

## The Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession

Women continue to increase their representation in the economics profession, but the rapid entry of young women occurring in other elite professions is not yet evident in economics. In 1983–84, the group of economics departments that grant most of the Ph.D.s (the so-called Chairs' Group) reported that 16 percent of their doctorates went to women. While this is an advance from the levels of the 1970's, it is below the proportion of women among newly trained lawyers (32 percent in 1980–81), physicians (25 percent), and chemical engineers (19 percent). Among undergraduates, the proportion of mathematics majors who are women (43 percent) exceeds the proportion of economics majors who are women (32 percent).

The economics profession continues to appear to undergraduate students as inhospitable to women. While the President-elect and one of the two Vice Presidents of the American Economic Association are currently women, the undergraduate is influenced by what she sees on her own campus. Surely a major factor in the perpetuation of this inhospitable image in the minds of today's students is the fact that many academic departments continue to be 100 percent male in their senior ranks. Some departments are 100 percent male in their entirety. In 1983–84, the situation with respect to the senior ranked positions was

	Number of departments	Number of women above rank of Asst. Prof.	At least this many departments with no women above Asst. Prof.:
Chairs' Group	41	22	19
Other Ph.D. granting depts.	34	21	13
Depts. granting MA only	46	27	19
Depts. granting BA only	189	49	140

The 41 departments of the Chairs' Group who reported on the composition of their faculties to the annual American Economic

Association survey, employed altogether 22 women as Full Professor or Associate Professor. We can deduce from this that at least 19, and surely more than half of them, had not a single woman above the rank of Assistant Professor.

Promotions for women within departments are less frequent than for men, given their representation in junior faculty positions (see Table 1). What is perhaps just as damaging is the fact that the ability of women to move from one school to a senior position in another school appears to be virtually nil. Of the 34 economists hired for senior positions by the departments of the Chairs' Group; only one was a woman. In all departments throughout the country, only two women made such a move.

In part to promote the visibility of women economists already in academic positions, CSWEP compiles and publishes a list of women faculty members at institutions which grant graduate degrees in economics. The women economists on that list should be prime candidates for recruitment by other academic departments. In the coming year, we will continue to update this list, so that it will be of greater use to economics departments who want to recruit women to their senior positions. Another project currently under examination for feasibility is the publication of a bibliography of women economists' scholarly publications, based on the *Journal of Economic Literature*.

We also plan to begin compiling lists of departments with no women faculty on senior levels or no women faculty at any level. In future years those lists should grow shorter and shorter, as more and more departments implement plans to end their exclusively male composition.

### Few Women Researchers Affiliated with the National Bureau

One of the most important functions of CSWEP is to campaign for the inclusion of

TABLE 1—DISTRIBUTION OF FULL-TIME FACULTY, BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION, ACADEMIC YEAR 1983–84

	Chair's Group			Other Ph.D.			Only M.A. Departments			Only B.A. Departments		
	Total	Female		Total	Female		Total	Female		Total	Female	
		No.	Percent		No.	Percent		No.	Percent		No.	Percent
Existing												
Professor	605	15	2.5	313	11	3.5	227	11	4.8	335	25	7.5
Associate	242	17	7.0	200	10	5.0	183	16	8.7	279	24	8.6
Assistant	315	32	10.2	205	29	14.1	158	27	17.1	346	57	16.5
Instructor	37	4	10.8	40	13	32.5	35	13	37.1	92	22	23.9
Other	39	9	23.1	21	1	4.8	27	13	48.1	40	1	2.5
New Hires												
Professor	24	1	4.2	6	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
Associate	10	0	0	4	0	0	3	0	0	3	1	33.3
Assistant	60	8	13.3	35	5	14.3	34	1	2.9	63	14	22.2
Instructor	19	2	10.5	14	2	14.3	14	3	21.4	42	12	28.6
Other	3	2	66.7	8	0	0	2	1	50.0	8	1	12.5
Promoted to Rank (1982–83)												
Professor	21	1	4.8	15	1	6.7	9	0	0	29	3	10.3
Associate	25	2	8.0	18	3	16.7	15	1	6.7	32	6	18.8
Assistant	1	0	0	4	2	50	1	0	0	14	2	14.3
Tenured at Rank (1982–83)												
Professor	1	0	0	9	0	0	1	0	0	8	2	25.0
Associate	12	2	16.7	28	3	10.7	15	1	6.7	22	5	22.7
Assistant	1	0	0	4	0	0	4	3	75.0	18	1	5.6
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not Rehired												
Professor	29	0	0	20	1	5.0	9	1	11.1	7	0	0
Associate	9	0	0	11	1	9.1	5	1	20.0	6	1	16.7
Assistant	40	7	17.5	20	1	5.0	26	4	15.3	35	6	17.1
Instructor	10	2	20.0	10	2	20.0	10	3	30.0	19	3	15.7
Other	8	0	0	2	1	50.0	0	0	0	6	0	0

