

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

The American Economics 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 position of women graduate students and faculty in academic economics departments and reports on the committee's activities during 1996.

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

For the past three years, CSWEP has worked on developing its contacts in all of the Ph.D.-granting departments in the United States. One of the tasks of the CSWEP representatives in these institutions is to report on the status of women in their departments. CSWEP has been able to acquire more complete and accurate data than are available currently through the AEA Universal Academic Questionnaire (UAQ) which is mailed to all department chairs each fall. In fall 1995, CSWEP was able to obtain information from 94 of its 114 contacts in comparison to the UAQ which received responses from 62 Ph.D.-granting economics departments.¹

Information from the CSWEP questionnaire on the Status of Women Faculty.—Table 1 provides information on the share of women faculty at various ranks in the 94 Ph.D.-granting departments. The first column provides information on all 94 departments, while the second column provides a comparison to information from the top 20 schools.

Table 1 indicates that the share of women in academic appointments decreases with rank. The growing group of non-tenured faculty in economics departments consists dispropor-

¹ CSWEP's sample contains only U.S. economics departments, while that of the AEA UAQ includes a few non-U.S. economics departments.

TABLE 1—SHARE OF WOMEN BY RANK, PH.D.-GRANTING DEPARTMENTS, FALL 1995

Rank	All Ph.D.-granting departments	Top 20 departments only
Non-tenure track	39.2	57.1
Assistant professor (untenured)	24.2	17.5
Associate professor		
Untenured	14.2	5.9
Tenured	12.9	12.1
Full professor (tenured)	7.5	5.4

Source: Data collected by CSWEP; 94 of 114 Ph.D.-granting schools reported, and 19 out of the top 20 reported.

tionately of women. Compared to the 23 percent of women receiving Ph.D.'s, of those faculty in non-tenure-track positions, 39 percent are women. Untenured tenure-track assistant professors are 24-percent female. Untenured associate professors are 14-percent female; tenured associate professors are 13-percent female. Tenured full professors are 7.5-percent female. Among the top 20 schools, the numbers are lower at every rank, indicating less representation of women on the faculty in the very top-ranked departments, except in the non-tenure-track positions, 57 percent of which are held by women.

Information from the UAQ on the Status of Women Faculty over Time.—While the UAQ data are less reliable, because of both a smaller sample size and high variability in terms of which schools report over time, they do provide a time series on women's representation by rank over the years. Figure 1 shows the patterns from 1974 to 1995 in Ph.D.-granting departments. The 1995 numbers from the UAQ are similar to those collected by CSWEP representatives. The percentage of women at each rank continues to increase over time in both the assistant- and full-professor ranks. Last year there was a slight drop in the assistant-professor ranks.

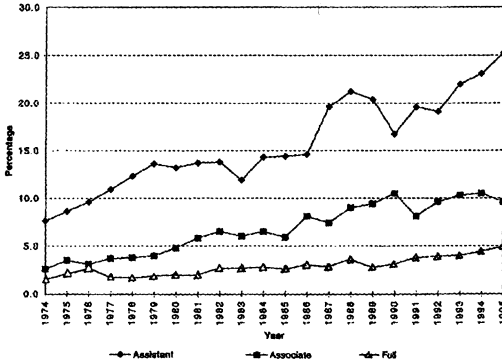


FIGURE 1. PERCENTAGE OF FACULTY WHO ARE WOMEN, IN PH.D.-GRANTING DEPARTMENTS, BY RANK (1974-1995)

Source: AEA Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974-1995.

Figure 2 compares public and private Ph.D.-granting departments. The share of women at each rank is slightly higher in public institutions than in private ones. This is most noticeable in 1995 at the full-professor rank where only 1.7 percent of the reported faculty are women in private institutions, while 5.8 percent of the full professors are women in public institutions.

Figure 3 looks at the advancement of women through the ranks. Figure 3 compares new Ph.D.'s to new assistant-professor hires. The number of new Ph.D.'s who are women has been relatively constant, averaging 24.7 percent for the last 10 years.² The percentage of new assistant professors hired into Ph.D.-granting departments over the last 10 years has been increasing and has averaged 21.2 percent.

