



Newsletter of the

# Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession

Summer 2013

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### From the Chair

This installment of the *Newsletter* includes women at all stages of their economics careers.

For that is what The Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP) is about: the championing and mentoring of women economists at every life phase—nurturing women embarking on their undergraduate major, applauding women at the height of their careers, and celebrating the life and work of colleagues who are no longer with us.

### Exploring the Undergraduate Gender Gap

The feature section in this edition of the *Newsletter*—exploring the gender gap in the undergraduate economics major—resulted from a happy coincidence. Back in January, CSWEP

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TOP TEN TIPS  
ON HOSTING A  
VISITING  
SPEAKER  
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### 2012 Carolyn Shaw Bell Award Winner

Interview with Catherine C. Eckel, the  
Sara and John Lindsey Professor of  
Economics at Texas A&M University

By Elizabeth Hoffman, Iowa State  
University

Catherine Eckel has been a leader in experimental economics for several decades. Working with many collaborators including students as well as faculty and supported by numerous grants, her experimental studies cover a wide array of topics and appear in prestigious academic journals. Professor Eckel has served as a

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## Letter from the Chair continued from page 1

Newsletter Co-editor Cecilia Conrad settled on this topic and began soliciting articles. Quite independently, American Economic Association (AEA) President Claudia Goldin was working on *Notes on Women and the Economics Undergraduate Major*, an effort to document the gap and delve into causal factors as preliminary work to figuring out what can be done. Fortunately, each became acquainted with the other's efforts in time for this *Newsletter*. As Goldin discusses, the gap is the differential loss to the economics major of female majors as a fraction of female Bachelor of Arts (BA) candidates when compared to male majors as a fraction of male BA candidates—a gap that is growing despite the relative number of female to male BAs.

I encourage you to read the entire set of articles whose authors span the discipline's career phases: from Maria Boya Zhu, winner of a NSF Graduate Fellowship, who will soon begin her graduate studies at Duke University, to Amanda Griffith, an assistant professor at Wake Forest University, to Susan Feigenbaum and Lisa Saunders, professors at the University of Missouri–St. Louis and University of Massachusetts Amherst, respectively, to AEA President Claudia Goldin. They ask the difficult questions and provide insights on a topic of great, even grave import to the future of women in the economics profession. After reading, I ask you then, as Goldin suggests, to go one step further and join the discussion: <http://www.aeaweb.org/to/gold>.

### In Memoriam

Following Anna J. Schwartz's death in June of 2012, CSWEP ran a short obituary in this *Newsletter*, focusing mainly on her well-known co-authorship with Milton Friedman of the 1963 classic treatise, *A Monetary History of the United States, 1867–1960*. In April 2013, the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) hosted a memorial service. Those assembled included many recognized leaders in monetary economics. The testimonies given spoke to the quality and power of Schwartz's economics, to her influence on policy and to her inspiration as a role model for women. I was fortunate to attend and came away with a desire to preserve Schwartz's legacy. Sharing my enthusiasm, NBER President James Poterba agreed that the *CSWEP Newsletter* was the appropriate publication venue. Hence our Fall 2013 *Newsletter* will feature an introduction by Poterba and the Schwartz Memorial talks given by Michael Bordo, Martin Feldstein, Alan Greenspan, Allan Meltzer, Edward Nelson, Eloise Pasachoff, William Poole and Christina Romer.

It is with sadness that I also share the news of the recent passing of Marianne A. Ferber, Emerita Professor of Economics and Women's Studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana–Champaign. Ferber was a founding feminist economist whose contributions to the literature and institutions of the field continue to resonate. Her research interests began with a study (in

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## Where are the Women Economics Majors?



By Cecilia Conrad, MacArthur Foundation

This issue of the CSWEP newsletter explores why the economics major is less popular among undergraduate women than it is among undergraduate men. In her introductory essay, Claudia Goldin, professor of economics at Harvard University and president of the American Economic Association, observes that economics is doing a poor job of attracting the most numerous and fastest-growing segment of the undergraduate population: women.

As a result, the fraction of all Bachelor of Arts candidates majoring in economics has not budged much over the past decade. She closes with an invitation to newsletter readers to contribute feedback: “So talk to your undergraduates, especially those who are making choices about their major.” I took this invitation to heart and asked one of my former students, Maria Boya Zhu, Pomona College ’13, to offer her perspective. Her personal narrative is the second article in this issue. Maria discusses misconceptions of the field, the absence of a critical mass of women and the dryness of course content as obstacles to majoring in economics—but she persisted and will start in the doctoral program at Duke in the fall. The third contributor is Amanda Griffith, professor of economics at Wake Forest University. Professor Griffith has published research on the persistence of women and minorities in STEM disciplines, and her article reports new findings on how role models do and do not impact the choice of major. Susan Feigenbaum, professor of economics at the University of Missouri–St. Louis, is the fourth contributor. Professor Feigenbaum was a senior investigator on a National Science Foundation grant to improve the teaching of introductory microeconomics. One of the outcomes of that grant is an experientially based microeconomics text. Feigenbaum argues that changing our approach to teaching economics will make the major more appealing to women.

Recent empirical findings suggest that we may want to take a closer look at peer effects and the classroom environment as factors affecting the popularity of the major among women. For example, Elizabeth Jensen and Ann Owens (*American Economic Review*, May 2000), using data from a liberal arts college, find that the effect of devoting class time to group problem solving depends on the gender composition of the class. An increase in class time devoted to group problem solving leads women to rate economics as more relevant when the percentage of females in the class is relatively high (above 48 percent) but leads women to rate economics as less relevant if the percentage of females in the class is low. The opposite is true for male students. Griffith (in this issue) reports that the sex of the professor affects the grades earned by women in a male dominant department, and the grades earned by men in a female dominant department. In the final article in this newsletter, Lisa Saunders, professor of economics at University of Massachusetts Amherst, directly addresses the consequences of minority status and offers specific strategies to improve the learning experience for all students by recognizing the diverse experiences that each student brings to the classroom.

We welcome your ideas, lessons learned and success stories. ■

The author is Vice President, Fellows Program of the MacArthur Foundation. The views expressed herein are her own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Foundation.

## Notes on Women and the Economics Undergraduate Major

—Claudia Goldin, Harvard University and President of the American Economic Association



I have written these notes to spark discussion concerning why women are not majoring in economics to the same degree as are their male Bachelor of Arts (BA) counterparts across a wide variety of colleges and universities. The differences in their rates of concentrating in economics are large and have been so for the past 20 years at least.

### The Problem

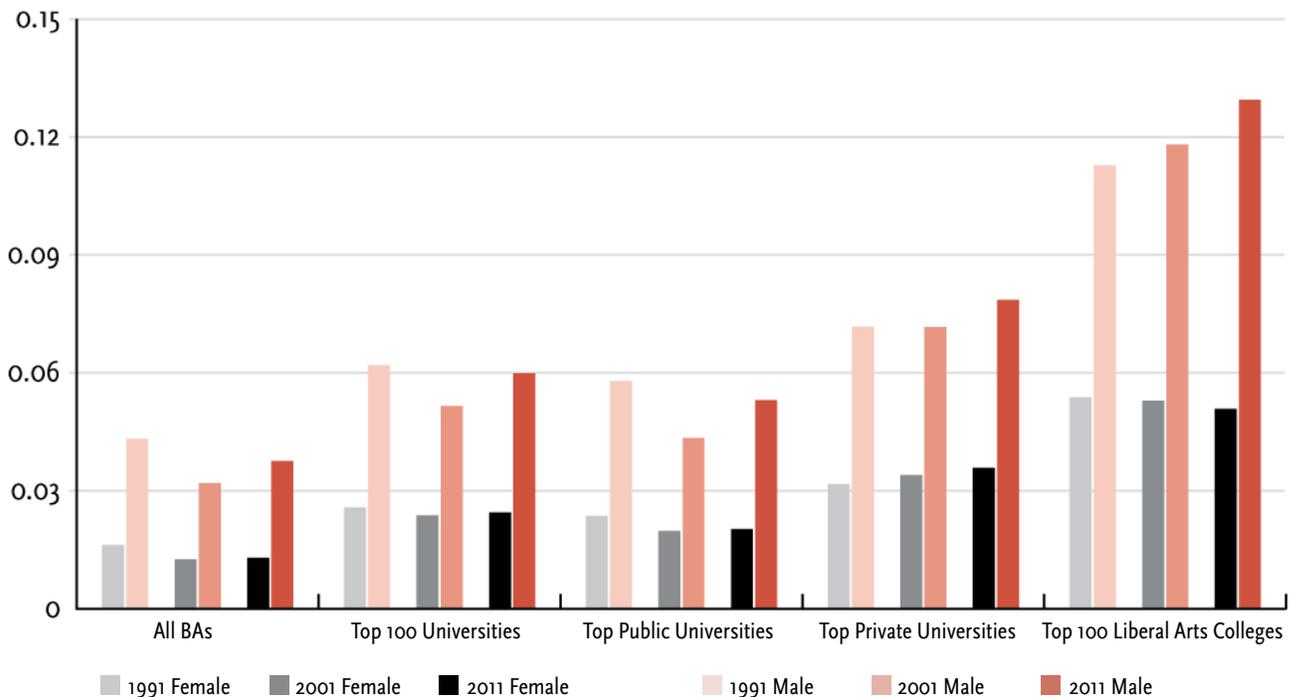
For every female economics concentrator today there are almost 2.9 male concentrators, relative to their numbers as BAs. That statistic is 2.5 among the universities ranked as the top 100 by *U.S. News & World Report*. The fraction varies somewhat across schools but has been fairly constant for the past two decades.

