

# Regional and State Association News

## Midwest Survey Final Report

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The following reports on a survey sponsored by the Midwest Women's Caucus, the Midwest Political Science Association, and the MPSA's Commission on the Status of Women. Special thanks for their help in preparing and conducting the survey go to Barbara Bardes, Diane Blair, and Lettie Wenner, all of whom served on the Women's Caucus Committee on Recruitment and Retention from its inception, to the leadership of the Women's Caucus and Midwest Political Science Association, and to colleagues at Iowa State whose help was crucial to the survey's success.

The committee also extends its appreciation to the political science department chairs who responded to the survey, many with detailed comments. Its findings were discussed at the 1990 MPSA annual meeting and recommendations for further action will be acted upon when the association meets in Chicago in April, 1991. In order to stimulate further discussion of the important issues which the report raises, the survey committee is interested in the report receiving the widest possible circulation and welcomes comments from colleagues throughout the profession.

Questionnaires were mailed in April 1990 to the chairs of all 28 departments offering doctoral degrees in the midwest region. After followup phone calls and a second mailing in May, only two chairs, those at the University of Chicago and the University of Illinois, Champagne-Urbana, did not return the questionnaire, a response rate of 93% (see appendix). Moreover, at least 22 questionnaires were personally completed by the chair. Since one respondent declined to complete any of the quantitative sections, most tabular data are based on 25 departments.

The chief strength of this approach, that it reflects the views of the departmental executive officers responsible for hiring and other personnel decisions, also limits it in significant ways. Most notably, it does not represent the views of female or male job candidates themselves or women faculty members presently on staff at these universities. The next useful step might well be to survey women political scientists, both recent graduates and those who can look back at their careers a decade or two after completing graduate study.

In terms of size, the departments responding to the survey fall into three groups. Four (plus the two that did not respond) have more than 30 tenure track faculty positions, 11 have 20-29 slots, and another 11 have fewer than 20. In all, midwest Ph.D. departments responding to this survey averaged 21 faculty members; moreover, an overwhelming majority clustered in the range from 17-23. Having an idea of faculty size is important because it helps the reader

visualize the different department atmospheres that exist for women faculty and graduate students. Also, large faculty size is linked with large cohorts of graduate students, many of whom will pursue academic careers in the midwest region after graduation.

### Where We Are Now

#### 1. *Distribution of Women Faculty by Rank*

First we present data from the survey which allows for a snapshot picture of how women political scientists are presently faring. Table 1 shows the makeup of political science faculties in midwest Ph.D. programs as of spring 1990. The status differentiation between men and women presented in this data is especially striking in light of more than two decades of rhetorical commitment to affirmative action.

Over half of all male political scientists in these departments are at the top of their university's career lad-

**TABLE 1.**  
**Full- and Part-Time Political Science Faculty, 1989-90**

	Full-Time			Part-Time	
	No. Male	No. Female	% Female	No. Male	No. Female
<b>A. Tenure Track Faculty</b>					
Professor	244	18	7	6	0
Associate Professor	133	22	14	1	0
Assistant Professor	74	38	34	0	0
Instructor	2	0	0	0	0
Totals	453	78	17	7	0
<b>B. Non-Tenure Track Faculty</b>					
Professor	1	0	0	2	0
Associate Professor	0	0	0	0	0
Assistant Professor	0	1	100	4	0
Instructor	3	2	40	15	9
Visiting	8	1	12.5	17	3
Totals	12	4	25	38	12

**TABLE 2.**  
The Status of Women Graduate Students, 1989-90

	% Graduated	% Admitted
Ph.D.	23	36
MA	29	33
MPA	58	52

der, that is, 54% are full professors, while under half (48%) of the women remain at the bottom rung of the ladder. Overall, women hold 78 (17%) of the 453 full-time tenured or tenure-earning positions in these departments. Women presently hold 7% of all full professor positions, 14% of the associate slots, 34% of the assistant professorships, and none of the instructor lines. Women are also seriously underrepresented as visiting faculty, an appointment which can be used as a recruitment tool if departments are interested in gaining diversity in their senior ranks.

