

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

The American Economics Association (AEA) created the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP) with a charter to monitor the position of women in the profession and undertake professional activities to improve that position. This report presents information on the position of women economists in Ph.D.-granting and liberal-arts institutions and a summary of the committee's activities in 2001.

Data on Women Economists

Change in the Last Decade for Women Faculty

For the past 25 years, CSWEP has presented data on the status of women economists, using data from the AEA's Universal Academic Questionnaire and from the CSWEP survey data obtained from CSWEP contacts and representatives at 120 Ph.D.-granting economics departments in the United States and, recently, from over 100 liberal-arts colleges. Past CSWEP reports noted the increase in the share of assistant professor positions held by women from approximately 7 percent in 1974 to 21 percent by 1992.¹ In 1993, the CSWEP survey reported an increase in that proportion to about 24 percent, but the share of assistant professor positions held by women dropped to 21 percent in 2000 and is 22 percent in the 2001 data reported by Ph.D.-granting institutions.

There has been a small increase in the proportion of women among tenured associate professors from about 13 percent in the early 1990's to slightly less than 16 percent in 2001.² There has been no change in the share of full

professor positions held by women since 1991. These trends are shown in Figure 1.

Data for the top 20 and top 10 Ph.D.-granting institutions show similar female representation in 2001 to the data for all Ph.D.-granting institutions. There are a few differences, however. For example, female graduate students were more likely to complete their degrees in the top 10 and top 20 schools this year compared to the rest of the Ph.D.-granting institutions. The proportion of students in the top 10 departments who obtain jobs in academic institutions is at least 10 percent greater than for those at all other institutions and about 5 percent greater than for those coming from the top 20 departments. However, the share of assistant professor positions held by women in the top 10 schools is 19 percent, compared to 22 percent for all the graduate schools, while the share of associate professor positions is slightly higher at about 18.5 percent, compared to the 16 percent in all schools.

Graduate Student Progress

In the last decade there has continued to be an increase in the proportion of women in the Ph.D. program and the proportion completing their Ph.D.'s. Women are now approximately 30 percent of all new Ph.D. recipients and, after a surge to more than 35 percent, are again about 32 percent of all first-year Ph.D. students. Women's share of entering Ph.D. students and of students completing the Ph.D. has been fairly consistent over the past decade, given the 6–7 years it takes for most students to complete the doctoral requirements. Students entering the graduate programs in 1994 and 1995 were approximately 30 percent women, and students completing the program in the past two years have also had approximately the same composition.

Job-Market Decisions

This year's job-market survey showed that women were slightly more likely to obtain an academic position in 2001 but were much more

¹ See, for example, the "Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession" by Rebecca M. Blank in the May 1997 *AEA Papers and Proceedings* [*American Economic Review*, May 1994, 84(2), pp. 491–95].

² My thanks to Edward Flaherty for his assistance in preparing the analyses and charts in this report.

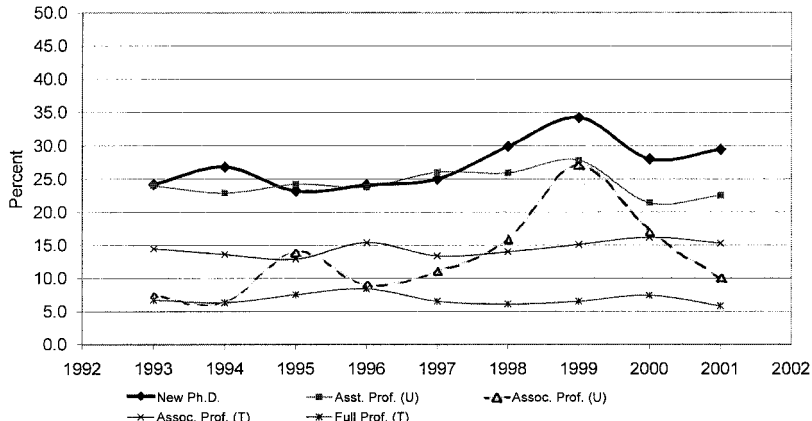


FIGURE 1. FEMALE FACULTY AT ALL PH.D.-GRANTING UNIVERSITIES, 1993–2001

Note: “T” denotes tenured; “U” denotes untenured.

