



FOCUS: Tips for Surviving and Thriving as an Academic Economist

Karen Conway

Introduction

So, you've landed an academic job . . . now what? How do you prepare your new courses and build up your research while also managing the onslaught of new, seemingly small tasks and committee work that can take up a surprising amount of your time? Or, perhaps you've been in the profession for a while but are finding it increasingly difficult to stay on top of the stealthily growing list of demands on your time. For me,

it has been the bite-sized pieces of wisdom I have received over the years that have stayed with me the most and that I have been able to pass along to others. Advice like "shoot to get the course right the 3rd time you teach it," "strive to always have three papers under review" and "group therapy is cheaper than individual therapy" (meaning = holding review sessions/group meetings saves time in reduced office hours/individual appointments). While I continue to embrace these tips, I still find it increasingly difficult to navigate the multi-tasking black hole that is my job.

This challenge was the catalyst for a career panel at the 2019 Eastern Economic Association meetings with the goal of providing a "Hints from Heloise" type of list for economists. I turned to six of the busiest and most productive—yet seemingly serene—people I know for their advice. They are

- **Laura Argys**, Professor of Economics and Associate Dean at the University of Colorado–Denver
- **Susan Averett**, Charles A. Dana Professor of Economics at Lafayette College
- **Hope Corman**, Professor Emerita of Economics at Rider University and NBER
- **Dhaval Dave**, Stanton Research Professor of Bentley University and NBER
- **Joyce Jacobsen**, President of Hobart and William Smith Colleges and

formerly Andrews Professor of Economics and Provost and Vice President at Wesleyan University

- **Amanda Ross**, Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Alabama

These economists all have enviable CV's, with high quantity and quality research listed alongside an impressive list of awards for teaching and/or service (as well as for research). They have held high-level administration positions and/or been heavily involved with professional organizations and activities, yet have managed to keep their research agendas on track and flourishing. I wanted to ask people who had excelled while not being at resource-rich institutions with extensive support systems to promote research, as they would have deep experience in managing scarce resources. I also chose this group because they have been consistently generous with their time and caring mentors of younger economists and therefore, in my mind, the best kind of role models.

This article is a compilation of the insights and answers to questions from that career panel, a free-ranging conversation on the challenges of an economist's job. It contains many nuggets of wisdom, organized by topic rather than by speaker. Despite attending the panel and having read multiple drafts of their contributions, I learn something new or valuable with each read. I hope that you find it as helpful as I do. ■

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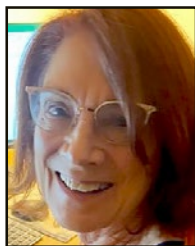
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From the Chair

Judith A. Chevalier

I am pleased to share this issue of the CSWEP *News* with our subscribers. As you may recall, we have moved from three annual issues to four in order to keep in regular contact with our readers. This is the second of our four issues this year. I am grateful that our Oversight Editor Kate Silz-Carson and Graphic Designer Leda Black have made it possible for us to produce more frequent issues of the *News*.

As I write this, I am “sheltering in place” due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I wish the absolute best to everyone. I am hopeful that the announcements, opportunities, and advice in this issue may, at this moment, prove a helpful glimpse into the future. However, I am also cognizant that many of our readers are too overwhelmed to manage this information at this moment. These are challenging times for everyone. Please take care of yourselves.

CSWEP continues to be active. An AEA ad hoc committee with members appointed by the chairs of CSMGEP and CSWEP organized the applications for the Summer Fellows Program. Many thanks to CSWEP board member Karen Pence for her help in this effort. This program provides fellows an opportunity to spend part of the summer with a sponsoring research organization. In particular, a number of the Federal Reserve Banks and several Federal agencies participate in the program. I have been approached numerous times by economists to who tell me how valuable they found their participation in this program.

We are gearing up to accept nominations for the Elaine Bennett Research Prize and the Carolyn Shaw Bell Award; those calls are in this issue of the *News*. We look forward to receiving nominations for both awards and celebrating the recipients in January. We are also preparing to host another group of mentees in our CeMENT mentoring workshops following the AEA meetings in Chicago in 2021. The application portal

will be open in the early summer.

In the Focus Section of the *News*, our outgoing Eastern Representative, Karen Conway, organizes a conversation among academics with tips for surviving and thriving. It is a very thoughtful conversation. Some of the advice is specific to academic positions, but some is quite appropriate for anyone with a research component to their job. While this kind of advice is particularly helpful for newer scholars, I was surprised at the extent to which the piece forced me to consider ways in which some of my good habits have lapsed. I have highlighted some practices that I will try to follow when I return to regular work in my office. I recommend this excellent piece to everyone.

This Focus Section arose, as many of our Focus sections do, from a CSWEP session organized at a regional economics meeting. This conversation took place at the Eastern Economics Association meeting in 2019. This February, I was lucky to be able to join Karen Conway and our incoming Eastern Representative Terri-Ann Craigie at the CSWEP breakfast at the 2020 Eastern Economics Association meetings in Boston. I had interesting conversations with people both new to CSWEP and with people who had participated in the summer fellows program or in the CeMENT mentoring workshops. It was also a great opportunity to introduce some graduate students and postdocs to CSWEP activities.

At the Easterns, I spoke with a number of women economists in government, corporate, and nonprofit positions. As part of our efforts to support women economists outside the academy, we have organized our CSWEP liaison program to include a CSWEP liaison in all agencies of government that have a significant number of economists. In our call for liaisons in this issue, you will see some government agencies where we are still looking for liaisons.

