

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

The American Economic Association (AEA) has charged the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP) with monitoring the position of women in the profession and with undertaking activities to improve that position. This report presents information on the advancement of women students and faculty in academic economics and reports on the Committee's activities during 1994. Currently, CSWEP has over 7,000 persons on its mailing list. This includes 1,514 students and 443 men, as well as all women who are members of the AEA or who have joined CSWEP.

The Hiring and Promotion of Women Economists in Ph.D.-Granting Departments

This year, CSWEP has two alternative sources of information on the status of women in Ph.D.-granting economics departments. As always, we have information tabulated by the AEA for the past 20 years as part of the Universal Academic Questionnaire (UAQ), sent to all department chairs in economics. In addition, in fall 1993, CSWEP identified official CSWEP contact-persons in most of the Ph.D.-granting departments. One of the requests we made of these persons was to return a one-page questionnaire about the number of women faculty and students in their departments. Of 88 departments surveyed, we received information from 81, a much higher return rate than the UAQ. There are differences in samples between these two surveys. The UAQ is mailed to a list of over 125 departments that grant Ph.D.'s in economics, not all of them traditional economics departments. CSWEP's sample excluded all noneconomics departments and omitted a number of schools with small Ph.D. programs. CSWEP's sample also excluded Canadian schools. Thus, the CSWEP information from 81 schools is based on a relatively complete sample of the better-known

U.S. Ph.D.-granting schools. The UAQ information is from 77 schools that returned the questionnaire, out of a larger sample of Ph.D.-granting institutions. In general, CSWEP was more successful in getting responses from higher-ranked schools than the UAQ. For instance, among the 20 top-ranked departments (according to National Research Council rankings), CSWEP has information from 18 of them, while UAQ questionnaires in 1993 were received from only 11.

Information from the UAQ on the Progress of Women Faculty over Time.—The UAQ provides comparative data on changes in the share of women faculty in Ph.D.-granting institutions over 20 years. As Figure 1 indicates, in 1993, 9.7 percent of all faculty in these departments were women. Among assistant professors in these departments, 22.0 percent were women; 10.3 percent of associate professors were women; and 4.0 percent of full professors were women. As Figure 1 shows, this represents a small increase over the numbers reported last year but is at about the same level as the numbers reported four years ago.

Figure 2 compares public and private schools that grant Ph.D.'s. Both this past year and on average over the past five years, the share of women at each rank is slightly higher in public universities than in private universities. Figure 3 compares higher- and lower-ranked graduate departments.¹ As Figure 3 shows, over the last five years there is little difference across ranks by school, with the caveat that a significant number of the highest-ranked departments did not respond regularly to the UAQ and are there-

¹The National Research Council ranks degree-granting departments in economics and Figure 3 includes only those schools ranked by the NRC. "High rank" includes schools ranked above the median, while "low rank" includes schools ranked below the median.

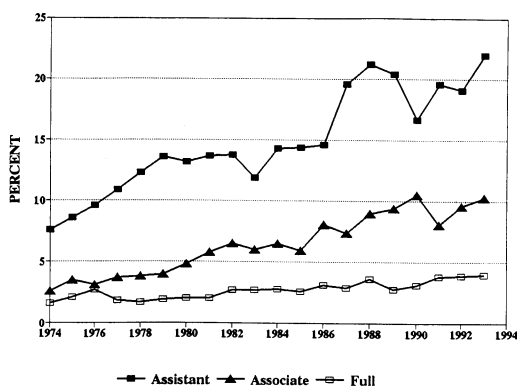


FIGURE 1. FEMALE FACULTY IN PH.D.-GRANTING DEPARTMENTS, PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL FACULTY BY RANK, 1974-1993

Source: American Economic Association, Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974-1993.

