



FOCUS: Advice for Job Seekers and Early Career Folks

Sarah Jacobson

If you are completing, or have recently completed, your PhD, this is a special period in your career. You have accomplished so much, and you should be proud; but you may feel anxious and contingent, as there are still daunting hurdles in front of you.

To address some of these anxieties, we held a CSWEP professional development panel at the 2018 Southern Economic Association annual meeting. At this

panel, five scholars shared wisdom about finding a job, understanding different types of jobs, evaluating fit with a hiring unit, changing jobs, and building a research portfolio. Each has kindly contributed a piece for this Focus section.

Linda Hooks (Washington & Lee University) argues that job market candidates should pay attention to institutional culture. She discusses ways job seekers can assess an institution's culture, as well as how to communicate one's own cultural commitments and one's fit with an institutional culture.

Melanie Khamis (Wesleyan University) describes some challenges and benefits of working at a selective liberal arts college. She addresses the misconception that liberal arts professors focus exclusively on teaching, and discusses what you might enjoy about liberal arts life and how to make it work for you.

Erin Troland (Federal Reserve Board of Governors) demystifies "policy work" and explains how rewarding government and policy jobs can be. She reflects on the challenges and joys of balancing policy work with research. The advice she offers for getting research done is valuable for any economist doing research!

Kelly Jones (American University) discusses early- and mid-career job transitions. She outlines how one can be prepared in case such a transition becomes desirable or necessary, and gives tips for conducting such a job search and navigating the transition to a new job.

Susan Vroman (Georgetown University) discusses how new scholars can build a research portfolio as they move toward tenure or promotion. She offers advice on understanding your department's expectations, sending out your work, dealing with a journal's response, and revising papers.

Some common threads struck me. First, relationships and support matter, and they depend on good communication. On that note, I suggest developing a network of mentors of diverse styles and backgrounds. Peer mentoring becomes especially valuable as your career progresses. Second, look for complementarities between different aspects of your work. Our jobs are so consuming that we flourish best if we can invest all of our work with our values and passions, and that will create natural correlations and cross-fertilization between, for example, our teaching and our research.

I'll add one more piece of advice: the stressors of 2020 will add uncertainty and anxiety to anything you are experiencing professionally. Give yourself kindness, patience, and forgiveness. Be as nimble as you can, as opportunities may disappear or arise quickly, and job expectations may change. But know that this year presents even more challenges that are outside of your control than a normal year, so leverage your support network and find ways to keep faith in yourself even when you face setbacks.



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From the Chair

Judith A. Chevalier

I am pleased to present Issue 3 of our CSWEP News for 2020. I know that 2020 is turning out to be a substantial challenge for many of our readers. In the last months, I have heard from so many economists about the career challenges, the personal anxiety, and the stress created by the pandemic, the state of the economy, and with ongoing reminders of structural racism. At CSWEP, we continue to try to support economists with modified versions of our usual activities and are also finding ways to innovate and adapt our programs to these challenging times.

In June, we hosted two panels on COVID-19. One focused on the disparate impacts of COVID on researchers in academia. We were lucky to have two deans on our panel and we discussed the ways universities will have to adjust processes and expectations to equitably manage these challenges. Our second June panel addressed the impacts of COVID-19 on government research and government researchers. You can re-watch these panels on our website and an upcoming issue of CSWEP News will focus on COVID-19 impacts.

This summer, I moderated a very well-attended panel for the National Association of Business Economists on career opportunities in the tech sector. We are looking forward to CSWEP-hosted webinars and conversations this fall highlighting different career options in economics. Look for further announcements about those activities in the months to come. When we learn of other organizations hosting such events, we will also try to keep our CSWEP subscribers and Twitter followers informed.

We continue to push forward with our mentoring initiatives. While we would have preferred to meet face-to-face, we are pleased to have received a very large number of graduate student applicants for CSWEP's first graduate student mentoring program, organized by Maya Rossin-Slater and

Jen Doleac and scheduled to take place in November. I am so grateful to Maya and Jen for spearheading this initiative, based on a successful pilot of a graduate student mentoring workshop that Maya organized in California. We also have received a large number of submissions for our CeMENT mentoring workshops designed for junior faculty and others with similar research expectations. Our coordinators Martha Bailey and Jessica Holmes are planning robust online mentoring programs in January. While some aspects of CeMENT will necessarily be different in the online format, our organizers have been energetic in finding ways to innovate and take advantage of everyone's growing comfort with remote tools. Please send a note to info@cswep.org to volunteer your services as a mentor.

We are also accepting nominations for our Carolyn Shaw Bell award and our Elaine Bennett research prize and look forward to presenting them at a virtual ceremony in January. Note that we extended the nomination deadlines until September 30, given the challenges that many face at the start of this academic year. We are eager to celebrate women economists, even if the ceremonies will look a little different this year!

In this issue, Sarah Jacobson has co-edited an excellent Focus section containing career development advice. The contributors provide counsel on building a research career in different types of jobs. For example, our contributors address the challenges of balancing research and policy work and of balancing research and teaching at a liberal arts college. Kelly Jones from American University discusses transitions and changing jobs. This is a topic economists don't discuss enough. The first job is often not forever—mine wasn't! For most people, it is prudent to plan for and strategize about the possibility of eventually moving. One of the important reasons to switch

The Job Search and Institutional Culture

Linda M. Hooks

Bower (1966) defines institutional culture simply as “the way we do things around here.” Why is it important to consider “the way we do things” when in a job search? For a job candidate, an institution’s way of doing things can provide insights into the institution’s values as well as into the job itself. While finding a fit with an institution’s culture is only one of the components in a search, it can ultimately contribute significantly to job satisfaction. This is important whether the job is academic, government, or private sector. With each step of the search process, but especially the in-person stage, a candidate will have an opportunity to gain more insight into the culture.

First, what does the job advertisement say about the institutional culture? Even a standard advertisement can offer information. For example, does an academic advertisement mention interdisciplinary programs? This generally signals that the university especially values interdisciplinarity.

