

CLIMATE STUDY OF THE ECONOMICS PROFESSION:

A SURVEY OF ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT CHAIRS IN THE UNITED STATES

Institute for Policy & Social Research
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Dr. Donna Ginther
Whitney Onasch



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In December of 2024, the American Economic Association (AEA) retained the Institute for Policy & Social Research at the University of Kansas to conduct a survey of economics department chairs in the United States. IPSR administered a survey of chairs to understand their training experiences, departmental recruitment practices, experiences handling incidents of discrimination or harassment, and incorporation of the American Economic Association's Best Practices recommendations into departmental policies and processes.

The 221 chairs who responded to the survey represent a range of institutions and programs, from heads of large doctoral-degree granting departments at R1 universities to administrators at regional and national baccalaureate colleges.

Below we outline key findings from the survey and summarize the kinds of support chairs requested from the AEA.

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

Chair Experiences: Training and Preparation to Handle Discrimination and Harassment Claims

- The majority of chairs (78.1%) received no training from their institution to prepare them for their role as chair. Less than half (46.7%) reported receiving recent Title IX training specific to their leadership role.
- Despite the relative infrequency of chair-specific preparation and Title IX training, 1 in 6 of those surveyed (16.7%) had handled incidents of sexual harassment in their departments. Nearly a quarter had handled other types of discrimination and harassment claims.
- Of those who reported that they had dealt with issues of discrimination and harassment, only about half (53.9%) felt that their institution had adequately prepared them to handle the situation.

Faculty Hiring Practices

- We asked about hiring practices in the field and we find that nearly all chairs (96.7%) report that their department conducts first round interviews online, typically in December. A substantial majority (93.8%) report that their departments scheduled follow up campus visits for their top candidates (typically three visits per position) in late January.
- Most chairs (84.1%) reported that they give candidates between 6 days and 14 days to decide on an offer.
- Departments were split on the decision to allow extensions to the offer acceptance window, with just under half of chairs (47.3%) reporting that they considered extensions in their most recent search.

Recruitment, Promotion and Tenure

- 85.4% of chairs reported that they set candidate evaluation criteria in advance and 78.6% report using standardized interview questions when recruiting new faculty.
- A significant majority of chairs (85.9%) reported that their job postings state an interest in employee diversity and about two-thirds (69.4%) indicated that they track demographic data during faculty searches.
- We asked chairs whether their departments have formal programs that pair junior faculty with experienced colleagues and find that just over half (51.9%) of chairs reported that such programs exist at their institutions.
- Despite the importance of dual career hiring programs, only 20.4% of chairs reported that their institution offers formal support for dual-career hires.

Admitting and Working with Students

- When considering graduate student admission, 76.5% of chairs reported their institutions put weight on personal statements and professional experience (rather than narrowly focusing on quantitative measures of performance).
- 66.8% of chairs oversee departments that monitor student demographics.
- Nearly two-thirds (65.2%) of respondents felt that faculty in their departments receive adequate support to meet the needs of diverse students.

Efforts to Improve Departmental Climate

- Less than half of chairs (43.4%) agreed that their department had taken deliberate steps to assess and improve the department's climate for women and members of underrepresented groups.
- The majority of respondents - 129 in total - indicated that they had neither adopted a code of conduct nor reviewed the AEA code of conduct within their departments.
- Only a quarter of respondents (25.6%) indicated that their department had adopted inclusive event guidelines intended to ensure that events are accessible to those with visual, mobility and hearing impairments.

Diversity of Seminars and Speakers

- Chairs who indicated they host at least one external seminar speakers per year were asked about the proportion of speakers they recruit who are women and non-white. In aggregate, chairs report that approximately one-third of external seminar speakers (36.5%) were women and less than one-third of external speakers (30.8%) are non-white.

SUPPORT NEEDED FROM THE AEA

At the conclusion of the survey, chairs were asked an open ended question about how the AEA could support department chairs. A few key themes emerged:

Opportunities for Peer-to-Peer Discussion and Support

- Several chairs expressed a need for a community of peers that facilitates problem solving and peer-to-peer support. Multiple participants offered suggestions for how the AEA could facilitate community online through a discussion forum or Discord channel or in-person as an half day supplement to existing professional meetings.

Training and Resources

- Chairs expressed a wish for additional training and support from the AEA, specifically citing a committee on departmental administration that is empowered to work with chairs, a report of job-market insights to facilitate student advising, or an annual document that summarize trends in the profession. Still others expressed a need for training opportunities through the AEA or other professional organizations, particularly for chairs who are new to their role.

More Robust Communication from the AEA

- Feedback from chairs implied a need for more robust communication about the resources and support the AEA provides for department heads. One person specifically noted that they are unaware of the resources and assistance that the AEA provides to department chairs. Others simply expressed a desire for more intentional sharing of the resources the AEA provides.

SUMMARY

Findings from this survey highlight both the progress and ongoing challenges within economics departments across the United States and opportunities for the AEA to advance efforts to improve the professional climate in the field of economics.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

In December 2024, IPSR conducted a survey of economics department chairs to understand their training background, recruitment practices, experiences handling incidents of discrimination or harassment, and incorporation of AEA Best Practices recommendations into departmental policies and processes.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

In December of 2024, the American Economic Association retained the Institute for Policy & Social Research at the University of Kansas to conduct a survey of economics department chairs in the United States. The survey invited chairs to provide insight on the professional climate in the field of economics. As part of this study, we aimed to better understand the training experiences of economics department chairs, departmental recruitment practices, experiences handling incidents of discrimination or harassment, and incorporation of AEA Best Practices recommendations into departmental policies and processes. The aim of this data collection effort was to inform efforts to develop educational programs and resources to improve the professional climate in the field of economics.

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

IPSR obtained from the AEA a contact list comprising names and email addresses of 1,114 economics department chairs in the United States. We were able to reach 1,082 eligible chairs with an invitation to take the survey. A total of 221 chairs responded to the survey, a response rate of 20%. These 221 responses comprise 26 partial responses and 195 complete responses. Participants who completed the survey were offered compensation in the form of a \$50 gift card to Amazon.com. Before we report and

Chairs who responded to the survey represent a broad cross section, from heads of large doctoral-degree granting departments at R1 universities to administrators at regional and national baccalaureate colleges with wide variation in program size and degree offerings.

visualize survey results, we describe the characteristics of our participants' institutions and departments.

DEPARTMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Respondents were first asked about the size of their teaching workforce, both tenure-track and adjuncts/lecturers. They were asked about the size and scope of their academic programs at the undergraduate, master's, and PhD levels, and the type of institution they belong to (e.g., Research Intensive or R1). Chairs who responded to the survey represent a broad cross section of the population, from chairs at large doctoral-degree granting institutions to chairs at regional and national baccalaureate colleges, with wide variation in program size and degree offerings.

Teaching Workforce

Around two-thirds of the chairs in our survey (65.6%) came from schools with 15 or fewer full-time equivalent tenure-stream faculty. A fifth (21.1%) came from departments with 16-25 tenure-stream FTE, while comparably few (13.3%) came from larger departments with 26 or more faculty FTE (Figure 1).

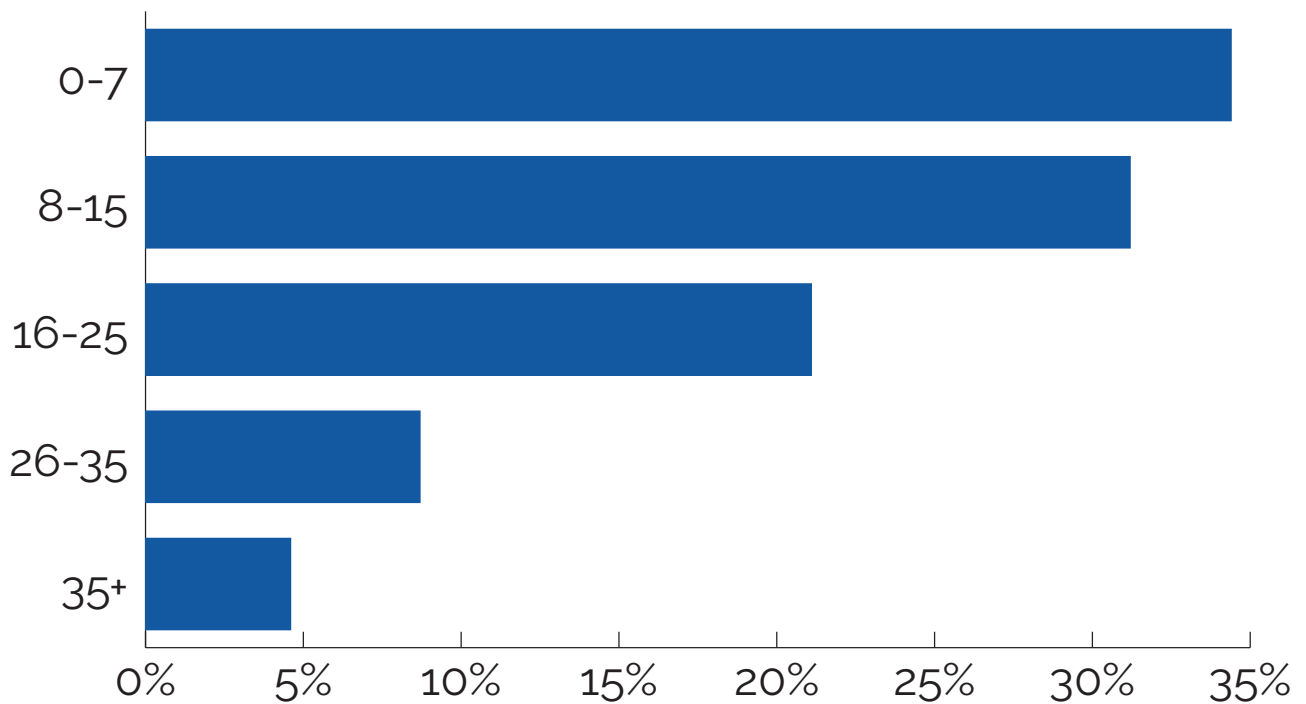
Chairs were asked about the number of non-tenure-stream instructors in their departments, specifically, full-time equivalent adjuncts, lecturers, and other teaching staff. Around half of respondents (50.5%) reported three or fewer "other" teaching staff. A third (33.0%) reported 4-8 non-tenure-stream instructors, and 16.5% reported nine or more.

Program Scope and Size

Chairs were then asked questions about the scope and size of their academic programs. First, they were asked to tell us how many undergraduate degrees their department conferred in the last academic year. Responses reflect a range of program sizes; 24.8% reported 0-15 undergraduate degree completions per year, 23.4% reported 16-40, 27.1% reported 41-100, and 24.8% reported that their department confers more than 100 undergraduate degrees per year.

Chairs were then asked, "What is the highest degree offered by your department?" We found that half of respondents (49.5%) oversee departments offering a bachelor's degree

Figure 1. What is the size of your department in terms of full-time equivalent tenured or tenure-stream faculty?



only. In 16.5% of departments, a master's degree was the highest degree offered, while a third of the chairs surveyed (33.9%) oversee Ph.D.-granting departments (Figure 2).

Chairs who reported that their department offers at least a master's degree were asked to tell us how many master's degrees their department conferred in the last academic year. Of the 98 chairs who responded to this question, just over half (58.2%) oversaw programs that conferred 10 or fewer master's degrees while 41.8% came from larger programs that conferred 11 or more master's degrees in the last academic year.

Chairs who reported that their department offers a doctoral degree were asked about the size of their Ph.D. programs. They were first asked to tell us the typical size of entering classes in their doctoral program. Of the 72 chairs who reported overseeing a doctoral program, around a quarter (27.8%) see 0-5 entering Ph.D. students in a typical year; a comparable proportion of respondents see 6-10 (36.1%) or 11-20 (29.2%) entering Ph.D.

students. A smaller number (6.9%) report more than 20 entering Ph.D. students in a typical year.

Chairs were then asked to tell us about the size of graduating classes in their doctoral program. Half (50.0%) reported 0-5 Ph.D. graduates in a typical year. A smaller proportion reported 6-10 (27.8%) or 11-20 (20.8%) Ph.D. graduates. Only one (1.4%) respondent reported graduating more than 20 Ph.D.s in a typical year.

