Why Women in Economics (WIE)?

One day back in 2013 two of our department’s stellar graduate students - Maggie Evans and Stephanie Buckley - approached Professor Lea Kosnik and asked whether the department would support a student group dedicated to the advancement of women in economics. Before they were even done pitching the idea, Professor Kosnik was on board. Since that time the group known as “Women in Economics” (WIE) has worked to provide a nurturing environment for women who wish to pursue a degree in Economics, including hosting BBQs, brunches, happy hours, and all sorts of events where students who wish to discuss and advance the goal of a greater presence of women in the profession can meet, network, and exchange ideas. The group is small (as is the major at UMSL), but the dedication is overpowering.

As the organization has developed over the past few years, an additional goal has been added to the group’s mission: education. WIE board members, in particular, have found that when others on campus (students, staff, and even faculty) first hear about WIE, they are commonly greeted with confusion and consternation. “Is such a group really necessary?” “What do you guys do anyway, gossip? Ha ha.” Clearly, the need for a group such as WIE is as strong as ever.

Sexism and discrimination, in the wider field of Economics in particular, is pervasive. For anyone who wishes to learn a little more about women in economics and the experiences they face, below are links to just a few articles, and from just the last couple of years, which illustrate some of the issues women economists face. Note that most of these articles are written by men (though, of course, that shouldn’t matter).
Informative Articles:


same topic:


“How Big is the Sexism Problem in Economics? This Article’s Co-Author is Anonymous Because of It.” January 6, 2015. Quartz. Miles Kimball, Professor of Economics, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor)

Which leads with this great photo, which speaks for itself:


Data on Women in Economics:

For basic data on women in the Economics profession, there is no better resource than CSWEP – Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession. They have been gathering data on the underrepresentation of women in Economics for decades. They produce graphs and table such as the following which, depressingly, show but marginal changes in the representation of women in economics since the 1970s. Compared to other social sciences, the numbers in Economics are abysmal. Even more such data can be found in CSWEP’s newsletters and on their website:

![Figure 1. Share of AEA Program Participants Who Are Female](image)

![Figure 2. Female Share of Program Participants and Professors in PhD Programs](image)

*Note: 1985–1992 data on professors provided by Donna Ginther; 1993–2015 data from CSWEP and AEA UAQ annual reports*