Accordingly, a candidate would want to review the website of relevant interdisciplinary programs. Another example is the language related to equal opportunity. It is useful to note whether the job advertisement mentions inclusion or support of underrepresented groups explicitly. An advertisement that includes something beyond the usual statement on diversity is attempting to send a signal that the institutional culture values inclusion.

In the application process, the applicant has a chance to demonstrate an understanding of the culture. A cover letter can signal to employers an understanding of the way the employers “do things around here,” so it should be tailored to the institution. Connections to the geographic location can further support a link between applicant and culture. (“I grew up only two hours away,” or “My hope is to live in a large urban city,” or “In my free time, I especially enjoy hiking and this location would provide opportunities.”)

In a teaching statement, the candidate can discuss relevant experience that links to the culture, such as class sizes similar to those of the institution or experience with first-generation or historically underrepresented students. It is important to be forthright about teaching evaluations. This demonstrates a personal culture of transparency and self-reflection. Less-than-stellar teaching evaluations can be addressed with a story about growth and adaptation as a teacher. When talking about research, applicants will want to explain the relevance of job market papers, highlighting what is of interest to a particular setting. Even reference letters can provide information about a candidate’s awareness of the institutional culture. Applicants can prepare letter writers to ensure that the writers are aware of the desirability of certain types of jobs, locations, and work cultures.

Following the initial application stage comes the time to meet potential employers face-to-face through web conferencing or interviews at professional meetings. The first round of interviews is typically brief and the interview team may not have time to focus on culture. One way for the candidate to learn about institutional culture is by asking culture questions. A candidate might ask how long interview team members have been with the employer, or why they decided to accept the job or have remained in the job. It might be appropriate to inquire directly about culture, posing such questions as: “How would you describe the culture of the department / team? Of the university / company as a workplace?” If time limitations prohibit asking these questions at the initial interview phase, asking some of them in follow-up rounds will certainly be appropriate.

The final step of a search usually involves an on-site, in-person visit. During this phase, candidates typically have extended time to talk with

From the Chair ↑

positions is when a job simply isn’t a good “fit.” In her Focus article, Linda Hooks of Washington and Lee University dives deeper into this question of “fit” and urges job seekers to investigate the culture of any academic department, agency, or company that they consider joining. I have been thinking about the issue of work culture as I have missed my colleagues during the pandemic and have been thinking about ways to maintain work connections. We know from the AEA climate survey that women economists, underrepresented minority economists, LGBTQ economists, economists with disabilities, and others often feel marginalized in their workplaces. Those of us who are not looking for new positions would do well to read this advice and consider how our workplace would look from the vantage point of

a new hire. Is my workplace one that a new hire would consider welcoming? Those of us in secure positions need to consider what we can do to improve the workplace culture.

Please keep in touch with CSWEP. Encourage your colleagues, students, and research assistants to join our mailing list by emailing info@cswep.org. We make an effort to tweet and retweet professional development opportunities and information so please do follow us [@aeacswep](https://twitter.com/aeacswep). If your department, agency, or organization is planning a professional development opportunity of interest to our readers, please share it with us by emailing info@cswep.org or tagging us in an announcement on twitter. If you have ideas for programs that we can run or ways that we can help people navigate the pandemic, please let us know. ■

Institutional Culture ↑

potential colleagues and are able to ask multiple people the same question. This is the best time to pick up nuanced information about institutional culture and to assess compatibility with “the way we do things around here.”

The composition of the search committee will reveal some clues about how the department or team conducts business. Because the composition varies by institution, such choices can be informative of the decision-making culture. The members of the search committee are either a sub-committee of the department or all members of the department.

The search chair may or may not be the department chair or head of the team. It may be that everyone participates at some point, from screening to interviews to the campus visit, or it may not work that way. If not, questions about how the search committee was chosen or why it has the structure it does may bring to light, for example, a department that seeks to involve all levels of its members or one that leans on senior faculty as primary decision makers. Similar insights may be gleaned by learning who makes the final decision on hiring. In an academic setting, is decision-making shared by all faculty in the department? Is the final choice up to the dean or the provost?

The list of people on the flyout schedule may also offer insights. For example, is everyone in the department / team included? If not, why not? The answer may be as simple as sabbaticals or as complicated as attempts to cover over some internal conflict. Are people from other departments included? This may signal that the department or company expects the candidate will find ways to work across divisions or wishes to link the candidate to people who will provide information specific to her interests or needs.

During this final step, the candidate should ask direct questions about institutional culture. Ask several people how they would describe the culture. To get even more information, try a scenario approach such as, “Please tell me about an important project or decision in the department/group, including the process used and the outcome.” Other good questions at this point are about risk-taking, such as “What level of risk-taking is common in teaching and research/project work? If someone takes a risk and fails, what happens?”

For insight into the culture about work/life issues, a candidate might ask, “What do people like to do on weekends? After work? For lunch?” and “Do people mostly live nearby or somewhere else?”

Requesting to speak to at least one woman faculty member or employee one-on-one will offer the possibility of a perspective with less filtering. Questions such as, “Do you feel the institution works to improve the culture for women?” or, “Has the workplace culture for women evolved here over the past five or ten years? How?” will open a conversation on the existing and historical cultural treatment of women.

One common response to a question about culture is a statement from someone about internal conflicts such as, “We all get along well, but Samuel and Lucy don’t speak to each other anymore.” Such information is certainly relevant, but it is not necessarily a deal-breaker. It could be a sign of a culture based around individuals rather than based on teamwork. It could be a sign of the long-term nature of relationships in academia where relationships can be difficult to repair. On the other hand, if the issue is related to junior faculty, that might be of more concern since the conflict would be more recent and

it needs to be worked out if the junior faculty do indeed end up as long-term colleagues.

In each step of the search, candidates also are signaling information on “the way we do things around here,” that is, how *you* might do things around here if hired. For instance, a candidate who is interviewing for a government job but talking mostly about teaching will not do well in signaling her value to a policy setting. Candidates interviewing with a university that values teaching need to indicate a desire to teach the subjects identified in the job advertisement for many years into the future and must be prepared to talk about teaching those subjects. For all types of employers, it is important for the candidate to signal professionalism by using formal language in e-mails and by returning all messages within 24 hours.

