

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271849599>

When Winning Is Really Losing: Teaching Awards and Women Political Science Faculty

Article in *Political Science and Politics* · January 2015

DOI: 10.1017/S104909651400167X

CITATIONS

0

READS

42

2 authors:



[Charity Butcher](#)

Kennesaw State University

9 PUBLICATIONS 9 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



[Timothy Kersey](#)

Kennesaw State University

1 PUBLICATION 0 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

All content following this page was uploaded by [Timothy Kersey](#) on 23 October 2015.

The user has requested enhancement of the downloaded file. All in-text references [underlined in blue](#) are added to the original document and are linked to publications on ResearchGate, letting you access and read them immediately.

When Winning is Really Losing: Teaching Awards and Women Political Science Faculty

Charity Butcher
Kennesaw State University

Timothy Kersey
Kennesaw State University

Abstract

Based on a recent survey of political science professors in the United States, women tend to win teaching awards at higher rates than their male counterparts. This may seem like good news for female faculty, particularly amid continuing reports of gender gaps in publications and citations as well as the 'leaky pipeline' phenomenon within promotions. However, a closer look at these findings suggests that in cases where such awards might be most beneficial to women, they are less likely than their male colleagues to receive such acknowledgements. In fact, women are more likely than men to receive such awards only in institutional contexts where research output is more important than teaching for tenure and promotion. Thus, the achievement of teaching excellence may have an overall negative impact on the advancement of female faculty by reducing the time and focus available for research.

Within the past decade, an increasing amount of attention has been paid to the existence of gender disparities within academia; more specifically, women appear to be lagging behind men within academic professions in a variety of ways. Recent survey data, however, suggests that women are outperforming their male counterparts in regards to recognition of teaching excellence. In a 2013 national survey of over six hundred political science faculty members, over one-third of respondents (34.5%) reported receiving a teaching award or other teaching recognition from their department, college, or university with the past five years.¹ When broken down by gender, we found that a greater percentage of female faculty members received teaching awards or recognition (39.6%) than male faculty members (31.4%). These findings thus suggest that teaching excellence is an area of academia in which women are *not* underrepresented.

This appears to be a welcome development amongst seemingly continuous reports of gender disparities within the discipline of political science and academia more broadly. For example, a recent article published on behalf of the Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession suggested that the position of women in academia is only partially improving. Although gender parity exists in graduate school enrollments, women achieve professional milestones further down the 'pipeline' (e.g. tenure, promotion, raises) at lower rates than male academics (Monroe and Chiu 2010). Hesli and Lee (2011) found that women in U.S. political science departments publish less on average than their male counterparts and that these results are significant at all ranks. Breuning and Sanders (2007) found that the percentage of publications by women in eight top journals lags behind female representation in these respective fields. However, the authors also find that when comparing submissions by women to those articles that are actually published, women fare comparatively well, having at least as many, if not more, of their articles accepted than their male counterparts. Similarly, Østby, Strand, Nordås and

¹ This survey was sent to 6291 political science faculty in 20 different states around the United States. A total of 660 individuals responded to the survey, for a response rate of 10.49%.

Gleditsch (2013) found no significant gender bias in terms of the rates of acceptances from submissions in the *Journal of Peace Research*. These findings suggest that the problem does not necessarily lie with reviewers or editors, but rather, that women are perhaps less likely to submit work in the first place.

Of course, not all the research points to women publishing less than men. In looking at the gender breakdown of individuals publishing in the journals *Political Communication* and the *International Journal of Press/Politics*, two interdisciplinary journals, Evans and Bucy (2010) find that while women did publish less than men, their rates of publication were actually higher than their representations in the field. Evans and Moulder (2011) find that again, while publishing less than men overall, women's publication rates in four political science journals (the *American Political Science Review*, the *American Journal of Political Science*, the *Journal of Politics*, and *PS: Political Science and Politics*), were consistent with the representation of women in the field. Such proportionality has also been found in regards to female contributions to edited political science books ([Mathews and Andersen 2001](#)). Thus, while women remain underrepresented in political science, recent findings suggest that publication rates are roughly proportional to representation.

