

the
Minority
winter 2008 **report**

CSMGEP

The annual news of the AEA's Committee on the Status of Minority Groups in the Economics Profession, the National Economic Association, and the American Society of Hispanic Economists

Economics Faculties: The Status of Racial Minorities

Gregory N. Price, Morehouse College

The last three decades have witnessed the formation of several organizations or committees to advance the status of racial minorities in the economics profession, including the National Economic Association (NEA), the Committee on the Status of Minority Groups in the Economics Profession (CSMGEP), and the American Society of Hispanic Economists (ASHE).

A major impetus for each was the chronic underrepresentation of racial minorities in the economics profession, particularly on the economics faculties of U.S. colleges and universities. To help address this shortcoming, the organizations have focused efforts on creating a pipeline from doctoral degree to faculty positions for minority graduates. The question raised here is whether this pipeline is working.

Racial Minorities Underrepresented on Economics Faculties

Table 1 details the number of black and Hispanic full-time faculty in the 2006–2007 academic year. The data are compiled from institutions that responded to the AEA's Universal Academic Questionnaire. Across all institutions, blacks and Hispanics constituted 1.9% and 2.7%, respectively, of all tenured and tenure-track economics faculty. Among nontenure-track

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inside:

Committee on the Status of Minority Groups in the Economics Profession

CSMGEP was established by the American Economic Association in 1968 to increase the representation of minorities in the economics profession, primarily by broadening their opportunities for training.

www.vanderbilt.edu/AEA/CSMGEP/index.html
csmgep@aeaweb.org

American Society of Hispanic Economists

ASHE, established in 2002, is a professional association of economists who are concerned with the under-representation of Hispanic Americans in the economics profession at a time when Hispanics represent 15 percent of the U.S. population.

Our primary goals include:

1. Promoting the vitality of Hispanics in the economics profession through education, service, and excellence;
2. Promoting rigorous research on economic and policy issues affecting U.S. Hispanic communities and the nation as a whole;
3. Engaging more Hispanic Americans to effectively participate in the economics profession.

ASHE is an open membership society; anyone who is interested in our mission can join.

www.asheweb.org

National Economic Association

NEA was founded in 1969 as the Caucus of Black Economists to promote the professional lives of minorities within the profession. Through its journal (*The Review of Black Political Economy*) and its annual paper sessions/meeting, the organization produces and distributes knowledge of economic issues that are of exceptional interest to native and immigrant African Americans, Latinos, and other people of color.

www.neaecon.org

The Minority Report: Advancing Minority Representation in the Economics Field

Welcome to the first issue of *The Minority Report*, a joint publication of the American Economic Association's Committee on the Status of Minority Groups in the Economics Profession (CSMGEP), the American Society of Hispanic Economists (ASHE), and the National Economic Association (NEA). Published annually, *The Minority Report* showcases the people, programs, research, and activities of the three groups, which together help to increase the representation of minorities in the economics profession.

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CSMGEP Pipeline Programs

CSMGEP OFFERS A VARIETY OF PROGRAMS TO ADVANCE YOUR CAREER AND VISIBILITY IN THE FIELD.

The Summer Program

The American Economic Association Summer Training Program (AEASTP) at the University of California, Santa Barbara, is an intensive eight-week program to encourage and prepare talented undergraduates for success in economics doctoral programs. The program and a related scholarship program fund participants who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents; preference for the scholarships is given to members of underrepresented minority groups historically disadvantaged in the U.S. context and who have demonstrated financial need.

The program is designed for two summers of participation, although students with strong undergraduate training can forgo the first summer. Hands-on research experience is a central feature of the summer program. The program enables students to solidify their understanding of analytic tools, apply their skills in examining real-world issues of interest to them, and work closely with peers and advisers. Students come away with a renewed excitement for the everyday relevance of economics and a better understanding of what a career as a research-oriented economist entails. Doug Steigerwald is director of the program. For more information, contact aeastp@econ.ucsb.edu.

Summer Economic Fellows Program

This exciting new program provides an opportunity for senior graduate students and junior faculty in economics to spend a summer (8–12 weeks) in the research department of a sponsoring institution, such as a Federal Reserve Bank or other public agency. By providing research resources and mentoring, the program helps to promote women and underrepresented minorities in economics. Fellowships are open to all economists without regard to gender or minority status, although the goal of the program drives the selection process.

During their residency, fellows participate as members of the research community while engaged in a research project of their own choosing. Fellows are mentored by experienced economists both on scientific and career issues. Fellows are encouraged to present a research seminar at the sponsoring agency during their fellowship. Fellows are typically either junior faculty or graduate students at the dissertation stage.

For further information, contact Dick Startz at aeansf@u.washington.edu.

The Mentoring Program

The Mentoring Program matches African American, Latino, and Native American economics Ph.D. students and new doctorates with mentors in the field, and also facilitates networking between minority economics students at all stages of the educational and early-career pipeline. The Mentoring Program also hosts an annual Pipeline Conference for all participants and their mentors, as well as others. The conference, held annually at the AEA Summer Program, facilitates contacts among minority students in different schools and at different stages in the pipeline.

For more information about joining and supporting the mentoring program, contact William M. Rodgers III, wrodgers@rci.rutgers.edu or 732-932-4100, x6203. ■

The CSMGEP Pipeline Program is vital to advancing minorities in the economics profession. The success of the Pipeline Program hinges on adequate funding. The AEA welcomes contributions to one or all of its Pipeline Programs. Contributions can be sent to:

CSMGEP Pipeline Program
c/o American Economic Association
2014 Broadway, Suite 305
Nashville, TN 37203

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ANY OF THESE PROGRAMS, SEE WWW.VANDERBILT.EDU/AEA/CSMGEP/PIPELINE

» continued from page 1 > faculty, blacks and Hispanics constituted 2.6% and 1.9%, respectively. The black share of tenured, tenure-track, and nontenure-track faculty is lowest among Ph.D. granting economics departments. For Hispanics, the tenured/tenure-track faculty share is lowest among M.A. granting institutions, and the nontenure-track faculty share is lowest among Ph.D. granting institutions.

Pipeline Issues Are Not the Only Roadblocks

One possible reason for the underrepresentation is that the pipeline feeding doctoral students into faculty positions is lacking or ineffective. Tables 1 and 2, however, suggest this is not the case, given that the 12-year average of those receiving doctorates (7.5%) exceeds their faculty shares in 2005–2006.

Of course, it is possible that, because Table 1 data are not a full sample of all colleges and universities, the black and Hispanic faculty share is actually higher. It could also be that the incomplete data in Table 1 omit hiring histories that reflect a commitment to affirmative action. In such a case, colleges and universities may have hired black and

Hispanic economics professors in early years, and given their omission from the sample, the results are thus biased.

Underrepresentation is Ongoing

This underrepresentation is not new, as historical data reveal. Of the total economics faculty employed or ever known to be employed at 106 Ph.D.-granting economics departments ranked by the National Research Council (NRC) as of January 1, 2006, only 1.5% were black.¹ Unfortunately, parallel data are unavailable for Hispanic economists.

More informative is the median number of blacks employed or ever employed in these institutions—zero. Given that the black share of earned doctorates on the hiring history was not zero, this suggests that even over a longer history, blacks have been underrepresented in economics faculties. To the extent that the historical black data in Tables 1 and 2 are similar for Hispanics, historical and contemporary minority underrepresentation on economics faculties is

¹ See Table 2 in Gregory N. Price, “The Problem of the 21st Century: Economics Faculty and the Color Line,” working paper, Department of Economics, Morehouse College, 2007.