FOCUS: Tips for Surviving and Thriving as an Academic Economist

Laura Argys, Susan Averett, Hope Corman, Dhaval Dave, Joyce Jacobsen, and Amanda Ross

Getting Started

Averett: Academic positions are in large part about publishing original research. A senior colleague once told me that research is typically what gets you tenure and almost certainly what gets you your next job if you don't get tenure. I've never forgotten that advice. Although I work at a liberal arts college, research matters. Thus, you must make time to get your research done.

Dave: I agree. As a junior faculty member, your primary focus should be on research. This is what will get you tenure or potentially another job if needed! That does not mean that you should lapse on your teaching but strive to hit the bar with teaching/service and then place your attention on your scholarship.

From the Chair ↑

Sadly, the Midwestern Economics Association meetings scheduled for March had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. However, we are very much looking forward to the CSWEP activities at the Southern Economics Association meetings in New Orleans in November. I want to particularly call your attention to a new program being organized by Jen Doleac and Maya Rossin-Slater. The day before the Southern, CSWEP will host a mentoring workshop for Ph.D. students. This initiative is modeled after both our CeMENT mentoring workshop and a workshop that Maya Rossin-Slater organized for California Ph.D. students last fall. Please check the CSWEP website in the early summer for application information.

As always, please follow us on twitter at @AEACSWEP. Please encourage research assistants, grad students, and others to subscribe to our newsletter by emailing info@CSWEP.org. I am looking forward to connecting with you. ■

Ross: No one has enough time to do everything that is asked of them when working in academia. There are always research projects, changes that can be made to courses, and various service activities that you are asked to do. One of the problems is that many of us are overachievers by nature. We don't like not being good at things, and we don't like giving less than 100% on any one task. That being said, as many people have likely told you, at academic jobs tenure is given based predominantly on research. Because of this, sacrifices and adjustments must be made so that you always have time for research.

Corman: Think about how much time you should devote to research, teaching, service, and the rest of your life, and try to stick with that decision. Otherwise others will allocate more than 100% of your time to what matters most to them.

Argys: As a new Assistant Professor, you've been immersed in (dissertation) research as you move into your first job. Often in that first year, you'll spend time on preparing a set of courses that you'll be teaching, hopefully for a number of years. Design them with longevity in mind. Prep time for teaching should decline dramatically after the first year. If you haven't already, get the first papers out.

Research Time

Corman: When are you the most productive? Schedule your hardest tasks at those times. Frequently re-assess how you are doing in time allocation.

Argys: Scheduling research time is particularly important; this is the time that is most often encroached upon. Put research on your calendar. When asked, you are not available.

Corman: If you must work in your office, keep the door closed and put up a sign of when you will be available.

Figure out a reasonable turn-around time for responding to emails, and don't stop what you are doing immediately. If needed, find another place to work where you can focus and not be interrupted.

Ross: Some people are night owls and prefer to sleep in until noon and then work until 1 am. Others are morning people, who get up at 6:00 am and work until dinner at 5:00 pm. Learn what you are and manage your time appropriately. For example, I am most productive in the mornings. I block my mornings to work on my research. All of my meetings are scheduled in the afternoon, unless it's a research meeting with a co-author or it's absolutely necessary to agree to a morning meeting. In the course of a semester, there are maybe two times I need to agree to a morning non-research meeting because an afternoon meeting won't work.

Dave: Understand your distractions. I realized early on that my switching costs are very high! If it is a teaching day, even with a few hours between classes, I know I am not going to be very productive at intense heavy-duty research activities. Recognizing this, I will just use that time to read a paper or jot down some thoughts for a referee report or get some future class prep work out of the way. On the other days, I can focus more continuously on research without constantly having to switch gears.

Research Topics

Corman: Focus on one area of research during your pre-tenure period. Switching topics and data sets is very time consuming.

Dave: At least for the first few years after your Ph.D., your comparative advantage is going to lie in the broader topic surrounding your dissertation. You already know the literature in-depth and you have worked with

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the data sets. Hence, it may be advisable not to branch out into other areas too quickly. You can slowly add to the breadth of your research agenda, but it makes sense to extract the full value of the quantity and quality of papers from your dissertation topic. At some point, you can then slowly start building and broadening your research into complementary areas.

Corman: Drop projects early if they don't look like they will provide a publishable paper (e.g. someone else is working on the same topic and is further along; results are not robust).

Dave: After tenure, you have a bit more luxury in terms of taking a step back and refocusing your research agenda for the next few years. Choosing new research projects can be tough. I tend to choose projects that typically overlap across three criteria:

1. I need to find it interesting. If it is not, it will not be fun and I will just end up dragging my feet and letting the project fizzle.
2. It is interesting to others. As a result, there is a good chance it will publish well.
3. It is something that some subset of my co-author group would find interesting, so that we can collaborate.

Co-Authoring

Averett: Co-authors are invaluable. They can be a lively source of new ideas. Sometimes they have access to data that I do not have. I also find my co-authors help keep me on track. It helps when someone is waiting for you to get your part done.

Dave: Find good co-authors to work with, and a good mix of co-authors—former classmates, peers, advisors, and others. When it comes to research, do not go it alone. Co-authoring keeps the process less solitary, makes it far more enjoyable, and will make you more productive. One never stops learning and working with good co-authors is a large part of the process.

Averett: Co-authors are especially invaluable when you are in a smaller

department where there are not many people in your field. They serve as great sounding boards. They also increase your efficiency. More than one person working on a paper increases the chances it will get finished.

Conferences and Seminars

Corman: Attend conferences. Submit papers. Even better—organize sessions. You may be surprised at how many people say yes when someone else is doing the organizing. In all things, don't take it personally when someone says no or doesn't reply.