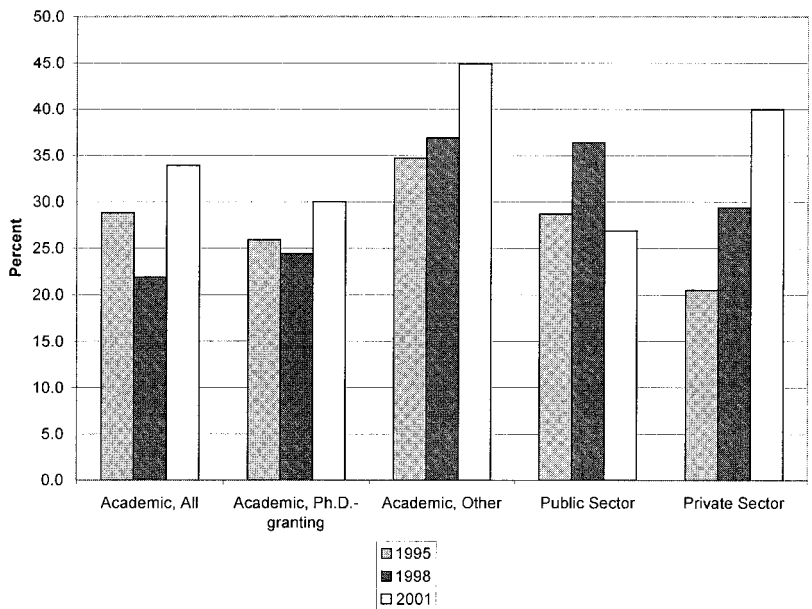


FIGURE 2. PERCENTAGE FEMALE, BY JOB-MARKET SECTOR

likely to be in a non-Ph.D.-granting institution. Approximately 34 percent of those entering academia in 2001 were women, but 45 percent of the new faculty in non-Ph.D.-granting institutions were women. As shown in Figure 2 women were a smaller share of the public-sector positions filled than their presence among new Ph.D.’s this year (27 percent) and a larger pro-

portion of the students taking private-sector positions (40 percent). In the past two decades there had been concern that women were choosing nonacademic positions at a higher rate than graduating men, but today the concern is that women are not entering the Ph.D.-granting institutions at the same rate as men. This is not a pattern that continued in 2001.

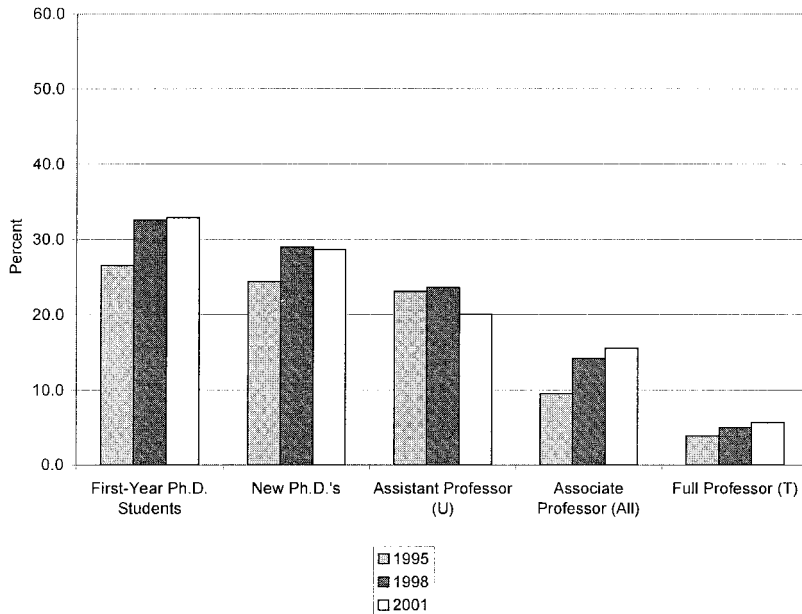


FIGURE 3. COHORT SUMMARY: FEMALE PH.D. STUDENTS, GRADUATES, AND FACULTY, ALL PH.D.-GRANTING UNIVERSITIES

Note: "T" denotes tenured; "U" denotes untenured.

