

Women in Economics: Stalled Progress

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Economics has diversity issues.

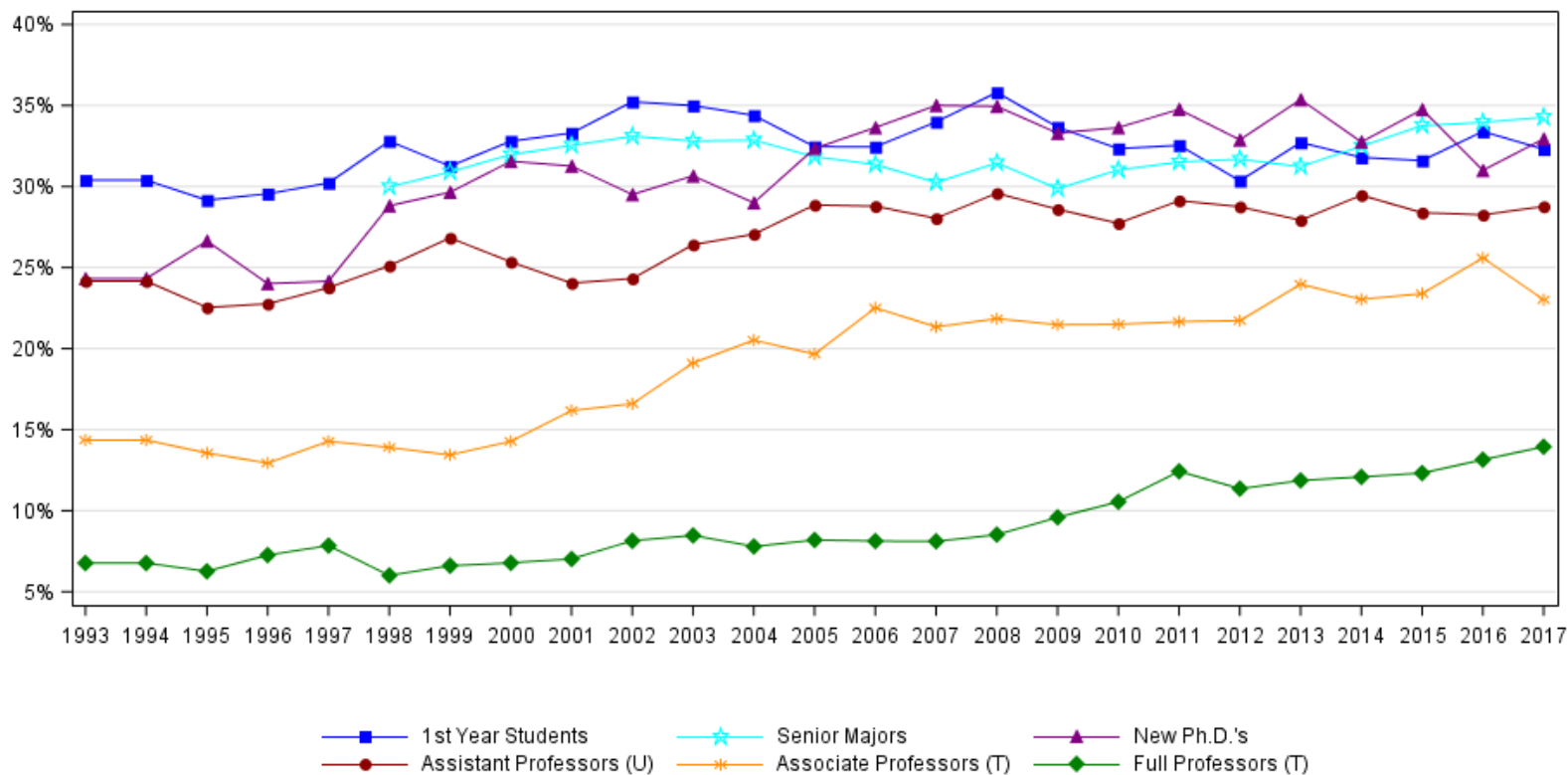
Stalled Progress for Women in Economics

- The representation of women in economics in the US among undergraduate majors, graduate students, and junior faculty has been flat (or decreasing) for 15-20 years.
- Women have done worse in economics than other STEM fields (i.e. it's not just about math or babies).
- Increasing evidence of distinct barriers to women, esp. at the tenure stage.