Averett: Conferences are great commitment devices. The regional economics meetings (Eastern, Midwestern, Southern, and Western Economic Association meetings) are friendly venues for presenting preliminary work. One way to get good feedback at conferences is to organize sessions. Colleagues like to be invited to be part of a session, the papers are more likely to be closely related, and you will gain an opportunity to network. You may even find new co-authors in this way.

Dave: There are strong benefits to presenting at seminars and conferences. Diminishing returns do not kick in until very late, and for some, they may never kick in! Go to the key conferences in your fields and overall—participate in sessions, discuss others' papers, or just attend. Visibility is vital for junior faculty members. A potential reviewer of your paper may be in the session where you are presenting. Attending sessions can also help you learn about new data sets and methods that are being applied in your research areas.

Averett: Don't overlook more specialized conferences in your area. At a more specialized conference, you will meet people in your field who will likely referee your papers.

Corman: Volunteer to be a discussant

at conferences. If there is a journal that is particularly appropriate for the kind of work you do, contact the editor and say that you are available to referee.

Averett: Refereeing papers and serving as a discussant at conferences can both endear you to editors and colleagues and provide you with a look at how others write and think. You will undoubtedly get good ideas about how to (and maybe how not to) present your work.

Dave: Try not to decline any seminar invitation. This is a great way to interact with colleagues at other schools and possibly form collaborations.

Averett: Try to get invited to give seminars at other schools. Ask colleagues if they'd be willing to invite you. It is a

great way to get your work noticed and occasionally it might even get you a job interview.

Dave: Make sure to go prepared. Treat it as a job talk, even if it may not be one! If the timing does not work out, reschedule or suggest a different semester to the inviter.

Publishing

Corman: Don't wait. Send papers out for publication. Don't try to make them perfect but try to make them fit the journal.

Averett: Don't be a perfectionist. A paper cannot get published when it is sitting on your desk. Although gathering feedback from colleagues is invaluable, at some point the only feedback that matters is that of the referees and the editor. Always be sure your paper has been carefully checked for grammar and errors before sending it out.

Dave: I have been guilty of this so many times, but do not strive to be a perfectionist. Do not keep revising and re-revising your papers. Some fields are very fast-moving. Data and papers can get dated and lose their relevance. After a few rounds, you do not want to be

... your comparative advantage is going to lie in the broader topic surrounding your dissertation.

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spending your time revising your papers on points that only you may think are important—let the editors and reviewers guide you on which direction the paper needs to go. This does not mean you should submit half-baked papers with major gaps. Early in an academic career, reputational capital tends to be elastic, and you definitely want to send polished, well-written, and well-proofed work to journals.

Averett: When considering where to submit your work, look to see where papers on similar topics have been published. Editors will often look for referees from citations to their own journals. Therefore, if possible, cite a paper or two from where you are submitting. If there are no related papers in the journal you are considering, this is a potential sign that your paper is not a good fit for that journal.

Corman: Before you send a paper to a journal, make a list of potential journals. Start at the top of the list. Make sure your paper has key qualities for the journal:

1. The topic and style are a good fit. Look through current and past issues. If yours is the first article on a topic, the editor may have trouble finding appropriate reviewers.
2. Your introduction should clearly state why your paper makes a contribution to the field. Just saying that you use a different data set or that you use a different technique may not be enough.
3. Focus on your main results and tie them to the introduction and conclusion. Keep your many robustness checks to footnotes and appendices.
4. Compare your results to previous studies.

When you get feedback after a presentation or rejection, keep comments in mind, but only follow the comments that you think will improve the paper. Move on. Do not stew. This is only the opinion of a few people on a specific day. If you get an R & R, do it right away. If you get a rejection, look at the

reviews, decide what you want to do, and do them. Send the paper out to the next journal on the list.

Refereeing

Jacobsen: When you are sent a paper to referee, give it a quick scan to see if it is worthy of your time and effort. If it is a clear loser, signal back to the editor that they may want to consider a desk reject. If it is of interest to you and you think you could contribute to its improvement as well as learn something from working on it, take the assignment. If you take on the assignment, do a thorough job and return the report on time. Don't feel as though you have to fix all the grammatical and spelling errors; just mention them if they are glaring and jump out to you while you are reading. You can give a blanket recommendation that the author get another person to fix the writing problems. Don't waste the editor's and author's time and your time by doing a bad and/or late report.

Teaching

Averett: While research may be the ultimate arbiter of a tenure decision, being a good teacher is important. It matters to your students and it matters to a tenure and promotion committee. It also likely matters to you. After all, you chose to become an academic. Yet, a colleague once told me that preparing for teaching will take up all the time you allot to it. I have found this to be true. Over the years, I have worked to streamline my teaching without sacrificing the quality my students deserve.

Argys: It is typically easy to spend time on teaching since there are constant deadlines. Don't let it fill more time than it should. Try to set aside specific days/times for all of your teaching activities. I found it useful to load prep time, grading, and office hours on my

teaching days. Two days per week is obviously best, but it will depend on your teaching load, schedule, and number of new preps.

Ross: Work with your department chair to set class times that will allow you to do work and be successful. For me, anything I have to do with regards to teaching prep is done in the afternoon, and all of the courses I teach are after 5 pm. After 5 pm teaching works for me because at that point my brain has shut off to research. If I try to read papers, none of it is retained. Teaching

a late class allows me to stay active since I'm on my feet and work for a few extra hours so that I can get everything done.

Corman: Your teaching will evolve over the years, so don't try

to make it perfect the first time.

Argys: Don't reinvent classes too often.

Corman: If there is a standard evaluation form, look at it before you write your syllabus, and design your course accordingly.