Gender gaps, however, may be more prominently seen when considering specific types of research. In an analysis of four top political science journals, Evans and Moulder (2011) demonstrate that articles with female authors were significantly more likely to be qualitative in nature than articles with male authors; similar results were found in study of eight top political science journals by [Breuning and Sanders \(2007\)](#). More dramatic gaps exist in regards to subfield. Kadera (2013) suggests that within the field of international politics, the cultures, institutions, and practices within academia often lead to the undervaluing of women's scholarship. This idea is reinforced by recent research on a possible "citation gap" between the published work of men and women; Maliniak, Powers and Walter (2013) find that women are cited less frequently than men in international relations literature, even after controlling for a variety of potentially confounding variables. Similarly, Mitchell, Lange and [Brus \(2013\)](#)

found that male authors and mixed-gender author teams publishing in *International Studies Quarterly (ISQ)* and *International Studies Perspectives (ISP)* were less likely to cite work by female scholars than female authors were. No such gender gap in citations, however, was found in the *Journal of Peace Research* (Østby, Strand, Nordås and Gleditsch 2013).

Despite a few rays of light, existing research paints a bleak view of the status of women in political science and other academic disciplines. As such, the finding that female academics in our sample demonstrated higher rates of winning teaching awards than their male colleagues appeared to be a welcome change. However, a closer look at this data and a more thorough discussion of the potential implications of this finding suggests that such celebration may be premature.

Gender, Teaching Awards, and Professional Advancement

One of the more important factors in considering receipt of teaching awards is academic rank. As seen in table 1, teaching awards were most frequently received at the Lecturer, Full Professor, and Emeritus Professor ranks. These results are not particularly surprising, as faculty at Full and Emeritus ranks will have had more years of teaching experience, and Lecturers are primarily teaching faculty at most universities and colleges. When these totals are broken down by gender, some interesting patterns may be seen.

[Insert table 1 around here]

Table 1 shows the breakdown of teaching awards by rank and gender. As the table indicates, women are more likely to receive teaching awards than men at the Assistant, Associate and Full Professor ranks (excluding Emeriti professors, due to the small number of women Emeriti). This would suggest that women at all ranks of tenure-track positions are putting a lot of time and effort toward teaching, and are being recognized accordingly. This finding is potentially promising, as such positive recognition will likely have some value in considerations of tenure and promotion. However, given the

great time and effort required to be an exceptional teacher, such effort is likely to have some negative consequences for research productivity. Thus, the possibility exists that female faculty members are spending more time on their teaching, especially in the critical pre-tenure years, while their male colleagues are spending more time on other professional responsibilities, namely research. This gender-based difference in allocation of time would support findings, such as Breuning and Sanders (2007), which show lower rates of submission for publication by women than men.

Furthermore, for Lecturers, where teaching may be the primary focus, men are much more likely to receive teaching awards than women in these positions. Thus, for individuals in positions where teaching awards may provide evidence for advancement and raises, women no longer appear to have an advantage over men in terms of winning teaching awards, in fact, the opposite is true.

Overall, the consideration of how rank and gender intersect in regard to teaching awards suggests that the gains made by women by “winning” such awards may not actually be such a victory. Given that many political scientists do not value teaching excellence as highly as research achievements - especially in regards to tenure, promotion, and raises - focusing on teaching and attaining recognition in this area may have a negative impact on the likelihood of professional advancement for women. Furthermore, in positions where teaching may be more important for advancement and pay (e.g. Lecturers), women become less likely to win teaching awards than their male counterparts.

As research productivity is not valued to the same degree in all institutions, it may be the case that spending additional time on teaching can be a ‘winning’ strategy for female faculty at Liberal Arts Colleges and other four-year institutions. Unfortunately, as demonstrated in table 2, women are less likely than men to receive teaching awards at four-year institutions – institutions in which excellence in undergraduate education is much more likely to be important for tenure and promotion than research productivity.

[Insert table 2 around here]

Women do receive teaching awards at a higher rate than men at all other types of institutions, but again, it is unclear if this represents an actual benefit for female faculty members. In institutional contexts (e.g. Ph.D. departments) where research productivity may be more valuable than teaching effectiveness, becoming an exceptional teacher can put female faculty at a disadvantage for tenure and promotions.

Discussion

It is perhaps not surprising that women are often more likely to receive teaching awards than their male counterparts. As many have noted, women tend to spend more hours per week in the classroom and preparing for their classes; teaching, however, is often valued less than research, particularly in regard to tenure and promotion ([Park 1996](#)). The relationship between teaching time and research productivity is supported in the literature. For example, Fox (1992) found that the number of courses taught, undergraduate teaching load, hours spent in course preparation, and time for undergraduate advising were all negatively associated with publication productivity. If women are spending more time on teaching (and winning more awards for teaching because of it), their research is likely suffering negatively. While this might not be problematic in some institutional contexts, it is undoubtedly detrimental for women at research-oriented institutions.