Cohort Institutions from 1995 to 2001

It might be thought that the change in the institutions that report each year might have affected the results of these patterns. One can restrict the data to the CSWEP sample from 1995 to the present in order to avoid contamination of the data by a changing sample each year. In these data there is little change in the composition of assistant professors for the period from 1995 to the present (22 percent) but an increase in female composition at the associate and full professor levels (see Fig. 3). These data show improvement among those who have reported continuously in the past six or seven years in the higher-level ranks and suggest that the lack of change shown in the total sample reflects losses among other institutions that were masked by the gains in this cohort of continuously reporting departments.

Women in Liberal-Arts Colleges

As the data above indicated, women were more likely to take positions in academic positions that were not in Ph.D.-granting depart-

ments. Approximately 43 percent of those taking this type of academic position were women. CSWEP surveyed faculty in liberal-arts colleges this year and found that assistant professor positions are 41 percent female and tenured associate professors are 36 percent female. Approximately 14 percent of the full professor faculty are women.

Expected Distribution of Women on Graduate Faculty

Following the same simulation methodology described in Rebecca Blank's report in 1993, we find that the expected female proportion of associate professors, if decisions to advance assistants professors to associate rank have not decreased in recent years, would be approximately 20 percent, and the full professor ranks would be about 7 percent female. The latter is consistent with the actual data, but advancement to the tenured associate professor rank has lagged for women. Shulamit Kahn has also developed other scenarios of position vacancies and advancement and found that the difference between the proportion of women among asso-

ciate professors ranges from 5 percent to 15 percent, depending upon the assumptions.³ These models suggest that women are not advancing to the associate professor rank, but once they make that transition, they are moving on into the full professor position as projected.

Conclusions

Women are not participating in faculties at the level one would predict from their graduation from Ph.D. granting institutions. Women graduated from the programs at a rate consistent with their entrance into the programs, but they did not move into academic positions at the same rate and, in particular, did not move into faculties at Ph.D.-granting institutions at the rate predicted by that presence.

Over the past decade, women's share of full professor positions has remained at approximately 6 percent, despite the fact that they have been between 13 percent and 15 percent of tenured associate professor positions for the nine years in which data have been collected. Projections based upon assumptions concerning the time it takes to advance from one rank to another, in light of the promotion and tenure decisions made, suggest that the share of associate professor positions would have been between 5 percent and 15 percent higher than it was in 2001.

The Committee's Activities

CSWEP Ongoing Activities

CSWEP is involved in a wide range of activities to help promote women in the profession and to increase the probabilities that they will earn tenure and be successful. Committee members edited three *CSWEP Newsletter* issues in 2001. The winter *Newsletter*, co-edited with Andrea Beller, provided insights into career paths available to women who began their profession during the 1970's, as well as interviews with the 1999 Carolyn Shaw Bell Award recipient (Sandra Ohm Moose) and the 1999 Elaine Bennett Research Prize Recipient (Judith Chevalier). The

spring *Newsletter*, co-edited with Jean Kimmel, focused on the mentoring experiences that developed from the mentoring workshops sponsored by NSF in a grant to CSWEP, as well as career development. The articles in the fall *Newsletter*, co-edited by KimMarie McGoldrick, profiled various organizations in economics and related fields of particular interest to women economists. The *Newsletter* also provides information on upcoming regional and national association meetings, calls for papers, and news about women economists' accomplishments.