Proportion female: Faculty and students at PhD-granting departments

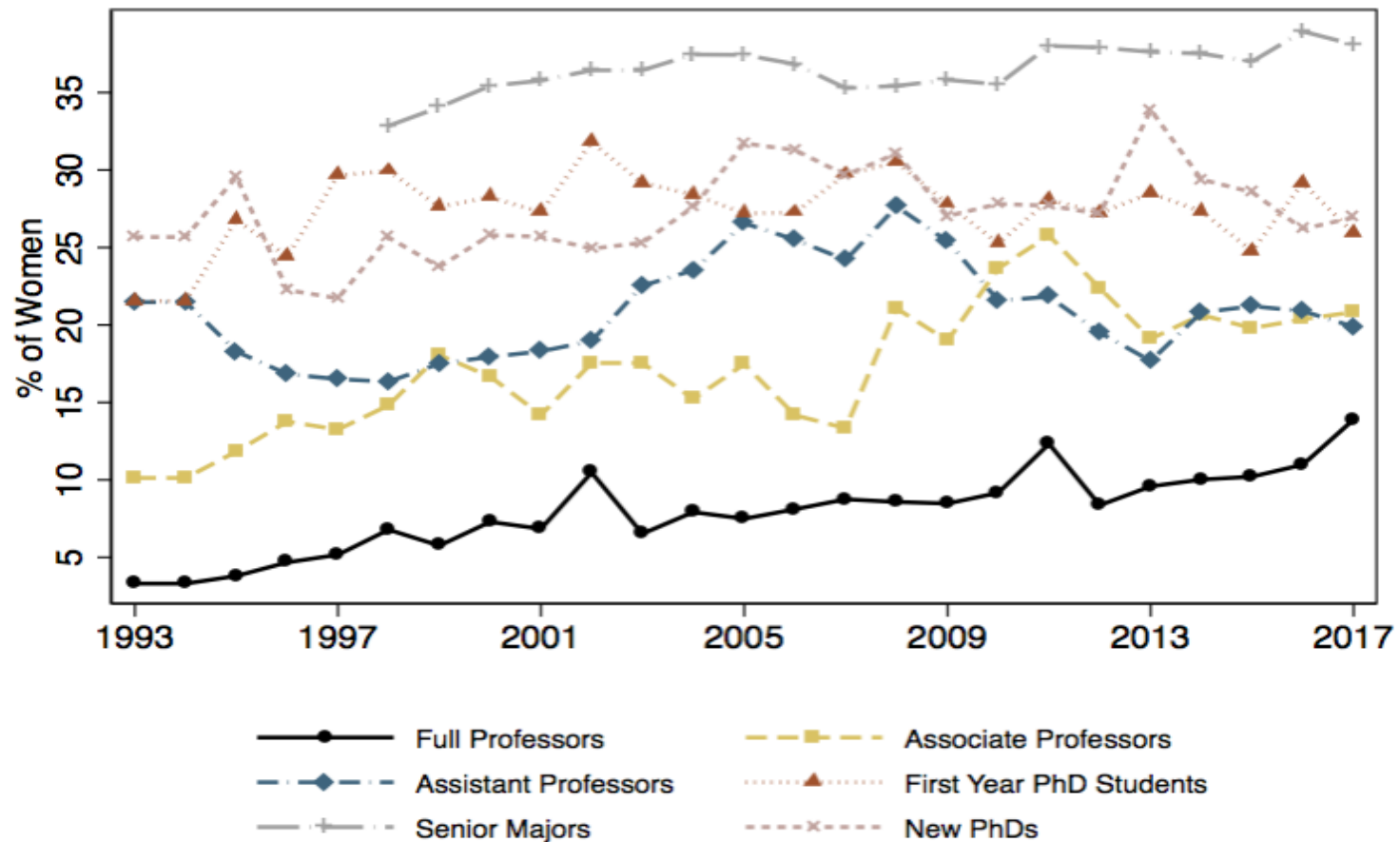
(CSWEP Annual Report 2017)