TABLE 1:
Numbers and Distribution of Black and Hispanic Faculty by Type of Institution: 2006-2007

	Number of Institutions in Sample	Full-Time Tenured or Tenure Track					Full-Time Non-Tenure Track
		Full	Associate	Assistant	Other	Total	
Ph.D. Institution	88						
Total		1136	371	513	21	2041	173
Black		10	6	9	0	25	1
Hispanic		25	8	42	0	75	4
M.A. Institution	36						
Total		224	137	114	8	483	38
Black		6	7	0	0	13	0
Hispanic		4	0	1	0	5	0
B.A. Institution	150						
Total		500	348	285	27	1160	97
Black		11	10	10	0	31	7
Hispanic		6	0	14	1	21	2
All Institutions	274						
Total		1860	856	912	56	3684	308
Black		27	23	19	0	69	8
Hispanic		35	8	57	1	101	6

Source: Report of the Committee on the Status of Minority Groups in the Economics Profession, December 2007. Data are from the American Economic Association's Universal Academic Questionnaire: Racial and ethnic representation includes U.S. citizens and permanent residents only. Includes faculty on leave during 2006-07, but excludes visiting appointments. A person who is full-time at the institution but only part-time in the economics department is considered full time. Non-responses to racial and ethnic diversity could not be distinguished from blanks representing zeros; thus all blanks were treated as zeros. Therefore, racial and ethnic representation may be underrepresented.

not likely fully explained by pipeline considerations.²

The data suggest current and historical barriers for economists from racial minority groups to gaining faculty appointments. In the case of blacks, for which historical data are available, there are more doctorates earned than faculty positions granted, particularly in Ph.D. granting programs. This raises the possibility that the historical and contemporary underrepresentation of racial minorities on economics faculties is not exclusively a supply-side pipeline problem. ■

² The summary data considered here are a mixture of small samples and a historical population, and neither informs the extent to which there is “leakage” of minority economics doctorates into the private sector or other college/university academic units such as public policy and business administration. If this leakage is significant, then it could be premature, if not unwarranted, to conclude that the small employment shares of blacks and Hispanics on economics faculties reflect historical and contemporary barriers—discrimination, for example. In this context, the small employment shares of blacks/Hispanics on economics faculties could reflect either their employment preferences for the private sector and other academic disciplines, and/or the relative success of the private sector and other academic disciplines in recruiting economists from racial minority groups.

[2006–07]

Blacks and Hispanics constituted 1.9% and 2.7%, respectively, of all tenured and tenure-track economics faculty.

TABLE 2
Percentage of Doctoral Degrees in Economics Awarded to Blacks and Hispanics: 1993–2004

Year	Total	Total Minority	Minority (%)	African American (%)	Hispanics (%)
1993	447	34	7.6	4.5	3.1
1994	483	32	6.6	3.9	2.7
1995	523	35	6.7	4.2	2.3
1996	518	37	7.2	3.7	3.5
1997	488	41	8.4	3.7	4.5
1998	480	40	8.4	3.8	4.6
1999	459	42	9.1	5.0	3.9
2000	440	35	8.0	4.1	3.9
2001	395	27	6.9	2.3	4.1
2002	381	27	7.0	3.1	3.9
2003	355	22	6.3	2.3	3.7
2004	352	29	8.2	5.4	2.8

Source: Report of the Committee on the Status of Minority Groups in the Economics Profession, December 2007. The data are from the Commission on Professionals in Science and Technology, and derived from the National Science Foundation, Survey of Earned Doctorates from 2002 and previous years; and only include U.S. citizens and permanent residents.

The *Other* Pipeline:

Ten Steps to Navigating Papers through Academic Journals

Cecilia Elena Rouse, Princeton University

You've successfully completed your doctorate and landed a plum academic job, and you even have a great paper you've just finished. Does this mean that you can now sit back and relax?

No! In many respects, your work has just begun. In academia, you get some credit for completing a first draft, but the true rewards come from publishing it. Unfortunately, the road to a “good publication” is not for the faint of heart, and most economists dread the process. Indeed, rejection is the name of the game. What separates the wheat from the chaff is how you cope with rejection—that is, what you do *next*.

Although it might not seem so, it is possible to navigate this process and retain one's sanity. I lay out some of my thoughts on the steps to publishing papers in academic (economics) journals. These insights reflect advice I've been given by my mentors, my experience of having papers both rejected and accepted, and from my role as an editor of the *Journal of Labor Economics*.

The Golden Rule and Its Corollary

Before laying out the “official” steps to publication success, I want to emphasize the Golden Rule of Academic Publishing: All papers potentially have a “home.” This means that even if your paper is rejected at the first, second, third, or even fourth journal, the fifth journal might be the one.¹ As of 2001, there were about 300 economics journals in the U.S. publishing more than 2,600 issues, and amounting to more than 350,000 printed pages annually. To find a suitable home for every paper means to just keep trying. Hence, Orley Ashenfelter's corollary to the Golden Rule: “All papers must be in the labor force—either ‘looking for work’ or already employed.” (If you had not already surmised, Ashenfelter is a labor economist.)

This corollary means that all papers should either be accepted (or published) or under consideration at a journal. One of the biggest mistakes

¹ If you do not believe me, see Joshua Gans and George Shepard, “How Are the Mighty Fallen: Rejected Classic Articles by Leading Economists,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, vol. 8 no. 1 (Winter 1994), pp. 165-179. This paper is at once hilarious and sobering.



that young academics make is to hold on to their papers, furiously polishing them and endlessly revising them, which only serves to keep them out of the labor force. Although it is certainly important to write a good paper, you must also take the bold step and submit it. Here's how to do that.

Step 1:

Write an excellent paper

The best papers in economics today highlight an important yet underappreciated or neglected area of economics; they revisit a well-known idea with new or better data; they make progress on a hard problem; or they contain some combination of the three. That said, while it is important to reach for blockbuster papers, don't overlook or undervalue those interesting contributions that are less than seminal. Many economists have built influential careers by writing good, solid, papers even though none have been published in the *American Economic Review*, the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, or *Econometrica*.

Step 2:

Get lots of feedback

Feedback from colleagues near and far is critical. Take (and create) many opportunities to present the paper. Let people know that you would be interested in presenting a paper in their seminar series; sign up for conferences and submit papers when possible. Ask colleagues or a mentor to read the paper. They

can help you pinpoint where the analysis, argument, and writing are lacking.² Part of the art and craft of negotiating this process is knowing when a paper is "polished enough." In general, you must write and rewrite a paper many times before the argument is well executed and presented. However, you never really know what the referees are going to like and dislike. Although you may think you are increasing your chances at a journal by making a particular revision, you may not be. That said, there is an important, informal, "30% Rule" to keep in mind: Journal editors typically will reject papers they believe would need to be improved by more than 30% to be acceptable. Thus, if you have a great idea, but the paper is poorly written, it may be rejected for this reason.

Step 3:

Select a journal

So now you have a paper written and you're ready to submit it to a journal. But which journal? This step can be tricky. In general, one starts at the "best" journal where the paper has a shot. If the paper is on an issue that is central to economics or is on a "hot" topic, consider a general interest journal. If the paper is on a topic that really would only be of interest to researchers in a particular field, consider a top field journal. Many people will start

The "30% Rule":
Journal editors typically will reject papers they believe would need to be improved by more than 30% to be acceptable.

» continued on page 8

² Claudia Goldin's excellent essay "On Being Placement Director in a Buyers' Market," in the Spring/Summer 2003 *Newsletter of the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession*, offers excellent suggestions for writing a good job market paper that apply to any academic paper.

› with a top general interest journal and then try a field journal if, or more likely *when*, the paper is rejected. The key is to start high, *so long as you have the time to go through the process at multiple journals*.