To use a concrete example, at the top 100 U.S. universities in 2011, there were 6 male economics concentrators for every 100 male BAs but only 2.4 females for

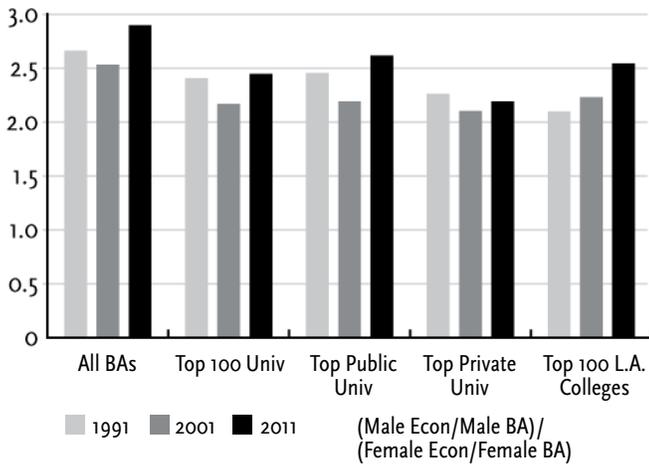
every 100 female BAs (see Figure 3). The data for 1991 and 2001 are not much different. Although the absolute number of economics concentrators (per 100 BAs) is higher at the top 100 liberal arts colleges (13 males relative to 5 females), the ratio is actually a bit less favorable to women (2.6).

Women have been a growing fraction of all BAs in the United States since the 1950s and became half of the group around 1980. In 2011, women were 57 percent of all BAs at institutions that offered degrees in economics, 52 percent of all BAs at the top 100 universities and 56 percent of all BAs at the top 100 liberal arts colleges. Yet economics has not increased its share of the group in the 20 years shown. For all but the top private universities, economics has had a decreased fraction of female BAs (see Figure 1). I should note that adding secondary concentrations (which can be done for 2011 and 2001) does not materially change the conclusions about women and economics.

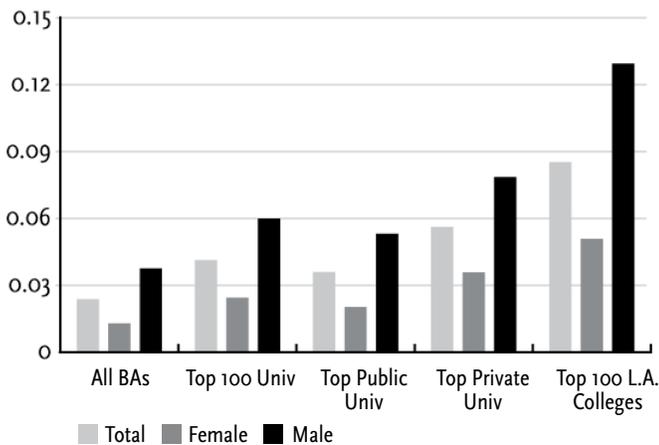
Figure 1. Majors as a Fraction of BAs by Sex, Type of Institution and Year



**Figure 2: Male versus Female Economics Majors as a Fraction of BAs by Institution Type in 1991, 2001 and 2011**



**Figure 3: Fraction of BAs Majoring in Economics, by Institution Type and Sex in 2011**



The upshot of these trends is shown, on the next page, in Figure 4 for the top 100 universities and top 100 liberal arts colleges. The fraction of all BAs who are economics concentrators has not budged much from 1991 to 2011. It has remained at around 4 percent at the top universities and 8 percent at the top liberal arts colleges. There is a slight increase for males but a corresponding decrease for females, leaving the total nearly unchanged.

To put this problem in the context of a business, we economists are doing a very poor job of attracting the most numerous and fastest growing group among our potential “clients.” If we were selling a product (and don’t we sell a service?), we would call in the “marketing” division

and give them marching orders. It is as if we are the Huggies division of Kimberley-Clark and forgot to translate our packaging into Spanish just as the Hispanic population became the fastest-growing group of young parents. Are we economists forgetting to translate our beginning and intermediate courses into “girlish?” And what would that language be?

Put another way, we do a fine job “converting” prospective male BAs into economics majors but a far worse job converting prospective female BAs into the same. Why are we doing so well appealing to one group but not the other? Is our “ideology” more attractive to one segment of the population than to the other? How can we attract those being disproportionately left out without forsaking the other?

The point is clear that we are doing a substandard job of attracting women as undergraduate majors. If we would like to expand the major, women would appear to be the “low-hanging fruit.” When women were a smaller fraction of undergraduates they could be overlooked. But they are now 57 percent of all BAs. More important is that we should want to attract more women. For one thing, they may be telling us something important about some failures of our pedagogy.

### Where the “Girls” Are (If Not in Economics)

Women once disproportionately majored in fields that were more “consumption” than “investment” oriented. They majored in literature and languages, less so in business and the STEM fields. But that is far less the case now. In fact, women are 42 percent of business majors and 57 percent of biology majors among the top 100 universities that give BAs in these fields. In business, the “conversion” rate of male versus female BAs is 1.54, and in biology it is 0.87. But in economics, among the top 100 universities, it is 2.5. That is, for an equal number of BAs by sex, there are 1.54 more male than female business majors but 2.5 more male than female economics majors. For an equal number of BAs by sex, women are the majority of biology majors. (The data are from the 2011 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) institutional data on completions.)

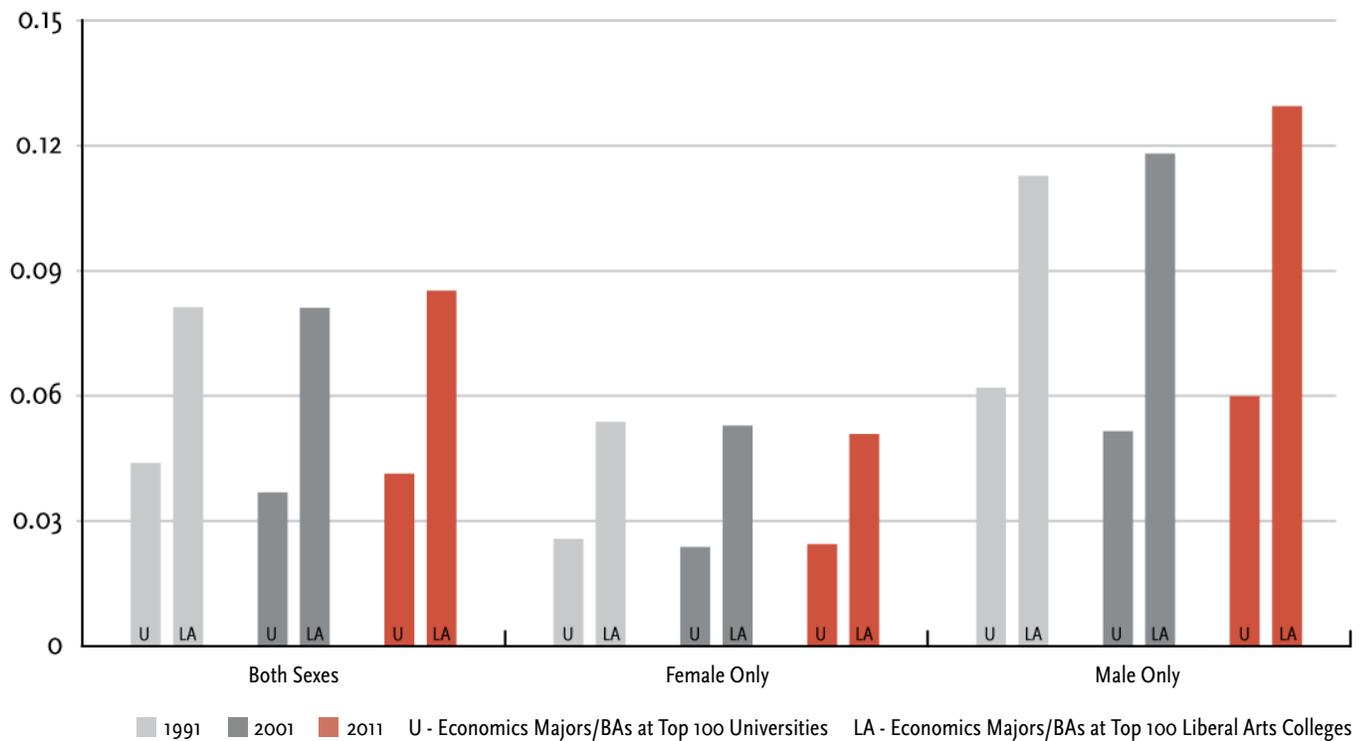
Among the top 100 universities, women are just 28 percent of economics majors but 73 percent of psychology majors. If economics is the male social science, psychology has become the female social science.

Undergraduates independent of sex have a preference for business above economics, but women have an even

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**Figure 4: Economics Majors as a Fraction of BAs by Sex and Institution Type: 1991, 2001 and 2011**



greater preference. Among the top 100 universities, there are 78 with both undergraduate business and economics majors. The ratio of business to economics majors is 3.15 for males but 5.29 for females. Institutions with both un-

*... advise the “marketing team” about how to sell economics to women without turning off men. Send your insights to me at [cgoldin@harvard.edu](mailto:cgoldin@harvard.edu) or visit <http://www.aeaweb.org/to/gold>*

dergraduate business and economics majors have a lower fraction of all BAs who major in economics but an even lower fraction of females who major in economics. That is, both male and female undergraduates prefer a business to an economics major, on average, but females do

to a greater extent.

The majority of the most-selective top 100 universities in 2011 had relative conversion rates ( $= \frac{\text{MaleEcon} / \text{MaleBA}}{\text{FemaleEcon} / \text{FemaleBA}}$ ) in the 1.7 to 1.9 range. That includes (in descending order): NYU (1.9), Stanford, UVA, Columbia, Harvard, UCSD, Penn, Yale, Chicago, Tufts and Duke (1.7). Cornell, Berkeley and UCLA were each a bit lower while Vanderbilt, Michigan, BU, Brandeis, Northwestern and Dartmouth were all higher. MIT and the Colorado School of Mines were almost at parity, but mainly because males concentrate in engineering at these institutions more than do females.

The higher is the fraction of BAs granted in business, the higher is the conversion rate in economics. Relatively more females than males major in business than economics, and when a business major is offered women exit the economics major more than do men.