Note: In the tables for 1982–83 appearing in the May 1984 AEA *Proceedings*, numbers listed as referring to "Other Ph.D. Departments" actually refer to all Ph.D. departments.

women economists in all of the important activities in which professional economists are engaged. For almost a decade, the leadership of CSWEP has been particularly concerned with the situation at the National Bureau of Economic Research, where women have been largely excluded. On November 20, 1984, the present Chair of CSWEP and the two previous Chairs (Elizabeth Bailey, Dean, Graduate School of Industrial Administration, Carnegie-Mellon University, and Ann Friedlaender, Dean and Professor of Economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology) signed a long letter to NBER President Martin Feldstein. In part, the letter said:

We at CSWEP are concerned about the low level of representation of wom-

en in the activities of the NBER. Currently only 6 of 170 Bureau research associates are women (2.8%), a level which has not shown any tendency to increase over the years since you became President. Yet the Bureau conducts research in a number of fields of applied economics in which women economists are active. We are concerned that the Bureau's low representation of women, combined with its steadily growing size and command over research funds, is increasingly putting younger women economists at a disadvantage relative to male economists in the same fields who have Bureau affiliations. We would like to urge you to take concrete measures to change this situation and we want to provide whatever help and guidance we can.

(Continued)

TABLE 2—PREVIOUS ACTIVITY OF NEW HIRES AND CURRENT ACTIVITY OF THOSE NOT REHIRED  
BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION AND SEX, ACADEMIC YEAR, 1983–84

	Previous Activity of New Hires				Current Activity of Not Rehiired			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Chairs' Group	122	100.0	18	100.0	90	100.0	14	100.0
Faculty	39	32.0	3	16.7	61	67.8	6	42.9
Student	66	54.1	12	66.7	2	2.2	1	7.1
Government	1	.8	0	0	8	8.9	2	14.3
Bus., Banking, Research	1	.8	1	5.6	5	5.6	2	14.3
Other	15	12.3	2	11.1	14	15.6	3	21.4
Other Ph.D.	52	100.0	6	100.0	43	100.0	7	100.0
Faculty	15	28.8	1	16.7	25	58.1	3	42.9
Student	28	53.8	4	66.7	2	4.7	0	0
Government	2	3.8	0	0	5	11.6	2	28.6
Bus., Banking, Research	4	7.7	0	0	4	9.3	1	14.3
Other	3	5.8	1	16.7	7	16.3	1	14.3
M.A. Departments	52	100.0	6	100.0	30	100.0	8	100.0
Faculty	15	28.8	0	0	17	56.7	4	50.0
Student	33	63.5	5	83.3	2	6.7	2	25.0
Government	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bus., Banking, Research	0	0	0	0	5	16.7	0	0
Other	4	7.7	1	16.7	6	20.0	2	25.0
B.A. Departments	127	100.0	37	100.0	66	100.0	14	100.0
Faculty	36	28.3	10	27.0	30	45.5	8	57.1
Student	75	59.1	18	48.6	12	18.2	1	7.1
Government	3	2.4	0	0	1	1.5	0	0
Bus., Banking, Research	10	7.9	4	10.8	14	21.2	0	0
Other	3	2.4	5	13.5	9	13.6	5	35.7

Note: See Table 1.