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Here's the complication: many journals have very long lag times from the date of the original submission to the initial response from the editor (not even counting the time it may take for the paper to be finally accepted for publication and in print). If you are untenured and you come up for review in a year, you may not want to wait the six months to a year for the initial response from an editor of a top journal, which will likely be a rejection. It may be wiser to start at a field journal. You should also pay attention to lag times for hot-topic papers that someone else might be covering already. It's not hard, for example, to get scooped in empirical microeconomics, given that data are readily available on many topics. There is a huge premium to being the "first" to write on a topic. In fact, the need to be among the first in an area only amplifies the importance of submitting the paper sooner rather than later. This may mean considering a lower-ranked journal from the outset just to get the paper out there.

Another helpful tool in deciding where to submit is to look at the rankings of journals.³ Also, read a few issues of a journal you have in mind to gain a sense of the potential audience and of the type of papers typically published. It's also worthwhile

³ For example, see Yolanda K. Kodrzycki and Pingkang Yu, "New Approaches to Ranking Economics Journals," *Berkeley Electronic Press: Contributions to Economic Analysis and Policy*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2006), article 24.

Read a few issues of a journal you have in mind to gain a sense of the potential audience and of the type of papers typically published.

to keep your eye on new journals. In their first years, new journals need to fill their issues, which makes it (slightly) easier to place a paper. The American Economic Association is starting new "field" journals, which may be potentially fruitful outlets. If you are on the tenure track, it is worth asking your chair or a trusted colleague which journals the department considers significant or good, as this can vary substantially.

Step 4: Submit the article

After you select a journal, read the submission guidelines, generally printed on the inside cover of each issue or found online. That said, it is generally not worth the time to format the paper according to the journal's guidelines (citation form, margins, and the like). The editor will send the paper to reviewers who will not know or care about the journal's specific formatting guidelines. It is also generally unnecessary to craft the perfect cover letter to the editor unless there is something unusual about your submission.

Typical submissions are sent to one or more reviewers. Most journals today use single-blind reviews—the



reviewer knows the identity of the author but the author does not know the identity of the reviewer. However, some journals also use “desk rejections,” where the article is rejected outright without review. This speeds up turnaround time for papers that an editor believes would never be acceptable. In that spirit, you should consider it a favor.

Step 5:

Brace for rejection and be patient

The top journals today receive well over 500 manuscripts a year and publish only 40–50 articles. The *American Economic Review* only accepts about 5% of the articles it receives, the *Journal of Political Economy* accepts about 8%, and the *Quarterly Journal of Economics* accepts about 6%. Even the *Journal of Labor Economics* accepts only about 5–10% of the 300 papers it receives each year. Thus, one can hardly expect papers to be accepted at any particular journal. And, if and when you receive a rejection, take comfort in knowing that you are not alone.

Authors should be prepared to wait 3–6 months (if not longer) to receive a first response from the journal.⁴ If the paper is not rejected, the response is typically a “revise and resubmit.” It is unlikely that a paper is accepted in the first round. In fact, the average paper undergoes two rounds of revisions before it is accepted. As a consequence, it can take more than two years for a paper to be accepted once it has been submitted.

⁴ If you do not hear back from the journal in six months, it is acceptable to politely inquire about its status. A gentle inquiry mostly serves to remind the editor about the paper, which may just have fallen through the cracks.

Step 6:

Consult a mentor to interpret the editor's decision

Once you have received the editor's response and the referees' reviews, ask a mentor or colleague—who is currently publishing—to help you interpret the decision. This outside counsel can be critical because a “revise and resubmit” may look like an outright rejection to you. Editors do not want to be in the position of potentially leading an author on, so they tend to sound more negative than they actually are about a paper. As a general rule, if the letter does not explicitly say “reject” or “I cannot invite you to revise and resubmit the paper,” you are free to resubmit.

Step 7:

Either move on (if the paper is rejected) or respond to every reviewer comment (if the paper is invited to be resubmitted)

If the paper is rejected at the first journal, Step 7 is generally to “move on.” The exception is if you strongly believe the paper has not been fairly reviewed. If so, you can politely appeal. Use this option only when you have very good grounds for doing so. A legitimate question at this stage is whether to respond to reviewers' comments before submitting elsewhere. Some would argue no, that reviewers are capricious, and it's better to just get the paper back into the “labor force” (the Golden Rule and its corollary). My general advice is that you should

The top journals today receive well over 500 manuscripts a year and publish only 40–50 articles.

More Must Be Done

The U.S. Must Increase Education among African Americans and Hispanics or It Risks Slower Economic Growth and Wider Income Inequality

Marie T. Mora, University of Texas-Pan American

Today, African Americans and Hispanics represent more than 27% of the total population, up from 17% three decades ago. Hispanics recently surpassed African Americans as the largest racial-ethnic minority group in the country, standing today at 15% of the U.S. population, compared with just 5% in 1975.

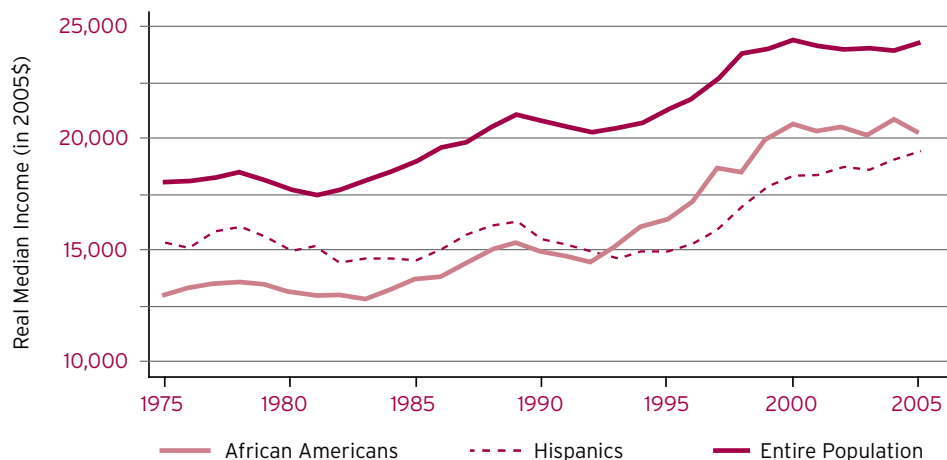
If the socioeconomic characteristics of African Americans and Hispanics continue to evolve as they have in the past 30 years, their growing share of the U.S. population could significantly affect the underlying economic growth and the distribution of income. One reason is that African Americans and Hispanics tend to earn less than the national average—a trend unlikely to cease soon. Although their earnings have increased over time, their income growth has

not been enough to close the gap with the national profile. The real median income gap for Hispanics compared with the nation as a whole was actually narrower in the late 1970s and early 1980s than today (see Figure 1). Where once Hispanic median incomes had been higher than those of African Americans, the pattern recently reversed.

One explanation for these income patterns is the increasing value of education in the labor market, and its contribution to growing income inequality. Indeed, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke in February 2007 called the larger returns to education and skill “likely the single greatest source of the long-term increase in inequality.”¹

Given that African Americans and Hispanics tend to have less education than the national average, their relatively low median incomes are not surprising. Although both groups have made gains in college graduation rates, their

FIGURE 1:
Real Median Income, 1975-2005



Notes: People 15+ years old (for 1975-79, 14+ as of March). Hispanics are of any race.
Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (www.census.gov)