Institution Type

Finally, chairs were asked to tell us about the type of institutions in which they are currently employed (Figure 3). Half of all survey respondents indicated that they come from doctoral-degree-granting institutions with high (15.1%) or very high (34.9%) research intensity. Just over a third came from regional (20.3%) or national (17.0%) baccalaureate colleges, and 11.8% came from master's colleges and universities.

Figure 2. What is the highest degree offered by your department?

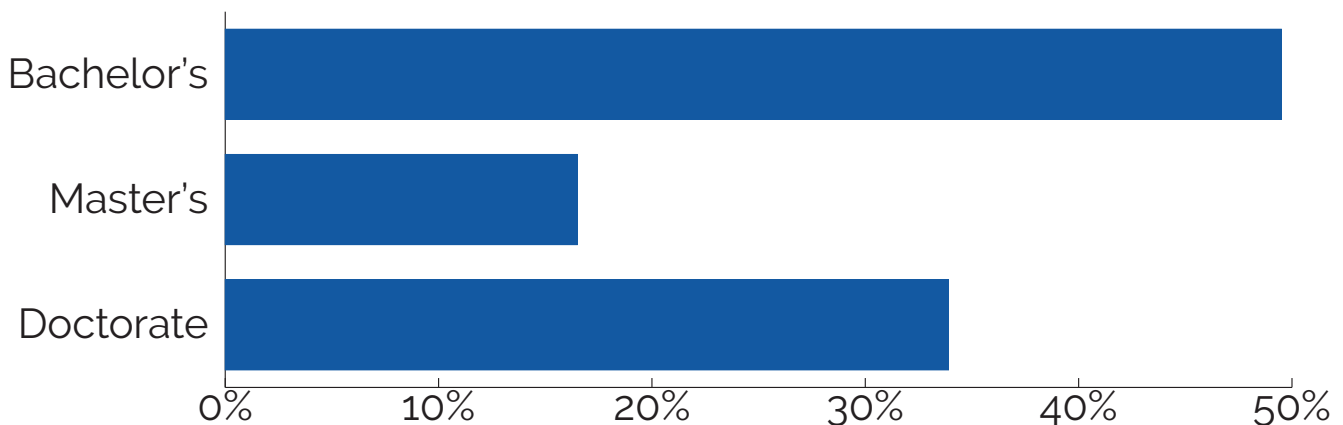
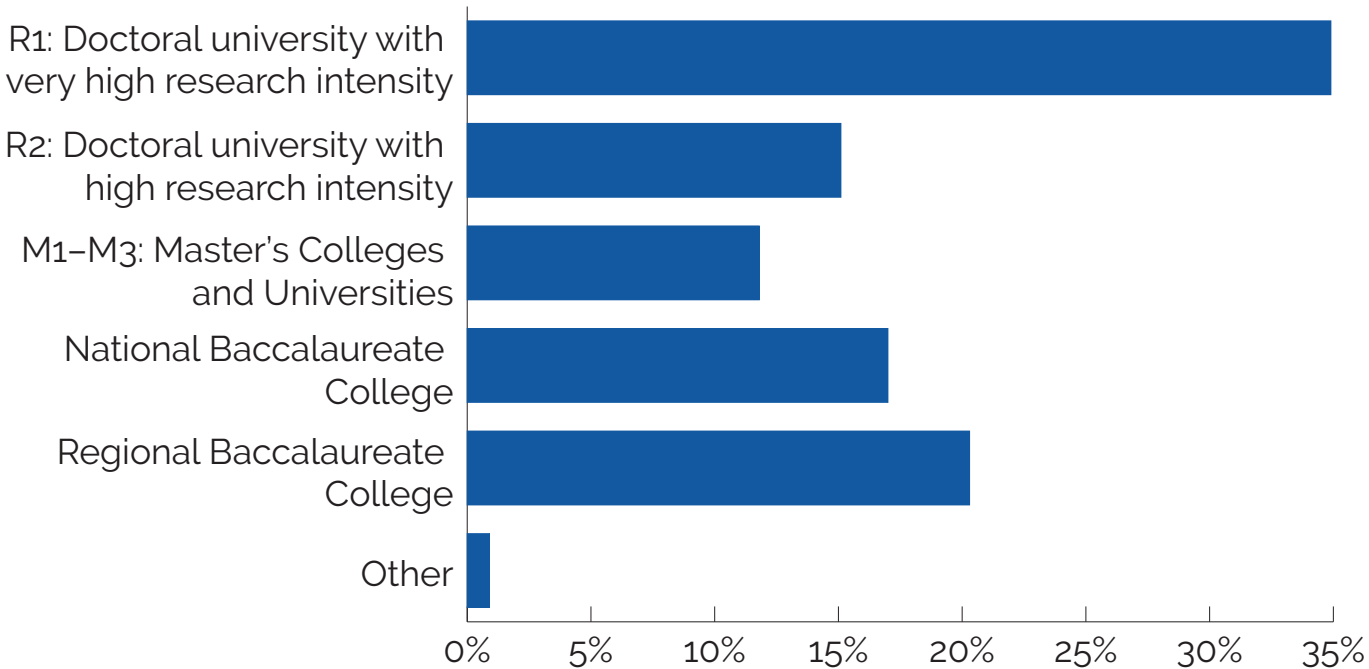


Figure 3. What best describes the college or university where you are employed?



SECTION 1. CHAIR EXPERIENCES

TRAINING EXPERIENCES

After asking chairs about the characteristics of their departments and institutions, they were asked about both the training they had received to prepare for the role of chair and about their exposure to recent Title IX training. We found that a sizable majority of chairs (78.1%) received no training from their institution to prepare them for their role as chair. Less than half (46.7%) reported receiving recent Title IX training specific to their leadership role.

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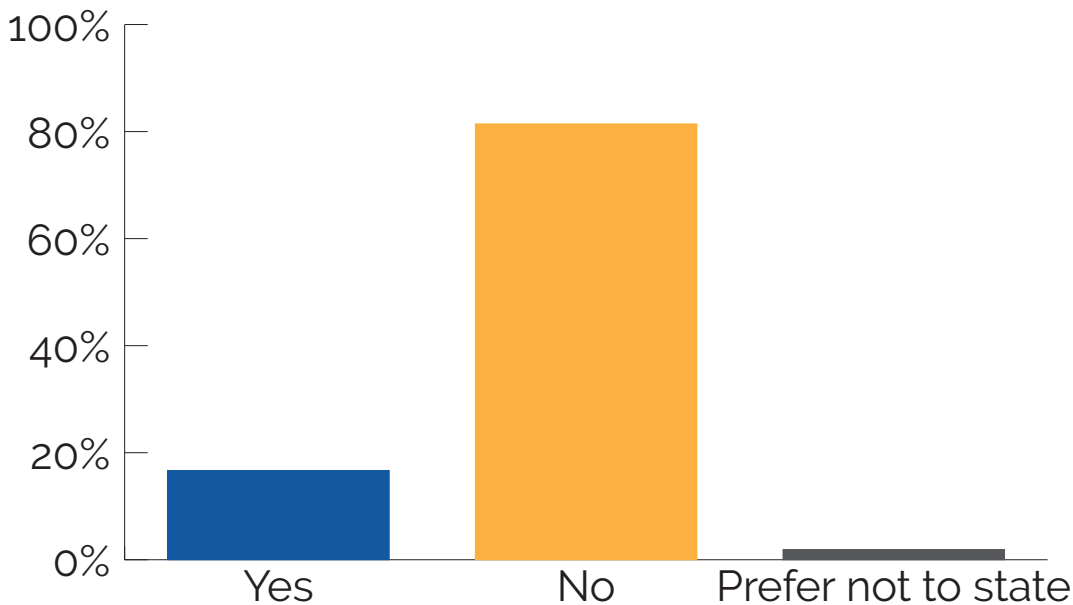
HARASSMENT CLAIMS

Chairs were then asked to tell us about their experience handling incidents of discrimination and harassment in their departments, including the types of claims they encountered, the source of these reports, whether action was taken beyond required reporting when incidents occurred,

and whether chairs felt prepared to manage these issues when they arose.

Despite the relative infrequency of chair-specific preparation and Title IX training, 1 in 6 of those surveyed (16.7%) reported handling incidents of sexual harassment in their departments (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Has an issue of sexual harassment ever been reported to you as chair



We asked chairs about their experience handling other types of discrimination and harassment claims. Around a quarter of those surveyed (50 chairs) reported that they had handled other types of claims, most commonly those based on race/ethnicity, political views, research topics, and marital status or caregiving responsibilities (Figure 5).

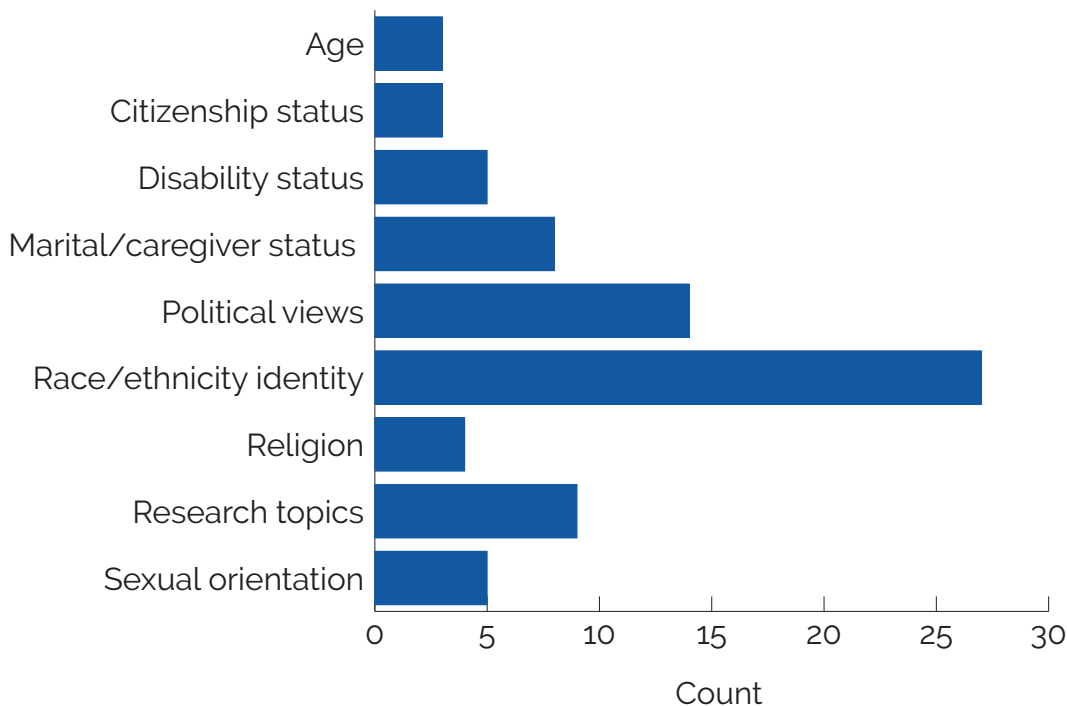
Individuals in the survey who had handled discrimination and harassment claims indicated that these reports came most frequently from undergraduate students (35 respondents), tenure-stream faculty (20 respondents) and graduate students (18 respondents).

In cases of both sexual harassment and harassment based on other identities and characteristics, we find that the majority of chairs report proactive steps to resolve the situation beyond the required reporting

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of the incidents. Of the 35 who reported that they had handled issues of sexual harassment, around two-thirds (62.9%) indicated that they had taken action to resolve the situation beyond required reporting, and in cases where other forms of harassment were reported, 60.0% of chairs took action over and above required reporting.

Figure 5. Have you had to address other forms of discrimination or harassment in your department?



PREPARATION TO HANDLE CLAIMS

Of those who reported that they had dealt with issues of discrimination and harassment, only about half (53.9%) felt that their institution had adequately prepared them to handle the situation (Figure 6). When asked to elaborate, several key themes emerged.

