

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

**Report on the Status of
Academic Women at the
University of Chicago**



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

FEBRUARY 2012 OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

FORWARD

From its founding, the University of Chicago has aimed to attract the most talented, creative, and impactful scholars, and to foster a community where ideas are freely exchanged and challenged. We pride ourselves on the quality of argument and discourse that comprises a Chicago education and believe firmly that it is what you have to say, not who you are, that matters. These aspirations are woven into our DNA, but we cannot assume that they are always expressed or optimally achieved. Beliefs and practice must withstand the scrutiny brought by confrontation with actual data.

It is in this context that I wish to express my gratitude to the Women's Leadership Council for their efforts over the last year to rigorously assess our record with regard to the hiring, promotion, and leadership opportunities provided to female faculty. If we are not leaders in attracting talented women and men to our ranks, then we cannot reach our potential as a University. The data that follow in the "Report on the Status of Academic Women at the University of Chicago" are just a first cut, but already contain an enormous amount of information that should spur discussion and thoughtful action. I encourage you to be part of the conversation.

Thomas F. Rosenbaum
John T. Wilson Distinguished Service Professor of Physics
Provost
The University of Chicago

In endorsing this inaugural Report on the Status of Academic Women at the University of Chicago, the President and Provost make clear their commitment to advancing scholarly and intellectual excellence without prejudice to the gender of the contributing scholars and intellectuals. We strive for a simple goal: an excellent, diverse, and productive intellectual community of faculty and student scholars.

For this report, the Women's Leadership Council focuses on a subset of existing data regarding women on our faculty. We purposely do not interpret the data nor do we comment on past or future policy. Rather, we intend to provide information regarding the state of women faculty at the University of Chicago in the recent past. From the available data sets, we selected, in this first report, to concentrate on 1) distribution of faculty across ranks and academic units; 2) hiring, tenure, and promotion; and 3) leadership and named professorships. Ultimately our ambition is to stimulate campus-wide discussion and debate that is informed by data on women faculty at the University of Chicago.

When the University of Chicago was established in 1892, President William Rainey Harper and donor John D. Rockefeller were committed to education of both men and women by faculty comprised of both men and women.¹ Remarkably nine of the original 77 faculty members were women (12%), evidence that the founders' vision was far ahead of its time (**Figure 1**). By 1972, the number of women on faculty had multiplied to 100, comprising 8% of the total faculty.² It should be noted that 1972 was the year that Title IX of the Education Amendments was enacted into law.³ By 2010, the number of women faculty had increased to 273 and women comprised a quarter of the total faculty. From 2007 through 2010, the proportion of women hovered around 25%, reaching a peak of 26% in 2008.

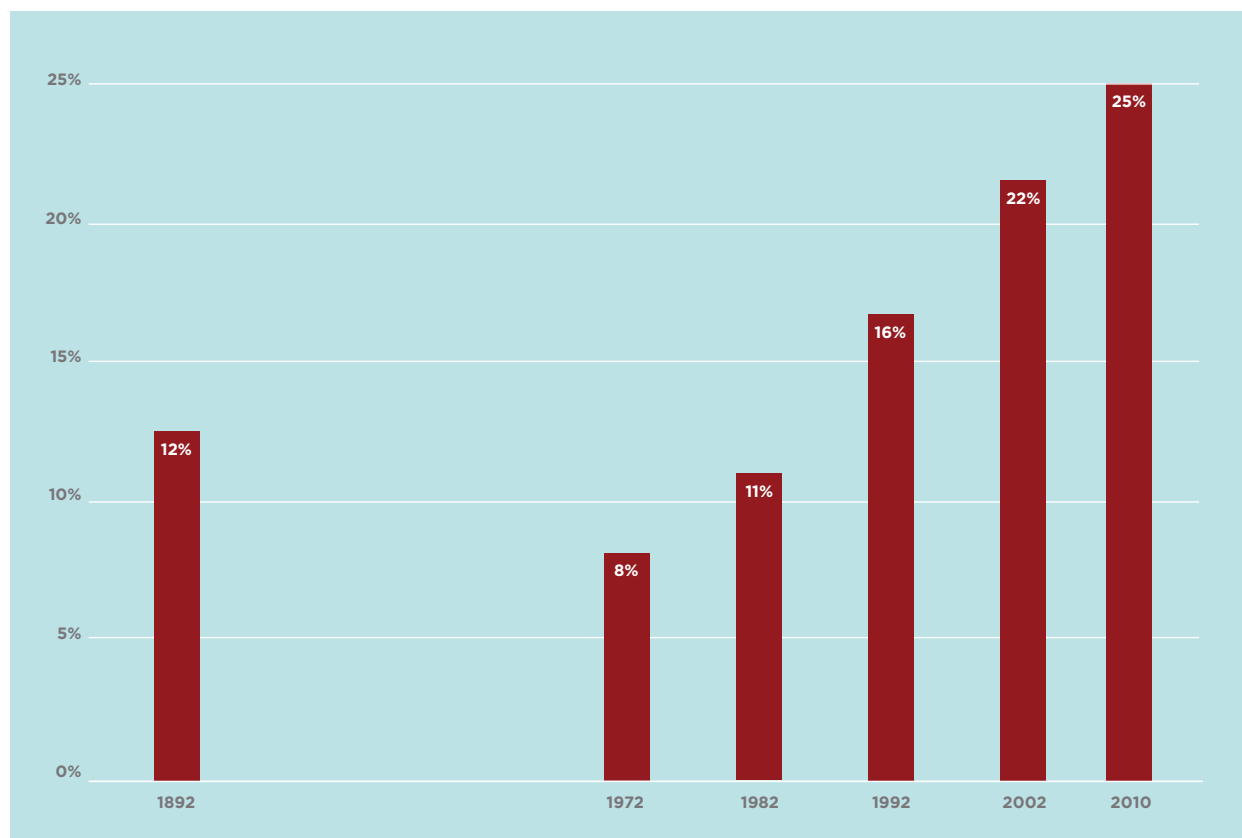


FIGURE 1 PERCENTAGE OF TENURE TRACK WOMEN FACULTY, 1892-2010

Source: Office of the Provost

1 <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/webexhibits/OnEqualTerms/index.html>

