

**Report Card on**  
**Gender- and Women-Friendly Sociology Departments**  
**(Among PhD Granting Institutions)**

Submitted to Sociologists For Women in Society (SWS) by:

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## The Case for SWS SEALS OF APPROVAL

Despite substantial progress over the last 30 years, women remain seriously underrepresented in the academy. Chait and Trower's (2001a) study offers a compelling contrast between ever-higher levels of gender and ethnic diversity among college students as against the relatively static level of diversity among faculty members. Of college undergraduates, about 56 percent are women, 11 percent African-American, and 8 percent Hispanic. Among full-time college faculty members, on the other hand, only 36 percent are women, 5 percent African-American, and 3 percent Hispanic.

As many researchers have shown, the under-representation of women in the academy increases the higher one moves up the institutional ladder of prestige. Women now earn 42 percent of doctoral degrees, yet only one-quarter of full professors are women, women at every rank earn less than their male counterparts, and women hold a disproportionate share of the lowest-paid part-time academic positions (Chait and Trower 2001a, Kulis 1998, Kulis, Sicotte, and Collins 2002). In sociology, women now earn 58 percent of doctoral degrees, yet they make up only 26 percent of full professors in graduate programs and they are over-represented (at 61 percent) among low-level instructors and lecturers at doctoral-granting institutions (American Sociological Association 2003a, 2003c).

In the face of these disheartening realities, Chait and Trower write,

Since universities have long prided themselves on being champions of tolerance and reform, one might expect them to have a better track record on faculty diversity. But the prospects for self-correction are bleak. Apparently, change will have to be initiated from the outside.

If, for example, a civil rights or feminist group widely disseminated a report card or ranking of the faculty compositions, broken down by race and gender, of the top colleges and universities, these schools might be spurred into constructive competition to improve (2001b).

This SWS report is a direct response to Chait and Trower's challenge. Specifically, we aim to establish a national ranking of sociology departments based on their relative "friendliness" to women and to gender and inequality scholarship.

Although women are underrepresented in sociology departments overall, there is a great deal of variation among departments in the extent to which women and gender scholarship are welcomed. By rewarding those departments that excel in their openness to women and gender scholarship with SWS SEALS OF APPROVAL, we hope to guide prospective graduate students and new PhDs in finding the "best" departments for women and gender research, and we hope to offer a useful tool to department chairs and university administrators who are seeking to diversify their faculty. This report is the first in what we expect to be an annual document, providing base line data.

One can conceptualize this SWS ranking system as akin to the National Research Council and *US News and World Report* rankings of departmental prestige and merit. In this

case, however, our goal is to recognize those departments that excel in creating a climate that is welcoming to women and feminist scholars.

The research we conducted for ranking gender-friendly departments and establishing SWS SEALS OF APPROVAL is based on data collected from the *2003 ASA Guide to Graduate Departments*. It makes use of two simple -- and highly significant -- variables:

- percentage of full-time faculty who are women
- percentage of full-time faculty with research and teaching specialties in the areas of gender and inequality

Just as the methods used by the NRC and *US News* are imperfect, it is apparent that there are no simple, unambiguous, or fully "objective" means of measuring the gender-friendliness of any given sociology department. We also recognize that women students and students interested in gender issues can receive excellent training from one or two outstanding scholars even in departments with few other women or feminist scholars in their ranks. Yet, prior research suggests that the under-representation of women faculty operates as a systematic structural impediment to the intellectual and professional success of women students and faculty (ASA Committee on the Status of Women 1990, Kanter 1977). In the same terms, a strong representation of teaching and scholarship on gender and inequality is likely to translate into a departmental climate that is more friendly and open to women and diversity.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, to promote gender equity within sociology, we hereby establish three SWS SEALS OF APPROVAL. The SWS SEAL OF APPROVAL FOR FACULTY GENDER EQUITY will be awarded to those departments in which 40 percent or more of the faculty are women. The SWS SEAL OF APPROVAL FOR GENDER SCHOLARSHIP will be granted to those departments in which over 25 percent of faculty specialize in gender or inequality scholarship. Finally, the seal we hope will be the most widely coveted -- the SWS SEAL OF EXCELLENCE -- will be awarded to those departments that meet SWS standards for both faculty equity and representation of gender scholarship.

## **SWS SEAL OF APPROVAL FOR FACULTY GENDER EQUITY**

For the last twenty years, over 40 percent of the doctoral degrees in sociology have been awarded to women. Since 1994, women have received over half the doctorates in

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<sup>1</sup> We recognize that the correlation between these variables and "gender-friendliness" is by no means absolute. We also want to note that we see a clear distinction between the number of women faculty and the number of faculty who do research on gender and inequality. We are not trying to suggest that all women study inequality, or that only women can study gender, or that the proportion of women faculty and the proportion of inequality scholars have the same impact on department climate. We are simply suggesting that these measures, taken together, are useful for determining a department's overall openness to women and to gender- and diversity-sensitive teaching and research.

sociology. In 2001, 58 percent of new sociologists were women (American Sociological Association, 2003a, 2003c).