Deal and Kennedy (2000) remind us that workplaces are social organizations, complete with identities, routines, and culture. Understanding more about the institutional culture during the search process will help a candidate stand out if she demonstrates that understanding to potential employers. It also will likely lead to greater satisfaction with the chosen job.

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About CSWEP

A standing committee of the American Economic Association, the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP) is charged with serving professional women economists by promoting their careers and monitoring their progress. CSWEP sponsors mentoring programs, surveys economics departments and freely disseminates information on professional opportunities, career development and how the profession works, both on the web and via free digital subscriptions to the CSWEP News. To subscribe, email info@cswep.org.

Being at a Liberal Arts College with High Research Expectations

The most common response I hear when I go to a research conference and mention that I teach at a liberal arts college is: “You must really like teaching.” I tend to respond in the following way: “I do like teaching, but I also like research and that is why I am at this conference.”

This example shows that there are some misperceptions about the relative weight of research and teaching among our non-liberal arts colleagues—a misperception that is probably shared by students on the job market and new faculty, based on what they have been told or assumed. Frequently, anonymous threads on a widely known rumors website about the economics job market have floated ideas like, “SLACs (Selective Liberal Arts Colleges) are for failed researchers from top PhD granting institutions” (this is a sanitized version of what is actually written there).

Below I discuss some of the unique challenges and opportunities of working at a liberal arts college with high research expectations.

There are three significant and unique challenges of the liberal arts college setting: (1) Given the emphasis on good teaching and service, the amount of time available to do research is probably more scarce than it is at R1 universities; (2) There are no graduate research assistants; and (3) Given their smaller department and institutional size, interactions with senior colleagues and colleagues in one’s own sub-field may be limited.

Time limitations for research

With teaching obligations that are usually in the range of a 2-2 or 2-3 course load and a significant amount of time spent in office hours, it may be harder to carve out time within teaching semesters to focus entirely on research. It is therefore vital to use summer and winter breaks efficiently. However, relegating research to only

breaks is not sufficient. It is important to make weekly commitments to get research moving forward. You may never have those uninterrupted blocks to focus on one paper as you did for your job market paper. However, that morning hour-long slot before your teaching starts may give you the time to run a few regressions, read a paper, edit the introduction of your paper to be revised, find a conference to submit your paper to, or communicate with your co-authors.

Research assistance

While the lack of graduate students to help with your research process can seem difficult to overcome, there are alternatives. Recruit able undergraduate research assistants to process or transcribe some of your data. Some of the best undergraduates will be interested in going on to graduate school, and they may be highly motivated to work on a research piece through an internship or undergraduate thesis. Having weekly meetings with your RAs helps keep you focused on your research and moving forward, and ensures that you have something to give them to work on. Working with co-authors at institutions with graduate students is a different way to bridge the RA gap.

Interactions with your sub-field in economics

Compared to larger departments in big US or European research-focused universities, liberal arts college economics departments tend to be smaller. Often, each faculty member has been recruited for their unique sub-field. It is not likely that you will have a colleague in your sub-field at your college. Even if your department has a seminar series, it probably brings in people with different interests, unlike larger departments that may have a separate seminar series in each sub-field. It is your responsibility to actively

seek out potential collaborators and colleagues in your field.

One avenue is through a liberal arts college conference or workshop. I have collaborated with several colleagues to start a liberal arts college conference with a focus on development economics, modelled on a similar conference for macroeconomists. Another option is to attend the field seminar at a nearby research university or have a research visit or affiliation during your sabbatical or leave. Going to conferences and both presenting and discussing papers is an important way to maintain close contacts with the field, meet potential co-authors and talk to potential referees and journal editors.

It is also important to convey research activity to others. One way to do this is to have a good online profile through a professional website and keep this updated at all times.

In terms of publishing and developing co-author relationships within the profession, seeking out opportunities actively is the way to go for a liberal arts college tenure-track professor. Although sometimes it makes sense to work with senior people in the field, it is also important to develop a healthy mix of joint work with senior scholars, joint work with other junior faculty (such as junior colleagues from your PhD institution, in similar fields, or from other liberal arts colleges), and sole authored work. Having a mix of collaborators will help to ensure that your work will be published by the end of your tenure clock. This is your individual time constraint and it is up to you to manage it.

In my view, there are four significant advantages of doing research at a liberal arts college:

Tenure expectations in terms of journals

Although everyone would love a Top 5 and it provides significant career

Balancing Research and Policy Work in Government Jobs

Erin Troland¹

Research draws many economists to the field. However, policy work offers the chance to apply economics to decisions that matter for people's lives. In a government job, you can do both. Balancing research with policy work is challenging, but worth it.

Policy work is exciting and rewarding. As a government economist, I find policy work as interesting as research. However, in graduate school I learned little about policy work or research in a government job. As someone who chose a government career, I write this

¹ The views herein are solely those of the author and do not reflect the views or policy of the Federal Reserve System.

piece for economists considering government jobs and for academics advising their graduate students. I first discuss what policy work is and describe the valuable role economists play. Then I discuss strategies for continuing to do research as a government economist.

What is Policy Work?

Policy work helps inform decisions that affect things like social insurance programs, access to loans, and most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. Economists can contribute to policy discussions in a number of ways. First, they can help identify specific problems that policy can solve. Second, they

can communicate key concepts in the economics literature on a policy topic. Third, they can help identify flawed ideas, particularly when an idea is unlikely to solve the problem at hand.

The nature of policy work, broadly defined, varies across institutions, and different types of work may appeal to different people. Some economists work on surveys like the American Community Survey. Other economists work on regulations that affect consumer protection and firm mergers. Others work on forecasting economic conditions. Descriptive analyses and measurement are critical. It is hard to know how to solve a problem if you do not know (a) whether it exists, (b) how large it is, or (c) who it affects. I have primarily worked on housing policy at the Treasury Department and Federal Reserve Board, from housing finance reform to banking regulation to COVID-19 and housing markets. I take pride in work I have done that has affected policy decisions.