Figure 4 looks at the next point of the career progression, comparing the percentage of newly hired or promoted associate professors who are women to the percentage of women among the stock of assistant professors. In 1995, the percentage of newly hired or promoted associates was well below the percentage of female assistant professors. Over the

² A consistent series on the share of women Ph.D.'s in economics is obtained from the National Science Foundation's annual Survey of Earned Doctorates.

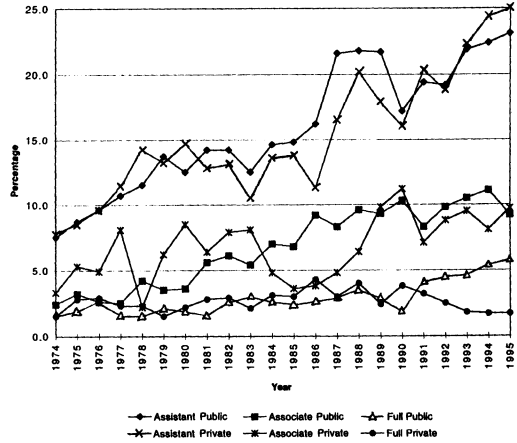


FIGURE 2. PERCENTAGE OF FACULTY WHO ARE WOMEN, IN PH.D.-GRANTING DEPARTMENTS, BY RANK AND TYPE OF INSTITUTION (1974-1995)

Source: AEA Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974-1995.

last 10 years, the female share of new hires or promotions at the associate level has averaged 13.4 percent, and the share of assistant professors who are women has averaged 20.2 percent. Figure 5 presents a similar comparison between the percentage of new full-professor hires or promotions who are female and the pool of associate professors who are female. In 1995 the percentage of new full-professor hires or promotions was 7.5-percent female; that of the pool of associate professors was 9.3 percent.

The data presented in Figures 3-5 suggest that there is a gap between the rate at which women are being hired and promoted and their share in the rank below. Efforts to stimulate the progress of women through the ranks of the profession have not been as effective as expected.

Information on the Status of Women Graduate Students in Economics.—The availability of women to the economics profession depends on the pipeline of women being trained in economics. Table 2 reports information on women in graduate programs in economics, taken from the CSWEP 1995 questionnaire. For the academic year 1995-1996, about 30 percent of the first-year class are female.

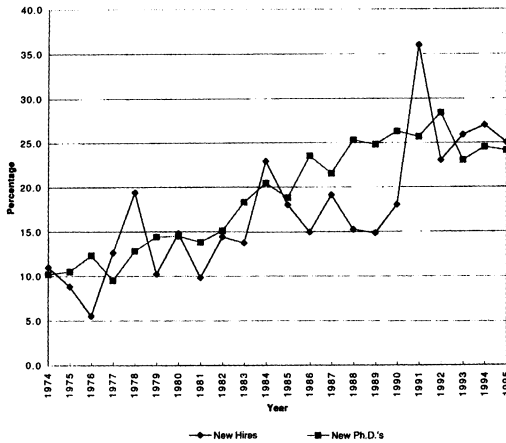


FIGURE 3. PERCENTAGE OF NEW PH.D.'S AND PERCENTAGE OF NEW ASSISTANT-PROFESSOR HIRES WHO ARE WOMEN, IN PH.D.-GRANTING DEPARTMENTS (1974-1995)

Source: Assistant-professor hiring information from the AEA Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974-1995. Ph.D. information is from the National Science Foundation.

Nearly 28 percent of those who are ABD ("all but dissertation") are female. Yet only 23 percent of those receiving a Ph.D. in economics are female in the 94 Ph.D.-granting departments reporting.³ The representation of women in the top 20 departments is very similar to that for all graduate departments. Approximately 26 percent of the entering class are women, 27 percent of the ABD's are women, and 22 percent of the Ph.D.'s are women. While the percentage of new Ph.D.'s who are women has improved since the inception of CSWEP in 1972, the percentage of new Ph.D.'s in economics is relatively low when compared to the corresponding percentages for 22 fields reported by the National Science Foundation in 1995. Fifteen of the fields have a noticeably higher percentage of women receiving Ph.D.'s, and one field (Business and Management) about the same—28.4 percent.