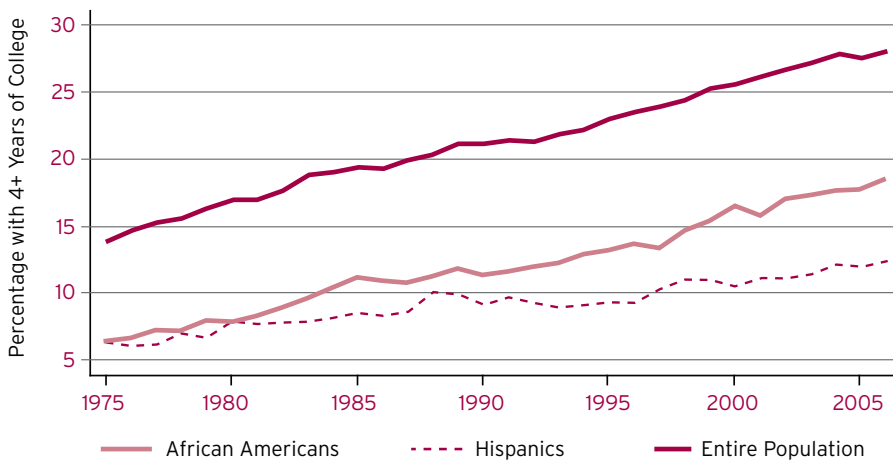
¹ Ben Bernanke, “The Level and Distribution of Economic Well Being,” Remarks by Chairman Ben S. Bernanke before the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, Omaha Nebraska, February 6, 2007, available at www.federalreserve.gov/boardDocs/Speeches/2007/20070206/default.htm.

education gap with the national average has widened over time, particularly for Hispanics. As Figure 2 shows, in 1975, 6% of African Americans and Hispanics were college graduates compared with 14% of the total U.S. population. Beginning in the early 1980s, however, the share of Hispanic college graduates rose more slowly than that of African Americans. By 2006, 12.4% of Hispanics had graduated from a four-year college or university compared with 18.4% of African Americans and 28% of the overall U.S. population.

The above-average population growth rates of both African Americans and Hispanics in the U.S. are expected to continue. Compared with a projected U.S. population growth rate of 49%, the U.S. Census Bureau expects the African

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FIGURE 2:
Percentage with 4+ Years of College, 1975-2005



Notes: Non-institutionalized population, 25+ years old. Hispanics are of any race.
 Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (www.census.gov)

American population to increase by 71% and the Hispanic population to increase by 188% by the year 2050. In that year, African Americans are expected to represent 14.6% of the entire population and Hispanics will represent one-quarter.² In the absence of vast investments in their human capital, if labor market structures continue to shift in favor of skilled workers as expected, and if current immigration, age distributions, and fertility rates continue, real income growth nationally is likely to stagnate. ■

² The U.S. Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity to be different concepts, such that the population projections of Hispanics and African Americans are not mutually exclusive.

Finding Economics at the Summit



Lisa D. Cook
Assistant Professor, Department of Economics and James Madison College, Michigan State University

It was atop Mount Kilimanjaro that it dawned on Lisa Cook that she should go into economics.

Having spent several hours climbing with a Cambridge-trained economist, Cook, who at the time was in Africa to research her potential philosophy dissertation on the concept of time, began to wonder whether she couldn't better answer her questions with the tools of economics.

Her hiking companion, the economist, she said, "helped me realize that my time in philosophy gave me the rigorous training in logic to ask or hone important questions, and that economics could give me the tools to answer them," she recalls. "He gave me tons of advice, and laid out what my preparation should be to switch from philosophy to economics," Cook says. At the end of the climb, he went his way and she went hers, but with her feet back on the ground in the U.S., she applied to and was accepted

in the doctoral program in economics at Berkeley.

Her path since Berkeley has led her to Harvard for post-doctoral studies and teaching and a fellowship with the Council on Foreign Relations in the Treasury Department. It was there she worked with the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Larry Summers, among other senior Treasury officials, investigating the problems of financial crises and heavily indebted countries.

Later at Stanford in another fellowship, she built on her dissertation (how the lack of property rights in Tsarist and post-Soviet Russia led to underdevelopment of the banking system) to explore the ability of inventors over time, especially African Americans, to patent their intellectual property. She continues to be inter-

ested in economic growth, particularly the relative importance of physical and intellectual property rights and their effect on growth.

True to her original interest, Cook has created several opportunities to apply the tools of economics on a human scale in helping to unravel some of the most enduring problems of the world. While at Harvard with Jeffrey Sachs, known for his international work on poverty reduction, debt cancellation, and disease control, she advised the government of Rwanda on its first post-genocide IMF program.

Each day, she said, the Minister of Finance would announce that their goal was to help prevent poverty and other economic factors that contributed to genocide in the first place. "That," Cook said, "was one of

In addition to working with Jeffrey Sachs, she also worked with U2's Bono to persuade senior White House officials on the merits of debt relief to poor countries.

the most rewarding moments in my career.” The Hutus and Tutsis, she said, saw it as a fight for scarce resources. “Rwanda had one of the highest population growth rates in the world, and their idea was that the economic pie was fixed, that what was beneath their feet was it, not that the land could be turned into more productive uses to increase the size of the pie so everyone could get a larger slice. If there’d been more thought about how the country should develop, things might have turned out differently.”

In addition to working with Jeffrey Sachs, she also worked with U2’s Bono to persuade senior White House officials on the merits of debt relief to poor countries. These opportunities, Cook says, were all high points, not because of the elite company, but because “it took seriously the policy implications of model-based, measurement-intensive, and sometimes obscure economic research and turned it into tangible, accessible recommendations that could have a huge impact. It also gave me the kind of intuition needed for economic analysis and made me see the power of these tools I had in action.”

When asked about the low point of her career, Cook didn’t miss a beat: “Being on the job market. If there’s any skin-thickening prescription on the market, take as much as possible.”

Her second piece of advice for young minority economists is to pick good mentors. “Sandy Darity, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, was an integral part of my preparing for and obtaining my Ph.D.,” Cook says, “just because he would answer my questions frankly about each stage of becoming a productive economist.

He also suggested that I enroll in the AEA summer program at Stanford University, which ultimately provided me with several other senior faculty as mentors and sounding boards. They weren’t all women, or African Americans, but they provided good role models and someone to talk to about graduate school and doing the work of an academic economist.”

As a minority woman in economics, Cook has had her share of challenges. “People assume that even though I’m in the economics department, and the questions I ask are economics questions, that I’m a political scientist or sociologist or an administrator,” says Cook. “I think it’s because there are so few black female economists, and the ones they might have known aren’t doing research anymore. It probably takes people a while to get accustomed to seeing blacks and women teaching these courses or doing this kind of research.”

“I’m often—as a female and as an African American—challenged as an authority figure,” she adds. “It took me some time to realize that it’s not just me. And it’s not just my field. It would be the same in any quantitative field. I’ve learned to manage the perceptions of students and colleagues. I talk to others in a similar position, and other women have given me solutions to overcome this barrier.”

Looking back on that mountaintop decision, she knows it was the right one. “I’m in awe of these tools we have to clarify and hopefully answer questions,” she says. “In economics, we have a set of models to address the questions that philosophy poses.” ■

The Proust Questionnaire*

Lisa D. Cook

>> *What’s a perfect day?*

A perfect day would be a Mel Brooks film festival—and a matinee no less (largely just to see who gets to go to movies in the middle of the day), then take the Concorde to my favorite places, like Terra del Fuego, or to Capetown or Tunis.

>> *What was your worst job?*

Phlebotomist. This was my mother’s last-ditch effort to get me to get a doctorate in medicine rather than in physics or philosophy.

>> *What would be your dream job?*

Apart from the field of economics, Commissioner of Major League Baseball, head of the Gates Foundation, or head writer for Saturday Night Live or the Daily Show with Jon Stewart.

>> *What’s your favorite indulgence?*

I don’t have a television, so renting a DVD (Stanley Kubrick, Mel Brooks, Monty Python, or Dave Chappelle) is an indulgence.

>> *What trait do you most deplore in others?*

Lack of curiosity.

>> *What’s your favorite city?*

Cape Town.

>> *What’s your favorite movie?*

Dr. Strangelove.