The institution in the top 100 university group with the lowest conversion rate given the fraction of its males majoring in economics is the University of Chicago, where one in four males major in economics and more than one in seven females do. Columbia, Harvard, Yale, Duke,

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## An Undergraduate Major's Perspective

—*Maria Boya Zhu, Pomona College '13*



Throughout most of high school, I thought I would pursue a major in the humanities when I came to college. I loved reading and writing, and

I thought I was too much of a creative type of person to major in math or science. I took my first economics class during my senior year of high school, and it didn't fit either humanities or science. I enjoyed the class, partly because it presented a novel way of looking at the world, but mostly because I picked up the concepts more quickly than many of my classmates.

While I wouldn't say my experience with economics in high school instilled a life-changing passion, having exposure to the subject definitely made me more open to it as a field of study in college. What turns off many women from economics (and some men, for that matter) is a misconception of what economics is actually about. Some of this misunderstanding is due to lack of exposure, but often it is because introductory economics is taught in a way that does not reflect the full breadth of the field.

As a student at a liberal arts college with no business major, I encountered many economics majors who saw economics as a proxy for business. The major was a way for them to have the benefits of a liberal arts education and a route to a future on Wall Street. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that all too often economics is seen as the business of making money rather than the science of human behavior.

Based on my observations, this misconception of the field seems to disproportionately drive women out of taking economics classes. Many of my female peers never even considered economics as a possible major, even those who were leaning heavily towards other social sciences, such as politics, psychology or sociology. Economics was often stigmatized as a pre-professional degree that focused less on critical thinking and engagement with significant ideas. The availability of interdisciplinary fields that offered concentrations in economics (e.g., Public Policy Analysis, Environmental Analysis, International Relations) provided an

attractive alternative to those who were interested in making a difference in society.

Additionally, the low numbers of female faculty and female majors poses a self-perpetuating problem. The absence of women in the year above me made pursuing an economics major less appealing. When I came to college, I didn't have a clear idea of what I was interested in studying, and I took classes in many different areas during my first two years to try and figure out what to do. It was difficult to imagine myself thriving in departments such as economics with a clear gender imbalance.

For many people I have spoken to, both women and men, the presence of inspiring faculty that they could relate to were instrumental in influencing their eventual field of study. Put simply, people are likely to feel more of a sense of belonging in places where there are people they can relate to. This level of relatedness comes in many forms, and gender is one key factor.

For me, it has been important to find a strong female support network. I have actively sought out female professors as advisors and made sure to establish relationships with female peers. I have received a lot of encouragement and advice from professors, older students and people in my cohort during college, and that has been invaluable in motivating me when I had doubts on my own capabilities or goals. In turn, I have tried to engage others on this issue as well. I took over organizing the semi-annual Women in Economics luncheon during my sophomore year. I organized a discussion panel that addressed the gender dynamics in economics and other disciplines with large gender imbalances and invited all students and professors to express their experiences and concerns.

Many people ask me why I decided to major in economics, and that's a good question given that much of this essay has been devoted to describing the challenges women in economics face. I am interested in economics as a way of understanding the choices individuals make and how these decisions operate in a greater social context. Economics conceptualizes

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relationships in the world in a way that makes sense to me, and I see a lot of potential to do research with meaningful policy implications in this area. I like the combination of analytical and creative aspects in looking at real-world problems, and I find it to be challenging in a way that I enjoy.

I did not always feel this certain about my passion for economics. During my sophomore year, I seriously considered dropping the major. I was having a hard time in one of my core theory classes, and I did not really understand why what I was learning was relevant to anything I cared about. Two key points made me decide to stick with economics. The first was that I had gotten the opportunity to do economics research with a professor the summer after freshman year, so I had been exposed to some

*... the core of the matter is not so much that economics is good for women, but that women are good for economics.*

of what real economics research looked like. The project I was working on looked at demographic data to analyze the impacts of immigration policy changes in Arizona and the impact this had on immigration patterns. I thought this research was fascinating, and I didn't even realize something like that would fall under the umbrella of research in economics. I saw a side of economics that was very much tied to real issues that affected many people's lives, which is something I didn't see from the graphs and equations in my textbooks.

The second key reason I decided to stick with economics was that I had taken a class called *Economics of Gender and Family* during the second semester of my freshman year. This class presented economics to me in a completely different framework, and I loved that it challenged traditional neoclassical ideas. We looked at topics such as household bargaining, women's rights, development, health and labor, and we addressed facets of these issues that actually seemed relevant and personal. I believe if more women were exposed to the wide scope of economics research at an earlier stage, it would give more purpose to many of the core theory courses and spark more

interest in learning the tools to analyze some of these interesting questions. For me, gaining research experience and taking interesting elective courses early exposed me to a much more nuanced and interesting side of economics than I would have been otherwise, and I think it made a big difference in my eventual decision to pursue economics as a major.

Finally, a valuable question to address in this discourse is why we should care about the representation of women in economics. I think the underrepresentation signals greater issues in terms of equity and access. It also signals problematic aspects of the current structure of economics in both research and pedagogy. Women bring a different perspective to the field, one that I think is very much missing right now. In particular, women often have different views on the valuation of time, attention to social constructs, focus on the informal economy, bargaining, welfare and more.

Many of these perspectives run counter to the established "rigorous" neoclassical models of economics, but that is an argument for diversity, not against it. Ultimately, we need to be careful in how we frame this issue. The goal is not simply to convince more women to major in economics at the undergraduate level—that implies that we should be fixing women instead of fixing greater structural issues. Trying to get women to conform to a male-dominated norm only serves to perpetuate the discipline as it is currently being practiced. Instead, we need to adopt a more nuanced approach that places value on the perspectives that women bring to the field and that works to encourage more people to embrace the full potential of economics as a discipline and tool. In the end, I believe that the core of the matter is not so much that economics is good for women, but that women are good for economics. ■

The author is a Winner of a National Science Foundation Fellowship for graduate study. She will begin her PhD studies in economics at Duke University in Fall 2013.

## The Importance of Role Models

—Amanda L. Griffith, Wake Forest University



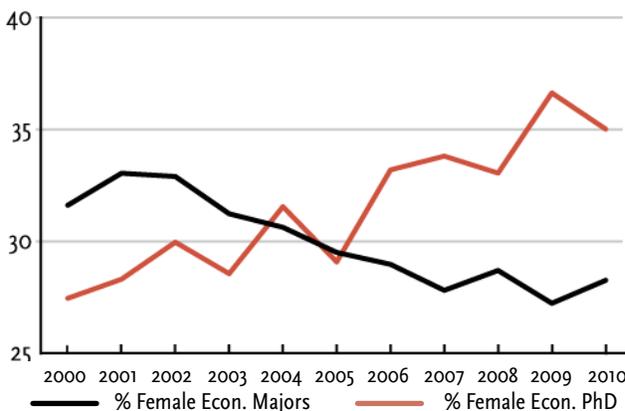
Historically, economics has been a male-dominated field. Although some progress has been made towards equalizing the representation of men and women in the field, there is still quite a ways to go. We experience this in our classrooms, because on average only about a third of our students are female. Figure 1 shows that over the last decade, there has been a slight decrease in the percentage of female economics students despite an increase in the percentage of female undergraduate students over this same time period. This failure to attract more females to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and economics fields is a drag on our economy, which is demanding more workers equipped with these skills. To an economist, the lack of interest in these fields is doubly frustrating because these fields tend to offer higher pay than most, yet females are staying out of them, adding to the gender wage gap. Below, I discuss in detail one possible mechanism by which we could encourage more women to enter these fields and show how my research provides support for current policies.

There are a number of hypotheses put forth by researchers and policymakers to explain females' lack of interest in economics and STEM majors. One hypothesis says that it may be a simple difference in preferences across genders, that females don't like these courses of study. That explanation seems dubious, however, because it appears that there is a "hole" in the pipeline, with female students expressing interest in these majors but not continuing. This suggests that preference differences can't be the whole story. Another is the old saw that women just aren't as prepared in math and science and therefore aren't naturally well equipped for STEM and economics majors.

One hypothesis that has garnered a lot of attention in the policy world is the "role-model" hypothesis. Female students in traditionally male-dominated fields like economics and the physical sciences may be more likely to pursue those fields if they are able to observe someone "like them"—of the same gender—succeeding in that

field already. A same-gender role model could point to major and career pathways that a female student would have previously thought unavailable or not of interest to her. Therefore, role models could be very important in shaping preferences during college, and many of us in academia likely have stories from our own careers that support this notion.

**Figure 1: Percent of Economics BA and PhD Degrees Awarded to Females, 2000–2010**



Note: Averages are weighted by the number of BAs or PhDs awarded at each institution. Data from Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System (IPEDS).

Based on this hypothesis, a number of policies have been pursued in the sciences aimed at increasing the number of female faculty members in order to provide more role models for female students. The hope is that this will spur more interest in these fields for female students considering a future in the sciences while simultaneously increasing the attractiveness of academia to women already in the sciences. The National Science Foundation (NSF) funds a number of ADVANCE awards each year that help to make careers in the academic sciences more attractive to women. These awards fund both small and large-scale projects focused on recognizing and addressing the issues that women face in academia, with the goal of making institutional conditions more favorable for women. This can include such things as offering more flexible tenure clocks to allow

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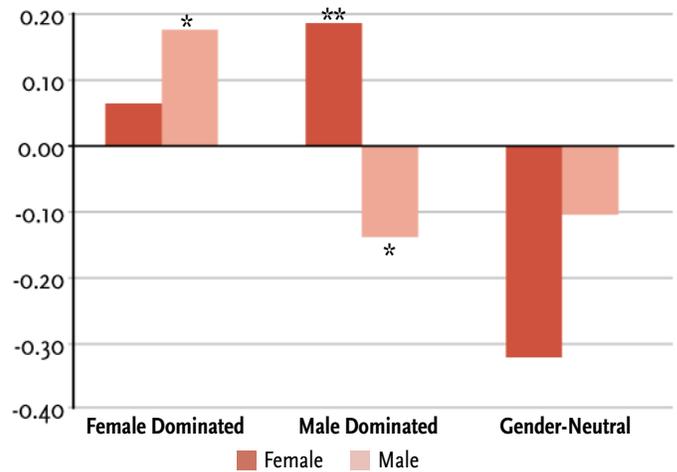
women to have children and providing services that allow women with children to continue to advance in their field.