Figure 1. Pipeline for Departments with Doctoral Programs:
Percent of Doctoral Students and Faculty who are Women, 1993-2017

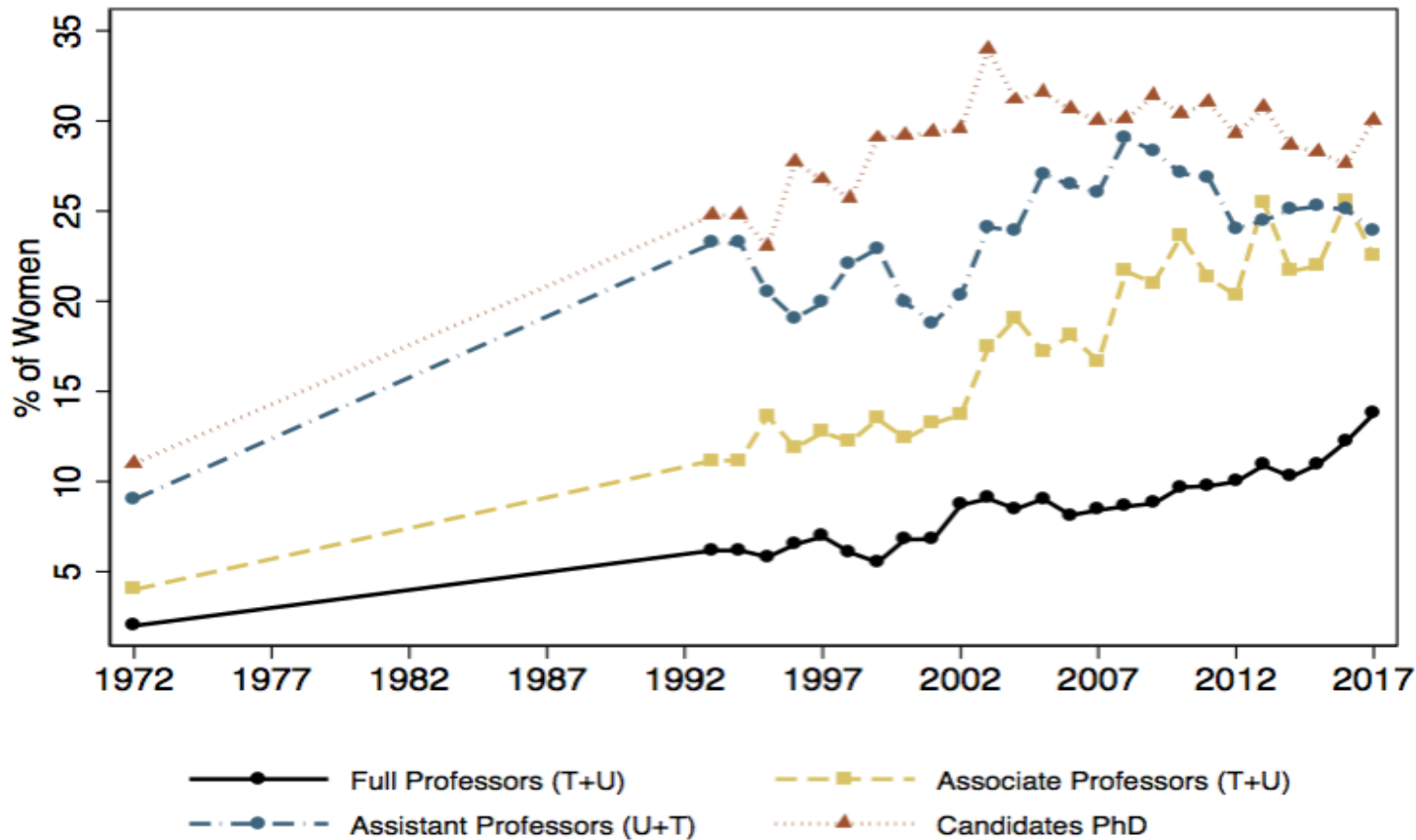


Proportion female: Faculty and students at top 20 departments

(Lundberg & Stearns, 2018)