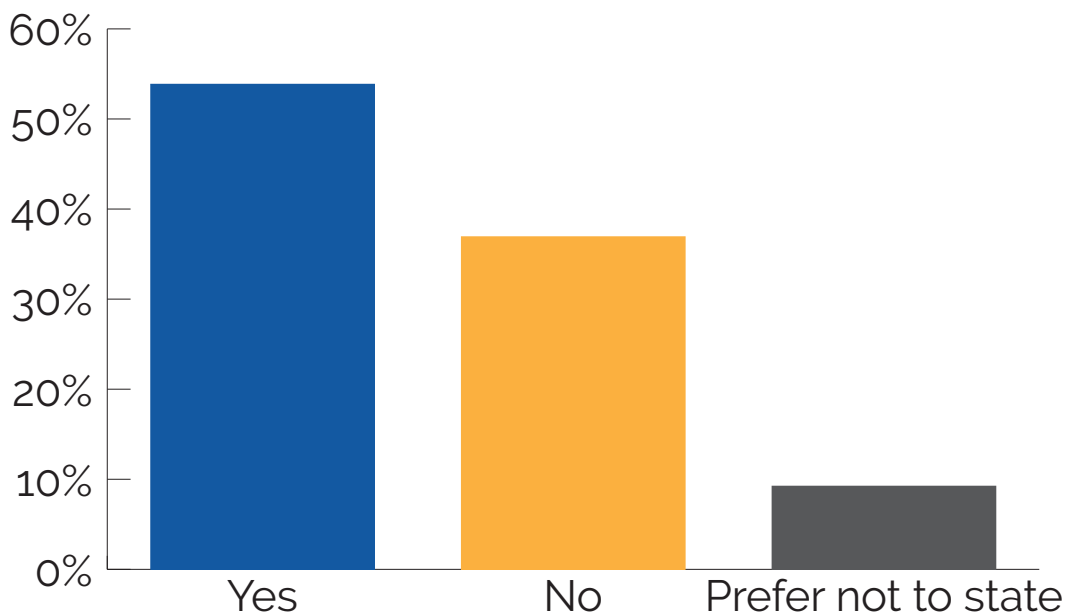
Positive responses to the question of preparation often noted the clarity of institutional procedures for reporting and handling discrimination and harassment claims. Respondents generally agreed that they had access to institutional support, including university counsel, the Provost's office, and HR representatives to guide them through formal processes. While initial training may have been lacking, respondents were able to reach out to relevant offices like the Title IX office, minority affairs, and the ombudsperson to navigate cases of discrimination and harassment.

Those who felt unprepared highlighted the

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inadequacy of training and the cumbersome or ineffective nature of institutional processes. They noted, for example, that while training and education on issues of discrimination and harassment exists at their university, it is often not provided in a proactive manner. Others noted that when individuals seek support or have questions, they can find people to talk to. However, individuals managing harassment reports are often left to navigate

Figure 6. Do you feel your university adequately prepared you to handle issues of discrimination and harassment in your department?



difficult interpersonal situations on their own, with little training or support provided in advance.

While some respondents focused on the inadequacy of training, others pointed to issues with institutional processes. Specifically, they noted that formal processes like Title IX are cumbersome and seem to be used for legal protection rather than a sincere effort to meet ethical obligations. Others note that while there are resources available through institutional Title IX coordinators and similar roles, there is inadequate guidance on how to address

situations that may not meet the exact Title IX criteria. Still others note that even when formal processes are initiated, the outcomes are unsatisfactory, with perpetrators facing minimal consequences. One participant noted that resolution procedures often put chairs between students and faculty, noting that student complaints are handled through a university office that serves students which often puts chairs in the position of having to defend their faculty from student reports, making the investigation and resolution process adversarial and counterproductive.

SECTION 2. FACULTY HIRING PRACTICES

In addition to understanding chairs' training experiences and preparation to handle discrimination and harassment, we also sought to understand the state of hiring practices within the economics profession.

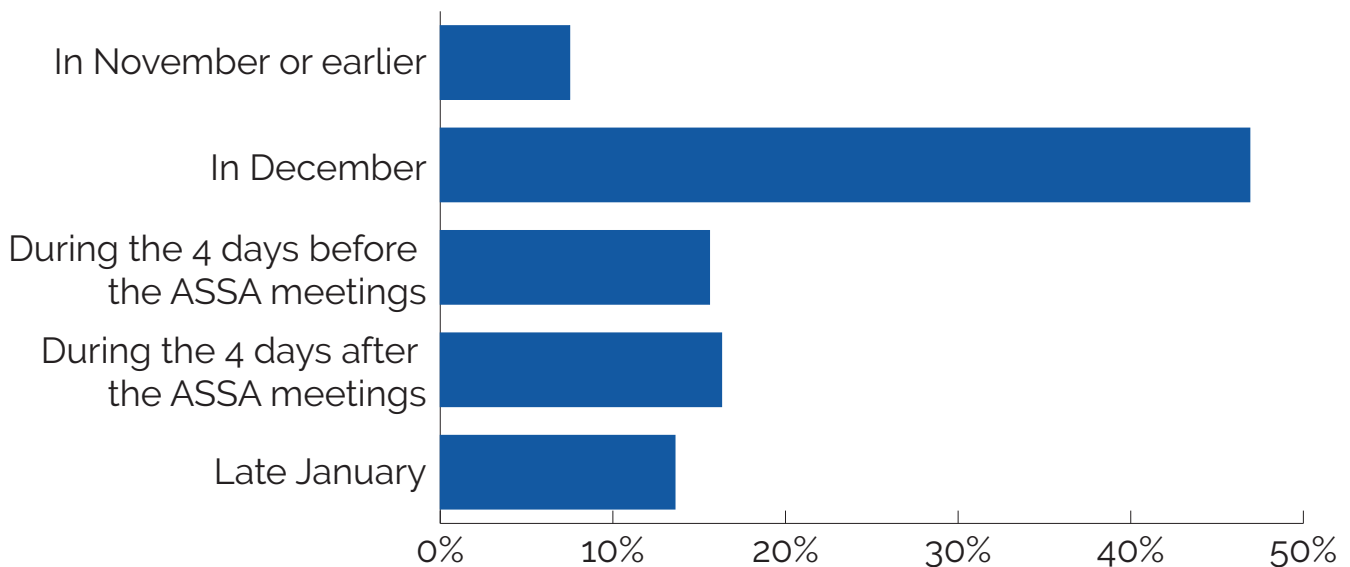
Chairs were asked whether they had hired any new junior tenure track faculty in the last three years. Only about a quarter of participants (56) indicated that they had not recently hired. All others had conducted at least one successful search between 2021 and 2024.

Those participants who indicated that they had recently hired a faculty position were asked a series of questions about their hiring processes during their most recent faculty search, including the timing and format of interviews and the management of offers to candidates.

Chairs were initially asked "Did you do first round interviews online?" We find that nearly all chairs (96.7%) report that their department conducts first round interviews online. Those who reported that they do first round interviews online (n=147) were asked about the timing of these interviews (Figure 7). We found that 46.9% of those surveyed conducted initial online interviews in December. A total of 31.9% conduct these interviews in the four days preceding or following the Allied Social Science Associations (ASSA) Annual Meeting in early January. A relatively small proportion (7.5%) conduct initial interviews in November or earlier and just 13.6% conduct first round online interviews into late January.

Those who conducted first round interviews online were asked if they scheduled any in-person campus visits for finalists. A small minority of chairs (6.2%) reported that they did not schedule campus visits; all of those who did not

Figure 7. If you did first round interviews online when did you conduct the online interviews?



schedule in-person campus visits conducted second round interviews online.

A substantial majority of chairs (93.8%) report that their departments did schedule follow up campus visits for their top candidates from the first round of online interviews.

Those who scheduled campus visits were asked how many visits they scheduled (on average) per open position (Figure 8). The majority of chairs (56.6%) reported that they

generally schedule three in person visits. It is relatively less common to schedule two visits (11.2%) or four or more visits (32.2%).

Next, respondents were asked about the timing of second round interviews, whether online or in-person (Figure 9). We found that many departments (46.7%) are scheduling second round candidate interviews in late January. A relatively small proportion schedule them in mid-January (21.5%) or into February (31.9%).

Figure 8. How many campus visits did you schedule on average per position?

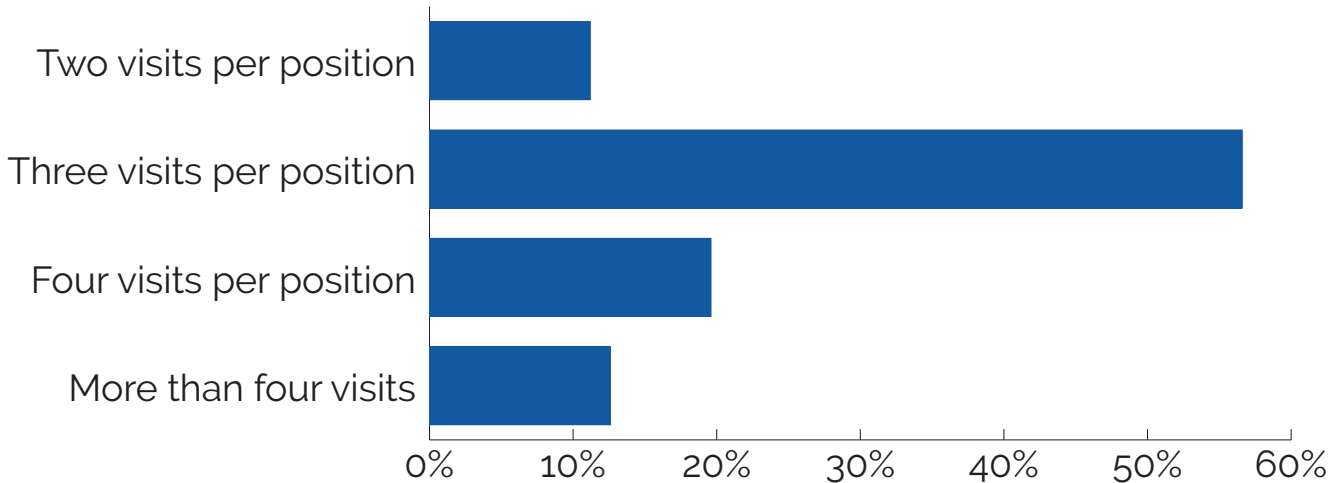
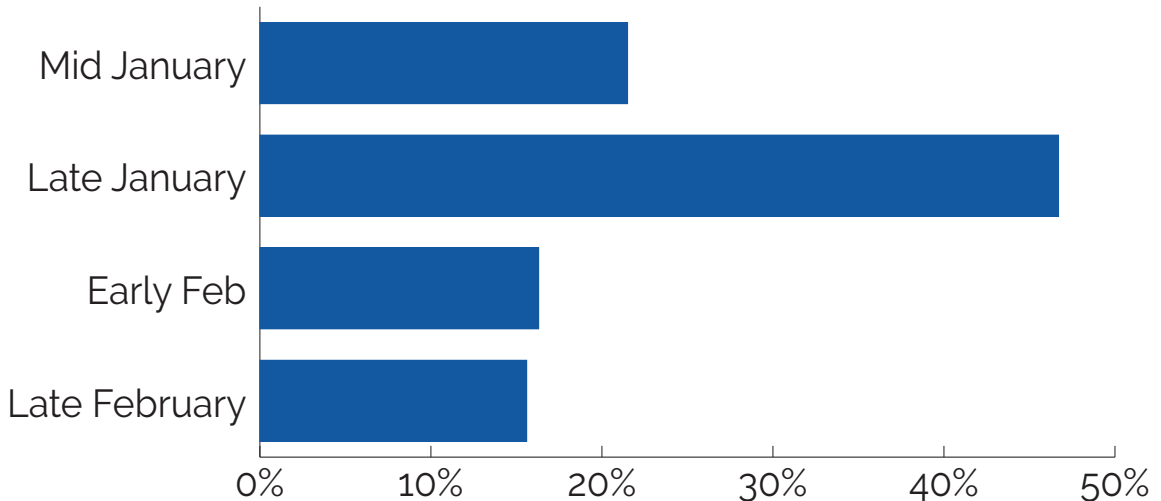


Figure 9. When did you conduct your second round online interviews/campus visits?



Subsequently, chairs were asked about the management of offers to successful candidates, including the timing of the first offer, the number of days candidates were given to decide, and whether the department allowed extensions to the offer acceptance window.