³ The National Science Foundation reports that 24.1 percent of the doctorates granted in economics in 1995 went to women, slightly more than CSWEP identifies. Information on one of the top 20 schools, however, is missing from the CSWEP data.

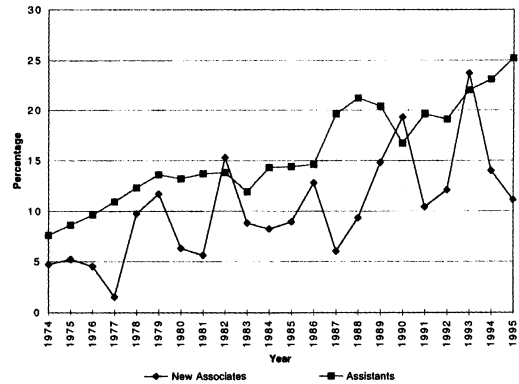


FIGURE 4. PERCENTAGE OF NEW ASSOCIATE-PROFESSOR HIRES OR PROMOTIONS WHO ARE WOMEN AND PERCENTAGE OF EXISTING ASSISTANT PROFESSORS WHO ARE WOMEN (1974-1995)

Source: AEA Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974-1995.

The fields of Physics and Astronomy, Computer Science, and Engineering have percentages that are noticeably lower. The other three fields (Earth, Atmospheric, and Marine Sciences; Mathematics; and Agricultural Sciences) have percentages that are slightly lower.

Table 3 shows how women fared in the job market in 1995 relative to men. With approximately 23 percent of the Ph.D.'s going to women, 26 percent of the academic jobs at Ph.D.-granting departments went to women, and 35 percent of the jobs at non-Ph.D.-granting departments went to women. At the top 20 schools, women received 22 percent of the degrees and 19 percent of the jobs at Ph.D.-granting departments. These women received a disproportionate share of the jobs at non-Ph.D.-granting departments, 57 percent. The data suggest that women from the top schools are going to smaller private or state institutions rather than continuing their careers at Ph.D.-granting departments.

The Committee's Activities

CSWEP is involved in a wide range of activities to help bring women into the profession and to increase the rates at which women are promoted at various stages of their careers.

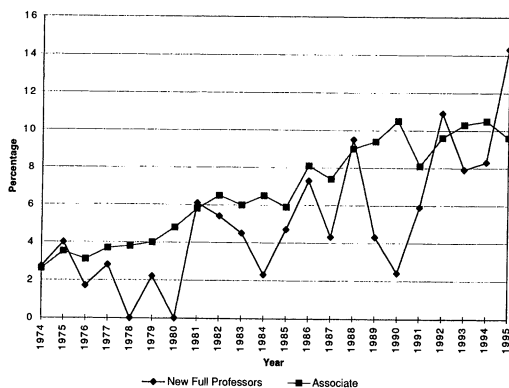


FIGURE 5. PERCENTAGE OF NEW FULL-PROFESSOR HIRES OR PROMOTIONS WHO ARE WOMEN AND PERCENTAGE OF EXISTING ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS WHO ARE WOMEN (1974-1995)

Source: AEA Universal Academic Questionnaire, 1974-1995.

As part of its ongoing efforts to increase the participation of women on the AEA program, CSWEP organized six sessions for the January 1997 ASSA meetings, three on gender-related topics and three on public finance. CSWEP also holds a business meeting at the annual meetings to report to its associates about its activities and to hear from the AEA membership suggestions for future activities. To support junior women meeting senior women, a hospitality suite is staffed by members of the committee.

To assist women in the profession who cannot make it to national meetings, CSWEP organizes sessions at the Eastern, Southern, Midwest, and Western Economic Association meetings. As at the national meetings, there is one session on gender-related research and one on a non-gender-related field. CSWEP is increasing its efforts to broaden the base of its organization by encouraging the formation of regional CSWEP committees to attend to the work of the regional associations. The committee is discussing ways to set up CSWEP representatives in small state and private schools to increase its ability to be responsive to the needs and concerns of women in the profession who teach at such institutions.