Making Time for Research in a Government Job

Though policy work is rewarding and impactful, making time for research can be a challenge. Yet it can be important for success in many government jobs. I discuss strategies to make time for research while in a government job, based on my own experience and the experiences of colleagues. I focus on government jobs that explicitly encourage economists to do their own research as part of their job.

Making time for research in a government job involves three key factors: complementarities between research and policy, time management, and connections to the research community.

Being at a Liberal Arts College

advantages (in terms of transferability to higher ranked institutions and also getting tenure at those institutions), in many liberal arts colleges with high research expectations this is not a necessary condition (yet) for receiving tenure.

The publication process can be erratic and time-consuming. Not having the pressure to produce that Top 5 piece can be a life- and job-saver. Have a conversation early on, and continued communication throughout your tenure-track, with your department chair and colleagues about what type and quality of outlets are expected from you, as the requirements are highly institution specific.


Tenure expectations in terms of the focus of your research

It is possible to develop a few areas of research interest and expertise that may not make you the world's leading expert in that particular field, but will allow you to pursue a research area that you enjoy. Liberal arts schools offer a larger degree of flexibility to work on research that is slightly broader than top research institutions might encourage.

There are no graduate students

Yes, I did mention the lack of graduate students as a challenge above. But it can be also an advantage. One does not need to spend countless hours on a graduate student that may have a promising or not-so-promising dissertation topic. Also, trying to place a graduate student into a job can be a significant time commitment, depending on the particular institution and quality of students.

Teaching complementarities

There will be some complementarities between your research and teaching at an undergraduate-focused institution. Develop these complementarities by employing good undergraduate research assistants or teaching upper level electives in your specialized research area and using them as a chance to read and work through some of the ongoing research in your area. Doing so will make both your teaching and your research more rewarding. 

Complementarities

Find connections between your policy work and research interests

In an ideal world, policy work and research are a virtuous cycle, one informing the other. If you can achieve this ideal, your balancing act will be easier. For example, I started as a development economist. Though I was well trained for my role in domestic policy, it was hard to keep up with my development research. After a few years, I largely changed my research agenda to geographic inequality in the United States, another related interest of mine. Now, I am applying my development training to a context that is more relevant to my policy work.

This complementarity can work in other ways. For example, some jobs offer access to restricted data. Many involve work in specific areas such as housing, labor, or finance that fit naturally with your research agenda. Asking about the nature of policy work at various jobs can help you understand whether there is a pre-existing opportunity for complementarities.

Time Management

Reserve specific blocks of uninterrupted time for research work

Research requires uninterrupted blocks of time. A “quick meeting” mid-morning can disrupt the whole morning. Protecting these blocks of time requires a commitment to managing external demands on your time, like meetings, but also internal demands that you may place on yourself. A number of strategies can help make this happen.

First, figure out when you work best on research, and guard that time. For example, I work best in the mornings, and Mondays and Fridays tend to be freer for me. Then, do everything you can to make sure that time is protected from interruption. Of course, not all interruptions can be avoided. To preserve your research time, make them the exception.

Two obvious sources of external interruption are meetings and emails.

For meetings, since I work best on research in the morning, I always propose afternoons. If someone proposes a meeting during my research block, I propose another time. Instead of responding to emails one by one as they come in, I respond in batches outside of research time.

Other resources and tools can help you protect your time from external interruption. First, talk to your manager. If you are expected to produce research and you are struggling with other demands on your time, it is in your manager’s interest to help you. Second, use your work calendar to block out your research time, because it is not free time. Third, if you primarily work in an office, try working remotely if possible, either regularly a day or two a week or occasionally to finish off a project or task. Even muting email, phone, and messenger notifications can go a long way.²

A less obvious source of external interference is inadvertently falling into a project management role. Are you the team member identifying inefficiencies, sending “gentle reminders,” and making sure people feel motivated? This type of work can be particularly hard to fit in with research time. Project management can be rewarding work. However, without a designated project manager, the work falls to volunteers. And those volunteers tend to be women, even if they are more interested in doing technical work.^{3,4}

In addition to external interruptions, sometimes you can get in the way of your own research time. First, policy work has short-term deliverables that may feel more satisfying than writing a lengthy response to referees. It can be

tempting to put off high value research work and instead work on short-term policy tasks. Second, just as there are diminishing returns to research, there are diminishing returns to policy work. It can also be tempting to treat a short-term policy analysis like a long-term research project when some simple summary statistics and charts are all that is needed. In both cases, you may find yourself using some of your research blocks for policy, which may be reasonable under some circumstances, but doing so regularly can harm your research.

Finally, find out what your office’s policies are on research, and advocate for yourself. Policies should be the same across people in the same role. If you find you have more administrative or service responsibilities than your colleagues, raise this issue with your manager. Your team many doing more of this work than other teams in your institution, and your manager may not even be aware of it.

Connections to the Research Community

Develop and maintain connections to the research community

Staying connected to the research community is crucial for government economists pursuing their own research. Academics are surrounded by researchers every day. Talking to people working in your field and keeping up with their work makes you a more productive researcher. Just as important, staying connected to the research community is valuable for policy work. Two main ways government researchers stay connected to the research community are also ways for academics to connect: seminars and conferences.

The constraints on conference attendance in a government job are similar to those in an academic job. Government agencies vary in their level of travel funding for conferences, just like academic departments. You may have to schedule around some of your policy responsibilities, as you would if you were teaching. For government jobs

2 For more advice on time management, readers might find Paul Graham’s “Maker’s Schedule, Manager’s Schedule” (<http://www.paulgraham.com/makersschedule.html>) to be a useful resource.

3 Reilly, Tanya (2018). *Being Glue*. <https://noidea.dog/#/glue/>

4 Babcock, Linda, Maria P. Recalde, Lise Vesterlund, and Laurie Weingart. “Gender differences in accepting and receiving requests for tasks with low promotability.” *American Economic Review* 107, no. 3 (2017): 714-47.