Averett: Although I do not regularly use Power Point (or any sort of slides) when teaching, I typically maintain a set of Power Point slides for each class I teach. They help me keep my thoughts organized and are easy for me to update between semesters. I also make them available to my students for studying—something they seem to appreciate. My students need a dynamic presentation of the material and they benefit from some hands-on application. Thus, each class, I do some presentation of concepts and provide an opportunity to practice the material. I tend to practice my lectures beforehand so I can deliver content smoothly and with confidence.

Corman: When designing your lectures/assignments, think about key concepts you want your students to remember one year out rather than covering a lot of content that will soon be

One way to get good feedback at conferences is to organize sessions.

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forgotten. As you go through a semester, try to edit assignments or lectures immediately afterwards. If you wait until the next time around, it's harder to remember what did or did not go well.

Jacobsen: Save all notes and slides related to a course and package them up for the next time you might teach it. Mark in the margins or highlight numbers that need regular revision, such as current economic statistics. When you teach a course again, pull the packet (whether paper or electronic) and go through it to see what does and doesn't need revising. If something didn't work well, change that section, while saving parts that did work well. Add jokes in as you come up with them over time, so that you remember when in the class it is best to tell them.

Corman: Students want to know your expectations and where they stand. Canvas (or other learning management systems) is a great tool for providing a grade-to-date automatically. Post assignments with due dates as soon as you can and stick to the schedule. Design assignments/papers/exams keeping in mind how easy/difficult they will be to grade.

Averett: Assigning an excessive amount of homework bogs me down in endless grading. Yet, I want to keep my students engaged in the material outside of class. I use some low-stakes assignments that serve to engage them regularly and count just enough in their final grade to incentivize them to complete the assignments. These also help facilitate discussion during class as students are much more apt to participate when they have had an assignment to complete. These "Course Preparation Assignments" either have students look back at something we just did or look ahead for the next class. I grade them on a 100, 70, and 0 basis and typically drop the lowest two. They are short and

easy to grade and the 100 has to be perfect. Students don't like getting a 70—it is just low enough that they put in the effort to get the correct answers.

Corman: Tell students when you will hand back assignments and stick to it. Use whatever TA/RA help you can get. If your institution offers tutoring, recruit good students from one semester to be tutors for the next.

Dave: Know your distractions and your weaknesses. Beware of activities that have little value-added for you or for your students, but that only serve to take up more time, such as time-consuming assignments to grade or spending a lot of time coming up with new problems and questions! Find ways to minimize this if possible, for instance by recycling older questions, shuffling data sets, or creating random subsets of data sets.

Averett: I never return my final exams so that I do not have to write a new final each semester. For midterms, I rotate through a variety of tried and true exam questions, tweaking them a bit each year.

Corman: Provide reviews/practice exams before tests. Be available during office hours, but don't be available all of the time. Tell students your email turnaround time policy.

Averett: Resist the urge to play with too many teaching methods. I've learned to stick with what works for me. I remind myself that although the same course is not new to me, it is new to the students.

Service

Averett: Be wary of excessive pre-tenure service. Minimize your specific human capital investment as it won't count for much at other schools and can hurt your chances where you are.

Argys: Service is a good way to become known outside of your department but be careful. Senior faculty in

your department should be able to help you select a committee that gets you involved but does not dominate your time. Your participation will naturally increase a bit as you approach tenure. Do not even put your toe in the administrative water until after tenure. And don't consider administrative roles that involve leadership until you've reached the rank of full professor (or you may not get there)!

Averett: Getting promoted to full professor may well involve a demonstration on your part that you have become part of the community by engaging in service. In this case, do your best to select those service activities that are meaningful to you.

Argys: If you aspire to administrative roles in your future (or at least want to have the door open for such a possibility), being a dependable and positive contributor in the limited service you perform pre-tenure is important. Specializing in a particular area of service is useful as is finding opportunities to work with upper administration. But don't fall into the trap of letting service eat away at your other roles—particularly research. Your ability to be an effective administrator depends on your reputation as a strong faculty member. If you are not a full professor, and not a successful one at that, you will not move up the ranks as an administrator.

Corman: Talk to your Chair/Dean about service expectations both during your interview and when you accept the job. Keep in mind that your institution has (hopefully) run reasonably well before you came, and that your contribution as a junior faculty member will be minor (unless your goal is to become an administrator). Be proactive and choose tasks that are a good fit for you. Find a senior person who can attest to your contributions.

Argys: Look around you. What is a reasonable level of service? What are others at your level contributing in terms of service? Once you decide on the right amount, target those things that are a fit for you. When asked to serve, ask yourself, am I the best person

As you go through a semester, try to edit assignments or lectures immediately afterwards.

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for this? Think about where your comparative advantage is. Find the thing you love, or at least like, or think would be interesting. Focusing your service in an area where you can have an impact and that you enjoy can make all the difference.

Jacobsen: One of the largest sources of bureaucratic waste is faculty and staff time spent in committee, task force, and department meetings, so it is important to minimize unproductive time spent in these, particularly if you are a regular faculty member rather than an administrator (who is pretty much consigned to spend much of their time in meetings). Insist on efficiently run meetings with clear agendas and deliberation that stays on topic. Move to cancel regularly scheduled meetings if there is no pressing business and wait to hold meetings until there is more than one topic to discuss, as items will tend to fill available time if there is not pressure to move on to the next topic. Insist that task forces have time limitations when they are constituted and that they have a clearly delineated task to be completed. Avoid having task forces take on more than one task. Question everything, always with an eye towards how to reduce total time spent on committee (or task force) work: why the committee exists at all, the composition of the committee, how often and for how long the committee meets, how business is carried out, including whether subcommittees can be used for much of the committee's business rather than having the whole committee work on everything.