>> *What was the last book you read?*

A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian (fiction), by Marina Lewycka. It was shortlisted for the Booker Prize, and since I lived in Russia during the transition she talks of, it was very, very interesting. I am still reading *Splendid Solution: Jonas Salk and the Polio Vaccine*, by Jeffrey Kluger. Having seen first-hand the dire need for vaccines for HIV, malaria, and other diseases, I have appreciated this author’s nuanced explanation of the difficulty in developing any vaccine.

*A salon and parlor game of the 19th century, made most famous by Marcel Proust’s answers, the Proust Questionnaire (adapted here) gets to the heart of things.

The Buck Stops Here

Seth Carpenter loves French food and French wine. It's an affinity developed from summers spent in France as a child—the food that is, not the wine. Presumably the taste for Burgundy came later.

Either way, his experiences in France led him to consider a French literature major in college, with plans to live and study abroad. Once on campus, however, he decided otherwise. “I realized that I liked those frivolous things, like food and clothing.” An introductory course during his freshman year gave him a nudge toward economics.

As an undergraduate, Carpenter says he found himself more and more interested in “thinking analytically and answering questions that didn’t already have answers.” The key to economics, he says, is “taking complex questions and paring them down to simple pieces that can be answered in a meaningful way.” It is the search for a balance between complexity, too much of which prevents finding an answer, and simplicity, too much of which produces a meaningless answer, that guides his economic approach and fuels his passion.



Seth B. Carpenter
Chief, Monetary and
Reserve Analysis Section,
Division of Monetary Affairs,
Federal Reserve Board



Today, one question Carpenter answers daily is, “How much money should the Federal Reserve release to the economy to achieve its interest rate goal?” As Carpenter explains, “Like any other market, the cost of money is set by supply and demand. The Fed can affect the supply.”

“Eight times a year the Fed committee meets and selects a target rate, and then they adjourn and head off to lunch. That’s when we go to work.” To hit the target, Carpenter and his staff convene at 9 a.m. each morning to forecast the daily demand for funds and the external factors that could affect the supply of reserves. “Then we discuss how much money there ought to be. If needed, and in concert with the Federal Reserve Board in New York, we adjust the markets and New York sets the wheels in motion. On a given day we may be deciding whether to add \$6 billion or \$6.5 billion to the market. We definitely sweat the details each and every morning because by the next morning, the interest rate tells us how good our forecasting was.”

“It’s a hectic few hours for us,” he says. “If my mom calls, I have to be a little abrupt and hang up quickly. Of course I then have to call back to apologize.”

After the morning crunch, Carpenter rubs elbows in the cafeteria with Fed chief Ben Bernanke, who was his doctoral thesis advisor at Princeton. In retrospect, Carpenter says he would have developed the relationship with Bernanke earlier in his graduate work, to learn the “hows” of research.

“At the beginning of graduate school,” he says, “I was happy to do my coursework, pass my exams, and

take school one day at a time. The hard part for me was that I didn’t have a mentor until my third year. When it became clear how important it was to work with someone, I tapped into an advisor and built up a relationship. In retrospect, it would have been better to establish from the beginning that I was a research economist and try to be involved in more research projects.”

Carpenter’s advice for aspiring economists of color is to attend the best school possible. “If someone is going to be skeptical of your abilities as an economist because of your race, he will think twice before dismissing you if you have a Ph.D. from MIT, Stanford, Princeton, or the like.”

“At times,” he says, “it is a bit uncomfortable being one of a very few black economists at the Board of Governors—you could count them on one hand and still snap your fingers—but most of the time I’m too busy to notice. As a professor, some students have reacted to me as a function of race, but I see these moments as an opportunity to teach, not just economics, but life.”

The path from French and law to economics has been a gradual one for Carpenter. “There wasn’t any watershed moment, the transition was very incremental over a long period of time.” However it happened, Seth Carpenter is clearly thrilled to be where he is, doing what he does. “I find working for the Fed, promoting the economic well-being of Americans, a very rewarding job. I get to do research that I’m interested in, of course, but there is also a great sense of public service, one that is shared by many of my colleagues, and I value that highly.” ■

The Proust Questionnaire

Seth B. Carpenter

» *What’s a perfect day?*

A perfect day would start with a cappuccino and a walk with my dog. Then there would be a bike ride, a good read, and a nap. It would end with a dinner I cooked for my wife and friends; then the dishes would magically disappear.

» *What was your worst job?*

I loved all of my jobs including furniture salesman, ice cream shop clerk, bank teller, and mover.

» *What’s your favorite indulgence?*

Red Burgundy. When a red from Burgundy is good, it’s one of my favorite pleasures.

» *What trait do you most deplore in others?*

Disrespect and mistreatment of fellow humans. Treating animals badly is right up there, too.

» *What’s on your nightstand?*

About six cookbooks.

» *What’s your favorite movie?*

Casablanca.

» *What’s your favorite sport?*

Cycling. I’m a dedicated ex-runner.

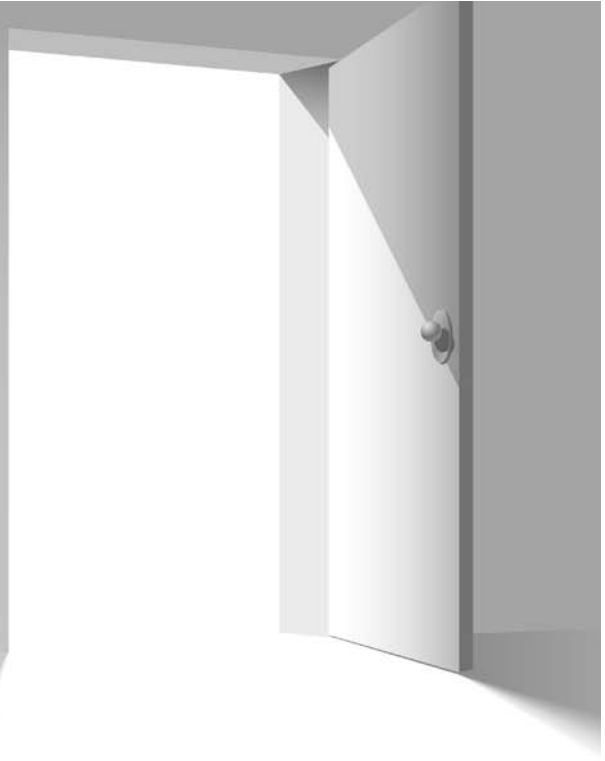
» *What’s your worst habit?*

Biting my fingernails—which is quite disgusting. I’ve quit about 15 times over the years.

» *If you weren’t in economics, what would you want to do?*

I’d be a professional chef of modern American cuisine—using classical (mostly French) cooking techniques with local ingredients. A bistro with interesting and creative, but not pretentious, food.

A Room of One's Own



"I had absolutely *no* interest in economics," says Marie Mora, professor of economics at the University of Texas-Pan American. "As an undergraduate, I literally took classes to avoid economics because of the terrible things I'd heard about it—it was boring, confusing, too many graphs. And I associated it with business."



Marie T. Mora
Professor of Economics,
University of
Texas-Pan American

It wasn't long, however, until her head was turned. While taking an anthropology class, then her major, on the modernization of traditional societies, the connection was made. "I saw how economics is a very real part of most aspects of life, and how interesting and wide-ranging the field really is. I changed my major at the end of that semester, took my principles classes in the summer, and then took 18 hours of econ the next fall, which I wouldn't advise, by the way."

Since then, she has never turned back.

It's hard to imagine a more dynamic and relevant setting in which to apply economics than at the Uni-

versity of Texas-Pan American, which sits just 25 minutes from the U.S.–Mexico border. Mora's research, in fact, focuses on border relationships and labor, two topics in nearly every headline of the day.