Transitioning between Academic and Non-academic Jobs

Kelly M. Jones

There are many reasons why you might find yourself on the job market more than once in your career. Some of these are hard to predict, like changes to your personal life that affect your geographical preference or ability to travel. Outside of academia in particular, you might find that the nature of your job has changed, or your boss has changed, spurring you to look elsewhere. In an academic position, there is also the possibility that you don't get tenure. You may also go back on the market because you didn't get your ideal job the first time around. [A word of caution here: unless it is truly awful, give it a chance.

Balance in Government Jobs ↑

based in Washington, DC, attending local conferences can help cut down on costs.

Attending seminars can require more work than if you had an academic job. Academic departments bring in researchers every week. Many government agencies do not. Though many government jobs are located near universities, you may have to work harder to connect with other researchers. However, if you work in Washington, DC, there are more opportunities for economics seminars than at a single university, as the DC Metro area is home to nearly 8,000 economists.⁵ Seminar series within academic departments and other organizations are often open to outside attendees, even if their website does not say so specifically. I have emailed seminar organizers asking if I can attend, and I have never been turned down.

To conclude, economists in government jobs can both apply economics to people's lives and pursue economics research. Balancing the two is challenging, but rewarding. ■

You might find that what you actually like is different from what you thought your preferences were. But if after a few years it still doesn't feel like a fit, then start using your networks and turn to the market.] It is far less common than it once was to stay in one position for your entire career. Given this unpredictability, how can you be prepared for this possibility?

Be prepared

Even if you don't foresee a job change, avoid the mindset that you are in your current job for life. I don't mean that you should avoid building relationships or undertaking service to your department or organization. I mean that you should gauge your accomplishments not by the specific criteria of your current job, but by the measuring sticks of the broader profession. For example, departments and organizations vary in how they weigh various journals by quality, sole- vs. co-authored papers, or even publishing vs. teaching, service, or fundraising. My former organization quality-weighted a publication in *Journal of Development Economics* the same as a QJE; while this was sensible for that organization, it clearly differed from the broader professional norm. When deciding how to spend your time, how to organize your work, and where to submit your papers, keep in mind what is valued broadly in the profession, even if it is an imperfect match with the incentives of your current job.

In the same vein, keep your skill set well rounded, even if it's not required in your current job. Most jobs for PhD-level economists involve some combination of research, teaching/advising, policy work, and/or fundraising, but few require all of these. Let's say you are in a teaching-only position. Unless you are 100% sure that this is the only type of job you will ever want, it is likely in your best interest to continue your research

and publishing as much as possible.

Similarly, if you are in a job that does not require teaching, you may want to keep that skill polished as well. Teaching an adjunct class every two years or so keeps your course preps fresh and indicates your interest in teaching—important qualities in a job search. To find an adjunct position, check the course catalog at nearby institutions for courses of interest to you. Reach out to see if an adjunct is needed (or might be in the future), or, better, propose a new course based on your expertise that can enrich their selection of electives. Reach out widely to your network in academic departments, even if they are not nearby, as many classes are now taught online. However, be realistic about the workload involved in this endeavor. Teaching in addition to a full time job is a heavy load that will certainly require working some nights and weekends. If this isn't possible for you, you can reduce the workload by splitting a class with another interested colleague, or seeking guest lecture opportunities. Your colleagues who are teaching will likely be glad to have you!

Finally, remember that, just like in every other career, networks are crucial. Take every opportunity to have one-on-one meetings with speakers or other visitors, even if your research doesn't overlap. Reach out to those in your sub-field when appropriate: questions about their paper? or just want to say you enjoyed it? A quick email is all it takes. Organize conference sessions. Be visible. Join [#ECONTWITTER](#)! Use it to engage in current conversations about research and the profession. Use it to promote your research and accomplishments and those of others. This is where we lift each other up.

Market yourself

A second-time-around market takes a slightly different approach. For

⁵ Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2018.

[https://www.bls.gov/oes/2018/may/oes193011.htm#\(9\)](https://www.bls.gov/oes/2018/may/oes193011.htm#(9))

Transitioning between Jobs

starters, you are older and may have a more established personal life. This may restrict your geographic flexibility, which is a big market challenge. Keep in mind that this may mean you need more than one market cycle to find the right fit. This is not a sign of low quality or failure; it is simply a fact that inability to relocate significantly shrinks your pool of potential jobs.

Another key difference this time is that *you already have a job!* This means you should be much more selective in your job search. Each opportunity must strictly dominate the job you have in order to warrant application. This will be an important decision because, since you're working a full-time job, job applications will be much more burdensome than they were when you were a graduate student. Combined with geographic restrictions, this might mean you apply for only 5–10 jobs per cycle.

Depending on how long it's been since your last market, you will likely need to get new letters of reference. You may decide that (some of) your original letter writers are still the best option, but these letters should be updated to reflect your most recent accomplishments and your current search. If feasible, request letters from new references that are more familiar with your most recent work than your former dissertation advisors might be.

Finally, and most importantly: you have progressed a few years in your career and built a network along the way—use it! This is your greatest advantage as compared to the version of you who was on the market last time. If you are comfortable doing so, let everyone in your network know you are searching. If not, strategically target your outreach

to colleagues who are in (or may be connected to someone who is in) a department or organization to which you are applying. Your (relatively) small number of applications allows you the possibility to make yourself stand out from the stack of applicants through network contacts and recommendations. Don't be afraid to ask colleagues for this favor! You will do it for someone else one day.

Make a smooth transition

Once you have secured a new job, the transition into academia or into the think-tank / policy research / govern-

ment world can require some finesse. If you are starting new course preps, now is not the time to reinvent the wheel. Reach out to colleagues who have been teaching for years. Review syllabi for helpful policies and ask for course materials. Many

will be willing to share. Be realistic with your expectations. Regardless of how generous your colleagues are, and how much material you receive, you will need to adjust and retrofit it for your unique set of students. This is going to be a lot of work. Your research WILL take a hit. Diving into teaching mid-career is just different from teaching right out of graduate school, but not only in negative ways. You also now have years of work experience to draw on. This can make your teaching more interesting and more relevant for students. It can help you be a good teacher, even if you are rusty.