The results presented here suggest that women are likely putting more of their time and effort toward teaching than their male counterparts, even at universities where teaching may be considered less important than research. Given the potentially negative consequences for tenure and promotion, why would female faculty allocate their time in this manner? One explanation is differing perceptions of expectations for faculty members. In a study of international studies faculty, Hancock, [Baum and Breuning \(2013\)](#) found that men were much more likely than women to believe that their university expected them to devote the majority of their time (as much as 80%) towards research.

Correspondingly, female faculty in this study were more likely to believe their institution expected 40% or less of their time to be directed towards research activities. This large difference suggests that women may underestimate the amount of time that they are expected to spend on research and therefore spend more time on teaching than their male colleagues.

Another possible explanation for different approaches to teaching time may lie with perceptions of ability. Recent research posits the existence of a “confidence gap” between male and female faculty (Kay and Shipman 2014). Kay and Shipman suggest that, compared with men, women generally underestimate their professional abilities (e.g. readiness for tenure/promotion); such underestimation of abilities and/or lowered level of confidence could potentially explain many gender-based differences in faculty behavior and performance. Specific to teaching, where professors must effectively ‘perform’ for an audience of students, female faculty may feel a particular need to not only prepare for class, but to *over-prepare* for their teaching performance. Such over-preparation (to overcome the ‘confidence gap’) could be one factor explaining the higher percentage of women receiving teaching awards than men. While this may have a positive impact in regard to women’s accomplishments in teaching, it is likely to have a negative impact on their research productivity, as every hour spend on class prep is one less hour that can be spent on research. Lower levels of confidence may further decrease research output in more direct ways, as women might feel the need to spend more time than men on projects before sending them out for review.

The amount of time and effort put towards teaching by female faculty members may also be impacted by how women are evaluated in the classroom by students. Sprague and [Massoni \(2005\)](#) find that students tend to hold certain gendered expectations for faculty members, for example, female professors are expected to be caring and nurturing, while male professors are expected to be funny and energetic. The authors also find that students enforce such expectations through evaluations; specifically, faculty members that *fail to* conform to these gender expectations receive negative

evaluations from students. Certainly, the expectation to conform to gender stereotypes represents a burden for male and female faculty alike, but such burdens may not equally impact other aspects of professional academic life.

In order to be considered 'good' teachers consistent with gendered expectations, female faculty members need to construct relationships with new students each semester and have greater interaction with students inside and outside of the classroom; such nurturing, or relationship-based activities are often very time-consuming. In our sample, female faculty appear to be meeting these demands and being rewarded accordingly. However, given the amount of time and effort required to achieve this status, women are likely spending much more time on teaching than their male colleagues to achieve positive evaluations.

In conclusion, while it is encouraging that women are doing well in one area of the profession, our findings suggest that women are still 'losing' within the larger struggle for gender parity in the academic world. Women appear to be recognized more for their teaching than men, but not within the institutional contexts where such awards and acknowledgements have the most impact. Further, given that more time being spent on teaching must mean less time being spent on something else, such excellence in teaching will likely come at the cost of decreased research activity for female faculty members.

These findings should not be interpreted to suggest that female faculty stop caring about teaching or solely pursue their research agendas, as such solutions are ultimately short-sighted. Rather, these findings suggest that female academics need to think a bit more strategically about advancement within their particular institutional context by ensuring both that their perceptions of faculty performance reflect actual institutional policies, and that their available work time is allocated accordingly. Stronger efforts towards mentoring of female faculty (especially junior faculty and advanced graduate students) may help improve many of the issues raised throughout this paper,

including increased confidence for women in the field, more effective allocation of work time, and practical strategies for professional advancement.

Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, department chairs and other college and university administrators should be mindful of the gendered dimensions involved in issues of professional advancement. Institutions should strive for maximum clarity and transparency regarding teaching and research expectations for tenure and promotion to minimize any potential misconceptions. Similarly, chairs and other administrators should actively monitor the allocation of teaching/research assistants, course releases, and other such institutional resources to ensure that female faculty are not underutilizing such opportunities. Different understandings of what is 'important' for professional academics are natural and not inherently problematic; however, the systematic miscommunication or misperception of faculty expectations should be considered by institutions seeking to address gender disparities in academic professional development.