In economics, providing role models for female undergraduate students is still a struggle due to the low production of female PhDs in economics. As seen in Figure 1, there has been some improvement in this area, with the percent of PhDs in economics awarded to women increasing from less than 30 percent to 35 percent over the last decade. But regardless, the pool from which to pull role models is not huge, adding further to the difficulty of finding viable role models.

Despite a heavy policy focus on providing female role models for undergraduate students in traditionally male-dominated fields, economic research has thus far found only limited evidence to suggest that these policies will be effective. In a recent study, I examined this question using data from an elite liberal arts college. The students in the sample, both male and female, took classes from faculty members new to the institution and who therefore were not listed by name in the class bulletins given to students when they enrolled for classes. As a result, when students were registering for classes, they did not know the gender of the faculty member. Looking within department and course level, this assignment mechanism comes close to a random assignment of female and male students to female and male instructors. I then examined whether having a same-gender faculty member influenced students' decisions to take subsequent courses in the same department and their relative success in those courses. The role-model hypothesis suggests that same-gender instructors should increase interest in a subject, particularly in fields where that gender is underrepresented. To investigate this hypothesis, I examined female students' subsequent course-taking behavior and the grade earned in a course taken with a female instructor separately for departments that were either traditionally male-dominant (>60 percent of the majors were male historically), traditionally female-dominant or gender neutral.

I do not find evidence that having a same-gender instructor increases the probability that students take additional classes in a subject or ultimately major in that department for either males or females, regardless of the gender distribution in the department. This evidence, while consistent with the literature, flies in the face of the established role-model hypothesis and the anecdotal evidence that many of us can provide from our own experiences in a male-dominated field.

**Figure 2: Effect on Course Grade of Having a Same-Gender Instructor**



Note: \* indicates p-value<0.10; \*\* indicates p-value<0.05

So does this mean that policies focused on increasing the representation of female faculty members in fields where they are currently underrepresented are misdirected? Not necessarily. I also examined the grades earned in courses with same-gender faculty members (results shown in Figure 2). In a male-dominant department, female students taught by a female instructor, rather than the typical male instructor, earn grades that are 0.186 points higher on a 4.0 scale. This is a significant difference, meaning the difference between a B- and a B grade in the course, and an effect equal to that of an approximately 200 point increase in the student's SAT score. In female-dominant and gender-neutral departments, female students earn the same grades regardless of faculty gender. Interestingly, although much of the focus of the role-model hypothesis has been on female students in male-dominated fields, my results also indicate that male role models could play an important role in female-dominated fields. Male students taught by male instructors in female-dominant departments enjoy a similarly sized grade increase. Male students also appear to gain from female instructors in male-dominant fields, although not by as much as female students in these fields, further indicating the overall importance of increasing female faculty's presence in male-dominated fields.

Taken together, these results indicate that while role models may not significantly influence course and major choice on average, there are some strong grade benefits

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## Attracting More Women and Minorities into Economics

—Susan K. Feigenbaum, University of Missouri–St. Louis



Several years ago I was invited by the Director of the National Science Foundation’s (NSF) Undergraduate Course and Curriculum Development (UCCD) program to serve as a reviewer for social science grant proposals. A primary goal of this program was to broaden the population of students pursuing careers in science, mathematics and engineering to include traditionally underrepresented groups, specifically women and minorities. A secondary goal was to increase the numeracy skills of students, particularly those from underrepresented groups. As it turned out, there were a number of well-developed proposals from sociology and a few from anthropology, but only one from economics. The economics submission proposed to use the farming sector as the organizing framework for a principles of economics course. It did not get funded.

I knew that my University of Missouri–St. Louis (UMSL) colleagues—Professors Sharon Levin and Anne Winkler—and I could do better given our wealth of experience mentoring and nurturing our women undergraduates and minorities. Our review of the literature on learning confirmed what we already knew: (1) creating connections between new information and previously learned information is a key step toward meaningful learning, especially for women and minorities; (2) motivation is a critical variable in determining how much students learn; (3) student “buy-in” stems from the perceived usefulness of the material and its ease of application; and (4) interactive “hands-on” learning is more effective than passive “spectator” learning. Despite these generally accepted learning principles, the conventional introductory economics course continues to emphasize mathematical rigor and abstract models and rely largely on a lecture format.

An immediate issue that arises is that the current knowledge and prior experiences of students—especially women and minorities—are likely to deviate significantly from those of their (white, male) professors. This often leads to a disconnect between instructor and

student, with the teacher assuming the “obvious”—in terms of assumptions, background knowledge and context—to which students are likely to be oblivious. For women and minorities, this feeling of alienation may be aggravated by textbook examples that are irrelevant to them or present them in stereotypical ways. Moreover, our mix of traditional (first-time, full-time freshmen) and nontraditional students creates a wealth of life experiences that inform their perspectives on the relevance of course content.

Our goal was to design a principles of microeconomics course that would explore key concepts and analytic tools within the context of everyday economic and social problems that confront our students. Unlike “issues-oriented” introductory courses that often suffer from disjointedness and a lack of continuity and therefore fail to reinforce knowledge across topic areas, we proposed an overarching framework within which to teach principles: the lifecycle. Our proposal would be called *Introductory Microeconomics: The Way We Live*, loosely inspired by the 1983 National Book Award-winning volume written by Professor Victor Fuchs, entitled *How We Live*. Within this course structure, we would integrate exercises in numeracy as well as international issues and concerns. The UCCD panel was enthusiastic about the potential of this approach and we were funded on our first submission, one of the first (if not the first) economics proposals funded by the UCCD program.

Our first proposed course “module” offers insight into how we intended to pursue our objectives. Entitled “To Whom Do I Owe My Existence: The Economics of Fertility and Childbearing,” this module provided the context for introducing a whole host of economic concepts, including scarcity, tradeoffs, preferences, opportunity cost, maximization of well-being, marginalism, human capital, property rights and the law of demand. Our quantitative exercises included using Excel to graph fertility rates versus income, fertility versus infant mortality and educational attainment versus fertility. Our third module was entitled “Getting

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Married, Buying a Car: Basic Economic Choices,” which provided the framework for introducing household versus market production and supply and demand analysis. The numeracy exercises included an Excel analysis of international cross-sectional and U.S. historical data to shed light on the relationship between age of first marriage and women’s educational attainment. Suffice it to say, when we began teaching these modules, several students each semester would remark that they wished they had had the course prior to their recent marriage or divorce—what a vote of confidence for the relevance of the course materials!

We received similar comments throughout all of the modules, attesting to the fact that the course was catching students at their own points in the lifecycle. More traditional (first-time, fulltime) students were enticed by the modules on investing in human capital, choosing a major and finding a job. Part-time working students were attracted to the modules that addressed on-the-job versus formal education, wage determination and the retirement decision.

Upon reviewing the initial course materials, Professor Lydia Ortega (California State University-San Jose) characterized them as “inverted” when compared to then-current textbook approaches. What did she mean by that? I think she meant that our materials *first tell a story* about a fairly universal life decision/experience, and only after examining the specific economic considerations of this situation is a more general economic principle introduced. For example, a discussion about teenage pregnancy leads to generalizations about opportunity cost and the impact of changes in legal and social constraints (property rights) on these costs. The presentation of data on wage differentials by educational level, occupation, gender and race leads to generalizations about wage determination, discrimination and signaling in the labor market. Stories about marriages, divorces, prenuptial agreements and court verdicts lead to generalizations about household versus market production, bargaining and property rights. Perhaps the “inverse” nature of the material is most obvious in its physical layout: the “boxes” on each page contain the theoretical generalization, primarily in graphical form, while the body of the narrative contains the relevant life “story.” These stories are not relegated to end-of-chapter “case studies” or interjected almost as an after-thought after the presentation of a batch of new theories. Nor are these stories contrived, trivial examples but rather real-life examples drawn from our everyday lives.

How well did this new approach fare in terms of its stated objectives? The easiest goal to achieve was the development of numeracy skills: each student left the course with basic proficiency in the use of Excel to graph and manipulate data, along with the ability to interpret line and bar graphs and compute such statistics as growth rates and present value. This success depended crucially on the use of upper class “peer tutors,” especially for the larger lecture-hall sections of 140+ students.

What about our more ambitious goals related to attracting and retaining students, especially women and minorities? UMSL’s Office of Institutional Research reported that the sections of the course that used the new materials had substantially lower numbers of drops, Ds and Fs. These sections of the course also generated the bulk of new economics majors, converting approximately 10 percent of undeclared or undergraduate business majors. Of these newly declared economics majors, approximately 30 percent were women, about 10 percentage points less than the percentage of women in the class. We were less successful in terms of recruiting minorities into the major (though fewer dropped the course), gaining only one or two per cohort. Of course, these measures of success lack rigor and cannot be disentangled from the fact that all of the fulltime women faculty were teaching the new materials and all were highly rated teachers.

NSF is very big on dissemination. Having taught the new curriculum from start to finish several times in manuscript form (students had online access to the manuscript in lieu of a textbook), I was convinced that it could be translated into an innovative principles textbook. While my co-PIs returned to their academic research agendas, I decided to devote my time to making this happen (inasmuch as I was in the process of raising triplets and was chair of the department, my opportunity costs were quite low). Several publishers expressed interest, and I naively thought that after a couple of years I would be able to return to my own research interests. As it turned out, I spent almost five years from the date the contract was signed to the publication of the textbook by Freeman-Worth. What were some of the hurdles to be surmounted?

First, virtually all of the publishers said they would need a principles of macro book to bundle with the micro volume. To address this perceived limitation, I added Rik Hafer, then chair of the economics department at Southern Illinois University–Edwardsville, to the book proposal. He did an admirable job of producing a macro split that incorporated

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## On Being the Other in the Classroom: Confessions of an African-American Woman Economist

—Lisa Saunders, University of Massachusetts Amherst



When I began teaching economics in 1987, I pasted a bumper sticker on my file cabinet near the door that read “Assume Nothing.” My experiences as a graduate student and teaching assistant taught me that many people would react to my race and gender before even saying hello. My experiences as an undergraduate make me mindful of how it must feel to be different and to disassociate with the material in my courses.