If you are leaving academia for the policy research world, this will require adjustments too. Translating research for a policy audience and the media is an entirely different skill set from academic presentations and publishing. Practice it! Write blog posts and policy

briefs. Reach out to your institution's communications professional; they will be happy to guide you. Say yes to all media inquiries for a while until you get the hang of it; then be more selective. And a final plug here for [#EconTwitter](#): writing in 280 characters will teach you economy of expression. While this *should* be important in academia, it certainly *is* important in communicating to other audiences.

In sum, a mid-career transition can be a lot of work. Hopefully these tips will make it a bit easier or at least more successful for you. And when you find the right fit, it will all be worth it! ■

Join the CSWEP Liaison Network!

Three cheers for the 150+ economists who have agreed to serve as CSWEP Liaisons! We are already seeing the positive effects of your hard work with increased demand for CSWEP paper sessions, fellowships and other opportunities. Thank you! Dissemination of information—including notice of mentoring events, new editions of the CSWEP News and reporting requests for our Annual Survey and Questionnaire—is an important charge of CSWEP. For this key task, we need your help. Visit [CSWEP.org](#) to see the list of current liaisons and departments for whom we'd like to identify a liaison. We are also seeking liaisons from outside the academy. To indicate your willingness to serve, send an e-mail with your contact information to info@cswep.org.

I'll focus on advice for beginning assistant professors about how to build a research portfolio that will earn tenure. Clearly, what constitutes an acceptable set of publications and research papers varies from school to school. Many schools, mine included, put emphasis on having a number of papers in good journals and having at least one paper in a top 5 journal (AER, ECMT, JPE, QJE, RESTUD). This is typically a rough guideline and not a "written in stone" numerical requirement. Higher ranked schools want more articles and expect higher quality, but these days almost all schools expect significant research output as a criterion for granting tenure. Schools are also concerned with how influential papers are. This is judged from outside evaluators' letters and possibly by looking at citation counts. Despite the variety of criteria, there are a number of unifying themes.

Tenure reviews usually look at a combination of publications and works in progress. At my school, we look for a research profile that predicts that the assistant professor will continue to be a successful researcher after being granted tenure. That is, we look not only at the number and quality of publications, but also at the "trajectory" of publications. Thus, we typically evaluate both publications and working papers and send both to the outside evaluators.

The question facing new assistant professors then is: how can you produce an acceptable research portfolio? Here's some advice based on my experience as a researcher and journal editor.

Step 1: Submit Papers!!

If your job market paper has not been published or sent out to a journal when you start your first job, send it out ASAP. It is hard to face your JMP since you've been talking about it on the job market and probably want to move to other things, but it is a big mistake to put it aside. Send it out! In order for a paper

to be published it must be sent to a journal! Putting a paper aside generates more work later when you finally get it ready to send out. Make any necessary changes that were suggested while you were on the job market and then SEND IT OUT.

Then, write up your other dissertation essays and also send them out. The publication process takes a long time and the sooner you send papers out; the sooner they can be published.

One of the most frequently asked questions that I get is: "When is a paper finished?" This is a hard question. My best advice is that when you think it is done, consult with your mentor or a colleague and ask them to read it, give you comments, and let you know if they think it is ready to submit to a journal. However, be careful not to wait too long. In my experience, some junior colleagues have failed to get tenure because they spent too long putting finishing touches on their papers and they sent them out too late. This is a tricky issue and it helps to have a mentor's or colleague's advice.

Step 2: Respond to the journal

Some time after you submit your paper, you'll get a response from the journal. How you interpret the editor's letter is very, very important. I recommend that inexperienced researchers show the letter to a mentor or a senior colleague to check their interpretation. (I know of one inexperienced researcher who threw a paper out because of the editor's negative language and later realized that he had missed the opportunity to resubmit the paper.)

There are several types of editorial letters.

1. **The paper is accepted with no revisions.** This has only happened to me once and most economists I've spoken with have never experienced this, but if it happens—celebrate!
2. **You get a revise and resubmit.** The

editor says that the paper is not publishable in its current form, but if you do a, b, and c (and probably d, e, f as well), he or she will look at it again, i.e., you can resubmit it. R&R's vary considerably in how encouraging they are, but personally, if they say you can resubmit, then I take it as an R&R even if the tone is discouraging. In responding to an R&R, pay close attention to the editor's letter.

a. It is the editor who makes the final decision not the referees.

b. Focus on the referee comments that the editor says are most important.

c. It is still important to try to respond to all the referee comments that you can. Submit a detailed list that explains how you responded to each referee comment. Keep in mind that the referees will likely see these responses. If there are some comments that you were unable to address or disagree with, you should explain this as well.

3. **There are also now some reject and resubmits.** That is, the editor says the paper is rejected, but suggests that you can resubmit if you can do a particular set of revisions and/or extensions. In this case, you have to assess whether you can do what is asked. If not, don't resubmit. If you can, then go ahead and resubmit. Resubmitting is probably a better bet than starting the process over if you can come close to addressing the concerns.

4. **You receive a rejection.** A common question about rejections is what to do with the referee comments. My usual answer has been that I would change the paper in response to referee comments that I think improve the paper and ignore the rest of the comments. This is based on the idea that people don't referee the same paper more than once. As a referee, I always refuse to referee a paper for a second journal, but

Calls, Announcements, and Sessions at Upcoming Meetings

Call for Nominations, 2020 Carolyn Shaw Bell Award

DEADLINE: 30 September 2020
(NOTE: This deadline has been extended.)

The annual **Carolyn Shaw Bell Award** is given to an individual who has furthered the status of women in the economics profession, through example, achievements, increasing our understanding of how women can advance in the economics profession, or mentoring others. Nominations should include a nomination letter, updated CV and three or more supporting letters, with preferably at

least two from mentees. Nomination letters should be focused on examples of how the nominee has fulfilled the criterion of advancing the position of women in economics, rather than strictly on academic achievements.

