



9-17-2015

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Christine Moser

Western Michigan University, christine.moser@wmich.edu

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Moser, Christine, "WMU collaboration with Michigan State University: The American Economic Association Summer Training Program" (2015). *Academic Leadership Academy*. Paper 47.
http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/acad_leadership/47

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WMU collaboration with Michigan State University: The American Economic Association Summer Training Program

Dr. Christine Moser
Department of Economics

Introduction

Since 1974, the American Economic Association Summer Program and Minority Scholarship Program has prepared talented undergraduates for doctoral programs in economics and related disciplines, by offering a unique opportunity for students to gain technical skills in economics and conduct research with prominent faculty. This program has been exceptionally successful, and a recent study suggests that around 20 percent of PhDs awarded to minorities in economics over the past 20 years can be attributed directly to the program. Starting in 2016, the Economics Department at Michigan State University will host this program in collaboration with Western Michigan University.

Minorities in Economics

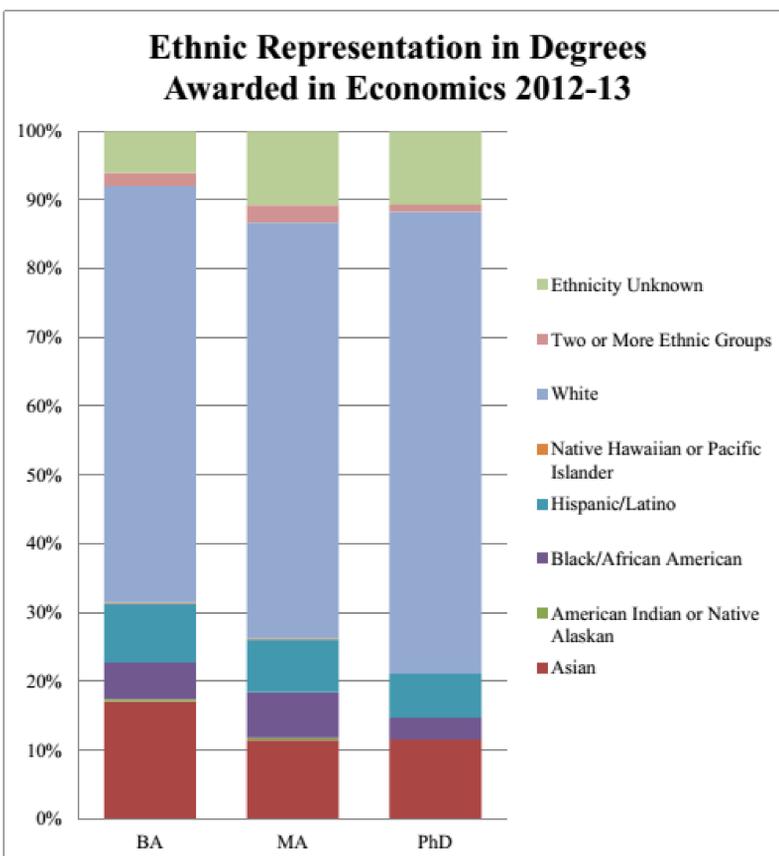


Figure 1: Representation of Different Racial/Ethnic Groups in Degrees Awarded in Economics 2012-13

Source: CSMGEP annual report 2014

The economics profession faces many of the same challenges as the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields in terms of minority participation. In fact, economics lags behind these fields in the percent of degrees awarded to minorities at the bachelor's, master's and PhD levels (CSMGEP 2014). Based on 2010-2012 averages, across all fields, the percent of bachelor degrees awarded to minorities (specifically African American, Hispanic and American Indian/Native American) was 19.9, while it was 13.0 percent in economics. At the PhD level, 14.8 percent of all degrees were awarded to minorities, but only 7.0 percent of economics PhDs went to minorities.

The Program

Michigan State is expected to host the program from 2016 to 2020 and during this time between 100 and 200 undergraduate students will receive extensive exposure to research tools and methods in economics in particular and in the social sciences more broadly.

These students will experience substantial preparation for high-level graduate work in economics and related fields. The Program offers two levels of instruction—foundations and advanced—over an eight week period. Students at each level will take courses in microeconomics, econometrics, mathematical economics, and research methods.

The Collaboration

Dr. Christine Moser is the Assistant Director of the program and will focus efforts on the foundations level program, recruiting and program evaluation. In addition, Moser will teach the foundations level research Methods course. Dr. Don Meyer will teach the foundations-level microeconomics course. WMU will host the students for a one-day visit to Kalamazoo and Lake Michigan.