TABLE 3—DISTRIBUTION OF SALARY FOR WOMEN FACULTY BY TYPE OF DEPARTMENT AND TIME IN RANK,  
ACADEMIC YEAR, 1983–84

Relative Salary for Rank	All Women		Time in Rank			
	Number	Percent	Total Percent	Above Median	At Median	Below Median
All Departments	309	100.0	100.0	29.1	42.7	28.2
Salary above Median	105	34.0	100.0	57.1	25.7	17.1
Salary at Median	109	35.3	100.0	15.6	77.1	7.3
Salary below Median	95	30.7	100.0	13.7	22.1	64.2
Ph.D., Chair's Group	70	100.0	100.0	28.6	31.4	40.0
Salary above Median	22	31.4	100.0	40.9	31.8	27.3
Salary at Median	17	24.3	100.0	41.2	35.3	23.5
Salary below Median	31	44.3	100.0	12.9	29.0	58.1
Ph.D., Other	58	100.0	100.0	36.2	36.2	27.6
Salary above Median	24	41.4	100.0	70.8	20.8	8.3
Salary at Median	14	24.1	100.0	7.1	71.4	21.4
Salary below Median	20	34.5	100.0	15.0	30.0	55.0
M.A. Departments	74	100.0	100.0	33.8	39.2	27.0
Salary above Median	20	27.0	100.0	80.0	15.0	5.0
Salary at Median	27	36.5	100.0	18.5	81.5	0
Salary below Median	27	36.5	100.0	14.8	14.8	70.4
B.A. Departments	107	100.0	100.0	22.4	56.1	21.5
Salary above Median	39	36.4	100.0	46.2	30.8	23.1
Salary at Median	51	47.7	100.0	7.8	90.2	2.0
Salary below Median	17	15.9	100.0	11.8	11.8	76.5

Note: See Table 1.

TABLE 4—DEGREES GRANTED IN ECONOMICS BY TYPE OF DEPARTMENT AND SEX, ACADEMIC YEAR, 1983–84

Number of:	All Depts.	Ph.D. Departments			M.A. Depts.	B.A. Depts.
		Total	Chairs'	Other		
Departments	377	120	44	76	45	212
Ph.D.s	542	542	406	136	—	—
Female	86	86	66	20	—	—
Percent Female	15.9	15.9	16.3	14.7	—	—
M.A.s	1229	1000	639	361	229	—
Female	279	236	135	101	43	—
Percent Female	22.7	23.6	21.1	28.0	18.8	—
B.A.s	12285	7292	5058	2234	1006	3987
Female	3912	2214	1554	660	270	1428
Percent Female	31.8	30.4	30.7	29.5	26.8	35.8
Other	127	53	33	20	23	51
Female	39	13	7	6	6	20
Percent Female	30.7	24.5	21.2	30.0	26.1	39.2

Note: See Table 1.

Obviously, membership in one of the NBER's permanent research programs provides tremendous benefits to younger academics.... Despite the substantial benefit from belonging to one of these programs, there appears to be no formal selection procedure that would ensure that the best researchers in each field are represented. Most research associates/fellows appear to be either former students of directors or senior research associates of that group or junior faculty at a few leading universities. Apparently no attempt is made to publicize these positions or to allow outsiders to apply. Due to the extent that women are not part of the "old-boy network" linking the Bureau research associates, they are effectively eliminated from the pool of potential associates....

What can be done to remedy this situation? We have several suggestions.

First, many male economists were brought into Bureau association because they were either Ph.D. students of Bureau project directors (or other Bureau research associates) or were junior faculty members in the University departments where Bureau project directors teach. Therefore, one way that we advocate for bringing in more women researchers is for all NBER project directors and research associates to review their Ph.D. students of the last

five years and the recent women hires in their departments and to consider bringing in any interested and qualified women economists who have been passed over. If, on the other hand, on doing this they find that they have had no women Ph.D. students over the past five years, then perhaps they should ask themselves why not and consider seriously whether they have been practicing unconscious sex discrimination in selection of thesis students....

Second, some procedure should be set up to allow "outsiders" to apply for positions as NBER research fellows in each group. Since the group of research associates/research fellows is by invitation only, it provides little opportunity for women to gain entry, since the NBER's project directors and other senior researchers have been very unlikely in the past to bring them in. This means that women economists are likely to be excluded by virtue of the selection process even if they are part of the pool of distinguished economists working in areas of interest to the Bureau.

We await your reply and, again, offer our help and guidance as you consider what concrete measures would be best adopted to rectify this situation.