A CSWEP-appointed committee reviews nominations and the prize will be awarded at the January 2021 ASSA Meetings. The Award Committee automatically retains and considers applications for a period of three years, and previous nominators are encouraged to update nomination packages if appropriate. **Nominations are due September 30, 2020.**

For more information and a list of

past recipients of the Bell Award, visit: <https://www.aeaweb.org/about-aea/committees/cswep/about/awards/bell>

Nominations for this award may be sent to:

Rebekah Crowe, CSWEP Committee Coordinator
American Economic Association
2014 Broadway, Suite 305
Nashville, TN 37203
info@cswep.org

Call for Nominations, 2020 Elaine Bennett Research Prize

DEADLINE: 30 September 2020
(NOTE: This deadline has been extended.)

The biennial **Elaine Bennett Research Prize** supports, encourages and recognizes outstanding contributions by young women in the economics profession. Nominees should be at the beginning of their career, normally within seven years of completing their dissertation or earning their PhD.

However, adjustments will be made for nominees who have had childrearing or medical leaves. Nominees will have demonstrated exemplary research contributions in their field. Nominations should contain the candidate's CV, relevant publications, a letter of nomination and two supporting letters. The Bennett Prize is for fundamental intellectual contributions to economics. Correspondingly, the nomination letter should describe the candidate's research and its significance and supporting letters should come from experts in the field who are best able to speak to these contributions, regardless of departmental or agency affiliation.

A CSWEP-appointed committee reviews nominations and the prize will be awarded at the January 2021 ASSA Meetings. **Nominations are due September 30, 2020.**

Research, Publishing, Tenure ↑

I now know that others do referee papers again or submit their earlier referee report to the second journal. Thus, you should try to correct things that referees have pointed out. I still would not make major changes to the paper that I disagree with, although you may want to rewrite the paper to short-circuit such complaints, e.g., by adding a footnote that mentions and discusses the particular concern.

Finally, if you receive a revise and resubmit or a rejection, deal with it immediately—treat it like a hot potato. The publication process can take a long time and tenure clocks are finite.

Three other suggestions

1. Present your JMP and other work at conferences. This is a good way to meet senior researchers working on your topic. It is also a great way to get comments and feedback on your work. Further, it allows senior researchers who may later be asked to be outside evaluators to see you in action and this can help make their letters more personal and supportive. It is also a good way to meet other young researchers and in general to network.

2. I find that it is better to work on more than one project at a time. This allows me to turn to something else productive if I'm stuck for a bit. It also allows me some diversity in what I'm working on.

3. I think that it is more productive to work with coauthors, although most of my papers before tenure were sole authored. Choose your coauthors carefully. Coauthoring with your mentor or spouse may be discounted in the tenure process. It is better to coauthor with a variety of other people.

The bottom line is that in order to receive tenure, you need to put together a set of research papers to make the case that you are and will continue to be a productive scholar. It's important to get papers out in a timely fashion and to recognize that the publication process can take a long time. It is very helpful to consult with mentors or senior colleagues about the process and to be clear about your department's expectations. It's also really important to remember the joy in doing research and not to let the pressures of the tenure process cause you to lose sight of that. ■



Calls, Announcements, Sessions

For more information and a list of past recipients of the Bennett Prize, visit: <https://www.aeaweb.org/about-aea/committees/cswep/about/awards/bennett>

Nominations for these awards may be sent to:

Rebekah Crowe, CSWEP Committee Coordinator
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Call for Participants and Topic Ideas, Virtual CSWEP/Midwest Economics Association Meeting

Panels on Career Development

22–28 March 2021

DEADLINE: 12 OCTOBER 2020

CSWEP is organizing two panels on topics related to career development at the Virtual Midwest Economics Association Meetings to be held March 22–28, 2021.

The panels will be held on the Friday (26 March) of the conference. One panel will be geared to those looking for jobs (academic and nonacademic) and another panel will focus on mid-career issues. Each panel will have four participants who will each speak for about 10 minutes. The sessions are organized to allow for plenty of time for an active exchange of ideas and advice among the panelists and session attendees.

If you have specific suggestions regarding the topics to be covered or ideas for potential panelists (you can also suggest yourself), please submit your topics and ideas as soon as possible (no later than October 12, 2020) to Shahina Amin, CSWEP Midwest Rep, shahina.amin@uni.edu. To foster the exchange of new ideas, we especially seek individuals who have not previously served as panelists.

In addition to the CSWEP panels the MEA meetings provide a great opportunity to present your own research. For those interested in presenting a

paper, you can find paper submission information on the MEA web site, <http://mea.grinnell.edu/>.

CSWEP Call for Complete Sessions and Individual Papers, CSWEP Sessions @ Eastern Economic Association Meeting

25–28 February 2021

Sheraton New York Times Square Hotel, New York, NY (Tentative)

DEADLINE: 19 OCTOBER 2020

CSWEP will sponsor a number of sessions at the annual meeting of the Eastern Economic Association.

Sessions are available for persons submitting an entire session (3 or 4 papers) or a complete panel on a specific topic in any area in economics, as well as topics related to career development. The organizer should prepare a proposal for a panel (including chair and participants) or session (including chair, abstracts, and discussants) and submit by email. Please be sure to include the appropriate JEL code(s) and the names, affiliations, and emails of all participants.

Additional sessions will be organized by the CSWEP Eastern Representative. Abstracts for papers in the topic areas of gender, health economics, labor economics and public economics are particularly solicited, but abstracts in other areas are also encouraged. Abstracts should be approximately one page in length and include the paper title, appropriate JEL code(s), names of authors, affiliation and rank, and email contact information.

Final decisions will be made before the regular EEA deadline.