Chairs were asked, "When did you make your first offer?" (Figure 10). While very few chairs (4.0%) reported issuing offers in early January or before, departments varied substantially in when they issued initial offers, with 24.0% in late January, 28.7% in early February, 18.7% in mid-February, and 24.7% in late February or later.

Finally, chairs were asked how many days they typically give candidates to respond to an offer (Figure 11) and whether they considered extensions to offer-acceptance window. Most chairs (84.1%) reported that they give candidates between 6 days and 14 days to decide. Relatively few departments allowed five days or less (9.9%) and even fewer allowed more than 14 days (6.0%). Departments were split on the decision to allow extensions to the offer acceptance window, with just under half of chairs (47.3%) reporting that they considered extensions to the decision window in their most recent search.

Figure 10. When did you make your first offer?

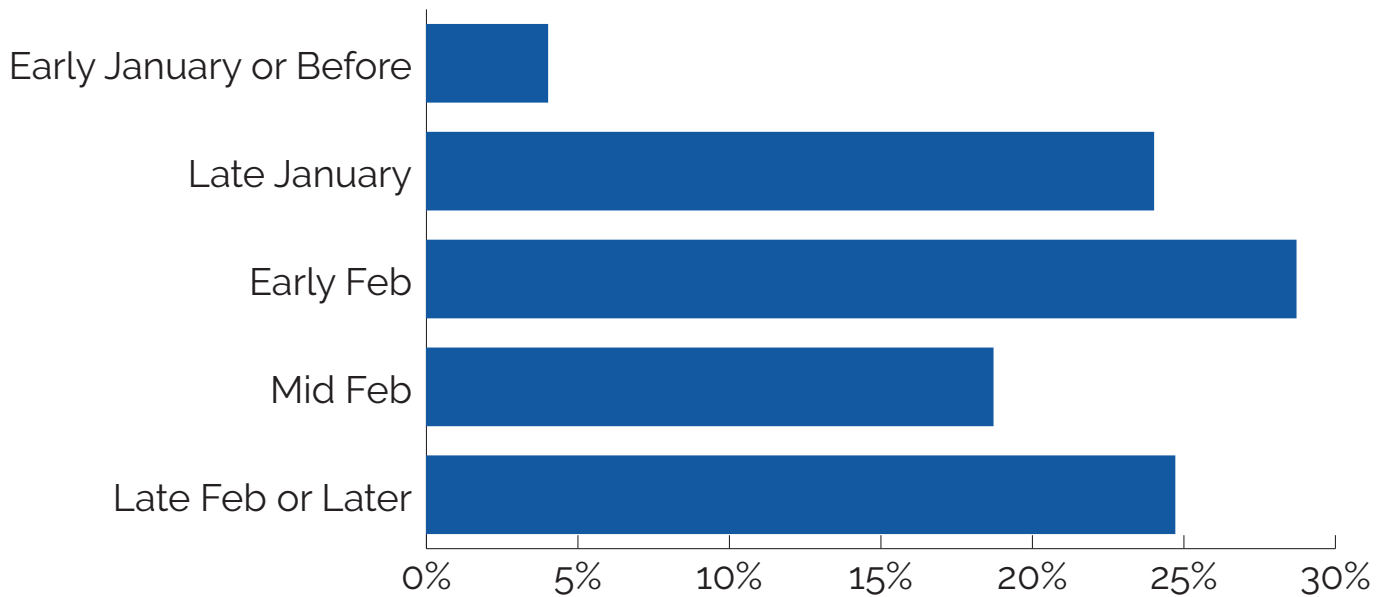
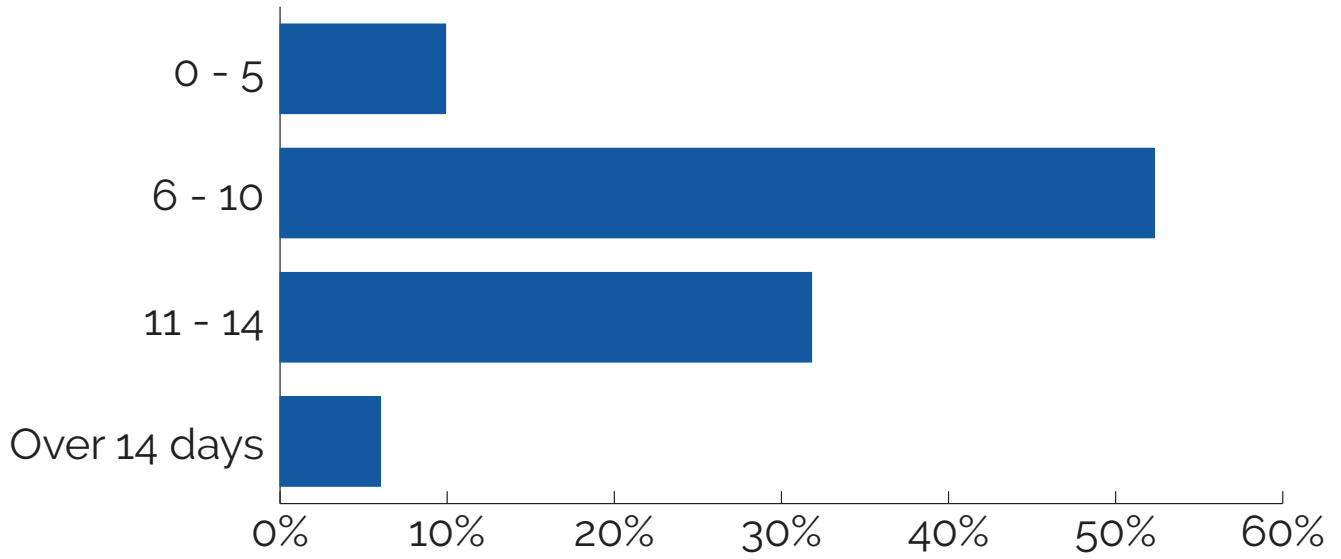


Figure 11. On average, how many days did you give a candidate to decide?



SECTION 3. RECRUITMENT, PROMOTION AND TENURE

RECRUITMENT PROCESSES

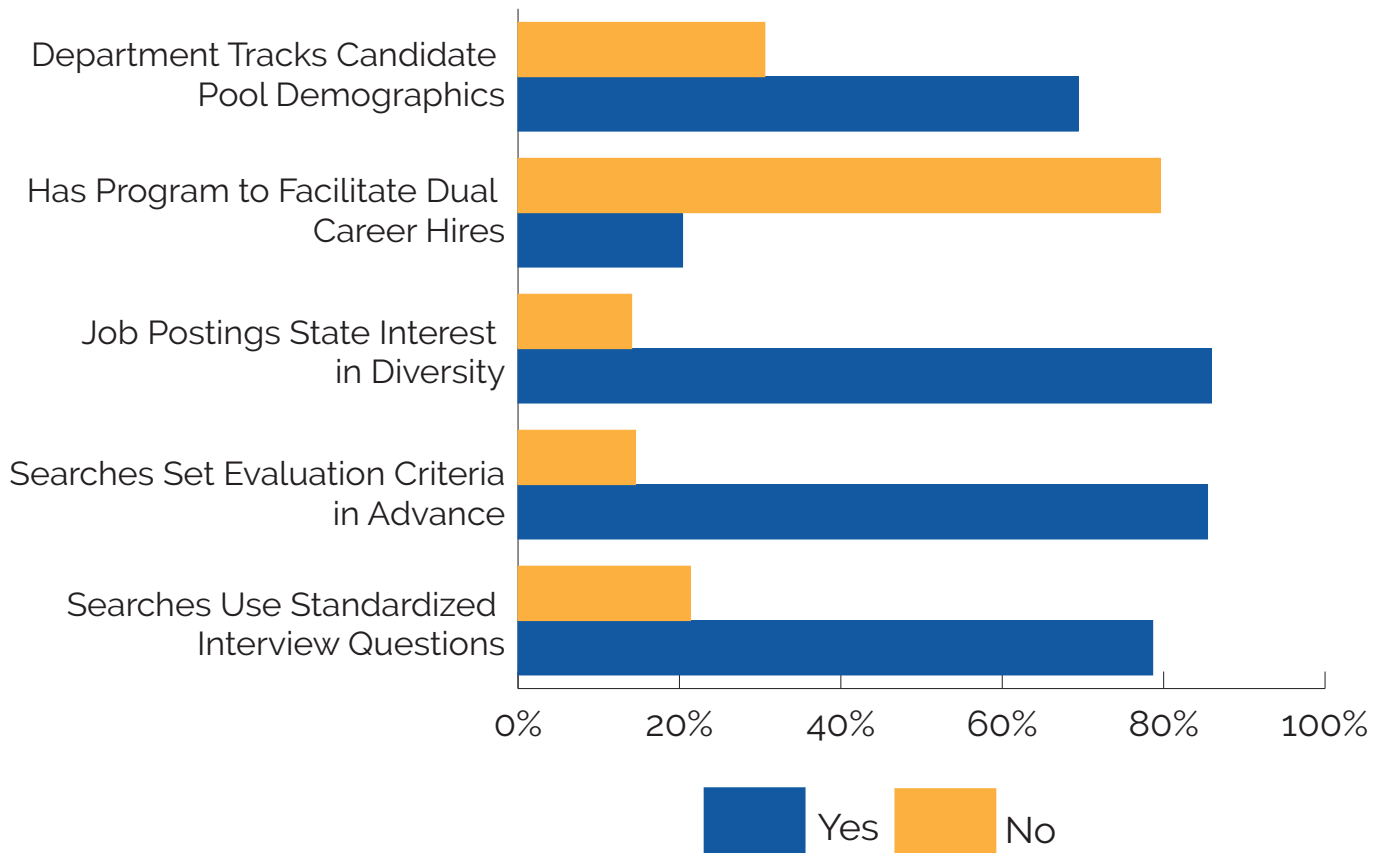
The AEA's Best Practices for leading departments emphasize fair and equitable recruiting processes to increase diversity in candidate pools and mitigate unconscious bias in hiring decisions. We asked chairs a series of questions to assess the extent to which departments are implementing AEA Best Practices around faculty recruitment (see Figure 12).

One key AEA recommendation is drafting job announcements that explicitly express an interest in diversity. The AEA guidelines cite research which shows that among racial

minority candidates, explicit mentions of diversity in job postings double interest in job openings, increasing the likelihood of applications and job offers. To assess the state of the field in this area, we asked chairs, "Do your tenure-track faculty job announcements explicitly state interest in employee diversity?" A significant majority of chairs (85.9%) reported that their postings include such statements.

Beyond broadening the candidate pool, the AEA emphasizes establishing standardized evaluation criteria and interview questions before searches begin. These measures help ensure consistent

Figure 12. Recruitment Processes



candidate comparison and reduce the risk of unconscious bias disadvantaging women and underrepresented minority candidates. We asked chairs two questions:

1. "When conducting faculty searches, does your department determine evaluation criteria in advance and use them to make decisions at all stages of the search?"
2. "Does your department use standardized interview questions in faculty candidate searches?"

The results show strong adherence to these practices, with 85.4% of chairs reporting that they set evaluation criteria in advance and 78.6% using standardized interview questions.

The AEA also recommends tracking demographic data throughout the recruitment process to inform candidate recruitment and evaluation strategies. To gauge adherence, we asked chairs, "Does your department or university record the demographic composition of the candidate pool at key stages of the faculty recruitment process?" About two-thirds (69.4%) indicated that they track demographic data during faculty searches.

Finally, we explored the prevalence of dual-career hiring programs, a critical equity and inclusion consideration. Research by Blake (2022) highlights that women are more likely than men to be part of academic couples, making the absence of dual-career hiring programs a systemic disadvantage for women in faculty recruitment. To assess this, we asked chairs, "Does your university have an official program to facilitate dual-career hires?" Despite the importance of such programs, only 20.4% of chairs reported that their institution offers formal support for dual-career hires.

PROMOTION AND TENURE PROCESSES

The AEA's guidance for department leaders also emphasizes the importance of transparency in promotion and tenure (P&T) criteria and measures to mitigate bias in the decision-making process. We asked a series of questions designed to gauge the extent to which chairs are implementing AEA Best Practices related to promotion and tenure (see Figure 13).