Based on the pool of available sociology PhDs, along with the recognition that labor market and organizational barriers impact the employment of new faculty, the SWS SEAL OF APPROVAL FOR GENDER EQUITY is awarded to all those departments in which **40 percent or more** of the faculty are women.

Thirty-seven graduate departments, representing 33 percent of the doctoral-granting sociology departments in the country, meet the standards for this seal of approval (N= total number of women faculty):<sup>2</sup>

University of California- San Francisco	67%	N = 8
University of Nebraska- Lincoln	67%	N = 8
University of Cincinnati	64%	N = 7
Syracuse University	62%	N = 8
University of Iowa	56%	N = 9
University of Miami	54%	N = 7
Bowling Green State University	53%	N = 10
University of California- Santa Cruz	53%	N = 9
Iowa State University	53%	N = 16
Temple University	53%	N = 9
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign	52%	N = 11
Rutgers, State University of New Jersey	52%	N = 17
Brandeis University	50%	N = 6
University of Delaware	50%	N = 13
University of New Hampshire	49%	N = 6
University of Colorado- Boulder	48%	N = 12
Georgia State University	48%	N = 11
Arizona State University	47%	N = 8
Emory University	47%	N = 9
Kent State University	47%	N = 7
University of Oklahoma	47%	N = 7
University of California- Irvine	46%	N = 10
Wayne State University	46%	N = 5
University of California- Davis	44%	N = 11
Fordham University	44%	N = 8
Howard University	44%	N = 8
Indiana University	44%	N = 11
Northwestern University	44%	N = 11
University of Southern California	44%	N = 7

<sup>2</sup> Columbia University-Dept of Sociomedical Sciences: Sociology and Health (8 women, 62% of its faculty) and Pennsylvania State University-Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology (6 women, 55% of the faculty) are not included in this list, since these are secondary departments -- both universities also have Sociology Departments that are included in national rankings of prestige. American University (7 women, 64%) has also been removed from this list, since it will no longer be offering a Ph.D.

Southern Illinois State University	44%	N = 4
Case Western Reserve University	43%	N = 3
University of California- Riverside	42%	N = 8
Boston College	41%	N = 9
University of California- Berkeley	41%	N = 9
University of Kansas	41%	N = 7
Kansas State University	40%	N = 4
University of Nevada- Las Vegas	40%	N = 6

By contrast, nearly one-third of sociology departments (30 percent, 33 departments) have fewer than 30 percent women among their ranks. In 7 percent of doctoral-granting sociology departments, women represent only 1 out of every 10 faculty members. (For a full listing of sociology graduate programs ranked according to their representation of women faculty, see the SWS website: <http://www.newmedia.colorado.edu/~socwomen/>)

## SWS SEAL OF APPROVAL FOR GENDER SCHOLARSHIP

Recognizing the diverse subject matters involved in sociology, but also mindful of the central importance of scholarship on gender and inequality to a depth understanding of the social world and to creating a departmental climate that welcomes diversity, the SWS SEAL OF APPROVAL FOR GENDER SCHOLARSHIP is awarded to all those departments in which **over 25 percent** of the faculty name gender or inequality among their specialties.<sup>3</sup>

Overall, a total of 24 departments, representing 21 percent of the sociology departments in the country, meet the standards for SWS approval in scholarship. The following departments win this seal (N=actual number of departmental faculty who study gender and/or inequality):<sup>4</sup>

Syracuse University	54%	N = 7
University of Nebraska- Lincoln	50%	N = 6
University of Cincinnati	46%	N = 5
Kansas State University	40%	N = 4
University of California- Santa Barbara	37%	N = 11

<sup>3</sup> Specifically, this includes all those faculty who listed “Gender,” “Feminist Theory,” “Sex and Gender,” “Inequality,” “Race/Class/Gender,” “Race, Class, and Gender,” “Gender Inequality,” “Gender and [blank] Inequality,” “Feminist [blank],” “Gender and [blank],” “Women/Men and [blank],” in the *2003 American Sociological Association Guide to Graduate Departments*.

<sup>4</sup> With 8 faculty members, representing 73% of the department, listing gender or inequality among their specialties, American University, if included in these rankings, would be the top department in the country overall.

University of Kansas	35%	N = 6
Georgia State University	35%	N = 8
Brandeis University	33%	N = 4
University of Nevada- Las Vegas	33%	N = 5
University of California- Riverside	32%	N = 6
University of Southern California	31%	N = 5
Loyola University Chicago	31%	N = 4
Rutgers, State University of New Jersey	30%	N = 10
University of Massachusetts- Amherst	30%	N = 6
State University of New York- Albany	29 %	N = 5
University of Connecticut	29%	N = 8
Vanderbilt University	29%	N = 4
Ohio State University	27%	N = 9
Purdue University	27%	N = 6
State University of New York- Buffalo	27%	N = 3
Iowa State University	27%	N = 8
University of Maryland	27%	N = 8
University of Pittsburgh	27%	N = 4
Florida State University	26%	N = 6

By contrast, 15 departments (13 percent) included not a single faculty member who listed gender as a research or teaching interest. (For a full listing of sociology graduate programs ranked according to their representation of gender and inequality scholarship, see the SWS website: <http://www.newmedia.colorado.edu/~socwomen/>)

## **SWS STAMP OF EXCELLENCE**

Finally, the SWS would like to proudly recognize those departments that excel in both the proportion of faculty who are women and in the representation of scholarship on gender inequality. To the "best" departments in the country in these terms, we offer the SWS SEAL OF EXCELLENCE.