Argys: Be sure you build a research portfolio that will raise your research profile through tenure and beyond, and don't sacrifice it for high profile administrative duties prematurely. When I was hired, a woman full professor told me not to agree to be department chair until I was a full professor. I promised, thinking of course no one would ask. I was wrong. By telling my department that I would not serve as chair until I was a full professor, I aligned their goals with mine. They really wanted me to be a productive researcher. It worked out well for all of us.

Saying No

Averett: Saying no to service is not always easy. It takes practice.

Corman: Protect your time, and learn to say no, or better yet, present yourself as someone who is already doing enough and cannot take on another task so that you won't be asked.

Argys: Putting all of your blocked time (e.g. for research, teaching prep) on your calendar can add to your ability to decline an additional service request. If you don't have the time, you'll be unable to participate. If it is on your calendar, schedulers will see prior commitments blocked out.

Dave: I know I have a really hard time saying "No" on the phone or in person—particularly with respect to service duties, so I have become a bit more strategic and have prepared responses for deferrals. It is always easier to think of my commitments and respond to requests via email. You cannot serve on every committee that you're asked to. Choose wisely. Choose if you have a genuine interest, if you can make a contribution, and if it will help you on your promotion application. But, of course, don't say no to everything.

Argys: Once you have decided *when* to say no, you need to be ready to execute it. Requests to participate on a committee (or a wide variety of other service and governance projects) can come up unexpectedly. The attempt to say no can be awkward and, without preparation, can backfire. Often if you provide a very specific reason that you cannot do this particular task, the motivated administrator will solve your problem. Decline sincerely—it never hurts to have an all-purpose response at hand. "Thank you for thinking of me, but I won't be able to participate right now" or an acknowledgement that there are many competing uses of your time "I appreciate the offer, but I don't think that I can

free up additional time from my other commitments."

Ross: One of the issues with service is that people who are good at service always get asked to do more, and people who aren't as good at service get off the hook. Suppose you are one of those people who are good at service. How do you manage the constant requests? Many of us struggle to say no to these requests because we feel guilty. I am no exception. The way I worked around this was I started giving people a choice of what I would do. For example, one year prior to receiving tenure I was asked to

be on the Graduate Admissions Committee and the Faculty Recruiting Committee. Both of those are tasks that take up a good amount of time. I told my Department Chair

One of the largest sources of bureaucratic waste is faculty and staff time spent in committee, task force, and department meetings . . .

that I would be happy to be on one committee, but I can't be on both, and gave him the option of choosing what committee I would be on. Giving people this choice helps you avoid some of the guilt of saying no and feeling like you're not contributing, and it also subtly points out how much you are asked to take on.

Jacobsen: Don't let some colleagues plead incompetence and thus shirk committee duties, while other good citizens serve on multiple committees at all times. Insist on general balloting for major committees and say no to people trying to get off the ballot for a variety of non-compelling reasons, while automatically taking people off the ballot who are already serving on another major committee. Put the relatively incompetent on committees when they can do little real harm. It is generally better for you to have a job done less than competently by someone else than for you to do it perfectly.

Argys: You can probably recognize kindred spirits (by serving on too many of the same committees). Although these may seem to be the wrong people to support your effort to curtail your

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service, it is often easier to give advice to others than to yourself. Knowing in advance that you'll have to confess taking on another responsibility is often enough to make the decision to decline when asked.

Jacobsen: One way to reduce time spent in committees is to delegate routine allocation decisions to administrators, including department chairs. If the resource constraint is relatively slack (e.g. allocating internal grant money when there is generally enough to go around), don't spend more time on deciding who gets the resource.

Argys: We have a meeting of Associate Deans, and the meeting begins with requests we have received to lead efforts that go well beyond our daily jobs. We support each other to help decide which of these are appropriate and most beneficial.

Efficient Time Management, Work-Life Balance, and Final Thoughts

Dave: My Achilles heel has to do with switching costs and getting distracted. Being productive means I need to find ways to minimize these. For this reason, I find it helpful to respond to emails in a block, rather than in "real-time." Similarly, I have become aware that when I am stumped on some difficult research-related problem (data, modeling, programming, etc.), I take a short break that can easily turn into an hour or several hours! Hence, I have started timing myself in these situations. Finally, when I am working on data sets for my papers, and I think one would be a good example for a class (for instance, econometrics), I will create it right away and set the sample data set and output aside, as opposed to going back to it at a later point.

Ross: I travel a lot, so one of my expenses to protect my productivity was to purchase a subscription to GoGo WiFi on planes. While the bandwidth isn't strong enough for remote access

so I can't run programs or anything like that, I block flights to work on referee reports, which I finish, upload, and mark as completed on that flight. This one hour can also give me enough time to go through and clean up some of the bottomless pit that is my email inbox. It always amazes me how much I can get done on an hour-long flight when I'm alone and there is no one who can stop by to ask a quick question or catch up on the weekend. As long as you're not on the same flight, you can share this expense with others who travel a lot as the account is only limited to one sign-in per flight.

Jacobsen: Template, template, template. Once you have a template that you like for a particular type of document or spreadsheet: reuse, reuse, reuse. Have templates for everything: letters of recommendation, annual memos (such as merit reports, recommendations for students for prizes, and internal grant requests), grade sheets, referee reports, syllabi, submission letters. Adjust content as needed for specific situations, and then save the specific version in your files. Avoid using stationary and signing letters by hand whenever you can use a template with an electronic signature instead.

Ross: Pre-tenure, your time is worth more than anything. Spend money to protect your time and avoid stress, and never feel guilty about it. Hire a cleaning lady or a lawn service/snow plow agency so that you don't have to spend your time on these tasks. If you have children, hire a nanny or a babysitter to help you with your children if you need it.