All submissions should be emailed to:

Rebekah Crowe, CSWEP Committee Coordinator
American Economic Association
2014 Broadway, Suite 305
Nashville, TN 37203
info@cswep.org

If you have questions, specific suggestions regarding career topics to be

covered, potential panelists, or ideas on how CSWEP can offer resources in career development at the Eastern meetings, please contact CSWEP using the above email address as well.

Fall 2020 CSWEP Survey Coming Soon!

DEADLINE: 23 October 2020

Since 1972 CSWEP has undertaken the collection of data on the gender composition of faculty and students in both PhD granting and non-PhD granting U.S. economics departments. This 40+ years of data is unique in the social sciences and beyond and is presented in the CSWEP Annual Report. The 2020 survey was sent to all department chairs in mid-September and the completed survey is due October 23. CSWEP is very appreciative of the work of the 200+ department chairs and staff and the CSWEP liaisons who work to complete these surveys in a timely manner every year.

CSWEP Sessions @ Southern Economic Association 90th Annual Meeting

21–23 November 2020

New Orleans Marriott, New Orleans, LA (Tentative)

NOTE: All session dates and times are TBD. As of the date of publication of this newsletter, it was unclear whether the SEAs will be virtual or in-person. If the SEAs are in-person, additional CSWEP-sponsored social events, such as a mentoring breakfast or luncheon, may be added. For updates on CSWEP activities at the Southern, follow CSWEP on Twitter ([@CSWEP](https://twitter.com/CSWEP)).

Policing and the Courts

Session Chair & Organizer: Jennifer Doleac (Texas A & M University)

Specialization in criminal courts: evaluating impact of domestic violence courts in Nashville, Tennessee

Kerri Raissian (University of Connecticut), Aria Golestani (University of California, Irvine), and Emily Owens (University of California, Irvine)

Calls, Announcements, Sessions

Discussant: CarlyWill Sloan (Texas A & M University)

Effects of disparate policing on long-term outcomes: evidence using Chicago parking tickets

Elizabeth Luh (University of Houston)

Discussant: Kerri Raissian (University of Connecticut)

The effect of tasers on fatal police encounters

Melissa Moore (University of Virginia)

Discussant: Elizabeth Luh (University of Houston)

The effect of prosecutor severity on case outcomes

CarlyWill Sloan (Texas A & M University)

Discussant: Melissa Moore, University of Virginia

The Causes and Consequences of Crime

Session Chair & Organizer: Jennifer Doleac (Texas A & M University)

A comparison of the female and male racial disparities in imprisonment

Anne-Charlotte Souto (University of Pittsburgh), Junsoo Lee (University of Alabama), and Paul Pecorino (University of Alabama)

Discussant: Orgul Ozturk (University of South Carolina)

Stress on the sidewalk: the mental health costs of close-proximity crime

Panka Bencsik (University of Chicago)

Discussant: Anne-Charlotte Souto (University of Pittsburgh)

The silenced women: can public activism stimulate reporting of violence against women?

Abhilasha Sahay (George Washington University)

Discussant: Panka Bencsik (University of Chicago)

Exit exams and crime

Orgul Ozturk (University of South Carolina) and Ozkan Eren (University of California, Riverside)

Discussant: Abhilasha Sahay (George Washington University)

Meet the Funders

Co-sponsored with the American Economic Association's Committee

on the Status of Minority Groups in the Economics Profession (CSMGEP) and Committee on the Status of LGBTQ+ Individuals in the Economics Profession

Moderator: Jennifer Doleac (Texas A & M University)

Panelists:

Martha Gimbel (Schmidt Futures), Stuart Buck (Arnold Ventures), Sue Marquez (Rockefeller Foundation), and Mark Steinmeyer (Smith Richardson Foundation)

Meet the Editors

Co-sponsored with the American Economic Association's Committee on the Status of Minority Groups in the Economics Profession (CSMGEP) and Committee on the Status of LGBTQ+ Individuals in the Economics Profession

Moderator: Jose Fernandez (University of Louisville)

Panelists:

Stefano Barbieri (Tulane University, *Economic Inquiry* and *Journal of Public Economic Theory*)

Donna Gilleskie (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, *American Journal of Health Economics*, *Journal of Human Resources*, *Labour*, *Southern Economic Journal*)

Christopher S. (Kitt) Carpenter (Vanderbilt University, *Journal of Health Economics*, *American Journal of Health Economics*, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*)

Madeline Zavodny (University of North Florida, *Journal of Population Economics*, *Southern Economic Journal*, *International Migration Review*)

Advice for the Non-Rookie Job Market

Co-sponsored with the American Economic Association's Committee on the Status of Minority Groups in the Economics Profession (CSMGEP) and Committee on the Status of LGBTQ+ Individuals in the Economics Profession

Moderator: Jose Fernandez (University of Louisville)

Panelists:

Nzinga H. Broussard (Global Innovation Fund), Douglas N. Harris (Tulane University), Joseph J. Sabia (San Diego State University), and Chloe R. Gibbs (University of Notre Dame) ■

Brag Box

"We need every day to herald some woman's achievements . . . go ahead and boast!"
—Carolyn Shaw Bell

Anya Samek, Associate Professor in the Rady School of Management at the University of California, San Diego, was selected as the 2020 recipient of the Vernon L. Smith Ascending Scholar Prize for her research on charitable giving, education and health. The prize is given annually by the International Foundation for Research in Experimental Economics (IFREE) to an exceptional young scholar (Assistant or Associate Professor, or equivalent) in the field of experimental economics whose work embodies IFREE's mission to promote human betterment through experimental economics to improve the understanding of exchange systems. Congratulations, Anya, on this outstanding achievement!

Elizabeth Asiedu, Professor of Economics at the University of Kansas, was awarded the Sadie Collective's award for Academic Excellence and Mentoring. The Sadie Collective is the first US non-profit organization aimed specifically at increasing the representation of black women in economics and related quantitative fields. Prof. Asiedu received the award in recognition of her role as the founder of the Association for the Advancement of African Women Economists (AAWE). Thank you, Elizabeth, for your service to the profession!

We want to hear from you!

Send announcements to info@cswep.org.

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