To promote fairness, the AEA recommends standardizing and consistently applying evaluation criteria while broadly communicating these criteria so all faculty members understand how they will be assessed. To foster transparency, the AEA also suggests conducting annual performance reviews for all junior faculty, even when not required to do so by one's institution. These evaluations provide a forum for junior faculty to engage in direct conversations about performance and areas for improvement. When surveyed, 87.4% of department chairs reported that they conduct annual performance reviews for untenured faculty members.

The AEA Best Practices also highlight the need for careful consideration of teaching evaluations in P&T decisions, given substantial research showing gender and racial biases in student evaluations (Kreitzer & Cushman 2021).

To explore practices around teaching assessment, we asked chairs how their departments evaluate teaching for P&T purposes. While 41.0% of chairs reported relying primarily on student feedback, the majority (83.4%) indicated that they include peer evaluations of teaching, either in lieu of or alongside student assessments.

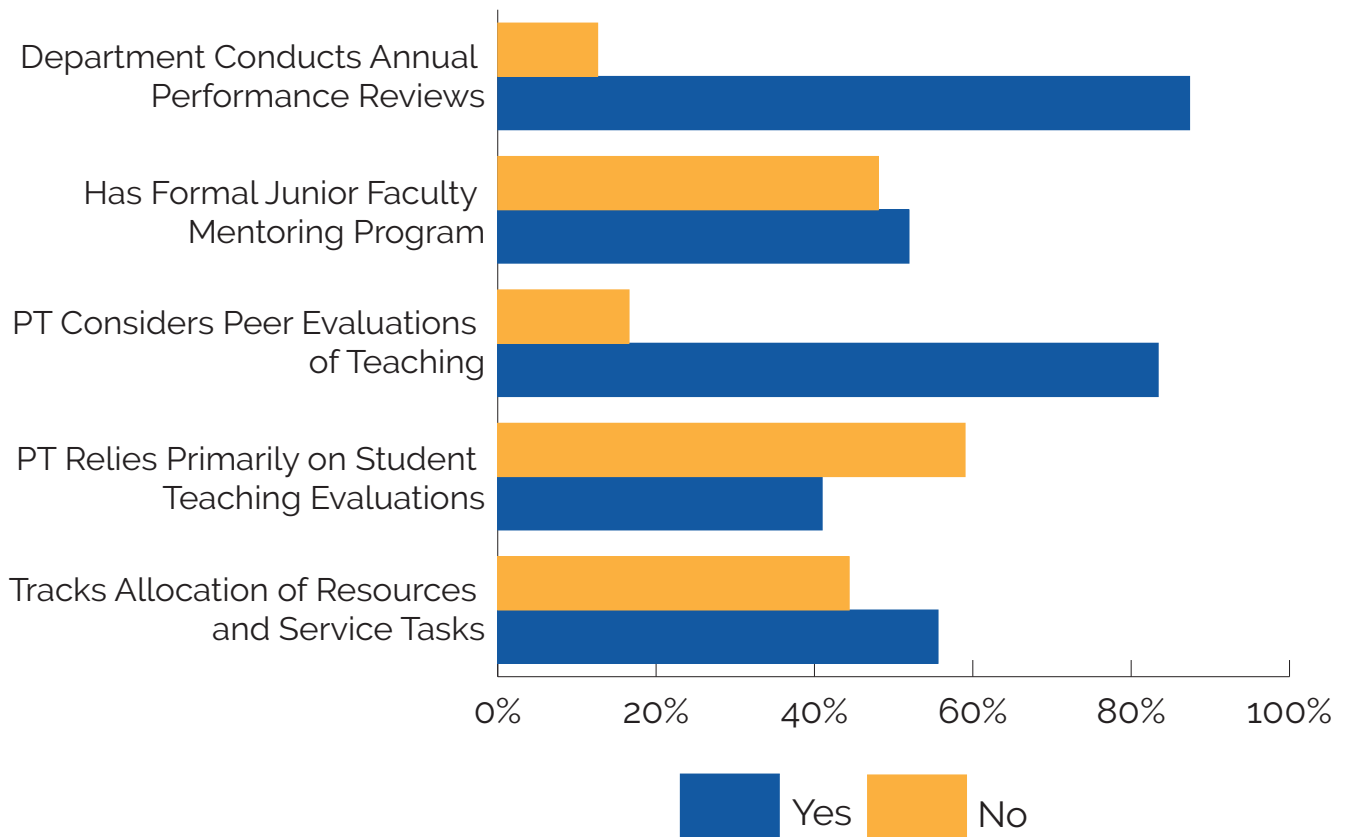
Traditional P&T evaluation criteria focus on teaching, research, and service and the AEA encourages departments to thoughtfully measure faculty contributions in these areas, particularly service tasks and mentorship, which are often unevenly distributed (O'Meaua et al., 2018). To assess transparency in service evaluation, we asked chairs whether they formally track the allocation of resources, opportunities, and departmental or institutional service tasks among faculty. Just over half (55.6%) of chairs oversee departments that collect data on service tasks and resource allocation.

Mentorship is another critical area for junior faculty development, as research shows a positive relationship between mentorship and key scholarly outputs like publications and grant success (Blau, Currie, Croson, and Ginther, 2010). However, women and minorities often face barriers to accessing

We asked chairs whether their departments have formal programs that pair junior faculty with experienced colleagues and find that just over half (51.9%) of chairs reported that such programs exist at their institutions.

high-quality mentorship (Davis et al., 2021). To evaluate mentorship practices, we asked chairs whether their departments have formal programs that pair junior faculty with experienced colleagues and find that just over half (51.9%) of chairs reported the existence of such programs at their institutions.

Figure 13. Promotion and Tenure Programs and Processes



SECTION 4. WORKING WITH STUDENTS

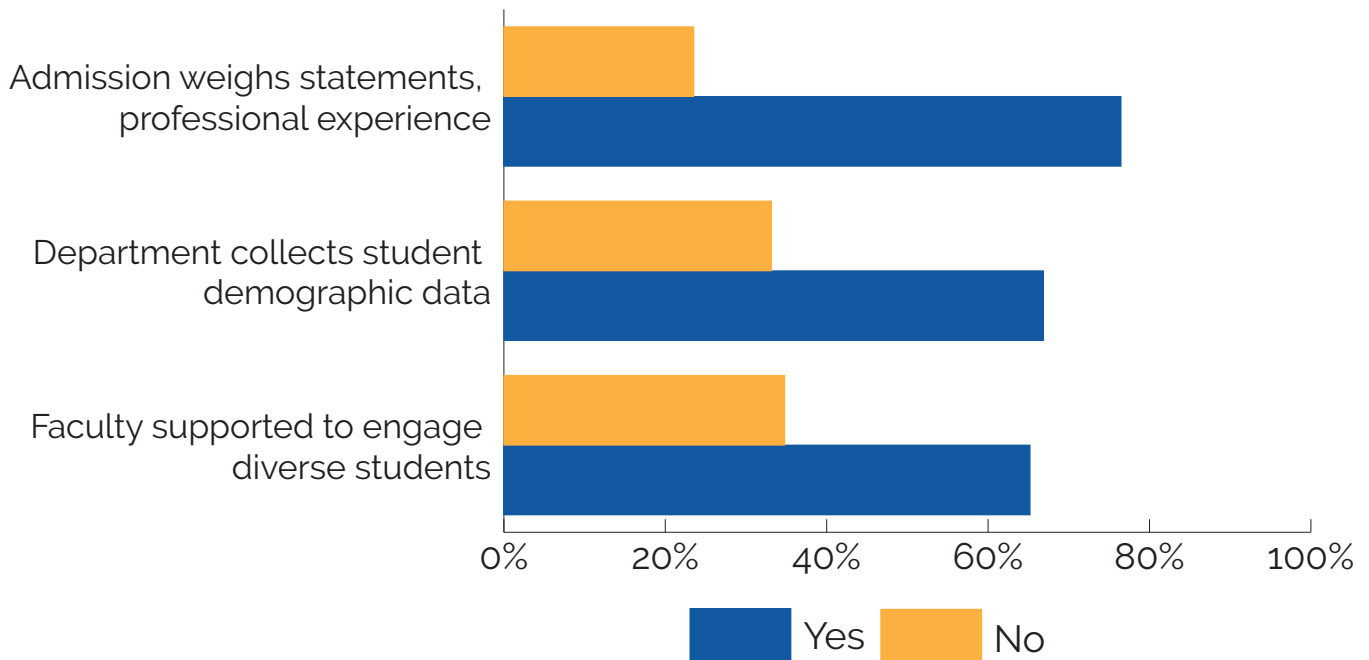
The AEA's Best Practices for leading departments outline steps to recruit and support students from diverse backgrounds. We asked a series of questions to assess the state of the field as it relates to student recruitment and support (Figure 14).

Among the AEA's recommendations for department leaders is the suggestion that admissions reviews should consider both professional experience and personal statements, rather than relying solely on quantitative metrics like standardized test scores and GPAs. This approach recognizes that lower scores or GPAs may reflect an individual's history of personal challenges rather than their future potential (Bayer and Rouse, 2016). To explore the extent to

which departments follow this guidance, we asked chairs to respond "yes" or "no" to the statement, "When considering graduate student admission, we put weight on personal statements and professional experience." The survey revealed that 76.5% of chairs reported their institutions emphasize these factors in graduate admissions.

In addition to admissions practices, the AEA offers recommendations for fostering a supportive environment for diverse students. One key suggestion is to create a sense of belonging, as research shows that explicit and implicit messages of inclusion can enhance performance and persistence among underrepresented groups (Gopalan and Brady 2019). Efforts to build belonging include

Figure 14. Admitting and Supporting Students



tracking student demographics. To assess this practice, we asked chairs to respond to the statement, "We collect and review data on the demographic composition of students in our department." The results showed that 66.8% of chairs oversee departments that monitor student demographics.

The AEA also provides guidance on inclusive practices for faculty and instructional staff, emphasizing outreach to address misconceptions about economics, offering

content that appeals to diverse students, and implementing evidence-based, inclusive pedagogy. To assess chairs' confidence in this area, we asked whether they agreed with the statement, "Faculty in my department are given support and resources to effectively engage students with diverse backgrounds and learning styles." Nearly two-thirds (65.2%) of respondents indicated that faculty in their departments receive adequate support to meet the needs of diverse students.

SECTION 5. DEPARTMENTAL CLIMATE

Respondents were asked a series of questions to gauge the extent to which their department has implemented policies to improve departmental climate (Figure 15). They were asked first if their department had taken proactive steps to improve climate, as well as whether they had implemented specific practices, such as the adoption of inclusive event guidelines, implementation of a code of conduct, and dissemination of the AEA's Best Practices.

We found that less than half of chairs (43.4%) agreed that their department had taken deliberate steps to assess and improve the department's climate for women and members of underrepresented groups.

The 68 individuals whose departments had taken proactive steps to improve climate were asked to detail these efforts. The most commonly cited actions were:

- **Formal DEI Role or Committee** | A number of departments have instituted formal DEI roles or committees to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **DEI Focused Events** | Several departments report efforts to organize DEI-focused events or participate in university-wide events, such as those focused on women in economics.
- **Climate Surveys/Data Collection** | To assess and improve the climate for women and underrepresented groups, several departments have collected data on institutional climate through departmental surveys or review of university-wide climate survey results.

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- **Affinity Group Organizations** | Some chairs report the organization of affinity groups, such as women in economics clubs, as well as access to campus groups for faculty of color.
- **Hiring/Evaluation Policy Changes** | A few chairs report changes to hiring and evaluation practices in an effort to improve the professional climate for women and minorities. These include changes to the faculty evaluation rubric to include DEI efforts and proactive efforts to recruit faculty from underrepresented groups.
- **Mentoring/Consultation** | Several departments describe the development of mentoring resources, including the allocation of resources for mentoring of junior faculty and grad students and the creation of 1-1 mentoring programs for women in economics.
- **DEI Policy Statement** | A few departments indicate the development of a cultural diversity or DEI policy statement.