As a student at a majority white institution, I was the only African-American woman in almost every college class I attended. While my late 1970s experience was by no means representative of all African-American female students at majority white institutions, then or since, it informs my take on the expectations realized and disappointed by many of our undergraduate students. I expected to keep my head down and do my work. I expected the (all) white male economic professors would not address economic problems of my community, and that their examples and problems would be based in European-American experience.

All but one professor in my undergraduate years were white men, and only one (in Sociology) ever mentioned race. Most, if not all, of the other students in my economics classes were white (mostly men). Afraid to raise my hand, I would slump behind a student seated in front of me. When called upon (this was rare), my face flushed, my palms sweated and my voice quivered. When I was assigned to group work with white males and females they refused to let me participate. This happened for an entire semester once, and the professor was not willing to intervene in any way or to grade my individual work. I did have two other professors who mentored me, to whom I will be eternally grateful. That was the 1970s. Ideally, none of our students should experience courses that way today.

In 2009–2010, black women earned 11.5 percent of degrees (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Digest of Statistics, Table 300.) That year 518 black women were awarded bachelor’s degrees in

economics (NCES, Women, Minorities and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering, Table 5-4). The total number of Bachelor of Arts degrees awarded to black women that year was 100,435. As noted elsewhere in this issue, women earned the majority of degrees at all levels in 2009–10 within each racial/ethnic group. Among U.S. residents, females earned 68 percent of associate’s degrees, 66 percent of bachelor’s degrees, 71 percent of master’s degrees and 65 percent of all doctoral degrees awarded to black students. (NCES, Fast Facts, 2012: <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=72>). To improve black women’s undergraduate representation in our field we need to be mindful of these statistics.

When we step into the classroom, we bring with us our hopes and expectations for the semester about the ideas we wish to share and the concepts we need to teach. We also bring a number of mandates from our institutions: to use more team-based learning strategies, to help students with their written and verbal communications skills and so on. Psychologists say we also bring associations, memories and perceptions that can unconsciously influence the choices we make and the ways we respond to specific students. Of course, our students arrive with associations, memories and perceptions of their own. Studying women and girls in STEM fields, psychologist Nilanjana Dasgupta finds a relationship between the gender of instructors (or projection of gendered images) and a student’s ability to associate with the discipline, grade expectations and performance. (The Swarthmore wiki link below has the citations for a few of Dasgupta’s research papers on this topic.) This means underrepresented members of each class are not able to see themselves as successful economics students.

I am not proposing we give special help to individual students or groups. I am offering a few specific ways to enhance the learning experience for all, by teaching with diversity in mind. There are many relevant questions we need to think about as instructors if we are to help all our students develop an interest in economics

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and prepare for subsequent courses. What do students expect from our courses? Have they had an economics course before? Which of the topics most intimidate them? Have they had the prerequisites and retained the necessary material? What have they heard about the instructor? Have they had a professor of this particular race/ethnicity and/or gender in an economics class before? Will they feel comfortable participating, given how they might differ from the instructor and other students? If the student has a disability, what are her/his expectations about the professor's willingness to accommodate them and adhere to confidentiality requirements?

*... a few simple changes can make economics more inviting and accessible to a diverse cadre of students.*

Given the voluminous job requirements of the professoriate, rethinking how we teach our courses might seem daunting. However, many of the strategies developed to reach diverse learning styles are available online, and a few simple changes can make economics more inviting and accessible to a diverse cadre of students. Over the last few decades, scholars in education and in psychology have developed and tested best practices for accommodating diverse learning styles. The CSWEP web site has a mentoring section that provides some helpful ideas at <http://www.aeaweb.org/committees/cswep/mentoring/reading.php>. Amanda Bayer, an economist at Swarthmore, has developed and hosts a wiki that describes how racial bias affects teaching and learning, and demonstrates pedagogical strategies to help instructors reach and retain students from diverse race and ethnic backgrounds, see: [http://wikis.swarthmore.edu/div\\_econ/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://wikis.swarthmore.edu/div_econ/index.php/Main_Page). A webinar on race and the economics classroom by Cecilia Conrad is also publicly available by visiting <http://serc.carleton.edu/econ/2yc/index.html>.

Perhaps more important than learning-style differences are the differences among students in what they believe are relevant topics and how they should be weighted. As instructors, we can develop an understanding in students about what needs to be examined while also building a sense of community. We can do this by developing examples and problems they will find relevant and by attending

carefully to the language we use. Elsewhere in this issue Susan Feigenbaum provides examples largely focused on women. It would be useful to enhance her approach using class, race, ethnicity and culture-specific examples.

I address class early and often in introductory and intermediate microeconomics. For example, condoms are a product that can be a necessity in some communities and a luxury in others (for economic reasons, but also due to differences in power). I tell stories about market participants treating racial and ethnic groups (and ethnic goods) differently. For example, black homeowners are advised by realtors to remove family photos and ethnic art or else expect lower offers on the homes they wish to sell. I follow such stories with questions about the assumptions goods and service providers are making about the preferences, tastes and incomes of "other" market participants. Teachers of macroeconomics might cite the stratification research by Stephanie Seguino and James Heintz published in the *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* (2012) showing that seemingly neutral Federal Reserve policies have differential effects by race and gender. In macroeconomics and topics courses, news and current events provide ample material for demonstrating course ideas in a timely and relevant fashion.

By adapting some of the ways we present economic concepts, theories and outcomes, we are acknowledging the representation of diverse students in our classrooms. When we document how economic outcomes differ by race/ethnicity, gender and nationality, we are representing their diversity in the economy. This can be eye opening and empowering for students. Since it is not my style to assume anything about the politics and preferences of our students, I find it useful to use published polling data to start discussions or debates about ideas and policy. I've found these and other strategies generate more questions, more rigorous investigations and discussions—and a greater sense of belonging in the conversation. From my point of view, it makes teaching economics more rewarding than other approaches that I've tried.

I think that it is only fair that I assume nothing about my students. Each new term I look forward to finding out about them and what they think about the economy and about how economists portray it. I try to learn how they learn best, and use that knowledge to make economics as welcoming and attractive to them as I know how. Rather than teaching to the choir, I think of myself as teaching to the "other." ■

## Notes on Women and the Economics Undergraduate Major continued from page 15

UCLA and Rice are also doing far better than average using this metric. Yet in all cases women are shying away from economics relative to men.

### Possible Causes of the Relative Lack of Female Economics Majors

Why do females shy away from economics relative to males? Two of the big contenders—math and mentors (or role models)—do not appear to have much power in several recent empirical studies examining women and the economics concentrator (see the piece by Amanda Griffith in this issue). Role models and mentors deserve more attention. But because the low level of women in economics is ubiquitous it would appear that the causes are more systemic. Even many all-female institutions face difficulties—the mean fraction of BAs in economics for women’s liberal arts colleges is not much higher than for coeducational liberal arts colleges. However, Wellesley College is a good case of an institution that has had an abundance of female mentors and where economics has historically attracted a high fraction of its BAs.

Math would appear to be less of an issue because female high school students do well at math for the levels needed in economics. Furthermore, psychology has become more demanding of quantitative abilities, yet women have increased their numbers in that major. So what is keeping women away from economics?

One area to investigate is what is taught in our principles courses, how it is taught (see the piece by Lisa Saunders in this issue) and what is contained in principles textbooks (see the piece by Susan Feigenbaum in this issue). Is economics presented as less of a “people-oriented” subject in elementary and upper-level theory courses? (See Maria Zhu’s piece in this issue.) Do freshmen women enter principles with an open mind to concentrate in economics but fall out with their first economics course or with the intermediate courses, or do females disproportionately not want to concentrate in economics when they apply to college? These are some of the next steps in understanding the relative absence of women in economics.

The most important next step is to get your feedback. If you are reading this issue of the *CSWEP Newsletter* you have already made it way beyond principles and intermediate theory and have bought into economics as a way of thinking. So talk to your undergraduates, especially those who are making choices about their major. Ask women

what factors are entering their decisions; ask the men as well. Figure out what to advise the “marketing team” about how to sell economics to women without turning off men. Then send the insights to me at [cgoldin@harvard.edu](mailto:cgoldin@harvard.edu) or contribute to the discussion on the related CSWEP Forum Page: <http://www.aeaweb.org/to/gold>. The “marketing team” thanks you in advance. ■

Notes and Sources: IPEDS institutional data on completions. “All BA” is all BA-granting institutions that could award a BA in economics in the given year. “Top 100 University” is the top 100 universities designated by *U.S. News & World Report*. “Top University Public” is the same for publicly controlled institutions, and “Top University Private” is the same for private. “Top 100 Liberal Arts Colleges” is the *U.S. News & World Report* top 100 liberal arts colleges in the United States. Data are weighted by the number of BAs by gender. Figure 2 is Figure 1 Part B divided by Figure 1 Part A.

### Nominations Sought

#### 2013 Carolyn Shaw Bell Award

The Carolyn Shaw Bell Award was created in January 1998 as part of the 25th Anniversary celebration of the founding of CSWEP. Carolyn Shaw Bell, the Katharine Coman Chair Professor Emerita of Wellesley College, was the first Chair of CSWEP. To read a short biography of Carolyn Shaw Bell, see our [Winter 2005 Newsletter](#).

The “Bell Award” is given annually to an individual who has furthered the status of women in the economics profession, through example, achievements, increasing our understanding of how women can advance in the economics profession, or mentoring others.

All nominations should include a nomination letter, updated CV and two or more supporting letters, preferably at least one from a mentee. As this award celebrates mentoring, nomination letters should be geared toward that activity, rather than toward academic achievements. Also note that all nominations are automatically kept alive for consideration by the Award Committee for a period of three years.

Inquiries and nominations may be sent to:

Marjorie B. McElroy  
CSWEP Chair  
Professor of Economics  
Department of Economics  
Duke University, Box 90097  
Durham, NC 27708-0097  
[cswep@econ.duke.edu](mailto:cswep@econ.duke.edu)

**This year’s nomination deadline: September 15, 2013.**

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## The Importance of Role Models continued from page 10

from same-gender role models, which could be particularly important for female students in economics. For example, research by Kevin N. Rask and Jill Tiefenthaler published in the *Economics of Education Review* in 2008 shows that female economics majors are more sensitive to course grades received when choosing whether to take subsequent courses. Therefore, although I do not find a direct effect of role models on course interest, there may be an indirect effect through the grade received in the course.