References

- Breuning, Marijke, Kathryn Sanders. 2007. "Gender and Journal Authorship in Eight Prestigious Political Science Journals." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 40 (2): 347-351.
- Evans, Heather K., Erik P. Bucy. 2010. "The Representation of Women in Publication: An Analysis of *Political Communication* and the *International Journal of Press/Politics*." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 43 (2): 295-301.
- Evans, Heather K., A. Moulder. 2011. "Reflecting on a Decade of Women's Publications in Four Top Political Science Journals." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44 (4): 793-798.
- Fox, Mary Frank. 1992. "Research, Teaching, and Publication Productivity: Mutuality Versus Competition in Academia." *Sociology of Education* 65 (4): 293-305.
- Hancock, Kathleen J., Matthew A. Baum, and Marijke Breuning. 2013. "Women and Pre-Tenure Scholarly Productivity in International Studies: An Investigation into the Leaky Career Pipeline." *International Studies Perspectives* 14 (4): 507-527.
- Hesli, Vicki, Jae Mook Lee. 2011. "Faculty Research Productivity: Why Do Some of Our Colleagues Publish More than Others?" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 44 (2): 393-408.
- Kadera, Kelly M. 2013. "The Social Underpinnings of Women's Worth in the Study of World Politics: Culture, Leader Emergence, and Coauthorship." *International Studies Perspectives* 14 (4): 463-475.
- Kay, Katty, Claire Shipman. 2014. "The Confidence Gap." *Atlantic*. April 14.
<http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2014/04/the-confidence-gap/359815/>
- Maliniak, Daniel, Ryan Powers, and Barbara F. Walter. 2013. "The Gender Citation Gap in International Relations." *International Organization* 67 (4): 1-34.
- Mathews, A. Lanethea, Kristi Andersen. 2001. "A Gender Gap in Publishing? Women's Representation in Edited Political Science Books." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 31 (1): 143-147.
- Mitchell, Sara McLaughlin, Samantha Lange, and Holly Brus. 2013. "Gendered Citation Patterns in International Relations Journals." *International Studies Perspectives* 14 (4): 485-492.
- Monroe, Kristen Renwick, William F. Chiu. 2010. "Gender Equality in the Academy: The Pipeline Problem." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 43 (2): 303-308.
- Østby, Gudrun, Håvard Strand, Ragnhild Nordås, and Nils Petter Gleditsch. 2013. "Gender Gap or Gender Bias in Peace Research? Publication Patterns and Citation Rates for Journal of Peace Research, 1983-2008." *International Studies Perspectives* 14 (4): 493-506.

Park, Shelley. 1996. "Research, Teaching, and Service: Why Shouldn't Women's Work Count?" *Journal of Higher Education* 67 (1): 46-84.

Sprague, Joey, Kelly Massoni. 2005. "Student Evaluations and Gendered Expectations: What We Can't count Can Hurt Us." *Sex Roles* 53 (11/12): 779-793.

Author Biographies

Charity Butcher is an assistant professor of political science and international affairs at Kennesaw State University. Her research focuses on various aspects of international and internal state conflict. She also conducts research on the scholarship of teaching and learning. cbutche2@kennesaw.edu

Timothy Kersey is a visiting assistant professor of political science and international affairs at Kennesaw State University. His areas of interest are contemporary democratic theory and scholarship of teaching and learning. He can be reached at tkersey2@kennesaw.edu.

Table 1
Faculty Teaching Awards by Gender and Rank

Rank	Female	Male	All
Part-Time Faculty	0.00% (0/17)	24.14% (7/29)	14.89% (7/47)
Lecturer	36.84% (7/19)	50.00% (10/20)	42.50% (17/40)
Assistant Professor	32.56% (28/86)	22.08% (17/77)	27.44% (45/164)
Associate Professor	53.85% (35/65)	29.63% (32/108)	38.29% (67/175)
Full Professor	48.98% (24/49)	36.89% (45/122)	40.35% (69/171)
Emeritus Professor	100.00% (1/1)	44.44% (4/9)	45.45% (5/11)

Note: Values represent the percentage of respondents having received a teaching award within the past five years. Total *N* of respondents reporting their gender was 606; *N* of respondents reporting their rank was 608.

Table 2
Faculty Teaching Awards by Gender and Institution

Type of Institution	Female	Male	All
Two Year or Community College	30.77% (8/26)	24.24% (8/33)	26.67% (16/60)
Four Year College or University	40.30% (27/67)	47.69% (31/65)	35.15% (58/165)
Master's Degree Granting University	33.90% (19/56)	22.73% (20/88)	27.40% (40/146)
Ph.D. Granting University	45.05% (41/91)	37.58% (56/149)	40.25% (97/241)

Note: Values represent the percentage of respondents having received a teaching award within the past five years. Total *N* of respondents reporting their gender was 606; *N* of respondents reporting their institution was 612.