In addition to asking broadly about efforts to improve departmental climate, we also asked about a few specific efforts: inclusive event guidelines, adoption of a formal code of conduct, and circulation of the AEA Best Practices. Around a quarter of respondents (25.6%) indicated that their department had adopted inclusive event guidelines intended to ensure that events are available to those with visual, mobility and hearing impairments.

Further, chairs were asked whether the AEA's Best Practices recommendations had been widely shared in their department as well as the frequency with which they, themselves, reference the guidelines. We found that just under a quarter of departments (23.4%) had seen the AEA Best Practices widely shared.

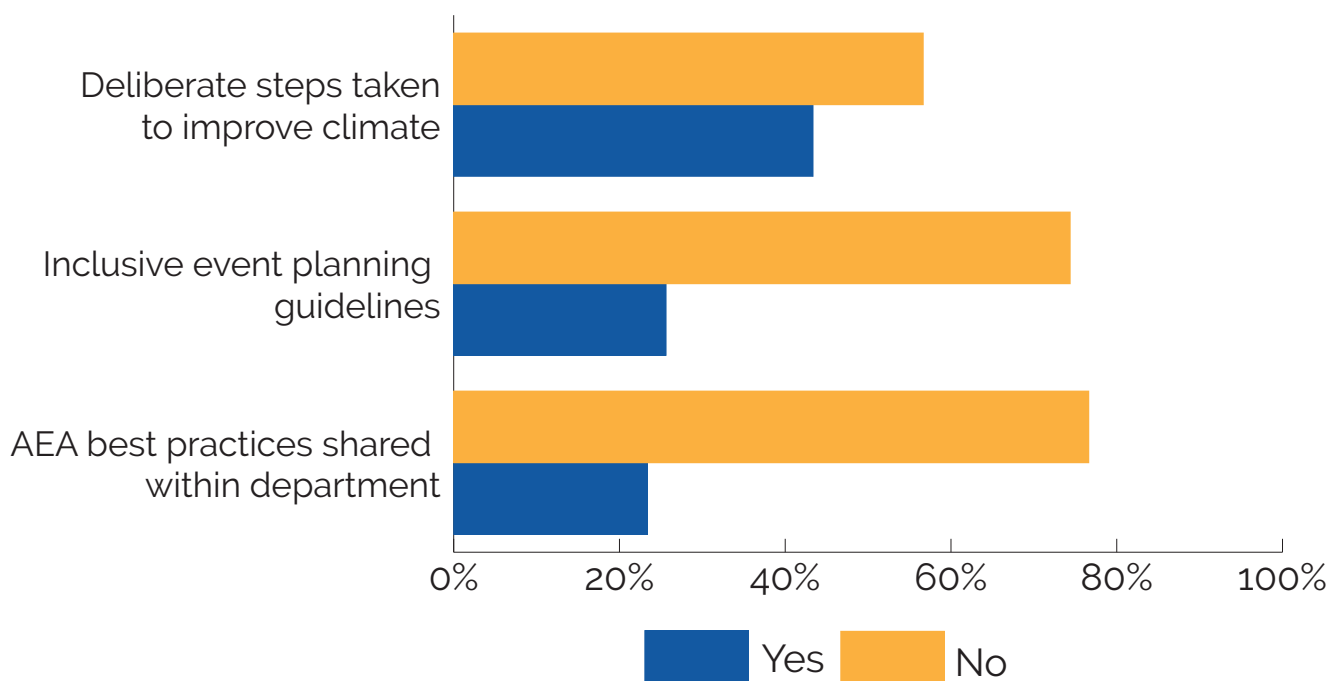
Finally, we asked chairs whether their department had reviewed the AEA code of conduct or adopted a code of conduct that outlines expectations for respectful behavior (Figure 16). A total of 48 respondents indicated

that their department had adopted a code of conduct, while 36 indicated they had reviewed the AEA code of conduct. The majority of respondents - 129 in total - indicated that they had neither adopted a code of conduct nor reviewed the AEA code of conduct within their departments.

We also asked chairs how frequently they personally refer to the AEA Best Practices

The majority of respondents - 129 in total - indicated that they had neither adopted a code of conduct nor reviewed the AEA code of conduct within their departments.

Figure 15. Efforts to Improve Departmental Climate



recommendations and we find that just 40.3% of respondents report that they reference the AEA guidelines once per

year or more; 59.7% report that they never reference the guidelines (Figure 17).

Figure 16. Department has adopted a code of conduct that or has reviewed the AEA Code of Conduct

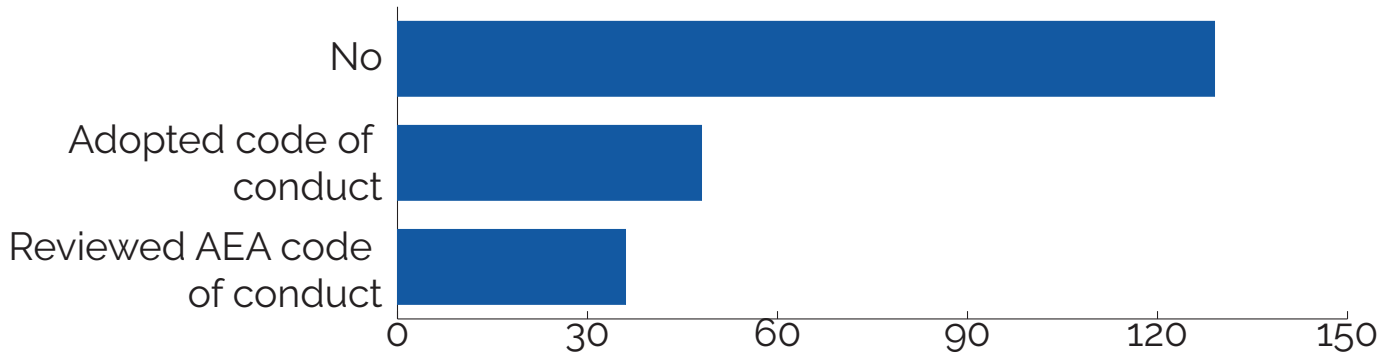
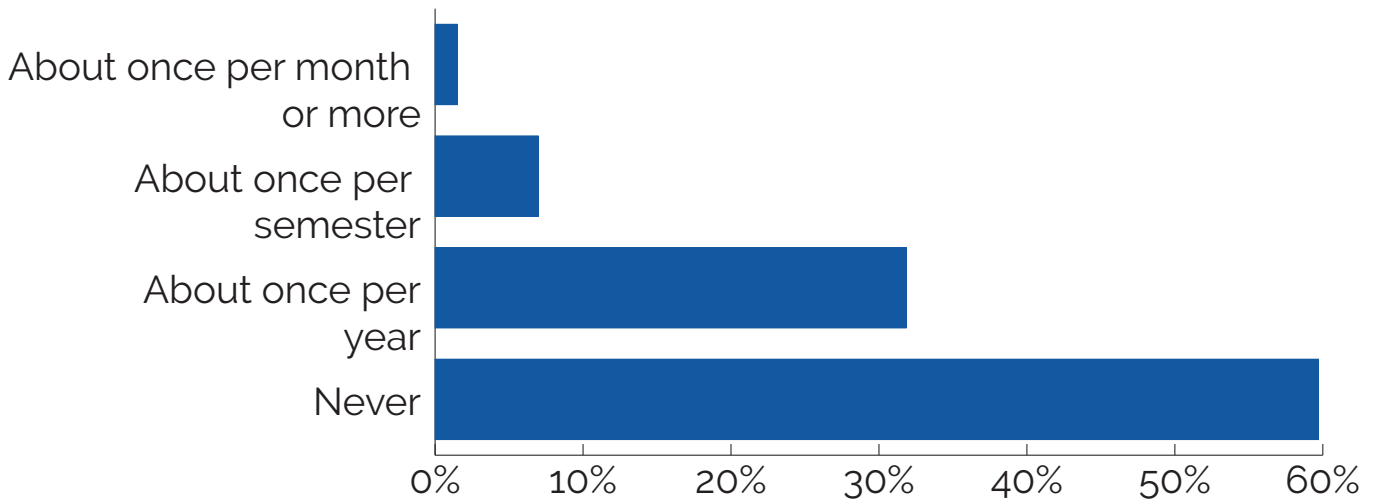


Figure 17. How frequently have you personally referred to the AEA's Best Practices Recommendations



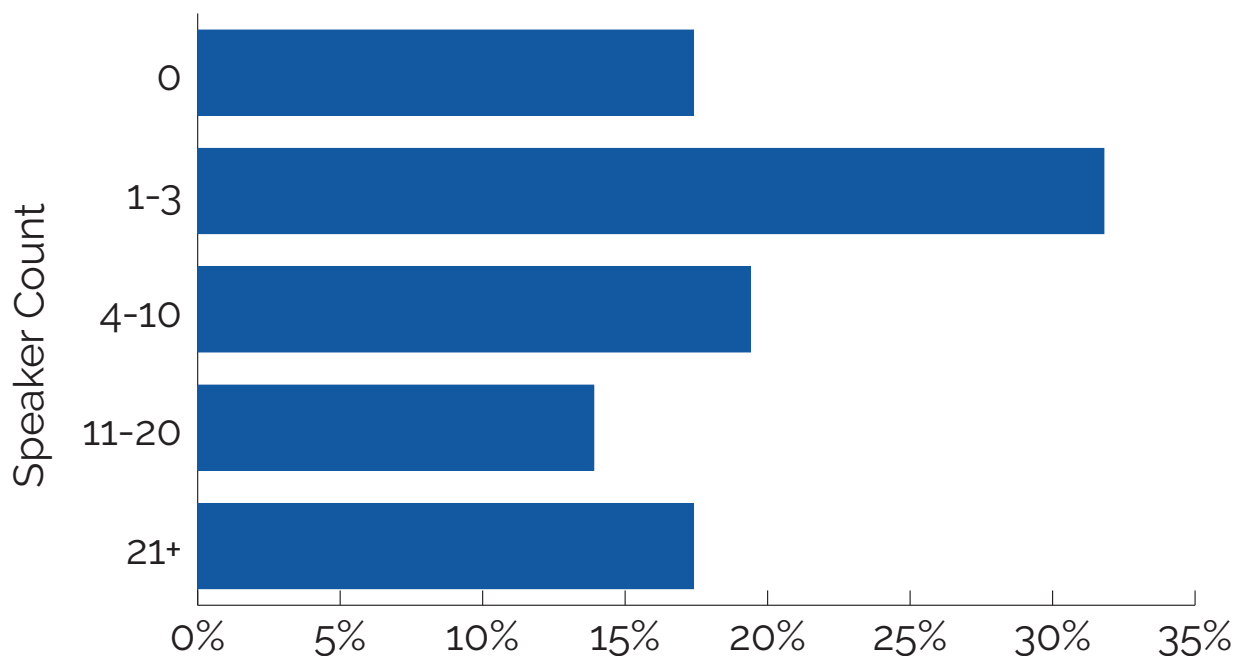
SECTION 6. SEMINARS AND SPEAKERS

The AEA Best Practices urge department leaders to organize inclusive conferences, seminars, and visitor programs. One key pillar of this recommendation is that each conference, panel presentation, and seminar series should feature a diverse group of economists. This recommendation is rooted in research showing that women and underrepresented minority (URM) economists are under-recruited as seminar speakers relative the proportion of women and URM economists in the field.

Given these realities, we asked chairs to tell us about how many seminar speakers their department typically hosts each year and what proportion of these speakers are women or underrepresented minorities. The majority of chairs (82.5%) report hosting at least one external seminar speaker per year (Figure 18).

Chairs who indicated they host at least one external seminar speaker per year were first asked about the proportion of speakers they recruit who are women. Figure 19 presents the proportion of female versus male speakers within each category for "number of invited speakers." We also calculated a weighted proportion of female and non-white speakers. For this calculation, we assigned each category a numerical midpoint: 0 for "0," 2 for "1-3," 7 for "4-10," 15.5 for "11-20," and 25 for "21+." We then calculated weighted averages by multiplying the midpoint of each speaker-number category by the corresponding percentage of female speakers, summing across all seminars, and dividing by the total weighted number of speakers. Using this method, in aggregate, chairs report that approximately one-third of external seminar speakers (36.5%) were women.