To be included in this list, a department must meet the SWS standards for BOTH representation of women faculty and representation of gender/inequality scholarship. Such departments are likely to be the most gender- and women-friendly departments in the country.

Twelve doctoral-granting sociology departments met these demanding criteria. In rank order, they include:

	% Women	%Gender Scholarship (N)
University of Nebraska, Lincoln	67	50 (6)
Syracuse University	62	54 (7)
University of Cincinnati	64	46 (5)
Brandeis University	50	33 (3)
Georgia State University	48	35 (8)
Rutgers, State University New Jersey	52	30 (10)
Iowa State University	53	27 (8)
Kansas State University	40	40 (4)
University of Kansas	41	35 (6)
University of Southern California	44	31 (5)
University of California, Riverside	42	32 (6)
University of Nevada, Las Vegas	40	33 (5)

Of these 12 doctoral granting institutions recognized by the SWS for their excellence in gender-friendliness, 6 are ranked among the **60 most prestigious sociology departments** in the country by *US News and World Report* (2001). They include (with their *US News* rank):

Rutgers University	(34)
University of California- Riverside	(34)
University of Southern California	(43)
Brandeis University	(48)
University of Kansas	(54)
University of Nebraska- Lincoln	(59)

## Women, Scholarship, and Institutional Prestige

For comparative purposes, it is important to consider the extent of overlap between departments that are elsewhere ranked highly for their scholarly productivity and prestige in contrast to those ranked highly by SWS measures. As previous research has suggested and as noted earlier, there is good reason to believe that the higher one moves up the ladder of institutional prestige, the fewer women one will find, the less diversity overall, and the less concern with gender and inequality scholarship. Nonetheless, one also finds a great deal of departmental variation, even among the upper ranks.

Using the *US News and World Report* (2001)<sup>5</sup> ranking of departmental quality, the **top 20 sociology graduate departments** in the nation include the following proportions of women faculty and faculty who teach and research gender and inequality:

	%Women	% Gender Scholarship
University of California Berkeley	41	14
University of Wisconsin Madison	31	12
University of Chicago	20	5
University of Michigan Ann Arbor	34	18
Stanford University	38	25
University of North Carolina Chapel Hill	26	15
Harvard University	37	5
University of California, Los Angeles	30	15
Northwestern University	44	20
Princeton University	21	7
Indiana University	44	20
University of Arizona	33	17
University of Pennsylvania	26	9
Columbia University	26	0
Cornell University	29	21
Duke University	36	10
University of Texas, Austin	34	11
University of Washington	34	12
Johns Hopkins University	33	0
Pennsylvania State University	17	3

Clearly, there is a high level of variation among these departments. Yet, it is also true that, overall, women faculty and gender/inequality scholarship tends to be even more under-represented at this level than is the case among less prestigious departments.

Of the 20 most prestigious departments in the country, only 3 receive the SWS SEAL OF APPROVAL FOR FACULTY GENDER EQUITY:

University of California Berkeley  
Northwestern University  
Indiana University

None of the 20 most prestigious universities in the country receive the SWS SEAL OF APPROVAL FOR GENDER SCHOLARSHIP.

Hence, to the extent that organizational cultures and academic practices continue to favor men, many women scholars and students interested in gender research will continue to be

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<sup>5</sup>The National Research Council Rankings might also be included in this discussion of gender and prestige. Also noteworthy is the department ranking by Barry Markovsky in his 2000 ASA *Footnotes* article, ranking departments according to their article publication records (in AJS, ASR, SF).

faced with a trade off -- seeking work and education in the most prestigious departments, or choosing to surround themselves with women faculty and scholars interested in gender and diversity teaching and research. However, one of the many purposes of this report is to demonstrate that this tradeoff is not absolute. As our data suggest, there are many mid-level and highly-ranked sociology department that demonstrate a laudable commitment to equality in both scholarship and the representation of women among their faculty.

Although this is only an initial assessment and there are many other criteria that could be used to measure gender-friendliness, we are convinced that this SWS ranking system is crucial. We expect it will be highly useful to a wide range of students, faculty, department chairs, and university administrators. We urge all those departments receiving SWS SEALS to proudly note this fact in their department brochures, announcements, and future *ASA Guides to Graduate Departments*. Our hope is that SWS approvals will become widely recognized standards of excellence within the discipline.

Finally, we join Chait and Trower (2001b) in seeking additional methods to prod departments forward toward the goal of equality and justice. We welcome any and all suggestions for next year's report.

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