Corman: Don't select an inappropriate role model or succumb to peer pressure about what your life should be like. Only you know what work-life balance works for you. Key times to reassess are when you are cranky and/or sleep deprived much of the time or feeling guilty about what you are not doing. Take control and figure out where you can provide a better balance for yourself. This might be as simple as hiring some household help or cutting down a

few hours a week in one area and taking more "me" time. It could be as big as reassessing whether your job or commute is making you miserable.

Jacobsen: Instead of trying to provide daily high parental input situations, pick a few high impact annual practices that are enjoyable for a wide age range, and stick to them faithfully. These will then become cherished rituals that the child will happily anticipate and remember fondly when they are grown. Examples include baking holiday cookies once a year with your children, making a fancy outfit once a year for your child (including having them pick out the pattern and fabric), and letting your child choose where to go on a monthly drive. Of course, only do these things if you already know how to bake/sew/drive and enjoy doing it with your child/children. The rest of the time, love and care for your children, but don't feel like everything has to be perfect for them.

Corman: Know that life throws us curveballs. As economists, we focus on causality, assume that we have control, and ignore the random errors. However, in life, we cannot control what partners/friends/colleagues/institutions may do and random events happen to us all. For me, early in my career it was the birth of a child with a long-term disability. I needed to re-allocate time and emotional energy. Thirty-seven years later, I can tell you that my life has been much richer because of this. Finally, unless you are a mean-spirited person (and who would admit it?), try to stay positive and constructive. Steer clear of those who encourage snide and dismissive comments about colleagues.

Dave: Most importantly, be a good colleague. There are HUGE returns to being regarded as a good citizen. Always strive to be constructive, positive, and genuine. Treat everyone with respect. When you have the opportunity to do so, consider being a mentor to and helping junior scholars and junior faculty along the way. Reputational capital is not just about the quality of your research portfolio but also about you as a person. ■

Calls, Announcements, and Sessions at Upcoming Meetings

Call for Submissions, Conference on Diversity and Inclusion in Economics, Finance, and Central Banking

23–24 September 2020
Federal Reserve Board of Governors,
Washington, DC

DEADLINE: 30 APRIL 2020

The Bank of Canada, Bank of England, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, and European Central Bank are organizing the third conference on *Diversity and Inclusion in Economics, Finance, and Central Banking* to be held on September 23–24, 2020, at the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. Sessions will focus primarily on issues encountered by underrepresented groups in economics, finance, and central banks.

We invite papers drawn from a variety of methods, perspectives, and disciplines and especially encourage submissions from groups traditionally less represented in economics and finance. We expect that most papers will cover academic-style research. We are also open to studies from practitioners or involving other professions that draw on or shed light on the experience in the economics, finance, and central banking professions, or that highlight the effects of practice steps to increase diversity and inclusion.

Areas of particular interest include, but are not limited to:

- What benefits do diversity and inclusion convey to organizations?
- How can the fields of economics, finance, and central banking better attract and retain members of underrepresented groups?
- What are the obstacles to greater diversity and inclusion in these fields, and what steps can be taken to overcome them?

Participants will be selected on the basis of papers or abstracts of about 500

words. The deadline for submissions is April 30, 2020. Authors chosen to present papers will be notified by May 29, 2020. Final drafts of the papers will be due on September 3, 2020.

The organizing committee consists of staff from each of the four central banks. If you are interested in participating, please email your paper or abstract to Diversity-and-Inclusion-Conference@frb.gov (subject line: “Submission for Diversity and Inclusion Conference 2020”). Reasonable travel and accommodation expenses will be covered for academic presenters of accepted papers. We look forward to hearing from you.

Call for Applications, CeMENT Workshop for Junior Faculty in Doctoral Programs

5–7 January 2021 (Immediately following
the ASSA meetings), Chicago, IL

DEADLINE: 15 August 2020

The CSWEP CeMENT workshop for faculty in doctoral programs is aimed at mentoring female faculty in tenure-track positions at Ph.D. granting economics departments in the U.S. or in government or other institutions with similar research expectations.

The workshop will consist of a two-day program, beginning directly after the 2021 ASSA meetings in Chicago, IL, and ending at 2 pm on Thursday, January 7th. The AEA will pay for participants’ lodging and food during the workshop, but attendees must arrange their own transportation. Participants will be arranged into small groups and assigned to mentors based on their research area. Group members and mentors discuss and offer feedback on the participants’ research. In addition, the workshop includes a number of larger how-to sessions on topics such as: publishing, developing a tenure case, writing a grant, effective and efficient teaching, conferences and networking, and work/life balance.

For more information on the CeMENT experience, including research evidence showing statistically significant improvements in top-tier publications and the receipt of federal grants as a result of the workshop, [click here](#).

For a list of past mentors, [click here](#). Past workshop participants have received binders of professional development materials relating to publishing, teaching, grants, and other relevant topics. CSWEP is now making these materials available [here](#).

We are excited about the opportunity to continue CSWEP’s tradition of mentoring female junior faculty. We hope you will apply and look forward to seeing you at one of our workshops.

Applications will be accepted starting this summer via our application portal, which will be posted on our website here: <https://www.aeaweb.org/about-aea/committees/cswep/programs/cement-mentoring-workshops>

You will be informed of your participation status by the end of October 2020. Our expectation is that, as was the case in past years, the number of qualified applicants will far exceed capacity of the workshop (which is approximately 40 junior participants per workshop). In this case, we will exercise a slight preference for women earlier in their tenure clock. Then, workshop participation is determined by random selection. Those who were randomized out last year will receive priority in the next year as we no longer have an evaluation component to the workshop.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Call for Nominations, 2020 Carolyn Shaw Bell Award

**DEADLINE: 15 September 2020
(nomination portal opens in May)**

The annual Carolyn Shaw Bell Award is given to an individual who has furthered the status of women in the economics profession, through

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example, achievements, increasing our understanding of how women can advance in the economics profession, or mentoring others. Nominations should include a nomination letter, updated CV and three or more supporting letters, with preferably at least two from mentees. Nomination letters should be focused on examples of how the nominee has fulfilled the criterion of advancing the position of women in economics, rather than strictly on academic achievements.