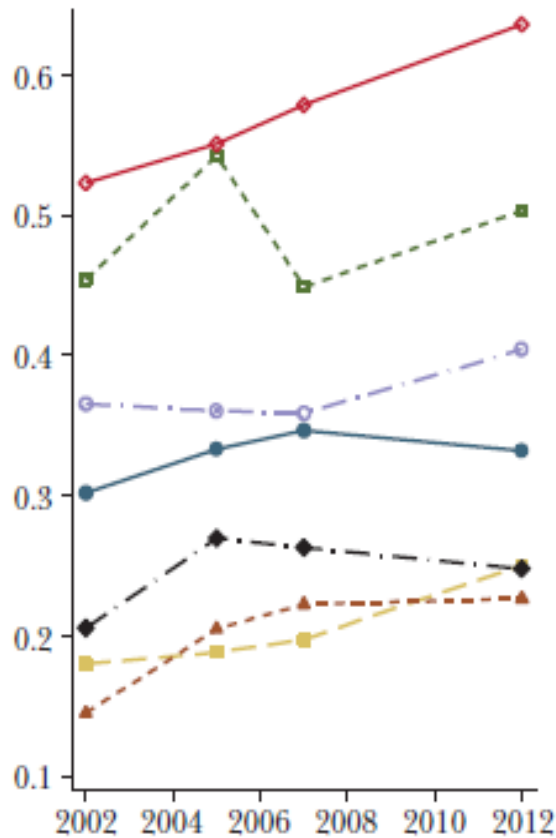
Proportion female: Faculty and PhD Candidates at “Chairmans’ Group” of 43 departments, 1972-2017



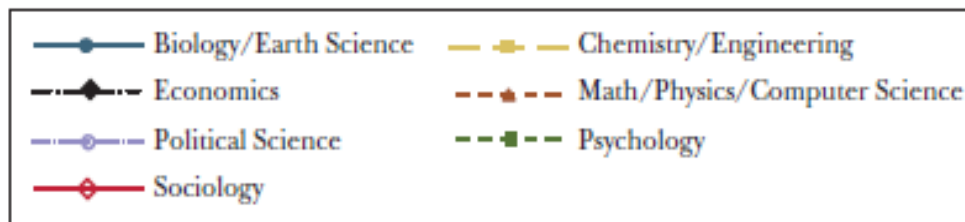
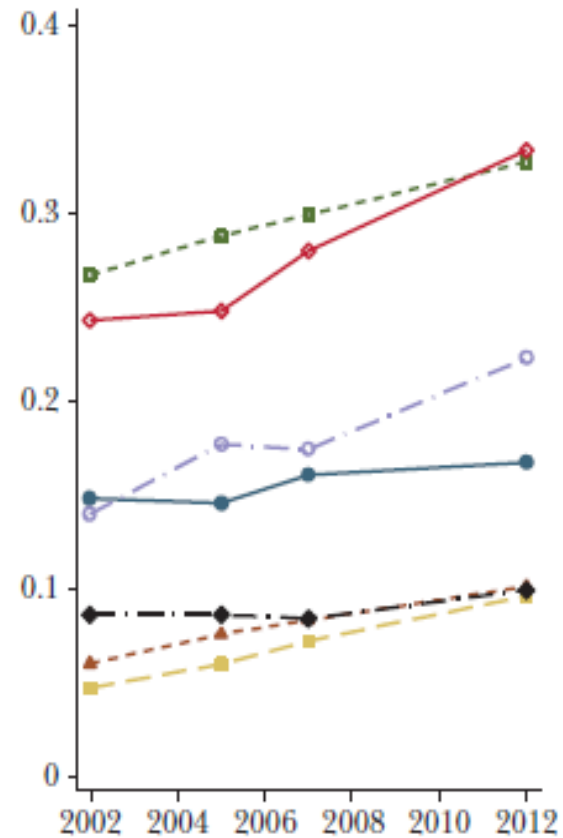
Representation of Women in Top-50 Departments, 2002–2012

(share female)