Sincerely,

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TABLE 5—DISTRIBUTION OF ACTIVITIES OF NEW PH.D. DEGREES BY SEX AND TYPE OF DEPARTMENT, ACADEMIC YEAR, 1983–84

	All Ph.D. Depts.		Chairs' Group		Other Ph.D. Depts.	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
All Ph.D.s	468	100.0	371	100.0	97	100.0
Education	279	59.6	224	60.4	55	56.7
Government	42	9.0	32	8.6	10	10.3
Bus., Banking, Research	33	7.1	27	7.3	6	6.2
Int'l Emp. Outside U.S.	65	13.9	47	12.7	18	18.6
Other	49	10.5	41	11.1	8	8.2
Male Ph.D.s	377	100.0	292	100.0	85	100.0
Education	229	60.7	181	62.0	48	56.5
Government	31	8.2	22	7.5	9	10.6
Bus., Banking, Research	26	6.9	20	6.8	6	7.1
Int'l Emp. Outside U.S.	55	14.6	38	13.0	17	20.0
Other	36	9.5	31	10.6	5	5.9
Female Ph.D.s	91	100.0	79	100.0	12	100.0
Education	50	54.9	43	54.5	7	58.3
Government	11	12.1	10	12.7	1	8.3
Bus., Banking, Research	7	7.7	7	8.9	0	0
Int'l Emp. Outside U.S.	10	11.0	9	11.4	1	8.3
Other	13	14.3	10	12.7	3	25.0

Note: See Table 1.

TABLE 6—DISTRIBUTION OF PH.D. STUDENT SUPPORT, BY TYPE OF SUPPORT, SEX, AND DEPARTMENT, ACADEMIC YEAR, 1983–84

	All Ph.D. Depts.		Chairs' Group		Other Ph.D. Depts.	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
All Students	3973	100.0	3099	100.0	874	100.0
Tuition Only	183	4.6	140	4.5	43	4.9
Stipend Only	365	9.2	215	6.9	150	17.2
Tuition + Stipend	1972	49.6	1589	51.3	383	43.8
No Support	1230	31.0	1003	32.4	227	26.0
No Record	223	5.6	152	4.9	71	8.1
Male Students	3118	100.0	2455	100.0	663	100.0
Tuition Only	145	4.7	111	4.5	34	5.1
Stipend Only	299	9.6	184	7.5	115	17.3
Tuition + Stipend	1505	48.3	1228	50.0	277	41.8
No Support	979	31.4	787	32.1	192	29.0
No Record	190	6.1	145	5.9	45	6.8
Female Students	855	100.0	644	100.0	211	100.0
Tuition Only	38	4.4	29	4.5	9	4.3
Stipend Only	66	7.7	31	4.8	35	16.6
Tuition + Stipend	467	54.6	361	56.1	106	50.2
No Support	251	29.4	216	33.5	35	16.6
No Record	33	3.9	7	1.1	26	12.3

Note: See Table 1.

### Representation at Annual Meetings

Any process of professional selection that is informal, and whose details are only known or understood by a relatively small in-group,

are disadvantageous to women, who benefit less frequently than men from sponsorship by more established members of the profession. The process by which sessions at the AEA annual meetings are organized and

papers invited has been one of these little-understood processes. Formally speaking, the President-elect does the inviting; in practice, many volunteers communicate to him or her their desire to participate, and it is out of these submissions that a considerable part of the program is in fact assembled with the help of referees.

We at CSWEP will continue to urge that the selection procedures for the annual meetings be made more formal and more public. While there is an understandable interest in having the profession's (mostly male) celebrities on parade at the meetings, we would urge procedures which give a better representation to innovative research from the less well-connected members of the profession, women among them. In the meantime, through our *Newsletter* we are urging women economists to submit proposals for sessions or individual papers to the President-elect.

#### **Research on Gender-Related Topics**

CSWEP has been concerned to encourage and foster research on gender roles in the economy and related policy issues, and to make sure that women economists and points of view sensitive to the special problems many women face under current economic institutions are well represented in the field.

To this end, we continue to sponsor sessions on these topics at the AEA and regional meetings. In November 1984, CSWEP jointly with The Brookings Institution sponsored a conference on Gender Issues in the Workplace, arranged by Clair Brown and Joseph Pechman.

As research proceeds and interest rises, courses on the economics of gender roles are being offered at an increasing number of schools. At least three new textbooks are in the works. A number of economics departments are specifically looking to recruit a specialist in gender-related topics, and individual economists are "coming out" as specialists in the field.

#### **Committee Operation**

We wish to thank Gail Wilensky and Nancy Ruggles, whose terms on the Committee expires this year. Gratitude is also due to Aleta Styers, who continues to bear the time-consuming editorial duties on the *Newsletter* with relative fortitude, and to Joan Haworth, who served as Membership Secretary. New Committee members for 1985 are Helen Junz of the IMF and Karen Davis of the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health.

BARBARA R. BERGMANN, *Chair*