A CSWEP-appointed committee reviews nominations and the prize will be awarded at the January 2021 ASSA Meetings in Chicago. The Award Committee automatically retains and considers applications for a period of three years, and previous nominators are encouraged to update nomination packages if appropriate. **Nominations are due September 15, 2020, and will open in May.**

For more information and a list of past recipients of the Bell Award, visit: <https://www.aeaweb.org/about-aea/committees/cswep/about/awards/bell>

Nominations for this award may be sent to:

Rebekah Crowe,
CSWEP Committee Coordinator
American Economic Association
2014 Broadway, Suite 305
Nashville, TN 37203
info@csweb.org

Call for Nominations, 2020 Elaine Bennett Research Prize

DEADLINE: 15 September 2020

The biennial **Elaine Bennett Research Prize** supports, encourages and recognizes outstanding contributions by young women in the economics profession. Nominees should be at the beginning of their career, normally within seven years of completing their dissertation or earning their Ph.D. However, adjustments will be made for nominees who have had childrearing or medical leaves. Nominees will have demonstrated exemplary research contributions in their field. Nominations should contain the can-

didate's CV, relevant publications, a letter of nomination and two supporting letters. The Bennett Prize is for fundamental intellectual contributions to economics. Correspondingly, the nomination letter should describe the candidate's research and its significance and supporting letters should come from experts in the field who are best able to speak to these contributions, regardless of departmental or agency affiliation.

A CSWEP-appointed committee reviews nominations and the prize will be awarded at the January 2021 ASSA Meetings in Chicago. **Nominations are due September 15, 2020.**

For more information and a list of past recipients of the Bennett Prize, visit: <https://www.aeaweb.org/about-aea/committees/cswep/about/awards/bennett>

Nominations for these awards may be sent to:

Rebekah Crowe,
CSWEP Committee Coordinator
American Economic Association
2014 Broadway, Suite 305
Nashville, TN 37203
info@csweb.org

Save the Date! Successfully Navigating Your Economics Ph.D.

A Mentoring Workshop for 3rd and 4th Year Female/Non-Binary Economics Ph.D. Students

**20 November 2020
(Friday before the start of the Southern
Economic Association Annual Meetings),
New Orleans, LA**

Organizers: Jennifer Doleac and Maya Rossin-Slater

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: TBD—
Call for applications will go out in May
2020.**

Purpose

In most economics Ph.D. programs, students will have completed their coursework and chosen their fields by the completion of their second year. Then, students face the daunting and

exciting task of conducting their own independent research, sometimes for the first time in their lives. Students can feel overwhelmed and lost at this juncture in their studies and may not always have access to support and resources that can help them navigate graduate school successfully and make the most out of their Ph.D. experience.

Female and non-binary students, who are substantially under-represented in economics education and the profession and face a variety of systemic barriers (Goldin, 2013; Bayer & Rouse, 2016; Hengel, 2017; Mengel et al., 2017; Sarsons, 2017; Wu, 2017; Lundberg and Stearns, 2018), may be at a particular disadvantage, and may lack female/non-binary peers, role models, or mentors in their own departments and networks. The goal of this workshop is to begin to address this need.

Details

The workshop will be modeled after the inaugural workshop of this kind, which was held at Stanford University in September 2019 for students from California (organized by Maya Rossin-Slater). It is also inspired by the successful CeMENT workshop for female assistant professors in economics, which is hosted by the Committee for the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP) and the American Economic Association (AEA).

Third- and fourth-year female/non-binary economics Ph.D. students are eligible to participate. Student participants will be organized into small groups based on shared research interests, and each group will be matched with 1–2 mentors. Mentors will be female/non-binary economists in early stages of their careers—assistant professors in economics and other departments, as well as those employed outside academia (e.g., research think tanks, government positions). The workshop will focus on a variety of issues, including generating research ideas, finding advisors, collaboration and co-authorship, finding opportunities to present research and get

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feedback, networking, and work-life balance.

The workshop is scheduled to be held on the Friday afternoon in advance of the Southern Economic Association Annual Conference in New Orleans, LA. The workshop will include a networking lunch, panels, group activities, informal discussions, and other networking opportunities. A call for applications will be posted on the CSWEP website in May 2020.

CSWEP Sessions at Western Economic Association 95th Annual Conference

26–30 June 2020
Grand Hyatt Denver, Denver, CO

Policies Affecting Children, Couples, and Immigrants

29 June 2020, 8:15–10:00 am

Session Chair and Organizer: Catalina Amuedo-Dorantes (University of California Merced)

A quantitative evaluation of publicly-provided day care

Zoe Xie (Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta)

Discussant: Linh Nguyen (Duke University)

Happy 18th birthday, now leave: the hardships of aging out of foster care

Alexa Prettyman (Georgia State University)

Discussant: Lauren Schechter (University of Colorado, Boulder)

Do shelters reduce intimate partner violence?