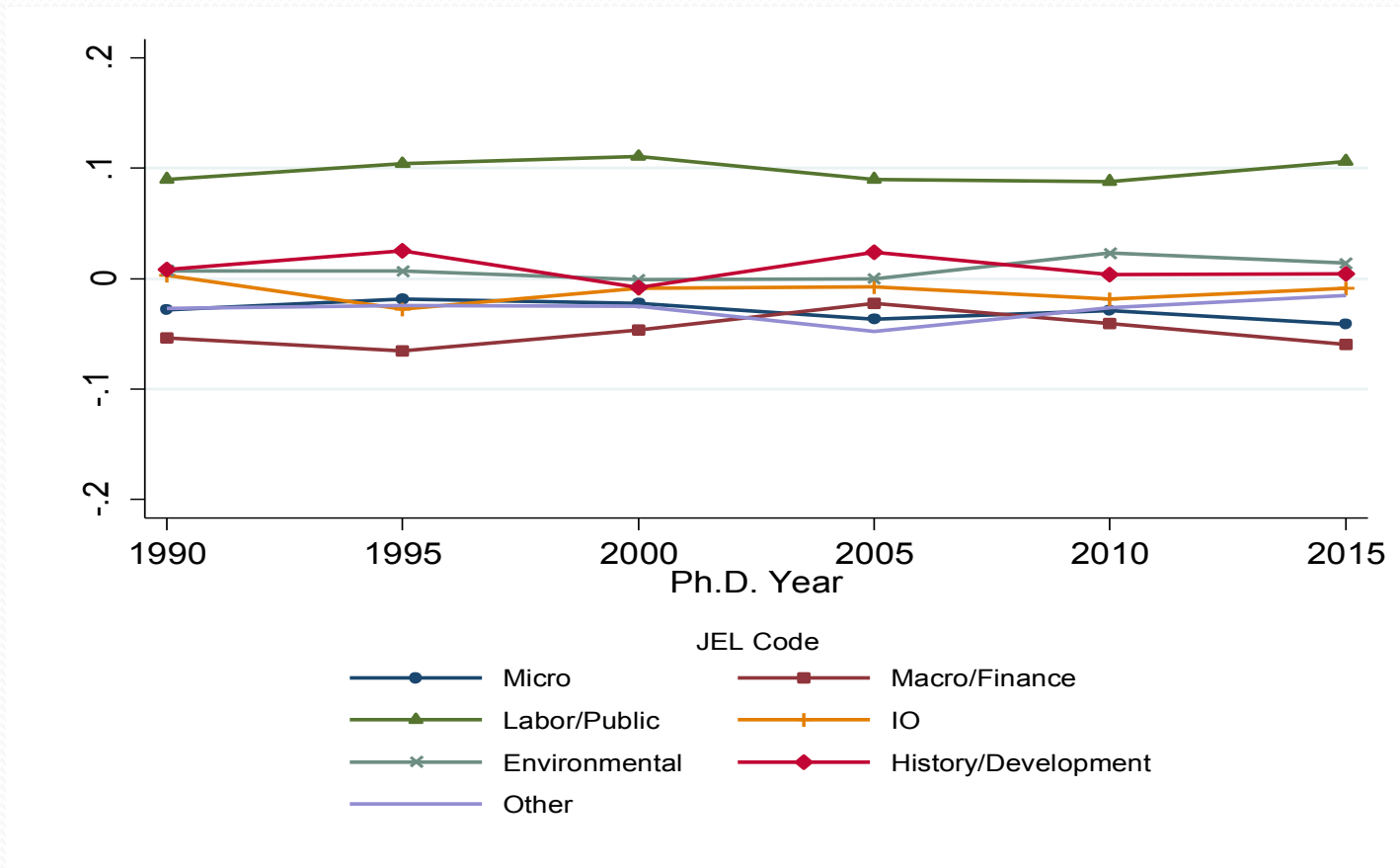
A: Assistant Professors



B: Full Professors



The over-representation of female economists in labor/public hasn't changed over time



Evidence for Barriers:

The Leaky Pipeline at Tenure

- Ten years after PhD, female economists 21 pct pts. less likely than men to have tenured academic job; only 30% explained by productivity (Ginther & Kahn, 2004).
- Most math-intensive fields made progress in gender equity in promotion/income since mid-90s, but economics did not (Ceci et al., 2014).
- “Economics is the one field where gender differences in tenure receipt (among social sciences) seem to remain even after background and productivity controls are factored in and even for single childless women.” (Ginther & Kahn, forthcoming).