One of CSWEP's most important activities is the publication of the *CSWEP Newsletter*

TABLE 2—SHARE OF WOMEN AMONG PH.D. STUDENTS AT DIFFERENT POINTS OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS, 1995-1996 SCHOOL YEAR

Points of academic progress	Percentage women	
	All Ph.D.-granting departments	Top 20 departments only
First-year students	30.5	26.1
ABD students ^a	27.8	26.6
Ph.D.'s granted in 1994-1995	23.2	21.8

Source: Data collected by CSWEP; 94 of 114 Ph.D.-granting schools reported, and 19 out of the top 20 reported.

^a Students who have completed all requirements for the degree except for the dissertation.

three times a year. Each issue contains "How To" articles to help inform its readers about grant-writing, the tenure process, and balancing family and job, among other topics. The "How To" articles have been so popular that last year CSWEP published its second *Special Reprint Issue*, which contained a selection of the most informative articles from the past six years. No doubt the interest in the *Special Reprint Issue* is a tribute to how timely and relevant these articles are. The *Newsletter* contains biographical sketches of current committee members to illustrate that there is more than one way to be an economist. The newsletter also contains historical sketches of women economists to showcase the contributions of women to the field of economics. Since the *Newsletter* comes out three times a year, timely calls for papers and announcements are also provided.

CSWEP has maintained its recently organized network of representatives in the Ph.D.-granting schools. These representatives help the Committee monitor the progress of women at these schools and collect the information upon which elements of this report are based.

CSWEP established a Web site this year. The site contains information on the mission of CSWEP, a list of committee members, a select list of associates by state and field, information on how to join, and connections to other Web sites of interest to economists. The announcement section keeps interested AEA

TABLE 3—SHARE OF WOMEN PLACED IN JOB BY TYPE OF JOB, AMONG STUDENTS ON THE JOB MARKET, WINTER AND SPRING 1995

Type of job	Percentage women	
	All Ph.D.-granting departments	Top 20 departments only
U.S. Ph.D.-granting departments	25.9	19.4
U.S. other academic departments	34.7	57.1
U.S. public sector	28.7	20.4
U.S. private sector	20.5	23.5
Non-U.S. academic job	19.7	15.2
Non-U.S. nonacademic job	11.9	11.8
No job found	15.6	11.8

Source: Data collected by CSWEP; 94 of 114 Ph.D.-granting schools reported, and 19 out of the top 20 reported.

members informed of upcoming CSWEP activities.

The Committee would like to thank several people who have made major contributions to its effort. Joan Haworth, the Membership Secretary, and her staff maintain the *Roster*, send out annual membership reminders, and create customized listings for potential employers.

Three members left the Committee at the end of 1996: Kathy Anderson (Vanderbilt University), who served as the Southern Economic Association representative and who did an excellent job reestablishing its regional base, Ronald Ehrenberg (Cornell University), who ended his tour of duty with an excellent

report on policies to make universities more female-friendly, and Joni Hersch (University of Wyoming), who shepherded the vast Western region and provided encouragement on several initiatives. CSWEP is also grateful to Nancy Marion, who helped me co-edit the most recent edition of the *Newsletter*. Since it was my first, her help and diligence were invaluable.

In addition, CSWEP thanks Helen Goldblatt and Yolanda Wales, Rebecca Blank's staff at Northwestern University, who provided administrative support for the first half of 1996 and who made the transfer of the records to Denison University smooth and efficient. CSWEP would also like to thank Rebecca Blank for her efforts to keep CSWEP on task. Under her guidance, the CSWEP representative network was established, and child care was provided for the first time at ASSA meetings. CSWEP also thanks Sally Schiederer for her help in establishing the new administrative headquarters of CSWEP at Denison University. Her commitment to the effort has made the transition enjoyable and possible. CSWEP thanks the Department of Economics and Denison University for their support and for providing the necessary resources to give CSWEP a new home for the next three years. Finally, CSWEP thanks Mary Winer and her staff at the AEA offices for their patience in answering the hundreds of questions that were asked and for making the financial transition easy.

ROBIN L. BARTLETT, *Chair*