GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN ECONOMICS? EVIDENCE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSON SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores whether or not there appears to be any gender discrimination amongst tenured and tenure track economics faculty members at mid-tier University of Wisconsin system schools. This paper explores issues related to rank, promotion, and compensation.

Keywords: *microeconomics, gender discrimination, Wisconsin, higher education*

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper examines various issues of rank, promotion, and compensation for economics faculty members at the mid-level schools in the University of Wisconsin system. This paper finds that there is little evidence of gender-based discrimination in terms of rank, promotion, or compensation but that women are not equally represented amongst economics faculty.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years there have been several articles published related to gender discrimination within the economics profession.

Initially research found that the economics profession lost female representation at varying points in time. Females were less likely to major in economics as undergraduates, less likely to enroll in graduate economic departments, less likely to complete PhDs, less likely to be hired into academia, less likely to earn tenure, and less likely to earn promotion to full professor. At that time, economics was performing worse than other science and engineering fields. Only 4% of full professors were female in economics as compared to 9.5% in other science and engineering fields. Women had lower salaries but also tended to have fewer publications (Khan, 1995).

This reduced productivity in publishing was thought to be one potential cause for the reduced tenure and promotion amongst female economists. However, later research using more recent data found that women were still less likely to earn tenure and typically took longer to earn tenure than men even after controlling for numerous other variables. Productivity and other background differences could not explain the gender gap in promotion. Women are definitely treated systematically differently than men in the economics profession and economics has the largest gender gap of any of the science and social science disciplines that the authors analyzed. Of all of the disciplines analyzed, economics had the largest gender differences in the probability of promotion (Ginther and Khan, 2004).

Other research also found an unexplained pay gap in economics but differentiated the gap at research intensive institutions versus liberal arts institutions. This research found that the unexplained pay gap is approximately 19-24% and is much smaller at liberal arts institutions than research intensive institutions. Women working at liberal arts institutions appear to experience less based gender discrimination, but it