Evidence for Barriers: Mechanisms

- Bias in evaluation of scholarship
 - women receive less credit than men for co-authored work in tenure decisions (Sarsons, 2017).
 - adoption of gender-neutral parental tenure clock extensions substantially reduces probability that women get tenure in their first job, substantially increases men's tenure probability (Antecol, Bedard & Stearns, 2018).

- Differential treatment in publishing
 - papers with female authors spend 6 mos longer under review at one top journal (Hengel, 2017). Other evidence suggests higher editorial standards.
 - Card, DellaVigna, Funk, and Iriberry (2018): referee and editorial decisions at 4 leading journals. No differential bias by referee/editor gender but all seem to hold women to higher standards—women's papers receive more citations.

Evidence for Barriers: Mechanisms

- Other gender-driven productivity differences
 - women expected to spend more time teaching, mentoring
 - lab studies find women volunteer, and are asked to volunteer, more than men for low-return tasks.
 - lack of mentoring
 - distinct collaboration patterns: fewer coauthors, higher clustering (Ductor, Goyal & Prummer, 2018)
- Remaining questions
 - gendered impact of aggressive, adversarial culture of economics?
 - gender harassment is pervasive in academia (NAS, 2018). Economics? (CSWEP News, Vol I, 2018)

What about awareness?

- 2008 survey of AEA members found:
 - 76% of women believe that opportunities for economics faculty in US favor men; fewer than 20% of men shared that view.
 - One-third of male economists felt that opportunities in economics favor women.
- So, as of 2008, not there yet.

In a more positive vein.....other papers in *JEP* symposium discuss possible solutions.

- Kasey Buckles: “Fixing the Leaky Pipeline: Strategies for Making Economic Work for Women at Every Stage”
- Leah Boustan and Andrew Langan: “Variation in Women’s Success across PhD Programs in Economics”

Lessons for productive actions by individual faculty member/supervisors, department heads, administration.



Buckles discusses interventions and strategies (usually rigorously evaluated) to enhance women's participation, persistence, and performance in economics.

K-12: Change the economics curriculum (Advanced Placement courses in US) to provide a more complete picture of what economists do. Not just finance/business.

Midcareer: Women can get “stuck” with family responsibilities, professional service demands, low visibility.

Undergraduate Women in Economics Challenge

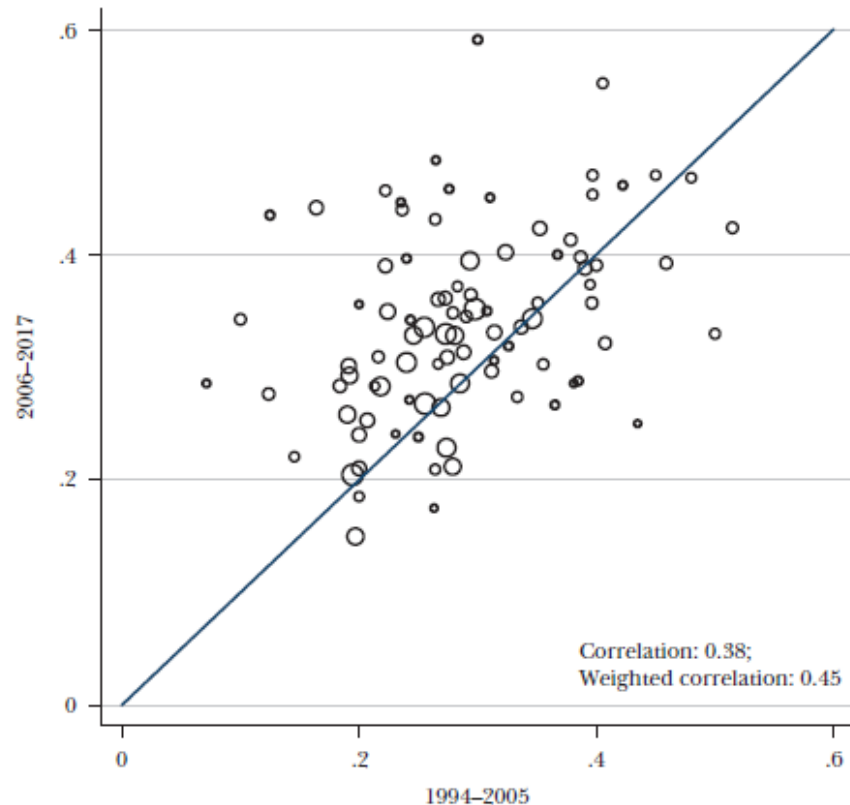
- RCT by Claudia Goldin and Tatyana Avilova in 2015.
- Volunteer departments randomly assigned to treatment and control. Treatment departments launch programs to encourage women to major in economics.
- Lack of female role models, greater sensitivity to grades, unclear ideas about what economics is appear to play a role.
- In-class exposure to charismatic female role models in intro economics doubles the likelihood that female students take interm. micro (Porter & Serra, 2017).

