suite and a 20th Anniversary Party and reception following the annual business meeting. These facilitate networking among economists at the annual meeting.

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

Another major activity was the publication of three issues of the CSWEP *Newsletter*, the contents of which are designed to help young economists advance. Each issue contains information about sources of research funding and calls for papers, as well as articles on such topics as the annual job market and advice on publishing papers. In 1990 the Board reprinted a number of pop-

ular past articles on how to get ahead in the profession in a special issue available free to all dues-paying members, and for \$8 to the general public. The Board continues to give copies to new members.

CSWEP maintains a *Roster of Women Economists*, including information on employers, educational backgrounds, fields of specialization, and publications. It is used, for example, by employers searching for job candidates and by organizations seeking members for advisory committees. The entire *Roster*, or selected portions, is available either on disk or as mailing labels. In addition, the *Roster* appears in a printed volume every other year. It was completely updated and printed in 1992. The Board also continues its recent practice of informing advertisers in *Job Openings for Economists* and the CSWEP *Newsletter* about the *Roster* and how to use it.

The CSWEP Board wishes to thank a number of people who served the Committee. Joan Haworth, the Committee's Membership Secretary, and her staff make it possible for the Committee to maintain contact with the membership and the profession as a whole. They maintain the *Roster*, prepare special mailings, and create customized listings from the *Roster*, just to name a few activities.

The terms of three members of the Board expired in 1992: Marjorie Honig, Barbara Wolfe, and Myrna Wooders. Marjorie served the Board as the *Newsletter* Coordinator; Barbara served as representative to the Midwest Economic Association, co-edited an issue of the *Newsletter*, and helped organize sessions at both the MEA and the AEA meetings. Myrna started a *Newsletter* series on Notable Women in Economics, co-edited an issue of the *Newsletter*, and helped organize sessions at the AEA meetings.

Finally, the Board thanks Christina O'Bannon, who works with Elizabeth Hoffman and serves as Assistant Editor of the *Newsletter*. Her contribution made it possible for the Chair to maintain the activities of the Board and produce the *Newsletter*, in addition to other professional and scholarly activities.

ELIZABETH HOFFMAN, *Chair*