## 2. Women Graduate Students

We also asked about the status of women graduate students in these same departments, a cohort soon to go into the political science job market. As can be seen in Table 2, women constituted 36% of the admissions to Ph.D. programs in the midwest last year, 33% of admissions to MA programs, and 52% for MPA programs. Since these data do not permit comparisons over time, an important question posed by this study is why a significantly smaller percentage of women emerged with completed doctorates (23%) and MA degrees (29%) in the period under study here than were beginning their graduate training. On the other hand, women appeared to do much better in MPA programs at these same schools, constituting a majority of those admitted and graduating from these programs.

## 3. The Presence of Special Programs

Survey questions also asked about the range of programs developed over the past two decades in response to two factors: (1) the increasing presence of women in academia; and (2) growing interest in women's studies as a field of academic study.

Of those reporting, nearly all chairs (95%) said that their universities had women's studies programs and a sexual harassment policy. Eighty-eight percent of these universities had a committee on the status of women. Moreover, most political science departments (88%) offer a course on women and politics as part of their undergraduate offerings and about two-thirds of the chairs believed that their universities had a maternity leave policy in place.

On the other hand, surprisingly few departments (33%) presently offer women and politics courses as part of their graduate curriculum. Forty-six percent of these chairs reported that their university had some kind of day care facility for faculty, staff, and/or student children, and a maternity leave policy. Finally, many more could report the existence of a campus women's center (88%) than a women's health center (12%).

## 4. Distribution of Women Faculty by Department

All of the chairs participating in the survey reported that their departments presently employ at least one female faculty member in a tenure-earning line. Whether they had many, few, or no female colleagues in their departments, women constitute a small percentage of their respective faculties, ranging from a low of 5% to a high of 23% of all full-time faculty members. Four departments reported having one woman faculty member, four had two, nine had three women, three had four women faculty, four had five, and one university employed seven women faculty in tenure-track positions.

But large numbers does not equate with large percentages. In the department with the most women faculty

(which was also the largest department in absolute terms), they constituted 18% of the total, while the smallest department of all employed one woman in a faculty of five members. And women are decidedly not spread through the professional ranks. Just over half of the departments were able to report a woman at the level of full professor, typically the rank at which faculty members become full-fledged academic citizens, entitled to take on the entire range of responsibilities for departmental governance as well as to participate in all personnel decisions. Only seven chairs reported one or more woman at each rank, 13 had women at only two ranks, and in the remaining five departments all women faculty were clustered at one rank. Three of the latter reported hiring women at the assistant professor rank within the last three years. Typically, women faculty were concentrated in one or two ranks.

## Recruitment of Women Faculty

### 1. Recent Hiring Decisions

The data presented in Tables 3 and 4 indicate that women gain faculty positions overwhelmingly at the entry level as assistant professors, that women are more likely than their male colleagues to leave before the tenure decision, and that not much has been accomplished to increase the number of women faculty at more senior ranks through outside hiring. Why women are not gaining professional advancement by being hired into other departments at the associate and full professor ranks is a question meriting further study by academic administrators and the political science profession alike.

Only one chair reported hiring a woman at the full professor level during the past three years. Two

**TABLE 3.**  
Departmental Hiring Decisions, 1987-90

	No. Men	No. Women	% Women
Professor	5	1	17
Associate Professor	10	2	17
Assistant Professor	56	32	36
Instructor	1	1	50
Totals	72	36	

women have come into these departments at the associate professor level in the same time period. On the other hand, all departments reported hiring at least one faculty member during the past three years. Five departments, including one that made five hires, reported that no women joined their faculties in this period out of a total of 17 decisions. At the other schools 36 women were hired out of a total of 108, a rate of 29.6% of all new hires.

## 2. *The Recruitment Process*

This section analyzes the open-ended responses that chairs made about how their departments conduct recruitment and hiring. Slightly more than half of the chairs reported that their departments had in place a formal or informal policy to increase the number of women faculty. Since nearly all of those reported that that policy had been effective, it appears that most department chairs are content with the present low rate of growth in affirmative action hiring.