CSWEP's CeMENT Intensive Mentoring Program

- For juniors in doctoral programs or equivalent—2-days annually after AEA meetings. For juniors in non-doctoral/teaching intensive programs, biennial.
- 40 participants, 16 senior mentors in field-specific groups of 5/2.
- Large group panels on research, teaching, funding, managing service, tenure. Small group meetings with intensive feedback on a working paper circulated in advance. Effective in increasing early career productivity.
- Professional development materials organized over years available online.

Boustan and Langan: Share of female PhDs by department—varies from .2 to .8

Figure 1
Share Women PhD Recipients by Department: 1994–2005 versus 2006–2017



Variation in Share of Women in PhD programs

- Persistent over time: 1994-2005 vs. 2006-2017
- Correlated with female share of faculty, metro size, lower-ranked department
- Not correlated with faculty fields.

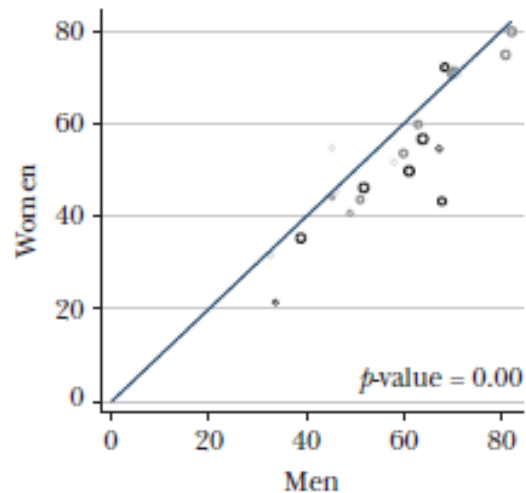
Collected early career outcomes by gender for 22 departments.

- women and men from same department equally likely to place in US doctoral departments.

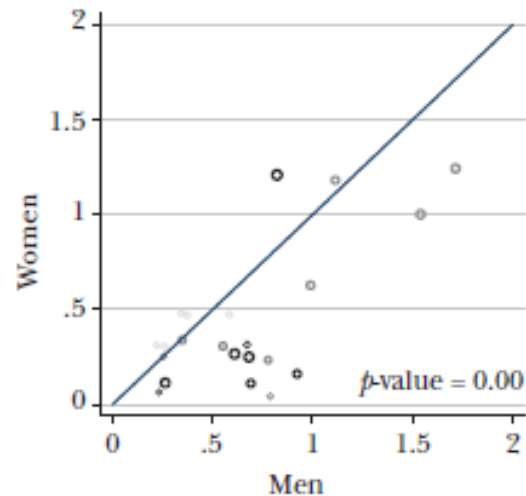
- conditional on academic placement, women in lower-ranked departments and publish less in first 7 years. Post-PhD.