Figure 18. Approximately, how many external seminar speakers are hosted by your department each year?



Chairs who reported that they host at least one external seminar speaker per year were also asked about proportion of non-white speakers they typically invite. Figure 20 shows the proportion of non-white versus white seminar speakers within each category for "number of external speakers." Using the method described above, we also calculated a weighted proportion of non-white speakers. We find that less than one-third of external speakers (30.8%) are non-white.

In aggregate, chairs report that approximately one-third of external seminar speakers (36.5%) were women.

We find that less than one-third of external speakers (30.8%) are non-white.

Figure 19. What was the approximate share of women who were external seminar speakers in your department last academic year?

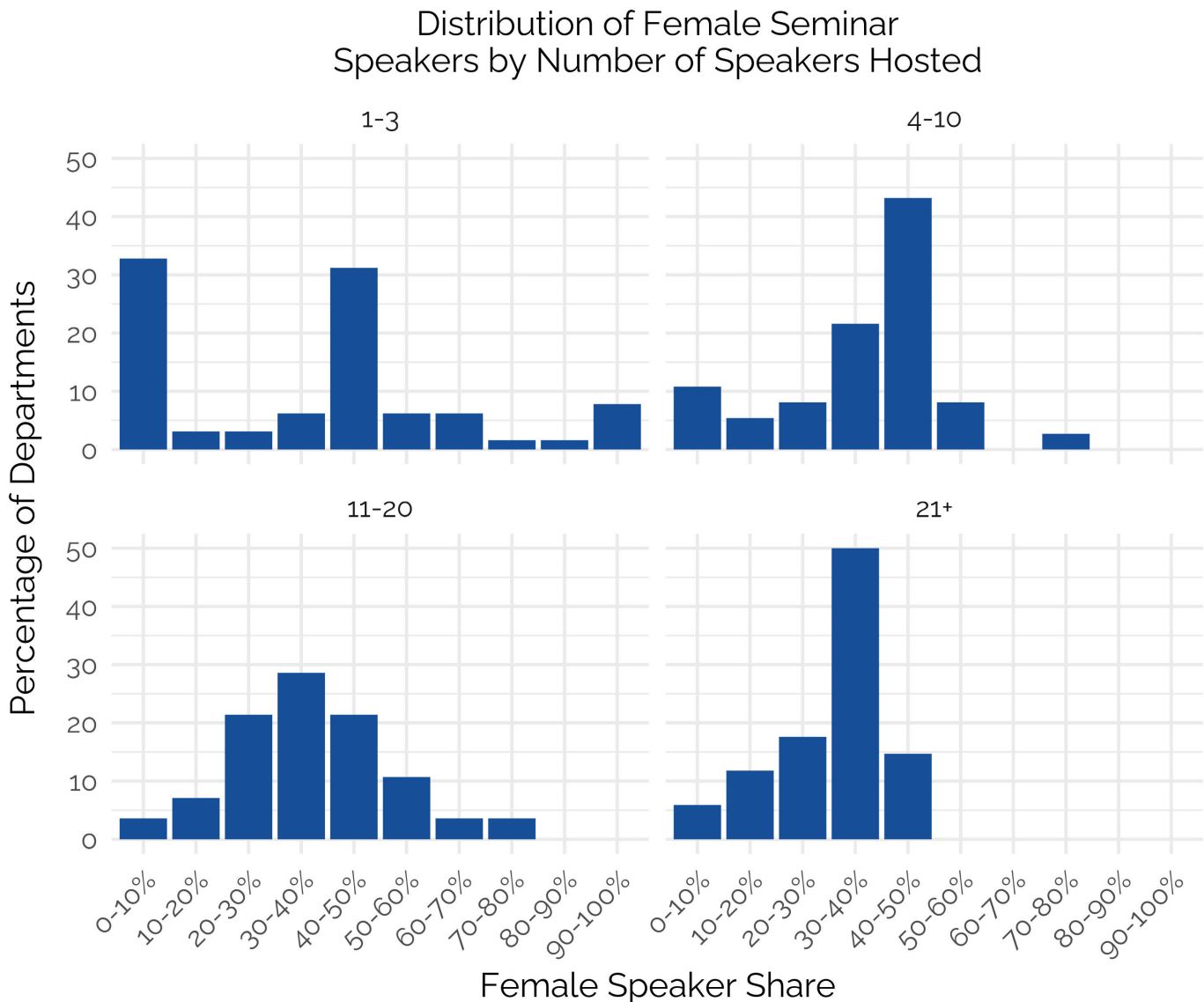
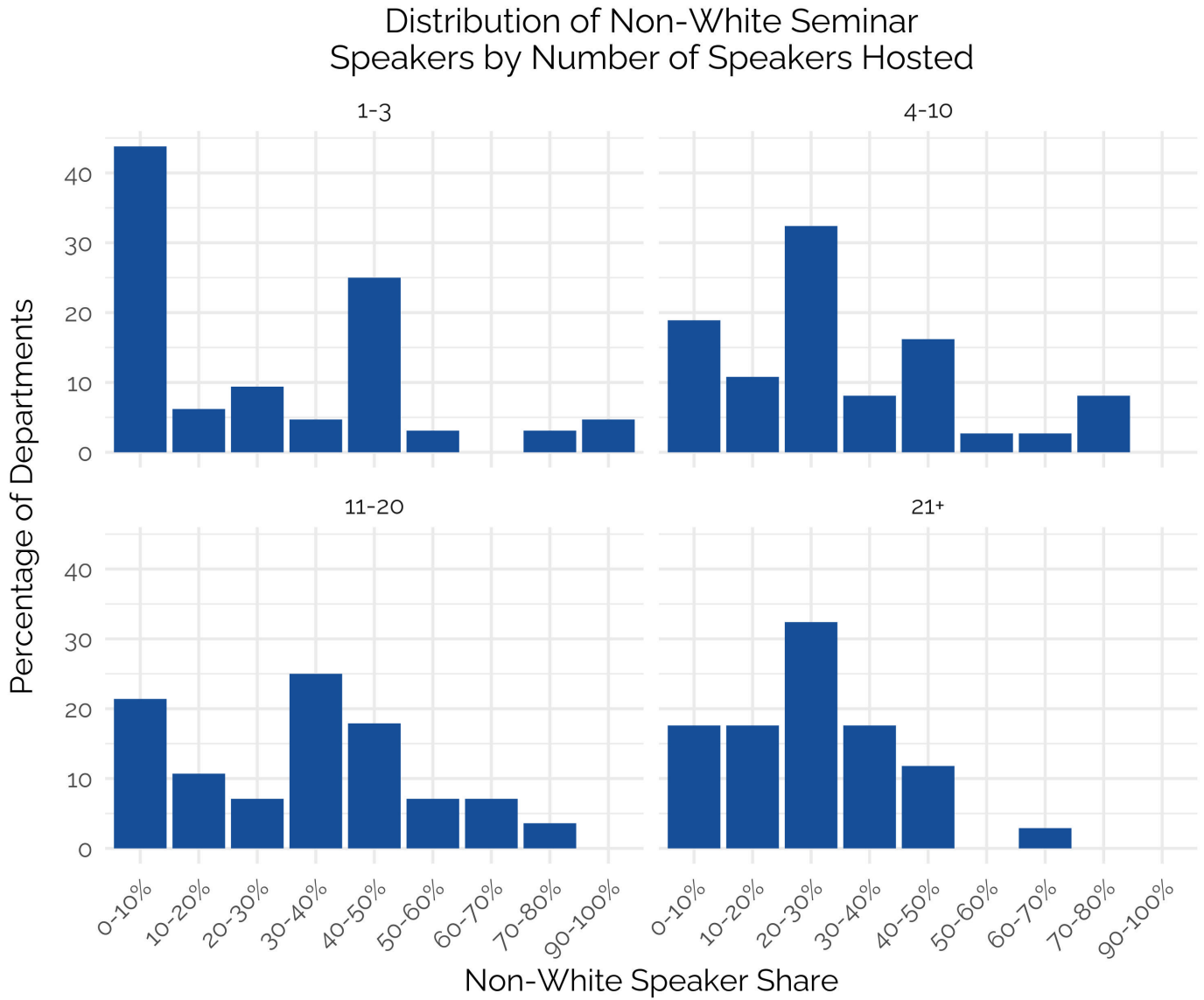


Figure 20. What was the approximate share of non-white external seminar speakers in your academic department last year?



SECTION 7. AEA SUPPORT NEEDS

At the conclusion of the survey, participants were asked, "Do you have suggestions for how the AEA could support department chairs?"

FORUM FOR PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT

The needs expressed by chairs focused broadly on a few key themes, but chiefly the need for a community of chairs that facilitates problem solving and peer-to-peer support. Some suggested it would be helpful if the AEA created opportunities for chairs in specific regions to network with each other and speak informally. Several participants suggested that the AEA could provide a national forum for chairs to meet, share problems and discuss with peers, for example, by hosting a half-day session before or after existing annual professional meetings. Others suggested that the AEA could facilitate this collaboration online by establishing and moderating discussion forums for chairs to collectively address challenges. Others suggested establishing a Discord channel or sharing a contact list or directory of chairs. Still others thought it would be helpful for the AEA to facilitate data sharing among departments, circulating key indicators to help with benchmarking. While the implementation ideas varied, it was clear from the responses that chairs would value an opportunity to interact informally, and learn from and support one another.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In addition to the expressed need for a community of peers, chairs offered suggestions related to the provision of additional resources by the AEA.

The needs expressed by chairs focused broadly on a few key themes, but chiefly the need for a community of chairs that facilitates problem solving and peer-to-peer support.

One chair noted, for example that chairs do not receive much training prior to appointment as an administrator, so having options for training through the AEA or other professional organizations would be helpful. Some suggested that these training events would be particularly helpful for chairs who are new to their role and for chairs at small colleges and BA-only programs.

One respondent suggested that the AEA could establish a standing committee on departmental administration and empower this committee to work with department chairs.

In addition to training and support from a committee on departmental administration, chairs suggested several other specific resources that might be beneficial to them. One participant suggested it would be helpful for the AEA to provide job-market insights to facilitate student advising; these resources could help chairs understand what skills and knowledge are valued in the job market for BA and MA students and what types of skills are valued by top PhD programs. Similarly, one respondent suggested provision of an annual document that summarizes trends

in the profession (e.g., student recruitment, hiring, etc.)

MORE ROBUST COMMUNICATION

In addition to requests for peer-to-peer support and additional resources, several comments either directly requested or implied the need for more robust communication about the resources and support the AEA already provides for department heads. One person specifically noted that they are unaware of the resources and assistance that the AEA provides to chairs. Others simply expressed a desire for more intentional sharing of AEA resources. Some suggested, for example, that it would be helpful for the AEA to disseminate summaries or transcripts of discussions at the AEA meetings that are relevant to chairs. Others urged the AEA to ensure ongoing accessibility of information distributed in webinars. Others urged the AEA to continue sending communication regarding initiatives to enhance inclusion in the profession.

Several comments either directly requested or implied the need for more robust communication about the resources and support the AEA provides for department heads.

UPDATING THE AEA BEST PRACTICES

A handful of comments focused specifically on the AEA Best Practices guidelines, suggesting the AEA should regularly update and disseminate the guidelines as things change. They urge the AEA to consider coordinating updates with other professional associations; specifically, the AEA might partner with non-AEA groups that share similar objectives to get feedback on fostering more inclusive departments.

SECTION 8. DEMOGRAPHICS

Before exiting the survey, respondents were asked demographic questions including their (1) gender, (2) sexual orientation, (3) race, (4) ethnicity, (5) years served as chair, (6) year of terminal degree and (7) primary field of economics.

Survey respondents were majority male, and predominantly straight, white and non-Hispanic. Specifically, two-thirds of chairs who responded to the survey identified as male (65.2%), while 31.8% identified as female. (Three percent either opted out of the question or indicated that they prefer to self-describe).