"We're really one community that just happens to be separated by a border," she says. "I find it interesting that so many policies that affect minorities—as well as women—are designed by people who do not have a personal perspective on the consequences of such policies. This whole issue of building a fence along the U.S.–Mexico border seems to be pushed by non-Hispanics in Washington who are quite unfamiliar with

the dynamics of the border region. Our metropolitan area here in McAllen depends a lot on Mexican nationals crossing the border for a leisure day or weekend trips for shopping or eating out, and quite a few Americans work in Mexico as well. Many U.S. natives here have family directly across the border, so the whole idea of building fences goes against what this community is about.”

Mora regularly conveys such realities to her students. “I bring in current events and show them that economics is not done in a vacuum.” Another reality Mora conveys to the growing numbers of women in her classes is the amount of hard work that lies ahead and the hard choices that career and family present.

“As economists, we talk about scarcity,” she says. “We can’t have it all, so of course, we all make sacrifices. But, given how important publishing is at the beginning of the tenure-track clock, it seems like one of the worst times to be distracted by marriage or children. I expect that some people will criticize me for saying this, because I don’t have any children myself. Unfortunately I have seen several promising female economists who essentially give up their careers to get married and have children.”

Mora finds that disheartening at times. “When women drop out, it’s so hard to make up that lost time, especially with publications. It shouldn’t be that way, but it is. What we need is a stronger support network so that women can continue publishing even if they leave a tenure-track position, to keep their options open.”

Mora’s own early history was one of furious writing and publish-

ing. Her successful publications and teaching led to tenure and a full professorship by age 36. Most recently she has assumed the presidency of the American Society of Hispanic Economists (ASHE).

Her early accomplishments can be attributed to her own determination and focus, and perhaps the fact that her now-husband (and frequent coauthor), Alberto Dávila, didn’t live in the same city. For the first seven years, they managed a long-distance relationship. “It was hard,” she said, “but it worked because I had my own space and no expectations on my time. I would teach and do research, and then go home and do more.”

Her advice to those in new tenure-track positions is “to completely work overtime on your research during the first few years. While a six-year tenure clock sounds like a long time, it goes quickly, and it is very easy to fall behind.” In other words, “crank out the journal articles. The process is slow.”

To graduate students, she urges them not to lose perspective. “The things we do in courses—workbook problems, theory—are not the usual things we do in research. It helps to know that this isn’t what you’ll be doing the rest of your life. Research buys you that.”

She also urges graduate students not to be shy. “I was too shy to even introduce myself to Professor Finis Welch, a noted labor economist, even though he was the reason I had applied to the program. Faculty want to help you, especially if they’re interested in what you’re doing.” ■

The Proust Questionnaire

Marie T. Mora

» *What’s a perfect day?*

A perfect day is one when I go wine-tasting with my husband, after spending the morning walking among ancient ruins in Europe.

» *What’s on your nightstand?*

Some Argentine and Uruguayan pesos that, for some unknown reason, I haven’t put away from a trip I took last year, and the book, *Commanding Heights, How the Scots Invented the Modern World*.

» *How do you treat yourself?*

By traveling abroad three or four times a year. There’s more to life than working—there’s inexpensive wine and good food.

» *What’s your favorite indulgence?*

Flying business class on international flights.

» *What trait do you most deplore in others?*

Lack of curiosity—when they believe what they’re being told without questioning.

» *Whom do you most admire?*

My grandparents, because they always stressed the importance of doing the right thing and of always being willing to help out those who needed it.

» *What’s your favorite sport?*

Soccer (in fact, that is the only sport I like).

» *What’s your most annoying/bad habit?*

Rearranging the dishes in the dishwasher to be more space-efficient after my husband loads it; it drives him crazy.

» *What’s your favorite movie?*

Spirited Away, which is a wonderful Japanese animation by Hayao Miyazaki. I also enjoy *Vertigo* and *Cabaret*.

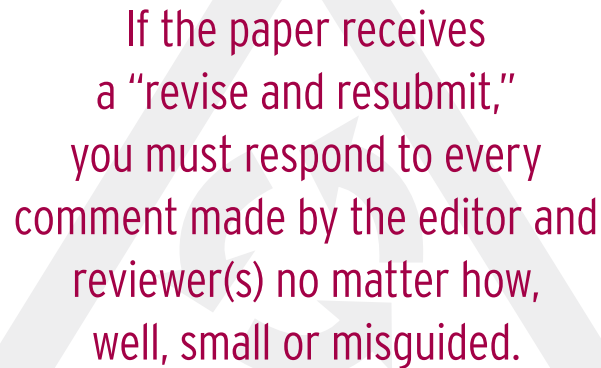
address the comments or concerns that really matter but not the small stuff. It is much more important to submit the paper to another journal quickly than to sit on it for another six months.

If the paper receives a “revise and resubmit,” you must respond to every comment made by the editor and reviewer(s) no matter how, well, small or misguided. This does not mean that you have to *agree* with every comment or suggestion, but if you do not, then you must at least explain why. And be polite! It is also very important to resubmit the paper as quickly as possible. Some journals have implicit (if not explicit) statutes of limitations for revisions, and the likelihood of getting this paper accepted is much higher than the likelihood for the next paper that has yet to be submitted—a bird in the hand... That said, papers are commonly rejected in the second round so it is no guarantee.

Step 8:

Repeat steps 3–7 until you get the paper accepted

In this next step, just keep repeating steps 3–7 until the paper is accepted. How will you know that the paper is accepted? The editor will write something to the effect that, “The paper is much improved and I am now prepared to accept it subject to a few minor edits.” This is an example of a conditional acceptance (note that it is *not* the final acceptance and you would do well to address the remaining issues quickly). Eventually you’ll get, “I am pleased to accept your interesting and important paper...” in which case the paper is accepted.



If the paper receives a “revise and resubmit,” you must respond to every comment made by the editor and reviewer(s) no matter how, well, small or misguided.

Step 9:

Pay close attention to copyedits and page proofs

You might have thought that you were long finished with this particular piece of research and you have moved on, but wait, you still have to go through copyedits and review page proofs! Copyeditors can and do make mistakes so it pays to look the changes over closely. Similarly, mistakes are common on page proofs (or galleys) so read them carefully, too. And, of course, turn these around promptly.

Step 10:

Celebrate!

You can officially pat yourself on the back. You have successfully navigated a paper through the academic journal pipeline. Now, back to work! ■

Economics Jobs beyond Academia

Economists have the choice of a wide range of jobs outside academia. Below are three examples from the perspectives of economists who currently hold them.

[one]

The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

Economists in the Research Department at the Boston Fed provide current economic analysis and policy advice to Federal Reserve decision makers. They also conduct innovative research on a wide range of topics. **Yolanda Kodrzycki**, Senior Economist and Policy Advisor, focuses on U.S. housing and labor markets, as well as on the New England economy. She has also served on numerous national and local advisory boards, including a project for the National Research Council to identify research and development priorities for the U.S. Census Bureau's state and local government statistics program.

The most interesting aspect of Kodrzycki's job is being part of a highly respected group of economists who are passionate about applying economic analysis to a wide range of economic and policy issues.

The job openings at the Boston Fed for economists are advertised with the AEA's *Job Openings for Economists* and also on its website (www.bos.frb.org/economic/recruit/index.htm). The Boston Fed is a sponsor of the AEA Summer Economics Fellows Program, which works to increase the participation and advancement of women and underrepresented minorities in economics. The Bank also participates in the annual AEA Pipeline Project Conference.

For more information, go to www.bos.frb.org/economic/index.htm.

[two]

Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

Economists at Mathematica conduct high-quality, objective research—both quantitative and qualitative—across a range of policy areas, including education, welfare, labor, disability, nutrition, early childhood, and health. For **Allison McKie**, the most exciting aspect of her job is the opportunity to conduct rigorous, policy-relevant research on issues she cares deeply about.