We continued to monitor women graduate students and to maintain a roster of women economists. This roster contains names of approximately 5,000 women with active addresses and is available to potential employers in electronic form to assist in recruiting and selecting women economists. Approximately half of the women economists in this group are faculty in academic institutions, and the rest are working in private- and public-sector positions.

As part of its ongoing efforts to increase the participation of women on the AEA program, CSWEP members organized six sessions for the January 2001 ASSA meetings. Andrea Beller organized three sessions on gender-related issues and Helen Popper organized three sessions on International Economics. CSWEP held its usual business meeting in which reports were made to its associates and other interested AEA members concerning its activities, and suggestions were heard from those present for future activities.

During the 2001 business meeting the Carolyn Shaw Bell Award was presented to Eva Mueller, the first academic recipient of this award. She is Professor Emerita of the Department of Economics and Research Scientist in the Population Studies Center at the University of Michigan. This award is given annually to a woman who has furthered the status of women in the economics profession, through her example, through her achievements, through increasing our understanding of how woman can advance through the economics professions, or through her mentoring of other women. The winner of that prize receives not only the public recognition for her accomplishments, but is also given a 2' × 3' plaque with her name and that of previous winners on it to display prominently at her place of work.

³ See Shulamit Kahn, "Women in Economics—One Step Forward and Two Steps Back," (unpublished manuscript presented at ASSA meetings).

Few women of Professor Mueller's cohort were successful as academic economists. A letter nominating her for the award noted how she was told upon completing her Ph.D. that if they had thought she could make it through the program at Harvard, she would never have been let in. Other letters describe her as a caring role model and a trailblazer of utmost modesty who passed on advice and survival skills to her students and in particular pushed female students to excel and to complete their degrees. Her notable accomplishments make her a worthy recipient of the third Carolyn Shaw Bell Award.

The business meeting also served as a forum for a discussion of future workshops to continue the mentoring program begun with the CCOFFE program ("Creating Career Opportunities for Female Economists"). We are developing a proposal for funding the continuation of such mentoring opportunities as part of our continued commitment to the promotion of women in economics. To encourage networking and to support junior women meeting senior women, a hospitality suite was provided every morning and afternoon at the meeting and staffed by members of the Committee.

CSWEP's Regional Activities

CSWEP's regional representatives also organized sessions at each of the regional association meetings—including the Eastern, Southern, Midwest, and Western Economic Association. The work of our regional representatives has been substantial this year. Our thanks go to Jean Kimmel in the Midwest, Rachel Croson in the East, Rachel Willis in the South and Janet Currie in the West, for their excellent programs and efforts to help women economists in their region maintain and grow their professional networks. Abstracts of the papers presented at these association meetings are presented in the *Newsletter*

each year. CSWEP continues its efforts to reach women economists throughout the country by encouraging a closer liaison between the regional governing boards and the formation of regional CSWEP committees to attend to the work of the region associations. Several CSWEP representatives attend the executive board meetings of their regional associations.

Several Words of Thanks

CSWEP thanks particularly the President of the AEA, Robert Lucas, the Executive Director, John Siegfried, and his staff, including Edda Leithner and Norma Ayres, for their continued support and commitment to CSWEP and its mission. In addition, the *Chair* thanks all the members of the committee who worked hard this year to develop an organizational framework that permits continuing development and growth of programs and outreach efforts. Our regional representatives developed programs to enhance our presence at each of the regional association meetings. Various members have worked to develop better Internet and outreach capabilities, and members throughout the economics profession have continued to assist in our efforts to collect information and reach out to women economists. We thank them all.

Finally, the Chair of CSWEP would like to thank Lee Fordham for her administrative support of the Chair and the Committee, as well as her work in preparing for each of our meetings throughout the year. Additional thanks goes to Economic Research Services for supporting the work of CSWEP with office space, paper, telephones, and other resources. All of these people have been wonderful to work with, and the Committee could not have been as successful and productive as it was without their dedication.

JOAN GUSTAFSON HAWORTH, *Chair*