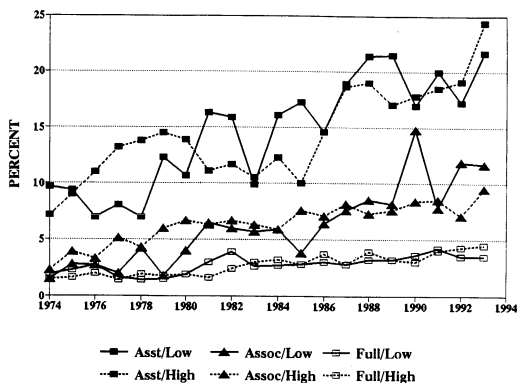


FIGURE 3. FEMALE FACULTY IN PH.D.-GRANTING DEPARTMENTS, PERCENTAGES BY RANK AND QUALITY OF DEPARTMENT, 1974-1993

Source: American Economic Association, Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974-1993.

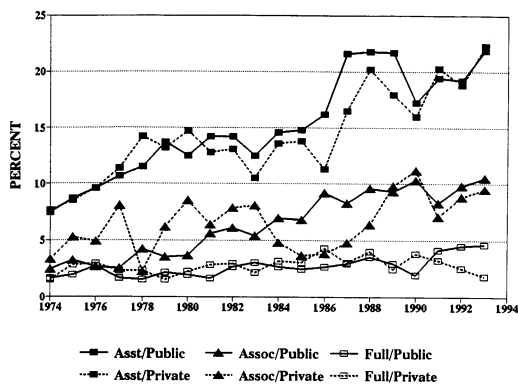


FIGURE 2. FEMALE FACULTY IN PH.D.-GRANTING DEPARTMENTS, PERCENTAGES BY RANK AND TYPE OF INSTITUTION, 1974-1993

Source: American Economic Association, Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974-1993.

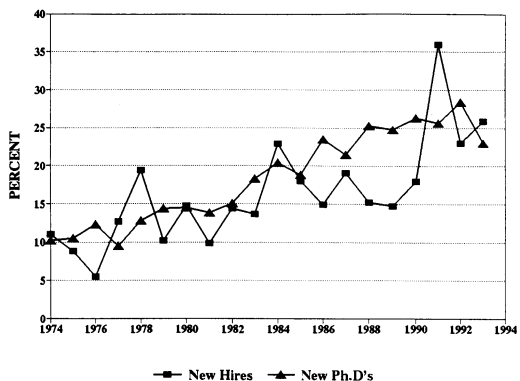


FIGURE 4. SHARE OF NEW PH.D.'S AND SHARE OF NEW ASSISTANT PROFESSORS WHO ARE FEMALE IN PH.D.-GRANTING DEPARTMENTS

Source: Assistant professor hiring information from the American Economic Association, Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974-1993. Ph.D. information is from the National Research Council.

fore not included in these numbers, as noted above.

Figures 4-6 look at the advancement and promotion of women through the ranks. Figure 4 compares new Ph.D.'s to new assistant professor hires. The number of new Ph.D.'s who were women has been relatively constant, averaging 24.5 percent over the last five years. The share of new assistant professors hired in Ph.D.-granting de-

partments over the last five years has been 2 percentage points below this on average, although it was slightly higher in 1993.

Figure 5 looks at the next point of career progression, comparing the female share of newly hired or promoted associate professors to the share of women among the stock of assistant professors. In 1993, the share of newly hired associates exceeded the share of female assistant professors. Over the past

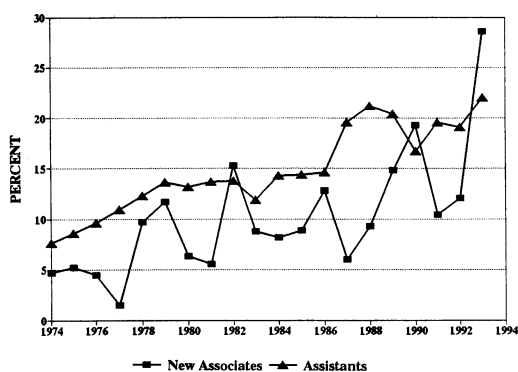


FIGURE 5. SHARE OF NEW ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS AND SHARE OF EXISTING ASSISTANT PROFESSORS WHO ARE FEMALE, PH.D.-GRANTING DEPARTMENTS, 1974–1993

Source: American Economic Association, Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974–1993.