The obvious next question these findings raise is why are these students receiving higher grades in classes from same-gender instructors in fields where their gender is underrepresented? A knee-jerk answer is that faculty members in these fields grade students of the same gender more leniently to encourage them to continue. However, other results I show in the paper indicate that it's unlikely this is the case, suggesting instead that there is more learning in these classes (see also Scott E. Carrell, Marianne E. Page and James W. West's article published in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics* in 2010). It shouldn't be surprising that many female students in male-dominated departments like economics may learn more effectively from a female role model. The students may be more willing to attend office hours and make investments to better understand the material they are asked to learn. Another possibility is that women who teach women in male-dominated subjects proactively choose examples that appeal to women, improving their academic performance. Similarly, male

students in female-dominated fields like English might also benefit from these things.

There is still a lot more for us to study in this area. How do role models affect student interest after college? Are female students more likely to continue on to graduate school in economics if they are exposed to a female role model in college? Are female role models in high school more important in forming female students' preferences for college major? These questions are important and their answers will help inform future policy.

However, it is clear from my work and related studies that there is a very important role for female faculty members to play in economics and STEM fields. To promote the success of female undergraduates in the major, departments need to have more women on the faculty. Programs like ADVANCE are important catalysts in starting the cycle of providing women with strong role models at the front of their classrooms. Female students in economics and STEM courses at our colleges and universities will benefit from continued progress in producing female role models in these fields. Having already chosen to enter academia in economics, we should all do our part to serve as role models to the current generation of undergraduate economics students.

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Note: This article references findings from the author's working paper currently under review, "Faculty Gender in the College Classroom: Does It Matter for Achievement and Major Choice?"

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## Attracting More Women and Minorities continued from page 12

much of the flavor of my volume. For example, he built on my focus on human capital and property rights in his discussion of economic growth.

Second, while outside reviewers uniformly lauded the book's writing style, the male reviewers overwhelmingly clamored for (1) more coverage of traditional topics, particularly oligopoly; (2) *less* emphasis on lifecycle applications, particularly in the areas of fertility and investment in children; and (3) a more traditional organization. In contrast, the vast majority of women reviewers liked the lifecycle approach but thought that some of the technical rigor was unnecessary and wondered whether the new organizational structure could work.

I was fortunate to have a textbook acquisitions editor who understood the importance of the new approach and agreed to preserve the bulk of the innovations. However, in the end,

the outside reviewers were successful in ridding the book of its lifecycle framework of organization, leaving this material to be integrated into a broader set of economic applications. Nevertheless, the book (which was first published in the spring of 2012) is the only principles book available that addresses much of this subject matter, whether it is fertility, household versus market production, marriage and divorce, composition of the household and investment in children, human trafficking or investment in human capital.

As I complete my 35th year in the classroom, I remain convinced that economic learning—especially at the principles level—always begins with a *story* that entices the student. And what stories could be more enticing than those that reflect the very decisions that our students face in their everyday lives? ■

## Letter from the Chair continued from page 2

which she partnered with Jane Loeb, a statistician from the Educational Psychology Department) that examined the salaries of women on the Urbana–Champaign campus, ultimately published in Alice Rossi and Ann Calderwood’s book, *Academic Women on the Move*. Then, as she quipped in a 1998 interview,<sup>1</sup> “the appetite came with the eating,” and Ferber went on to publish numerous books and papers on the subject, served as a member of CSWEP’s Board from 1978–1980, was a founder and President of the International Association for Feminist Economics in the 1990s, and co-authored (with Francine Blau and Anne Winkler) *The Economics of Women, Men and Work*, the standard textbook for courses on women in the economy, now in its 6th Edition. In 2001 Ferber was a co-recipient of the Carolyn Shaw Bell Award (with Francine Blau) and nomination letters cited her as a wonderful example to students for decades; a teacher and researcher who followed her heart; and a collaborator, not a competitor. In 2011, CSWEP sponsored a session in honor of Ferber at the Midwest Economics Association Meeting, titled “Perspectives on Gender and Family,” which was covered in the [Spring 2011 Newsletter](#). CSWEP plans to honor the life and work of Ferber in our upcoming Winter 2014 *Newsletter* with remembrances from colleagues including Anne Winkler and Francine Blau.

### CSWEP Business

Congratulations are in order to CSWEP Board Member Cecilia Conrad on her recent appointment as Director of

1 An Interview with Marianne Ferber: founding feminist economist, *Review of Political Economy*, Volume 11, Number 1, 1999, pp. 83–98.

the MacArthur Fellows Program. Conrad comes to the appointment from her 16-year tenure at Pomona College, where she served as Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College. [The MacArthur Fellows Program](#) sponsors ample fellowships that aim to enable recipients to exercise their own creative instincts for the benefit of human society. We wish her well in this exciting new endeavor and happily note that she will continue to serve on the CSWEP Board!

CSWEP committees are currently working on final selections of 24 papers for the 2014 AEA Meetings in Philadelphia, with three sessions on economics of gender and three on structural econometrics. A *Call for Papers* for the 2015 AEA Meetings in Boston can be found in this issue of the *Newsletter*. Provided a paper has at least one female author, submission is open to all. We particularly encourage submissions from women in the early years of their careers.

In closing, I extend a request from CSWEP for your ideas and feedback; and if you want to work with CSWEP in any capacity, by all means let us know.

As always, we are also interested in learning about you. Send to us announcements of honors, awards and grants received, promotions or tenure decisions, and new appointments. It will be our pleasure to fill the next edition of our brag box. Correspondence can be sent to [cswep@econ.duke.edu](mailto:cswep@econ.duke.edu).

I wish you a summer that brings, as ascribed to Anna Schwartz by her granddaughter, “A work-life balance of joy.”

—Marjorie McElroy ■

## Eckel Interview continued from page 1

program director for the National Science Foundation, editor of the *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* and director of the American National Election Studies Board of Overseers. Over the years she has been the recipient of numerous teaching awards and has directed a steady stream of PhD students. Known as a tireless advocate for the careers of women economists and described as “tenacious” in her commitment to mentoring the next generation of female economists, she has not only served as mentor to many, but also has served as a role model of effective mentoring. Professor Eckel has been unusually effective in helping women faculty network with each other. She was instrumental in bringing women into leadership positions at major economic organizations, including the Southern Economic Association and the Economic Science Association. Her research

agenda, which focuses in part on gender differences in decision making, has made important and lasting contributions to our understanding of social relationships.

***To begin, please tell us how you decided to become an economist, particularly an experimental economist.***

In high school the guidance counselors make you take those tests to see what career you should choose, and mine always came up engineering. But I wanted to be an actress. After one year in theatre school I realized I was never going to be self-supporting as an actress. So, I looked for another line of work. I dropped out of school and started a small photography business and did photo spreads of fancy houses. I soon realized I needed some training if I was to develop a successful business. So I entered the undergraduate business program at Virginia

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Commonwealth University. The only problem was that I didn't exactly enjoy my business courses, except economics, which I loved. I had always been something of an activist, and economics gave me a way to think about hard problems with a cool approach.

During my junior year in college, one of my economics professors handed me back an exam and said, looking me in the eye, "You could do a PhD." The thought had never crossed my mind. I applied and was accepted by the University of Chicago, Brown and the University of Virginia. Virginia won the (quite enjoyable) bidding war.

Even though UVA later became a center for experimental economics, it was not at the time. I studied Industrial Organization (IO) with Roger Sherman and spent my early career at the University of British Columbia and Virginia Tech working on regulation and mixed enterprise. (Perhaps it was prophetic that Roger's dissertation was one of the early experimental tests of oligopoly theory.) My first twelve published papers (seven in journals and five book chapters), and all but one of the papers in my tenure packet at Virginia Tech, were in IO.

Roger mentioned experiments in his courses, but when Charlie Holt visited Virginia in my second year, he taught about experimental economics in his game theory course. (This was 1979, and Virginia didn't yet have a game theory course.) Several years later we met up again at a conference and began to work on what became my first experimental paper: Eckel and Holt, "Strategic Voting in Agenda-Controlled Committee Experiments," *American Economic Review* 79(4):763-773, September 1989.

Charlie has been an important mentor and friend. In my first trip to a conference (we all went down to New Orleans on the Southern Crescent Train), Charlie got me a spot as a discussant of Palfrey and Plott's famous asset market paper, which grew out of Palfrey's dissertation, at the Southern Economics Association meeting. (If you look, you will see that they thank "Katherine Echol.") Not only did he get me on the program, he read the paper with me and helped me prepare my discussant comments. He then took me around and introduced me to all the important people at the Southern meetings. He later introduced me to the department head at the University of British Columbia, where I landed my first job. Years later, just as my tenure packet was about to be sent out to the references, our strategic voting paper was accepted by the *AER*. We pulled all the packages out of the mailbox and hastily redid the tenure packet. Thanks to my fantastic coauthors and a terrific sabbatical at the University of Arizona with Vernon Smith, I gradually built up my experimental publication list until I stopped working in IO altogether.

### ***What do you consider your best work and why?***

My most cited work is the gender experimental research, which was initiated by Phil Grossman. This work was very hard to publish, but it got us invited to a life-changing conference in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1992. There I met you (Betsy Hoffman) and many of the current and future leaders in experimental economics (Charlie Plott, Vernon Smith, Werner Guth, John Kagel, Dan Levin, and Ernst Fehr and his entourage of graduate students, now all famous on their own). I'll never forget the sight of you sitting on the deck during that boat tour, surrounded by Europe's finest PhD students, hanging on your every word! I think at the time people just did not think that studying gender differences in the lab was interesting. One of our most memorable referee reports said that we should not study gender differences unless the "government was planning to manipulate the sex ratio in society." Lucky for us, we found an editor who disagreed. The work on gender and altruism developed into further projects on how charitable giving differs from typical economic interaction, which continue to occupy us.