Post-Graduation Outcomes for Men and Women, PhD Economists by Graduate Department

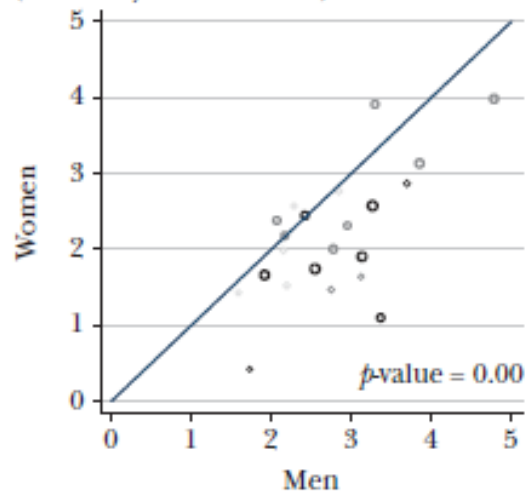
A: Average Rank of 1st Placement
(rank = 100 - [2017 US News ranking];
better departments have higher scores)



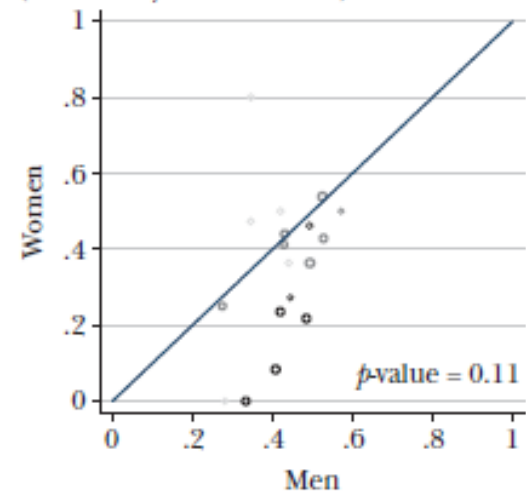
B: Top 5 Publications
(in first 7 years after PhD)



C: Top 55 Publications
(in first 7 years after PhD)



D: Ever Promoted
(in first 10 years after PhD)



“Ethnographic” evidence on why relative performance in PhD programs varies

- Rank 22 departments in terms of comparative success of women PhDs in placement, publishing, etc.
- Conduct exploratory interviews with faculty and former students in 2 good, 2 bad, and one middling department.
- Departments with best outcomes are characterized by:

1. A commitment to hiring women on the faculty

- High female faculty share and institutional focus
“It could even amount to an extra position if we come up with an additional excellent female candidate”
- Role-model and demonstration effects
“I can do this and be a woman”
- Worse departments either have only a recent focus on hiring women, or have made no intentional effort to hire women.
“We pay attention to see if we’re gender neutral, at least in our junior hiring”

2. Regular and transparent processes for student-advisor contact

- Sorting process in economics is unusually informal and haphazard.
- Options: Mandatory and regular student works-in-progress seminars. Public venue for 4th and 5th year students to present work and get comments from a group of committed faculty. Third-year research advisory groups.
- May be more important for women because less informal socializing with faculty.
- Worse departments: seminars are not required, students get “lost”.

3. More collegial seminar culture

- Less combative, aggressive, more constructive research seminars.
- Especially for graduate students
- Individual faculty can take action on this, arrange post-seminar meetings to provide feedback.
- Speculates that women are more affected.

4. Stronger general awareness of gender issues among senior faculty

- Particularly more subtle and implicit forms of gender bias
- Senior faculty in departments with better outcomes respond to question in “more observant and thoughtful ways.”
- Faculty in worse departments focus on lack of overt discrimination against women students, seemed unaware or disbelieving about more subtle differences
- Responses to cases of harassment: just condemn and punish individuals vs. further action to change underlying culture or institutions

To conclude...

- We haven't seen a lot of progress recently in the representation of women in economics (in the US, and not aware of any data showing substantial progress elsewhere).
- There is an increasing body of rigorous evidence showing that women face bias, either in assessment of their research or via institutional arrangements favorable to men—should help with awareness.
- There is much that we can do, as mentors, colleagues, and leaders, to advance the status of women in our field.