Lauren Schechter (University of Colorado, Boulder)

Discussant: Sidonia McKenzie (Kansas State University)

The effects of joint taxation on occupations of married couples

Linh Nguyen (Duke University)

Discussant: Alexa Prettyman (Georgia State University)

SNAPing to the beat: assessing the impact of immigrants' food stamps eligibility on household income

Sidonia McKenzie (Kansas State University)

Discussant: Zoe Xie (Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta)

Implications of Immigration and Immigration Policies

Monday, 29 June 2020,
10:15 am–12:00 pm

Session Chair and Organizer: Catalina Amuedo-Dorantes (University of California Merced)

Immigration and the institutionalization of the elderly

Kristin Butcher (Wellesley College), Karen Moran (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), and Tara Watson (Williams College)

Discussant: Catalina Amuedo-Dorantes (University of California Merced)

Can legal status help undocumented immigrants achieve the American dream? Evidence from the deferred actions for childhood arrivals program

Jian Wang (University of Dayton) and Weici Yuan (University of Central Arkansas)

Discussant: Kristin Butcher (Wellesley College)

Unintended consequences of immigration enforcement: personal services and high-skilled women's work

Chloe East (University of Colorado, Denver) and Andrea Velasquez (University of Colorado, Denver)

Discussant: Alejandro Gutierrez-Li (Washington University in St. Louis)

Business ownership and Mexico-U.S. immigration

Alejandro Gutierrez-Li (Washington University in St. Louis)

Discussant: Jian Wang (University of Dayton)

Returns to education and the impacts on international students' enrollments and selectivity: evidence from the optional practical training program

Catalina Amuedo-Dorantes (University of California Merced), Kevin Shi

(Queens College CUNY), and Huanan Xu (University of Indiana–South Bend)

Discussant: Chloe East (University of Colorado, Denver)

Education, Skill Production, and Wage Traps

29 June 2020, 2:30–4:15 pm

Session Chair and Organizer: Catalina Amuedo-Dorantes (University of California Merced)

Building inter-ethnic cohesion in schools: an intervention on perspective taking

Elif Kubilay (University of Essex), Alan Sule (University of Essex), Ceren Baysan (University of Essex), and Mert Gumren (Koc University, Turkey)

Discussant: Alexa Prettyman (Georgia State University)

Using existing school messaging platforms to inform parents about their child's attendance

Alexa Prettyman (Georgia State University), Tareena Musaddiq (Georgia State University), and Jonathan Smith (Georgia State University)

Discussant: Yang Song (Colgate University)

Major complexity index and college skill production

Xiaoxiao Li (Villanova University), Sebastian Linde (Grand Valley State University), and Hajime Shimao (Santa Fe Institute)

Discussant: Bidisha Lahiri (Oklahoma State University)

College matching mechanisms and matching stability: evidence from a natural experiment in China

Yang Song (Colgate University), Wei Ha (Peking University), and Le Kang (Peking University)

Discussant: Elif Kubilay (University of Essex)

Low level equilibrium trap for women

Bidisha Lahiri (Oklahoma State University)

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Discussant: Xiaoxiao Li (Villanova University)

Household impacts of health and consumption shocks

Monday, 29 June 2020, 4:30–6:00 pm

Session Chair and Organizer: Catalina Amuedo-Dorantes (University of California Merced)

Household impacts of having a child with a long-term disability or chronic illness

Evelyn Skoy (University of Colorado, Boulder)

Discussant: Kelli Marquardt (University of Arizona)

Mis(sed) diagnosis: physician decision-making regarding attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

Kelli Marquardt (University of Arizona)

Discussant: Evelyn Skoy (University of Colorado, Boulder)

Impact of remittances on household consumption in Nepal

Olga Kondratjeva (Washington University in St. Louis), Khushbu Mishra (Stetson University), and Gerald E. Shively (Purdue University)

Discussant: Lilia Ruslanova (University of Zurich)

Trade shocks and consumption risk sharing

Lilia Ruslanova (University of Zurich)

Discussant: Olga Kondratjeva (Washington University in St. Louis)

Join the CSWEP Liaison Network!

Three cheers for the 150+ economists who have agreed to serve as CSWEP Liaisons! We are already seeing the positive effects of your hard work with increased demand for CSWEP paper sessions, fellowships and other opportunities. Thank you! Dissemination of information—including notice of mentoring events, new editions of the CSWEP *News* and reporting requests for our Annual Survey and Questionnaire—is an important charge of CSWEP. For this key task, we need your help. We are looking for liaisons from the following colleges, universities, and government organizations:

Beloit College
City College of New York, CUNY
Eastern Mennonite University
Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco
Franklin and Marshall College
Howard University
Hunter College, CUNY
Lawrence University
Lehigh University
Muskingum University
Randolph-Macon College
Rhodes College
Ripon College
Susquehanna University
University of Cincinnati
University of Miami
University of Minnesota
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
University of Texas at Dallas
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
West Virginia University

If you know individuals at these institutions who you think might be interested in serving as a CSWEP Liaison, please encourage them to contact us at info@cswep.org. We are also seeking liaisons from outside the academy. To indicate your willingness to serve, send an e-mail with your contact information to info@cswep.org.

Brag Box

“We need every day to herald some woman’s achievements . . . go ahead and boast!”
—Carolyn Shaw Bell

Karen Conway was awarded the 2019 Distinguished Faculty Award by the University of New Hampshire. The purpose of the award is to identify and honor longstanding members of the University of New Hampshire faculty whose overall record of excellent teaching, caring about students, devotion to the university community, and substantial record of scholarly achievement exemplifies what we would call a “distinguished longstanding career.” Congratulations Karen!

We want to hear from you!

Send announcements to info@cswep.org.

About CSWEP

A standing committee of the American Economic Association, the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP) is charged with serving professional women economists by promoting their careers and monitoring their progress. CSWEP sponsors mentoring programs, surveys economics departments and freely disseminates information on professional opportunities, career development and how the profession works, both on the web and via free digital subscriptions to the CSWEP *News*. To subscribe, email info@cswep.org.

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