Personally, the work I like best deals with the impact of social status on economic behavior. This project was the happy result of a missed flight. Sheryl Ball and I were on our way back to Blacksburg from a conference in Tucson, and ended up with six hours to kill in the airport, during which we designed the whole experiment. We got an NSF grant for the project (my first), and published it in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

I like to think that this body of experimental research, in part, helped lead to the recognition that context matters, and thus contributed in a small way to the development of behavioral economics.

***Talk about the seminar series for distinguished senior women economists you started at Virginia Tech. Do you think it was successful in changing your colleagues' views about women economists?***

When I was hired in 1983 I was one of two women in the department. I became the second woman to be tenured in the department in 1989 (the first was Carolyn Weaver, who left immediately for a policy position in DC). Starting in 1992, things really began to change when, over the objections of some of the more traditional members of the department, the head (Yannis Ioannides) hired five women over two years, two of them experimentalists: Sheryl Ball and Elaine Bennett, along with Kristin Butcher, Nancy Lutz and Anne Sibert. Suddenly we had a large enough group of women to have a critical mass. I organized Friday morning get-togethers at the local coffee roaster for the women faculty and PhD students, which

turned into a mutual mentoring group that I think we all benefitted from.

After an invitation to the Faculty Women's Association, which turned out to be tea with the faculty wives, I worked with other like-minded women at Virginia Tech to start a university women's group that focused on faculty: the Organization of Women Faculty. In the early '90s we were organizing workshops on "Tenure Strategies," "Saying No," "Planning for Full" and of course "Balancing Family and Work Life." I also proposed to the department chair that we invite senior economists to the department to give talks, including many senior women (yourself among them), to illustrate the variety and quality of their research. Each visitor gave two talks: one a regular research seminar, and a second for grad students and assistant professors where they discussed their own inspirations and challenges. The senior visitors had two purposes: one was to educate the faculty about experimental research, and the other to showcase women's contributions. Both were effective, I think. This series had a strong effect on the department and the women who participated. Some years later, I was asked to serve as an Advance Professor on Virginia Tech's engineering-led (but university-wide) NSF ADVANCE grant, designed to improve the status of women in STEM fields.

***Talk about how you got the NSF CSWEP program now called CeMENT started when you were a program director at NSF.***

Seeing firsthand the transformation of the economics department from a place with one tenure-track woman to a place with six; and getting to know the terrific women scholars who visited the department, really changed my ideas about women in economics. I began to do a lot of reading and to try to figure out what was different about the experience of women that would account for their difficulty advancing in the profession. I wondered if lack of mentoring made a difference. It seemed that there were many small barriers to effective mentoring of women while men unconsciously received lots of informal mentoring from their teachers and colleagues. I really think that people are just a little more likely to mentor someone who reminds them of themselves, and let's face it, this made a woman's situation different. Women had to work to develop effective mentoring relationships while men were automatically mentored.

From 1996 to 1998 I had the wonderful opportunity to be a Program Director in Economics at NSF, working for Dan Newlon and overlapping for a couple of months with the outgoing program officer Barbara Fraumeni. Barbara had been talking with Robin Bartlett and others at CSWEP about the idea of working with CSWEP to write a grant proposal for a mentoring workshop that would be

sponsored jointly by NSF and CSWEP. They enlisted my support. We proposed the idea to Dan, who was focused on the problem at NSF that so few women even applied for grants. He rejected our idea, thinking that incentives were the problem: he wanted to give small, \$5000 grants to women to prepare proposals. This led to much discussion. We tried repeatedly to convince him, trotting out all the social science then at our disposal. One day we trailed him down the elevator at NSF, making a great impression on his parents who were waiting to take him to dinner. "Dan," they said, "is it always like this?" Finally he relented and said that if we could get matching money from another NSF program he would consider it. So, we approached the program director for the Program for Women and Girls, who was wonderfully supportive about the idea. At that point, Dan had to provide his promised match and the CCOFFE (Creating Career Opportunities for Female Economists) workshop was born.

In the first round we did not do random assignment, but we did our best to create a control group by asking the participants to name a male and a female economist who they thought were "like them." We recruited junior and senior economists to participate and tried to match them by interest into groups. Dan Newlon used the power of the NSF to persuade several of the senior mentors to participate, but in the end everyone found it a worthwhile—indeed exciting—experience. While we could not tell definitively, the data we had from the workshop participants and the paired controls showed the women who participated made faster progress towards tenure and promotion to full professor than the controls, with more publications, grants, conference participation, etc. It was not until the CeMENT workshops a decade later, which included random assignment of applicants into "treatment" and "control" groups, that the data could show conclusively that mentoring makes a significant difference in objective measures of professional progress. I feel a great sense of pride in playing a part in setting that process in motion.

***What do you find satisfying about mentoring junior women economists? Do you think doing this has helped or hurt your career?***

I can't help it, the mentoring. It is part of my job, and I like to do it. The women I have met through mentoring have become my most loved and admired colleagues and friends. And in the long run they mentor me at least as much as I mentor them. It has been helpful for both my career and my life to work with so many wonderful women.

Mentoring may have gotten a bad name lately. Younger women may feel that the battles have been fought and

continued on next page

## Eckel Interview continued from page 19

finished and that to “need” a mentor is a sign of weakness. But the data are clear that mentoring makes a significant difference. We do need each other as women, just as men need the kind of networks that keep them moving through life and their professions. We need to work together across institutions since there may not always be enough senior women at any one institution.

*You just moved to an endowed chair position at Texas A&M. Talk about that decision.*

Moving to Texas A&M University was a difficult decision. I was happy at UT Dallas, where I had built a great lab and network of grad students and faculty, and I had no intention of moving, but they recruited me so convincingly! It’s nice to be in a big department with many assistant professors, strong research support and wonderful leadership. The department has been just great. Several of my students came along for the move, but I do miss my colleagues and friends at UT Dallas.

*You have probably done more to further the careers of women in economics than almost anyone else in the field. We thank you for that important work. Is there anything you would like to add?*

Oh, Betsy, that would be you! I have to say I am just delighted to receive the Carolyn Shaw Bell award. It is a great honor, and I am so grateful to you, Yan Chen and all of the wonderful women who wrote letters in support of my nomination. Thank you! ■

### Help Support CSWEP’s Mission

#### Call for CSWEP Contact Persons

Dissemination of information—including notice of mentoring events, new editions of the CSWEP *Newsletter* and reporting requests for our Annual Survey and Questionnaire—is an important charge of CSWEP. For this key task, we need your help. CSWEP is seeking to identify individuals who would be willing to regularly forward CSWEP information to colleagues and other interested persons. If you would be willing to serve in this capacity, please send an e-mail with your contact information to:

[cswep@econ.duke.edu](mailto:cswep@econ.duke.edu)

Thank you in advance for your support of CSWEP!

## BRAG BOX

*“We need every day to herald some woman’s achievements . . . go ahead and boast!”*

—Carolyn Shaw Bell

**Sandy Black**, professor of economics at the University of Texas at Austin; **Marianne Page**, professor of economics at the University of California, Davis; and **Kathryn L. Shaw**, the Ernest C. Arbuckle Professor of Economics at the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University were elected to the Executive Board of the Society of Labor Economists.

**Rebecca M. Blank** was appointed Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

**Janet Currie**, the Henry Putnam Professor of Economics and Public Affairs at Princeton University, was elected Vice President of the Society of Labor Economists.

**Shataksh Dhongde** was awarded the CETL/BP Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence Award by the Georgia Institute of Technology.

**Luciana Echazu** was awarded tenure and promoted to Associate Professor of Economics and Financial Studies at Clarkson University.

**Xiaoshu Han** was awarded tenure and promoted to Associate Professor of Economics at University of Mount Union.

**Hilary Hoynes** will become the Haas Distinguished Chair in Economic Disparities at the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley. Hoynes is also co-editor of the *American Economic Review*.

**Jennifer Hunt**, professor of economics at Rutgers University, was appointed Chief Economist at the U.S. Department of Labor. Hunt and **Marjolaine Gauthier-Loiselle’s** article, “How Much Does Immigration Boost Innovation?” won the 2013 Best Paper Prize for the *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics*.

**Sara LaLumia** was awarded tenure and promoted to Associate Professor of Economics at Williams College.

**Kalina B. Manova**, assistant professor of economics at Stanford University, won a Hoover Institution National Fellowship and received the Excellence Award in Global Economic Affairs, awarded by the Kiel Institute for World Economy to young economists who have made significant contributions to the study of globalization.

**Ellen R. McGrattan**, monetary advisor at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, was elected a Fellow of the Econometric Society.

**Alice M. Rivlin**, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, was selected as the 2013 recipient of the Robert M. Ball Award for Outstanding Achievements in Social Insurance awarded by the National Academy of Social Insurance.

**Nancy L. Rose**, the Charles P. Kindleberger Professor of Applied Economics at MIT, was elected Vice-President of the American Economic Association.

**Michele Tertilt**, professor of economics at the University of Mannheim, was awarded a five-year ERC Grant for her research on Gender Differences and the Macroeconomy.

**Ranjini Thaver** was promoted to Professor of Economics at Stetson University.

**Heidi Williams**, assistant professor of economics at MIT, was awarded an NSF CAREER Grant for her research on technological change in health care markets.

**Velma Zahirovic-Herbert** was awarded tenure and promoted to Associate Professor of Housing and Consumer Economics at the University of Georgia.