McKie learned about this job through her graduate school advisers and colleagues at MIT. Mathematica also recruits minority economists at the AEA Pipeline Conference. The company offers a summer fellowship for graduate students pursuing research on a policy issue of relevance to the economic and social problems of minority groups; although this fellowship is not exclusively for underrepresented populations, qualified minority students are encouraged to apply.

McKie's advice to new economists interested in this type of work: "Strong candidates for this type of employment demonstrate not only a solid set of analytic skills but also a keen interest in thinking creatively about the policy implications of their work."

[three]

Ernst & Young

Economists at Ernst & Young work on a variety of issues. **Arturo González**, who as a Senior in the Transfer Pricing Unit is currently analyzing transfer pricing, finds that the most interesting aspect of his job is applying economics tools and knowledge to the private sector. His job also offers greater promotion and salary possibilities than most academic jobs. Ernst & Young recruits minority economists through the AEA's *Job Openings for Economists*, although González discovered the position through his dissertation adviser. ■

ASHE Summer Dissertation Fellowship Award

The American Society of Hispanic Economists announces its new Summer Dissertation Fellowship Award. The fellowship provides \$1,500 to help offset summer expenses for a graduate student who is working on a dissertation leading to a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in economics or a closely related field. The award recipient shows promise of future achievement as a scholar and teacher, particularly if this achievement is in line with the goals of ASHE, which are to promote the vitality and expand the representation of Hispanics in the economics profession and to promote rigorous research on economic and policy issues affecting U.S. Hispanics.

STIPEND AND BENEFITS

- ◆ \$1,500 stipend, to be paid on June 1, 2008;
- ◆ The option to have an ASHE board member review an academic paper that the recipient plans to submit for publication within 24 months of the award;
- ◆ One-year free ASHE membership at the professional level;
- ◆ One-year student subscription to the journal of the recipient's choice or a one-year student AEA membership.

For more information, visit www.asheweb.org.

Worklife Wizard for Spanish Speakers

The WorklifeWizard.org, created by Harvard Law School, has launched **EIMundoLaboral.org** as the premier Spanish language resource for worklife issues. The website provides career resources for U.S. workers and cutting-edge research tools for management, labor, policymakers, scholars, journalists, and others.

"EIMundoLaboral represents modern-day efforts to support individuals throughout American workplaces," says Terry Babcock-Lumish, Wertheim Fellow at Harvard Law School. "Our site empowers workers to remove the veil that continues to shroud salary information."

The website includes the only American salary checker in Spanish, news and issues, occupation and earnings profiles, and much more. Take a quick survey and enter to win a safari to South Africa, an autographed Jim Rice baseball, or Amazon.com gift certificates.

Conference on Hispanic Economic Issues

The Department of Economics at Texas A&M University sponsored a conference on economic issues affecting Hispanic American communities November 3, 2007. Dennis Jansen, Texas A&M, and Marie T. Mora, University of Texas-Pan American, were the conference hosts. The conference brought together researchers working on a variety of issues with the goal of furthering the development of a network of researchers analyzing economic issues important to Hispanic Americans.

CSMGEP Pipeline Conference

The AEA held its annual "pipeline" mentoring conference at Duke University July 13-14, 2007. The conference is a key component of the National Science Foundation's program to increase the number of minorities who obtain doctorates in economics.

Participating mentors included chairs of economics departments, professors with outstanding publishing and teaching records, and professionals from government research institutions. Panels discussed the challenges many minorities face while pursuing their careers, opportunities in careers beyond the academy, the early years of a tenure track position, and choosing and thriving in graduate school. Next year, the conference moves to UC Santa Barbara, the new host of the Summer Program.

Southern Economic Association Meetings

ASHE organized the following sessions at the 2007 Southern Economic Association (SEA) annual meetings in New Orleans.

LABOR MARKET AND OTHER SOCIOECONOMIC OUTCOMES AMONG HISPANIC IMMIGRANTS IN THE U.S.

■ Day Laborers' Health and Work-Related Abuses: An Assessment of Risks, Choices, and Policies

Edwin Meléndez, New School University; Abel Valenzuela, Jr., University of California, Los Angeles; and Nik Theodore, University of Illinois at Chicago

This paper assesses the impact of informal work relations on the most vulnerable segment of the Latino immigrant population. In particular, the authors assess the risks of work-related abuses and health outcomes, how workers choose among various work environments given such risks, and how various programs and support networks may condition or mitigate the impacts of risks and workers' choices.

■ Labor Market Outcomes of Mexican Women in Mexico and the United States

Mary López, Occidental College, and Fernando Lozano, Pomona College

This paper presents evidence that the policies implemented by the Mexican government increased the labor market participation of Mexican women, and this in turn raised the average quality of Mexican immigrant women relative to men who migrated at the same time to the U.S. Using a pooled sample of the 1990 and 2000 U.S. decennial census data, the 1994-2005 CPS merged outgoing rotations, and the 1984-2000 Encuesta Nacional Ingreso Gasto de los Hogares (ENIGH), the authors compare the labor market outcomes of immigrant Mexican women relative to similar Mexican men in the U.S., and contrast these outcomes with the relative outcomes of women in Mexico the year the immigrant came to the U.S.

■ Labor Market Earnings along the U.S.-Mexico Border: An Analysis of Mexican and U.S. Decennial Census Data

Marie T. Mora, Alberto Dávila, and Alma D. Hales, University of Texas-Pan American

Using U.S. and Mexican decennial census data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, International, this study analyzes changes in labor market earnings between 1990 and 2000 among workers on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. Preliminary results indicate that wages began converging between Mexico and the U.S. during this time,

particularly when comparing the northern Mexican border region with the southern U.S. border region.

■ Are Remittances from Female Migrants Larger than the Money Sent by Male Migrants? Evidence from Mexican Migrants in Three Counties in Texas

J. Ulyses Balderas, Sam Houston State University

Based on data gathered by the researcher, this paper studies the personal and family-related factors that influence Mexican female migrants to remit. Preliminary results show that even when men still send more money home, women are also sending a considerable amount. However, if one considers the amount of remittances as a percentage of income, both groups behave similarly. In addition, demographic and economic factors play an important role in determining who remits.

TOPICS ON THE INFLUENCE OF HISPANICS ON HUMAN AND SOCIAL CAPITAL IN THE U.S. AND LATIN AMERICA

■ Heterogeneous Effects of Limited English Proficient Students in North Carolina Public Schools: A Look at Native Educational Outcomes

Robert Santillano, University of California, Berkeley

Using a nine-year panel of student-level administrative data from North Carolina, this study tests for peer effects of English learners on others in public elementary schools on standardized math and reading exams. The large data set allows for use of covariate matching methods that highlight a fine disaggregation of heterogeneous effects. Contrary to fears of negative effects, both positive and negative effects exist, which are small in magnitude and reveal few generalizable trends across demographic groups.

■ Class Size and Student Achievement in Introductory Economics: Ethnicity and Gender Comparisons

Benjamin Matta, New Mexico State University; Sue K. Stockly, Eastern New Mexico University; and Benjamin Widner, New Mexico State University

This paper reports the results of a novel inquiry into the effects of class size on undergraduate students in introductory economics courses by ethnicity and gender. The data set used in the analyses was compiled from observations over several semesters at a single institution and involving a single instructor. As such, the usual statistical noise present in previous research is absent. In addition, the econometric model addresses estimation issues that have previously been avoided, issues which cast doubt on the validity of those findings. The findings in this paper indicate that class size does matter and how it matters is conditioned by ethnicity and gender.

continued on page 22 »

■ Are Hispanics in the U.S. Promoting Informality in Latin America?

Isabel Ruiz and Carlos Vargas-Silva,
Sam Houston State University

A large portion of remittances are sent through the informal sector, making it difficult for business owners to justify the sudden inflows of capital. Thus, many new businesses are opened in the informal sector of the economy. This paper uses data from the 2003 Quality of Life Survey of Colombia to distinguish between businesses opened in the formal and informal sector. Preliminary results suggest that those households that received remittances have a higher likelihood of opening a business in the informal sector.