Overall, these data paint a picture of decentralization in hiring; departments appear to be on their own with little supervision or assistance from central administration. University affirmative action officers mostly monitor the paperwork flow and deans' involvement seems limited to the final stage when an offer is about to be made.

All 25 departments providing data reported using the *APSA Personnel Services Newsletter* is one of the top three methods for advertising a job opening. Personal phone calls to colleagues at other universities and general notices to graduate placement officers and/or chairs were also widely used techniques. Less importance was attached to the placement service at national and regional meetings. And departments made still less use of the services of national or regional women's caucuses or specialized talent banks at the first stage of the hiring process.

## 3. *Search Committee Operation*

As expected, most departments employ search committees to aid the hiring process. While some departments have given little attention to how search committee deliberations

might further or hinder achievement of affirmative action goals, others have taken a more proactive stance. For example, in at least one case, university affirmative action officials train search committee members before they start work.

One chair, whose department has successfully hired women candidates, recommends charging one committee member with being the affirmative action advocate for that search, an innovation which has worked well in his department. Another urged a system combining strong involvement by the chair, broad position descriptions designed to draw a wide variety of candidates, and use of a single search committee, charged with reporting multiple candidates in unranked order.

In response to a question asking how chairs ensured that search committees do not allow conscious and unconscious biases to intrude on decisions they make, several respondents stressed the responsibility of the chair to remind faculty members of the need for diversity. In this view, the values of affirmative action need to be emphasized all the time, not just once a search has begun. Others followed up this theme by stressing the need to redesign job openings to tap areas of the discipline where there are large numbers of women and minority candidates on the job market.

## 4. *Making Affirmative Action Hires*

Another question asked for techniques chairs use to broaden or diversify the applicant pool if few women candidates present themselves through the usual advertisement process. This time there was much less agreement about possible responses. At this stage, specialty periodicals and newsletters are beginning to supplement the personal contacting that chairs frequently use.

Political science chairs pay less attention to other techniques, such as including affirmative action in departmental strategic planning, activating networks including former women graduate students, bringing in women scholars as visiting professors, and redesigning jobs, proposals, advanced in recent years to help achieve greater faculty diversity.

Nineteen chairs noted that their university or department had available some kinds of special resources (e.g., additional positions, salary supplements, reduced teaching loads, and additional funds for research) to use in affirmative action hiring. When asked to assess their utility, several noted that these primarily applied to minority hires, not yet to affirmative action hiring of women.

Some were actively lobbying for changes in policy that would yield additional resources. Employment opportunities for spouses were thought to be most useful, but many chairs had a long list including some or all of the following: additional positions, help with family issues, summer support, travel money, computing support, reduced teaching loads, and research leave. In addition, one chair expressed a need for training to identify and reach out to female and minority candidates.

When asked to account for their success in hiring women candidates, chairs volunteered two kinds of answers, usually mixed in a complex equation. One is associated with traditional hiring practices (e.g., competitive offers, departmental prestige, faculty collegiality, etc.). The other, which appears to apply with more force in the case of hiring women candidates, includes a more proactive recruitment process, ensuring that more than one woman makes it to the stage of campus interviews, having women faculty already on staff, and providing opportunities for spousal employment.

In short, affirmative action hiring appears to be a matter of conscious intention to include women in the pool, hard work, and, according to two chairs, a certain amount of luck. On the other hand, chairs most often gave as the reason why women candidates turned down their job offers the problem of dual careers (e.g., the lack of job opportunities available for a spouse or some other form of spousal veto).