A similarly high proportion of those surveyed identified as heterosexual/straight (89.9%); just 3.0% identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual, and 7.1% either declined to answer or stated

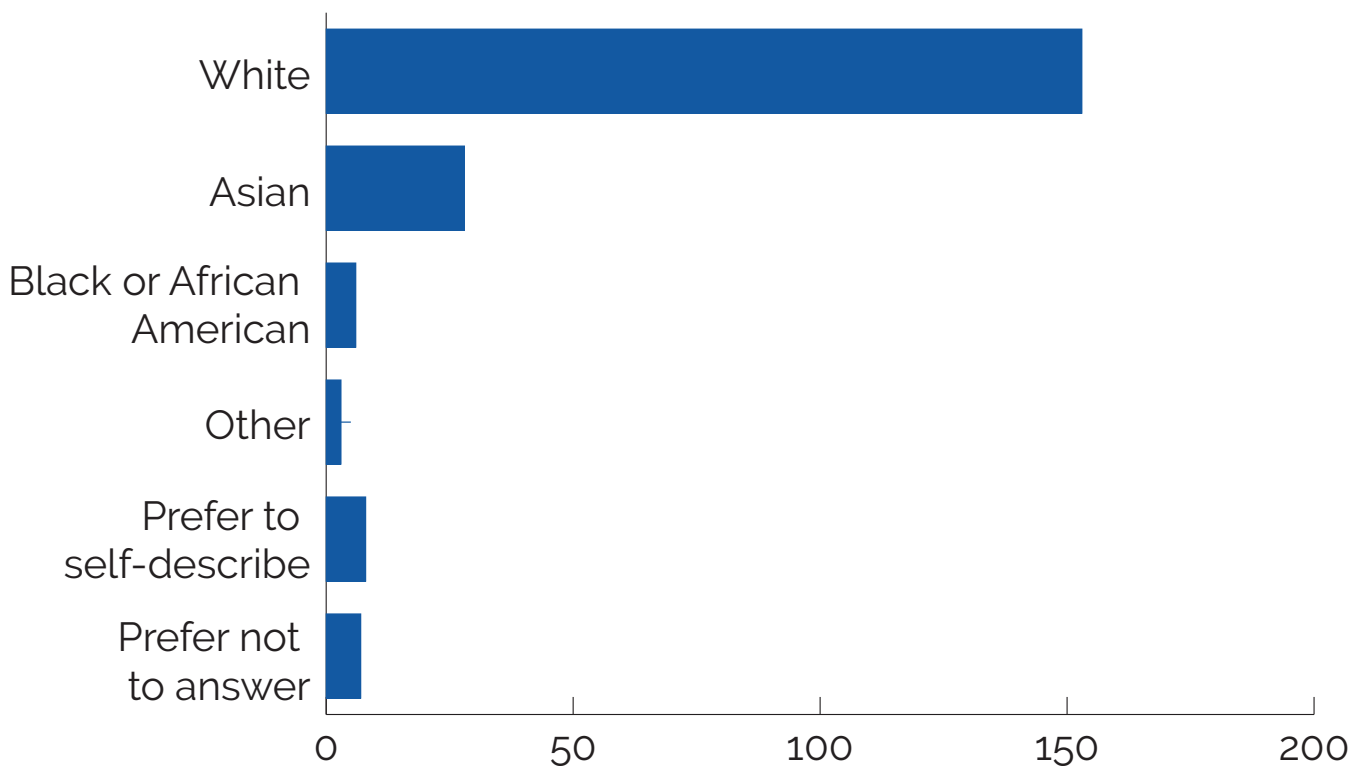
that they prefer to self-describe.

Respondents were also asked to select their race(s) (Figure 21) and most chairs we heard from identified (alone or in combination) as white (153), while a far smaller number identified as Asian (28), Black/African American (6), or Other (3). (Fifteen respondents selected "prefer not to answer" or "prefer to self-describe".)

Just seventeen of those surveyed (8.6%) reported that they were of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin.

Many chairs in our survey were relatively new to their administrative role (Figure 22). Around a third (30.3%) had served less than two years, or between two and six years (46.0%). More senior administrators with more than six years of service as chair comprise 23.8% of respondents.

Figure 21. What is your race?



In addition to asking about respondents' tenure as chair we asked the year they received their terminal degree (Figure 23). the majority of chairs in our survey (69.7%)

were 15-35 years past PhD. Just 15.7% of respondents reported fewer than 15 years since attaining their terminal degree

Figure 22. How many years have you served as chair?

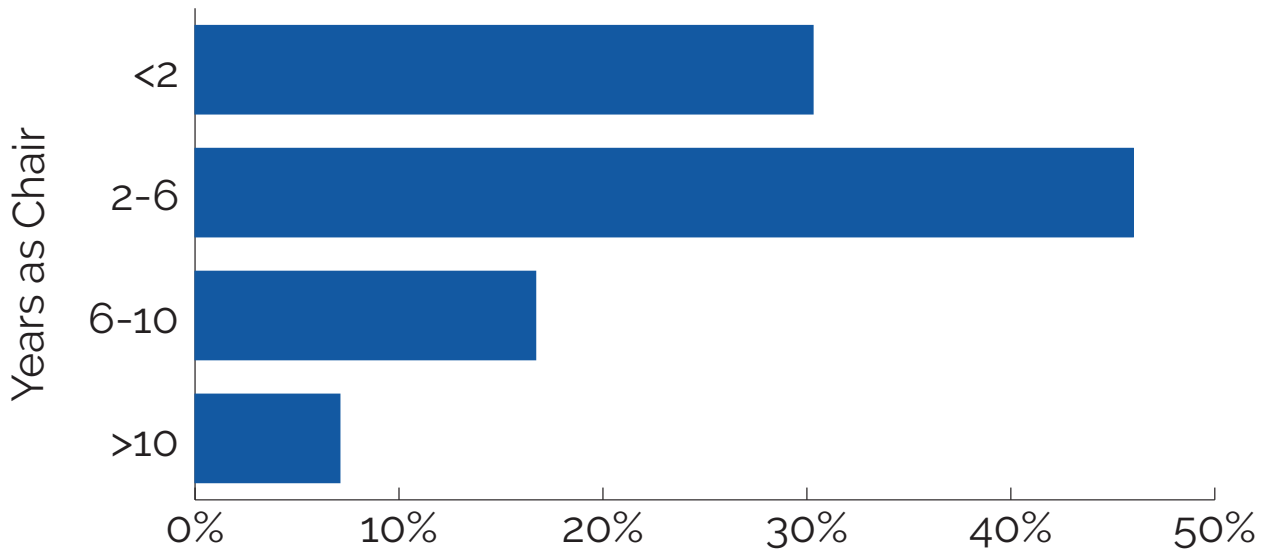
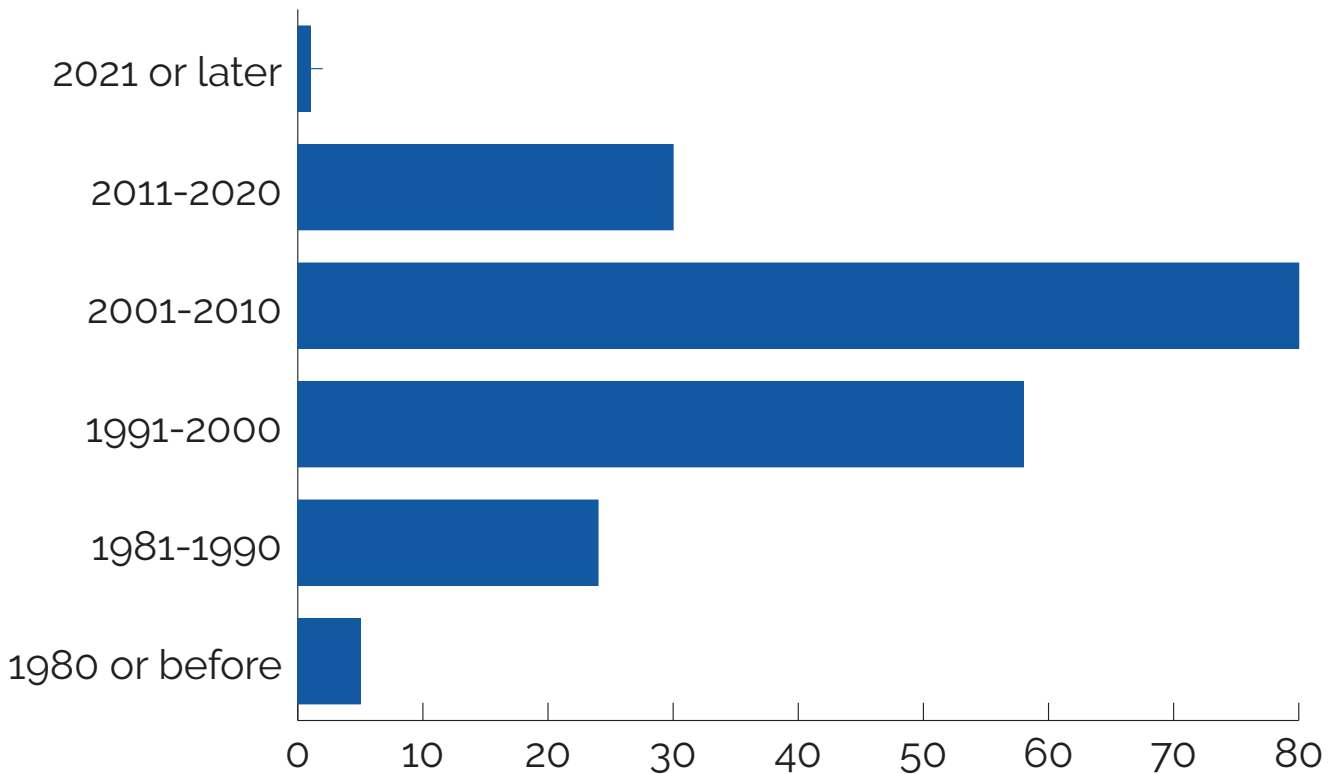


Figure 23. What year did you receive your doctorate or terminal degree?



Finally, we asked chairs to tell us what they consider to be their primary field of economics. Table 1 reports counts by area of specialization.

Table 1. Primary Field of Economics

Field	n
Agriculture and Natural Resource Economics, Environmental and Ecological Economics	14
Business Administration, Business Economics, Marketing, Accounting, Personnel Economics	2
Economic Development, Innovation, Technological Change and Growth	15
Economic History	8
Financial Economics	8
General Economics and Teaching	16
Health, Education, and Welfare	13
History of Economic Thought, Methodology and Heterodox Approaches	3
Industrial Organization	10
International Economics	15
Labor and Demographic Economics	23
Law and Economics	5
Macroeconomics and Monetary Economics	27
Mathematical and Quantitative Methods	6
Microeconomics	10
Miscellaneous or Other Special Topics	10
Political Economy and Comparative Economic Systems	2
Public Economics	8
Urban, Rural, Real Estate, and Transportation Economics	3

CONCLUSION

The findings from this survey highlight both the progress and ongoing challenges within economics departments across the United States.

We find, for example that many chairs received no chair specific Title IX training or institutional preparation for their administrative role. As a consequence, about half of those who had dealt with issues of discrimination and harassment felt inadequately prepared to handle the situation.

In the area of faculty recruitment, we find that some departments have implemented AEA Best Practices around hiring, such as the use of standardized questions and evaluation criteria. Yet the survey reveals uneven progress, particularly in the area of support for dual career hiring.

Similarly, the record on P&T processes is mixed; many departments are conducting annual performance reviews and considering peer evaluations of teaching in P&T decisions. However, fewer departments report the existence of junior faculty mentoring programs or efforts to track resource and service allocation among faculty.

Efforts to improve departmental climate are likewise inconsistent. Just 43.4% of chairs reported deliberate efforts to assess and enhance the environment for women and underrepresented groups. Many departments lack formal codes of conduct, and very few report the adoption of inclusive event guidelines. This extends to seminar speaker recruitment, where the composition of external speakers continues to skew white and male.

The findings suggest that continued efforts to enhance transparency in hiring, promotion, and tenure processes, along with active strategies to improve department climate, could contribute to a more inclusive and equitable profession.

Asked what support they need from the AEA, many chairs expressed a desire for more peer-to-peer networking opportunities, better access to training and resources, and clearer communication regarding AEA's existing resources for department heads. The AEA thus has an opportunity to build on these findings, ensuring that chairs are well-equipped to lead their departments in alignment with best practices and the evolving needs of the field.

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