# Top 10 Tips on Hosting a Visiting Speaker

*Joni Hersch, Vanderbilt University*

You have been given the honor of inviting and hosting visiting speakers for your department. Congratulations! Here are some practical tips to help make the visit a success:

1. Who to invite? This is a great opportunity to meet or get better acquainted with established people in your research area whose work you admire. Do not hesitate to invite people you do not already know, and especially invite women to be speakers.
2. Give information about basic transportation and scheduling logistics in your invitation. This will help your potential visitor to decide easily whether a visit is feasible given her teaching schedule and other time commitments. Check flight schedules in advance so you can let your visitor know whether it is feasible to arrive the day of the talk or to leave after the talk, given the time and day of the seminar, the meals you hope to have with your visitor, and your knowledge of traffic patterns and airport congestion.
3. Let your visitor know how long she has for her talk and the likely audience composition. Although 1.5 hours is common, it varies. The audience may also vary from primarily faculty to primarily graduate students and may include those in other departments across campus or undergraduates. Even if the content of the talk would not change, this may help your visitor decide which of her papers would be best to present to that audience.
4. Give your visitor specific dates for providing her paper title and for providing the actual paper.
5. Ask for permission before posting the visitor's paper to an unrestricted website. Better still, set up a system so that access to the visitor's paper is restricted to your department. Speakers frequently do not want early versions of working papers to be widely accessible. Other reasons to restrict access to your visitor's working paper: some journals require embargoes before publication or will not consider papers that have been widely circulated (especially medical journals such as *JAMA*), and some publishers require removal of working paper versions of papers once they've been published.
6. If there is more than one airport in your area, suggest suitable airport/airline combinations. This is especially true if your local airport has limited service and it is common to drive from the larger airport in the area. (For instance: Kansas City to Manhattan, KS; Denver to Laramie, WY.)
7. Let your visitor know what expenses you will cover, who makes reservations for travel arrangements, and how the billing will work. If the hotel is billing your department directly, let your visitor know this. It is not always obvious to hotel reception and can cause confusion at checkout. Do you cover rental cars? Does she need itemized receipts for meals?
8. Give your visitor instructions for or assistance with ground transportation going in both directions. If you recommend a taxi, give information about how long the trip usually takes based on your knowledge of traffic patterns. Because taxi service can be unreliable early in the morning and during rush hours, provide your visitor with a list of taxi companies with a good track record, or arrange for a reliable car service.
9. Do what you can to make this an exciting and productive experience for your visitor. Ask your visitor what time of day (in your time zone) that she wants to start. Set up meetings and meals, but don't feel that you need to fill every minute of the day. In fact, be sure to schedule in some breaks for restroom, coffee and checking email. Ask if there is anyone whom the visitor would particularly like to see. Send a schedule at least three days in advance, even if the schedule is incomplete or subject to change. Include names and some information about everyone on the schedule (especially for meetings with graduate students, visiting faculty members or faculty from a different department, as this information may not be on your department's website). Obtain your visitor's cell phone number in advance (and it is a good idea to give the visitor a host's cell phone number).
10. And, finally, if your visitor is a woman, try to schedule a separate meeting with the women faculty and students. This is always my favorite part of any campus visit.

## Annual and Regional Meetings

### CSWEP Sessions at the Western Economic Association 88th Annual Conference

*June 28–July 2, 2013  
Grand Hyatt, Seattle, WA*

#### Panel: Flipping, Clicking and Other Contortions to Make Your Classes More Interactive

*Chair:* Jennifer Imazeki, San Diego State University

*Participants:*

Mary Flannery, *University of Notre Dame*  
Jennifer Imazeki, *San Diego State University*  
Brandon Sheridan, *North Central College*  
Steven Slezak, *Cal Poly San Luis Obispo*

## Calls for Papers and Abstracts

### Eastern Economic Association Meeting Call for Papers

*March 14–16, 2014  
Boston Park Plaza, Boston, MA*

CSWEP will sponsor a number of sessions at the annual meeting of the Eastern Economic Association. Sessions are available for persons submitting an entire session (3 or 4 papers) or a complete panel on a specific topic in any area in economics. The organizer should prepare a proposal for a panel (including chair and participants) or session (including chair, abstracts and discussants) and submit by e-mail before **October 15, 2013**.

One or two additional sessions will be organized by the CSWEP Eastern Representative. Abstracts for papers in the topic areas of **gender, health economics, labor economics and innovation** are particularly solicited, but abstracts in other areas will also be accepted by e-mail by **October 15, 2013**. Abstracts should be approximately one page in length and include paper title, names of authors, affiliation and rank, and e-mail contact information as well as mailing address.

All information should be e-mailed to:

Dr. Amalia R. Miller, CSWEP Eastern Representative

Associate Professor  
University of Virginia  
P.O. Box 400182  
Charlottesville, VA 22904-4182  
Email: [armiller@virginia.edu](mailto:armiller@virginia.edu)  
Phone: (434) 924-6750

### Midwest Economics Association Meeting Call for Papers

*March 21–23, 2014  
Hilton Orrington, Evanston, IL*

CSWEP will sponsor up to two participant-organized sessions/panels at the 2014 Midwest Economics Association meeting. CSWEP will also organize one or two sessions on topics related to career development.

The deadline for submission of proposals to CSWEP is October 26, 2013.

**One or two sessions are available for persons submitting an entire session (3 or 4 papers) or a complete panel on a specific topic in any area of economics.** The organizer should prepare a proposal for a panel (including chair and participants) or complete session (including chair, abstracts and discussants) and submit by e-mail by **October 26, 2013**. Submissions should include all relevant details, including proposed session title and authors' institutional affiliations and e-mail addresses.

Note: Unlike past years, CSWEP/MEA is no longer accepting individual paper submissions; if you would like to present an individual paper at the MEA meetings, you need to submit your paper directly to the MEA (information is available at <http://web.grinnell.edu/mea/>).

**CSWEP will also organize one or two sessions on topics related to career development.** If you have specific suggestions regarding the topic to be covered, potential panelists or other aspects, please submit your ideas by e-mail by **October 26, 2013**.

Please submit your proposed sessions, panels and ideas by **October 26th** to:

Dr. Anne E. Winkler, CSWEP Midwest Rep  
Professor of Economics and Public Policy  
Administration  
University of Missouri–St. Louis  
Email: [awinkler@umsl.edu](mailto:awinkler@umsl.edu)

### American Economic Association Meetings Call for Papers

*January 2015 in Boston, MA*

CSWEP will sponsor sessions at the January 2015 American Economic Association meetings in Boston,

MA. We will be organizing three sessions on gender-related topics and three sessions on macroeconomics/international topics. Accepted papers will be considered for publication in the *Papers and Proceedings* issue of the *American Economic Review*.

Abstracts of individual papers and complete session proposals will be considered. Email a cover letter (specifying to which set of sessions the paper is being submitted) and a copy of a one- to two-page abstract (250–1000 words), clearly labeled with the paper title, authors' names, affiliation, and contact information (email, mailing address and phone number) for all of the authors by **March 1, 2014** to [cswep@econ.duke.edu](mailto:cswep@econ.duke.edu).

### Looking for advice on **publishing, teaching, tenure, grants, and work-life balance?**

**Check out the materials distributed at  
our CeMENT mentoring workshops,  
now online at**

[http://www.aeaweb.org/committees/  
cswep/mentoring/reading.php](http://www.aeaweb.org/committees/cswep/mentoring/reading.php)

### **CSWEP–DC Holds Successful Speed Mentoring Event**

Speed mentoring is a variation on speed dating. It is a face-to-face venue of quick introductions to connect people who share similar interests. The May 17, 2013, event brought together 27 graduate student and young professional mentees with 16 mid-career and senior economist mentors. Participants came from government, academia and international and non-profit organizations. Mentees came prepared to share a two-three minute introduction with mentors and were provided with guidelines on how to follow-up with the mentor who most closely matched their interests. After the speed mentoring session, participants continued conversations at a more leisurely pace over lunch. The event organizing committee was chaired by Susan Fleck, a manager and economist at the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and members included Maureen Doherty of BLS, Judy Yang of The World Bank, and Xiaotong Niu of the Congressional Budget Office.

### **What is CSWEP?**

CSWEP (the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession) is a standing committee of the American Economic Association charged with serving professional women economists in academia, government agencies and elsewhere by promoting their careers and monitoring their progress.

CSWEP activities endeavor to raise the awareness among men and women of the challenges that are unique to women's careers and can be addressed with a wide variety of actions, from inclusive searches to formal and informal mentoring activities. CSWEP freely disseminates information on how the profession works as well as advice to junior economists. We intend this information to be of value to all economists, male or female, minority or not.

Annually, CSWEP

- Organizes mentoring workshops, paper presentations sessions at the annual AEA Meetings, and professional development sessions at the annual meetings of the four regional economics associations (the Eastern, Mid-Western, Southern and Western);
- Conducts a survey and compiles a report on the gender composition of faculty and students in academic economics departments in the United States;
- Publishes three editions of the Newsletter, containing a feature section written by senior economists that highlights career advice or other topics of interest to the economics profession; and
- Awards the Carolyn Shaw Bell Award, given to a person for their outstanding work to promote the careers of women economists as well as the Elaine Bennett Research Prize, given biennially to a young woman economist for fundamental contributions to academic economics.

The CSWEP Board meets three times yearly. Our business meeting is held during the annual AEA Meetings and is open to all economists. It is a time for us to recognize our award recipients, present the Annual Report on Women in the Economics Profession and hear your input on CSWEP's activities. We encourage you to attend our business meeting or contact a Board Member directly to convey your ideas for furthering CSWEP's mission.

See our website at <http://www.cswep.org> for more information.



American Economic Association  
CSWEP  
c/o Marjorie McElroy, Chair  
Duke University, Box 90097  
Durham, NC 27708-0097

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## Upcoming Regional Meetings:

### Western Economics Association

<http://www.weainternational.org/>

88th Annual Conference, June 28–July 2, 2013  
Seattle, WA: Grand Hyatt

### Southern Economics Association

<http://www.southerneconomic.org/>

2013 Annual Conference, November 23–25, 2013  
Tampa, FL: Tampa Marriott and Waterside Hotel and Marina

### Eastern Economic Association

<http://www.ramapo.edu/eea/conference.html>

2014 Annual Meeting, March 14–16, 2014  
Boston, MA: Boston Park Plaza

### Midwest Economics Association

<http://web.grinell.edu/mea>

2014 Annual Meeting, March 21–23, 2014  
Evanston, IL: Hilton Orrington

## CSWEP Activities

As a standing committee of the American Economic Association since 1971, CSWEP undertakes activities to monitor and improve the position of women in the economics profession, including: an annual survey and report on the gender composition of faculty and students in U.S. academic departments, internships with the Summer Fellows Program, mentoring opportunities through CeMENT and the Joan Haworth Mentoring Fund, recognition of women in the field with the Carolyn Shaw Bell Award and the Elaine Bennett Research Prize, support of regional and annual meetings, organizing paper sessions and creating networking opportunities.