## Professional Advancement

### 1. *The Tenure Pool*

As part of a broader concern about professional advancement for women in the discipline, the survey also asked chairs a number of ques-

**TABLE 4.**  
**Promotion, Tenure and Retention Decisions, 1987-90**

	No. Men	No. Female	% Female
<i>A. Tenure and Retention</i>			
Faculty awarded tenure	32	8	20
Faculty denied tenure	10	2	16.6
Faculty leaving before tenure decision	13	5	27.7
Totals	55	15	27.3
<i>B. Promotion and Advancement</i>			
Faculty promoted to associate rank	24	7	22.6
Faculty promoted to full professor	22	4	15.4
Faculty leaving after tenure decision	13	0	0
Totals	59	11	22.9

tions about how women are advancing through the ranks at their institutions. Chairs reported a "pool" of 70 potential tenure cases over the past three years, as can be seen in Table 4. Of these, 52 decisions actually resulted, 42 involving men and 10 women. According to the chairs, there were 32 positive tenure decisions involving men, a 76% success rate.

Among women the comparable figure was 80%. These figures suggest a rough similarity in advancement opportunities for the men and women who stay in the system long enough to reach the tenure decision, but say nothing about whether it is harder for any particular cohort to get jobs than another, whether some people are more likely to leave before tenure, or whether some people have to work harder (or longer) than others to advance professionally.

## 2. Advancement in Rank

Taken together, the data in Tables 3 and 4 also give indications of what women and men face in further advancement through the ranks after tenure is granted. Promotion and outside hiring figures combine to show 34 male associate professors named during this period, compared to 9 appointments of women to the same rank. In all, 43 personnel decisions were made, some 55% of which came from promotions of men to this rank, 23% from new hires of men from other schools, 16% by promotion of women from within, and only 5% from outside hires of women. Of course, these data do not yield information about how many women were on the job market, just

how many were ultimately hired.

Appointments to associate and full professor rank are significant points at which affirmative action policies could be working for women. Instead, the data show that appointments of full professors still come most often with promotion of males from within the ranks (69%), followed by hire of males from other departments (16%). Very few (12%) of the 32 decisions reported went to women promoted from within and only one (3%) to a woman applying from the outside.

## 3. Deciding to Leave

Finally, if we define the potential tenure "pool" more broadly, to include all of those who could have had a tenure decision within the last three years, we find that 13 of 55 (24%) of the men in that pool left their positions before the tenure decision. That compares with 5 of 15 (33%) of the women, a considerably higher figure. Looked at another way, the same figures show that half of the men who left these departments within the last three years did so before the tenure decision while the other half did so afterwards.

On the other hand, all of the women reported to have left did so before tenure. Again, a survey of women academics might cast light on whether or not women are receiving equally tempting offers of professional advancement. Alternatively, they may be encumbered by family ties or for other reasons feel precluded from considering geographical moves. Or, possibly, they may be more satisfied with their current positions than their male counterparts.

Whatever the answer turns out to be, the advice women graduate students will take away from these data is unmistakable—be careful when you accept your first job!

## 4. Barriers to Professional Advancement

A final question probed chairs' assessments of whether women faculty members faced special barriers to professional advancement after the first hiring decision is made, an issue of increasing concern in the literature on affirmative action policy. A substantial minority of the respondents did not find any particular problems for women faculty, at least at their own universities, but an overwhelming majority of those who answered the question pointed to the problems of dual-career couples as a major impediment. Other issues considered important by half the respondents were lingering sexism on the part of departmental colleagues (e.g., their attitudes about women's family and child care responsibilities).

Finally, two other issues were also reiterated. Because there are so few women at the associate and full professor levels, most female and male graduate students lack female mentors. Some chairs fear that the demands of implementing affirmative action policies (e.g., frequent service on departmental committees, etc.) may be falling more heavily on recently hired junior women and thus eating into the time they should be spending on research and teaching. And a few department chairs attributed problems in women's advancement to such other items as the status of women's studies in the profession, difficulties women experience as the sole female in male-dominated departments, and related issues frequently discussed in the affirmative action literature.

## Appendix: Midwest Ph.D. Departments Responding to the Survey

Case Western Reserve University  
 University of Cincinnati  
 University of Illinois-Chicago  
 Indiana University  
 University of Iowa  
 University of Kansas  
 Kent State University

**Regional and State Association News**

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