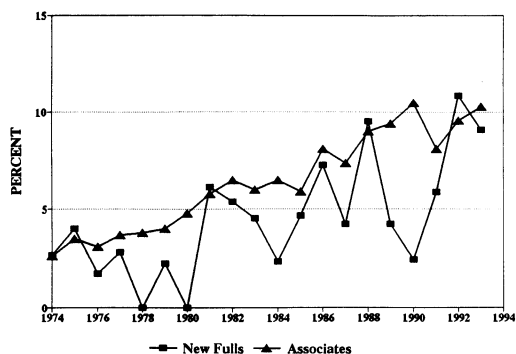


FIGURE 6. SHARE OF NEW FULL PROFESSORS IN PH.D.-GRANTING DEPARTMENTS AND SHARE OF EXISTING ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS WHO ARE FEMALE, 1974–1993

Source: American Economic Association, Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974–1993.

five years, however, the share of new associate hires has been about 2 percentage points below the share of assistants. Figure 6 compares the share of women newly hired or promoted as full professors to the share of women among the stock of associate professors. These numbers have been quite close in the last two years, but over the past five years, the share of new full professor hires has been about 3 percentage points below the share of female associates.

TABLE 1—SHARE OF WOMEN BY RANK, PH.D.-GRANTING INSTITUTIONS

	UAQ survey	CSWEP survey
Percentage assistant professors	22.0	24.0
Percentage associate professors	10.3	14.5
Percentage full professors	4.0	6.7
Total share at all ranks	9.7	13.5
Number of schools reporting	77	81

The evidence of Figures 4–6 indicates that there is not a large gap between the rate at which women are being hired and promoted and their share in the rank below. But there is some gap. Over the past five years, there is evidence of somewhat fewer women being promoted through the ranks at these Ph.D.-granting schools, as the share of women hired and promoted consistently falls a few percentage points below their representation at the next lower level.

Information from the CSWEP Survey in 1993 on Women's Representation among Faculty and Students.—We have a check on the above numbers from the CSWEP survey conducted this past year. The comparative shares of women at each rank in the CSWEP survey and the UAQ survey are shown in Table 1.

It is reassuring that the numbers from these two surveys are so close, although they represent slightly different samples, as discussed above. The somewhat higher share of women in the CSWEP survey, which represents a larger sample of higher-ranked Ph.D.-granting departments, indicates that these schools may be doing a slighter better job of hiring and promoting women.

The CSWEP survey also provides information on the advancement of women graduate students at these schools, while there is information on the number of undergraduate women majors in the UAQ. This is shown in Table 2.

The number of women who major in economics at the undergraduate level is quite low, below one-third of all economics majors. The share of women in first-year Ph.D. classes is quite close to this, at 30.4 percent. The share of new Ph.D.'s (24.2 percent) in these data is extremely close to the National

TABLE 2—SHARE OF WOMEN AMONG STUDENTS AT DIFFERENT POINTS OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS

	Share (percentage)
Women receiving economics B.A.'s, spring 1992	30.3
Women in first-year Ph.D. classes, fall 1993	30.4
Women among thesis writers, fall 1993	27.2
Women receiving a Ph.D., 1992–1993 academic year	24.2

Source: CSWEP survey, fall 1993.

Resource Council's estimate that 23.0 percent of new economics Ph.D.'s were female in 1993, as shown in Figure 4.

The evidence on women's advancement in graduate school looks quite similar to that regarding women faculty advancing through the ranks, discussed above. On the one hand, there is no evidence of large dropout rates among women, compared to men, as they advance through Ph.D. programs. On the other hand, there is evidence of a small but steady dropout rate, that starts at the first year of the Ph.D. where 30 percent of the class are women, and continues throughout graduate school, so that women receive only 24 percent of the Ph.D.'s. (These data are from a cross section and not a cohort. As we collect data over time, we will be able to follow cohorts.)