■ A Dynamic Model of Status Effects on Social Inclusion

Francisca Richter, Cleveland State University

Status plays a role in how individuals interact within their social groups. This paper models the evolution of social inclusion and status using a system of difference equations, with fixed and stochastic parameters representing the strength of status effects relative to other competing variables effects. Behaviors displayed by the model show that convergence to distinct levels of social inclusion may be achieved by individuals, depending on their initial characteristics and the value that the social group places on status. Model implications are analyzed in the context of Latin American society, in which strong status effects are displayed.

2007 ASSA Annual Meetings

The NEA (organized by ASHE) and CSMGEP sponsored the following sessions at the 2007 annual meeting of the Allied Social Science Association (ASSA) in Chicago.

NEA SESSION: CHANGING TRENDS WITHIN THE U.S. HISPANIC COMMUNITY

Presiding: Mark Hugo Lopez, Pew Hispanic Center

Discussants: Ronald L. Oaxaca, University of Arizona; Richard Santos, University of New Mexico; Kalena Cortes, Princeton University; Rene Rosenbaum, Michigan State University

■ English Language Proficiency and Occupational Risk among Hispanic Men in the U.S.

Alberto Davila, Marie T. Mora, and Rebecca Gonzalez,
University of Texas-Pan American

Using data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and from the 2000 U.S. decennial census, this study finds that limited-English-proficient (LEP) Hispanic men in general have more hazardous occupations than their non-LEP counterparts (particularly those at the lower end of the

wage distribution). However, they also earn a greater risk premium than English-fluent men, offsetting part of the well documented LEP-earnings penalty.

■ How Do Parametric Consumer Expenditure Share Distributions Differ between Urban/Rural Mexicans and U.S. Hispanics?

David Molina, University of North Texas

Economists have long used income distribution to measure welfare. Recently, researchers have turned their attention to the distribution of expenditures. This study adds to this growing literature by providing an a priori selection criterion for consumer expenditure share distributions. It uses Mexican and U.S. household data prior to and after the North American Free Trade Agreement to show changes in consumer behavior.

■ The Impact of Hispanic Dispersion and Suburbanization on Hispanic Public Schooling

Richard Fry, Pew Hispanic Center

Using enrollment data for public schools, this analysis documents the extent to which Hispanic students have dispersed and suburbanized since the 1993-1994 school year. In addition, the analysis quantifies how the changes in Hispanic enrollment have altered the average characteristics of the public schools educating Latinos. Although modest improvements are found in the basic characteristics of schools, typical white suburban public schools differ significantly from suburban schools educating the typical Hispanic student.

■ Estimation of the Effects of the Length of Exposure to a Training Program: The Case of Job Corps

Alfonso Flores-Lagunes, University of Arizona and Princeton University; Arturo Gonzalez, Public Policy Institute of California; and Todd Neumann, University of California-Merced

This paper illustrates how recently developed methods for estimating causal effects from continuous treatments can be used to learn about the consequences of differing lengths of enrollment in the evaluation of job training programs. These methods are applied to data on Job Corps, America's largest and most comprehensive job training program for disadvantaged youth. The length of exposure is a significant source of heterogeneity in these data. Moreover, the authors find important differences across three racial and ethnic groups of participants (blacks, whites, and Hispanics), which helps explain why the benefits these groups receive from Job Corps are so disparate.

CSMGEP DISSERTATION SESSION

Chair: Susan M. Collins, Georgetown University and Brookings Institution

Discussants: Peter Henry, Stanford University, and Sue K. Stockly, Eastern New Mexico University

■ **What Makes You Go Back Home? Determinants of the Duration of Migration of Mexican Immigrants in the U.S.**

Carmen E. Carrión-Flores, University of Arizona

Carrión-Flores examines which factors—whether migration experience, demographic characteristics, economic conditions or social networks—affect the length of time Mexican immigrants spend in the United States illegally. The study relies on data from the Mexican Migration Project. This paper contributes to the literature by introducing past trips as a covariate, actual distances from origin states in Mexico to destination states in the U.S. as a proxy for migration costs, and a measure of expected U.S. real wage rather than average U.S. real wage. The empirical analysis shows that the migration duration increases as the U.S. expected real wage increases. Tighter U.S. migration policies have an ambiguous effect on the migration duration, while longer distances limit returns to one's state of origin. Both the Immigration Reform and Control Act in 1986 and the Immigration Act of 1990 increase migration duration. Faculty sponsor: Ron Oaxaca (University of Arizona).

■ **The Employment Effect of Antidepressants for Women Living with HIV in the U.S.: Evidence from the Women's Interagency HIV Study (WIHS) 1994-2004**

Omar Galarraga, Johns Hopkins University

Galarraga examines whether antidepressant treatment helps women living with HIV to improve the likelihood of being employed, conditional on receiving highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART). The study uses longitudinal, semi-annual data from the Women's Interagency HIV Study. The author examines the role of state Medicaid coverage of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors in antidepressant use to address a potential source of bias: more depressed persons are more likely to receive antidepressant treatment, but they are also more likely to be unemployed. The results show that women with HIV who took antidepressants were at least 12 percentage points more likely to be employed than women who did not use antidepressants, conditional on receiving HAART and controlling for individual and local area labor market characteristics. Improving screening, diagnosis, and treatment of depression in specific high-risk HIV positive populations may both improve physical and mental health and increase employment. Faculty sponsor: Darrell J. Gaskin (Johns Hopkins University).

■ **Is It Really Safe Sex? Analyzing the Causal Link between Contraceptive Use and Crime Rates**

Nicholas J. Hill, Jackson State University

Hill investigates the possibly causal link between contraceptive use in the 1970s and the declining crime rates of the 1990s. Hill theorizes that contraceptive use reflects decisions to delay parenthood until a family network can be established, which increases the costs associated with criminal behavior. In this context, contraceptive use can affect the crime rate by reducing the number of individuals with low costs for engaging in criminal activity. The study uses data from the Centers for Disease Control Family Growth Survey. This research extends the existing literature on crime and abortion by considering the effects of a wide array of reproductive choice technologies on the crime rate. Preliminary results suggest that contraception does affect the property crime rate but does not significantly affect the violent crime rate. Faculty sponsor: Maury Granger (Jackson State University).

■ **The Macroeconomy and Health Insurance Coverage of Minorities**

Adrian Price, Jackson State University

Price investigates the relationship between the macroeconomy and health insurance coverage of African Americans and Hispanic non-whites. The research uses a cross-sectional sample from the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey. Preliminary logistic regression results show that, for minorities, the unemployment rate is inversely correlated with the probability of health insurance coverage from any source as well as private sources. On the other hand, the unemployment rate and public health insurance coverage are directly correlated for minorities. In particular, minority women appear to be more insulated from economic fluctuations by public health insurance. Faculty sponsor: Maury Granger (Jackson State University).

■ **A Confidence Interval for Default and Prepayment Predictions of Manufactured Housing Seasoned Loans**

Frederic N. Wandey, University of Minnesota

Wandey uses proprietary data of manufactured housing (MH) loans and competing risk hazards to predict MH loan defaults and prepayment probabilities. Results show that variables used to capture option price theory in the literature on mortgage termination affect MH borrowers differently. The study also forecasts key drivers in profitability models that determine underwriting standards for acquisitions and securitizations of MH seasoned portfolios. Finally, Wandey examines racial discrimination in the MH market. Faculty sponsor: Samuel Myers (University of Minnesota).

The annual news of the AEA's Committee on the Status of Minority Groups in the Economics Profession, the National Economic Association, and the American Society of Hispanic Economists

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