We also asked about job placement among students on the job market in 1992–1993, as shown in Table 3. In general, these numbers indicate that women seem to be finding academic jobs with as least as much frequency as men. There are far fewer female foreign students, so while more women get U.S. academic jobs, fewer women go to foreign academic jobs. In total, 54 percent of men on the job market end up in an academic job, while 60 percent of the women find an academic job. Women are more likely to enter public-sector jobs, but less likely to find non-U.S.-based nonacademic jobs. It is worth noting that the share of women hired into U.S. Ph.D.-granting departments in these CSWEP data (35 percent, not shown here) is substantially above

TABLE 3—JOB PLACEMENT AMONG STUDENTS ON THE JOB MARKET WINTER AND SPRING 1992

Job placement	Percent distribution	
	Men	Women
U.S. Ph.D.-granting department	19.1	30.1
U.S. other academic department	16.4	16.7
U.S. public sector	13.1	17.2
U.S. private sector	8.6	8.1
Non-U.S. academic job	18.4	12.9
Non-U.S. nonacademic job	10.5	4.8
No job found	14.0	10.2

Source: CSWEP survey, fall 1993.

the share of new assistant professor hires reported as female in the UAQ data (25 percent). Whether this is due to particular sample differences or reflects differences in the surveys themselves is unclear.

The Committee's Recent Activities

CSWEP is involved in a wide range of activities designed to help women advance in the economics profession. As part of its ongoing efforts to increase the participation of women on the AEA program, CSWEP organized seven sessions for the January 1995 meetings, three on gender-related topics, three on topics relating to the "new institutionalism," and a roundtable discussion entitled "Mentoring within the Economics Profession: How Can Economists Do a Better Job of Mentoring Students and Younger Faculty?" CSWEP also held a business meeting and reception at the meetings and sponsored a hospitality suite. At the regional level, members of CSWEP organized sessions and receptions at the Eastern, Southern, Midwestern, and Western Economics Associations.

One of CSWEP's most important activities is the publication of three issues of the *CSWEP Newsletter* each year. Each issue contains articles about women in economics and information of interest to younger economists about professional advancement, as well as information on jobs and on research funding. CSWEP also maintains a *Roster of Women Economists*, providing in-

formation on all women members of the AEA. Employers particularly interested in female candidates can receive the entire *Roster* or selected portions, available in print or on disk. This *Roster* was recently updated and made available to CSWEP members in fall 1994.

One of CSWEP's projects this year was an effort to increase the number of Ph.D.-granting departments where CSWEP has officially designated representatives. As of fall 1994, there were 115 persons who had volunteered to serve as a contact between CSWEP and their departments, all in Ph.D.-granting departments. These persons have provided information on CSWEP to graduate students and new female faculty in their departments, as well as provided information back to CSWEP about the status of women in their departments.

CSWEP is concerned with maintaining strong contacts with the Ph.D.-granting departments because this is where future economists are trained. Being in touch with graduate students and assisting them as they start careers is perhaps one of the most important jobs the Committee undertakes. On the other hand, CSWEP is also aware that many women with economics Ph.D.'s find jobs in teaching colleges, in parts of universities other than economics departments (like business schools or public-policy programs), or in university economics departments that do not grant Ph.D.'s. The Committee has been discussing ways to be

in closer contact with women faculty who are not in Ph.D.-granting departments. Through the leadership of Committee member Ronald Ehrenberg, CSWEP is also working to identify a key set of university policies that may have different effects on men and women in academic positions and which affect the attractiveness of academic careers for women.

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

Four members left the Committee at the end of 1994: Ivy Broder, who served as representative to the Western Economic Association, Linda Edwards, who served as representative to the Eastern Economic Association, Jo Anna Gray, and Roger Noll. CSWEP appreciates the work of all these individuals on its behalf.

Finally, CSWEP thanks Helen Goldblatt, on the staff of Northwestern University, who has provided administrative support for CSWEP and who serves as Assistant Editor of the *Newsletter*. The Department of Economics at Northwestern also provided support to the operations of CSWEP.

REBECCA M. BLANK, *Chair*