2 Annual faculty counts are made each November.

3 Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 outlaws exclusion or discrimination on the basis of sex under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Focusing on the recently completed decade (2001-2010), the size of the tenure-track faculty grew by 11% from 983 in 2001 to 1092 in 2010 (**Figure 2**). Over this same period the number of women faculty increased by 31%. The compound annual growth rates for the number of women and men on the faculty were 2.7% and 0.6%, respectively. Combined with a modest growth in the number of total faculty (CAGR of 1.1%), these changes amount to an increase in the proportion of women faculty from 21% in 2001 to 25% in 2010.

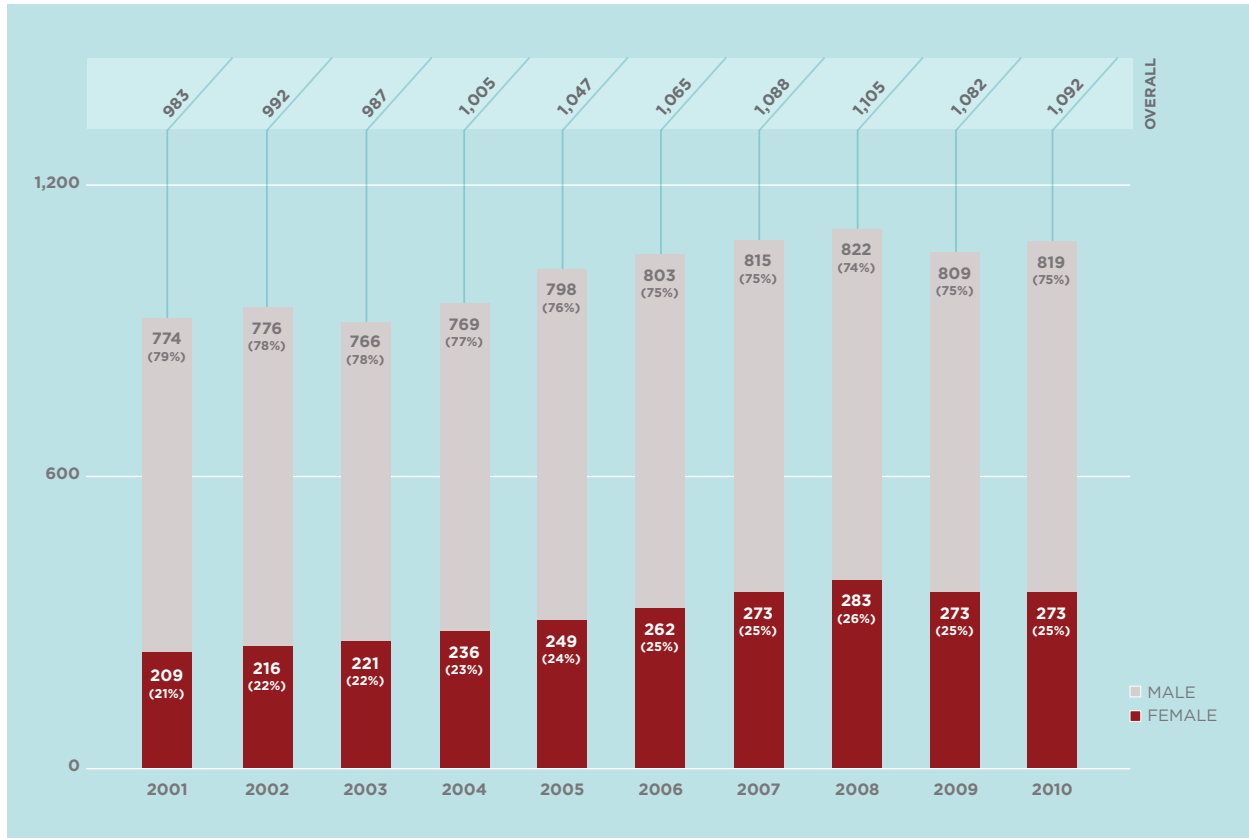


FIGURE 2 TENURE TRACK FACULTY BY SEX, 2001-2010

Source: Office of the Provost

More faculty members of each gender were in tenured positions than pre-tenure ones during the last decade (**Figure 3**). Among women, tenured faculty members outnumbered pre-tenure faculty by an average factor of 1.6. The comparable ratio for men over the same period is 3.0. Across the university, women comprised 31% of pre-tenure faculty in 2001 and 33% in 2010. Among tenured faculty, the proportion of women was 18% in 2001 and 22% in 2010.

The representation of men and women on the tenure-track faculty is not uniform across the various academic units of the university (**Figure 4**).⁴ For this and subsequent analyses, we split the Biological Sciences Division (BSD) into Medical (e.g., Medicine, Pediatrics, Surgery) and Basic (e.g., Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Ecology and Evolution, Neurobiology) groups. Tenure-track faculty members are housed in both BSD Medical and BSD Basic departments whereas clinical faculty members are housed in BSD Medical departments. Despite the fact that BSD is actually one academic unit, this split is warranted because of the structural differences between the BSD Basic and BSD Medical departments. Consistent with housing tenure-track along with the largest number of clinical (term-appointed,

⁴ Faculty members are classified within the unit where they hold a primary appointment.

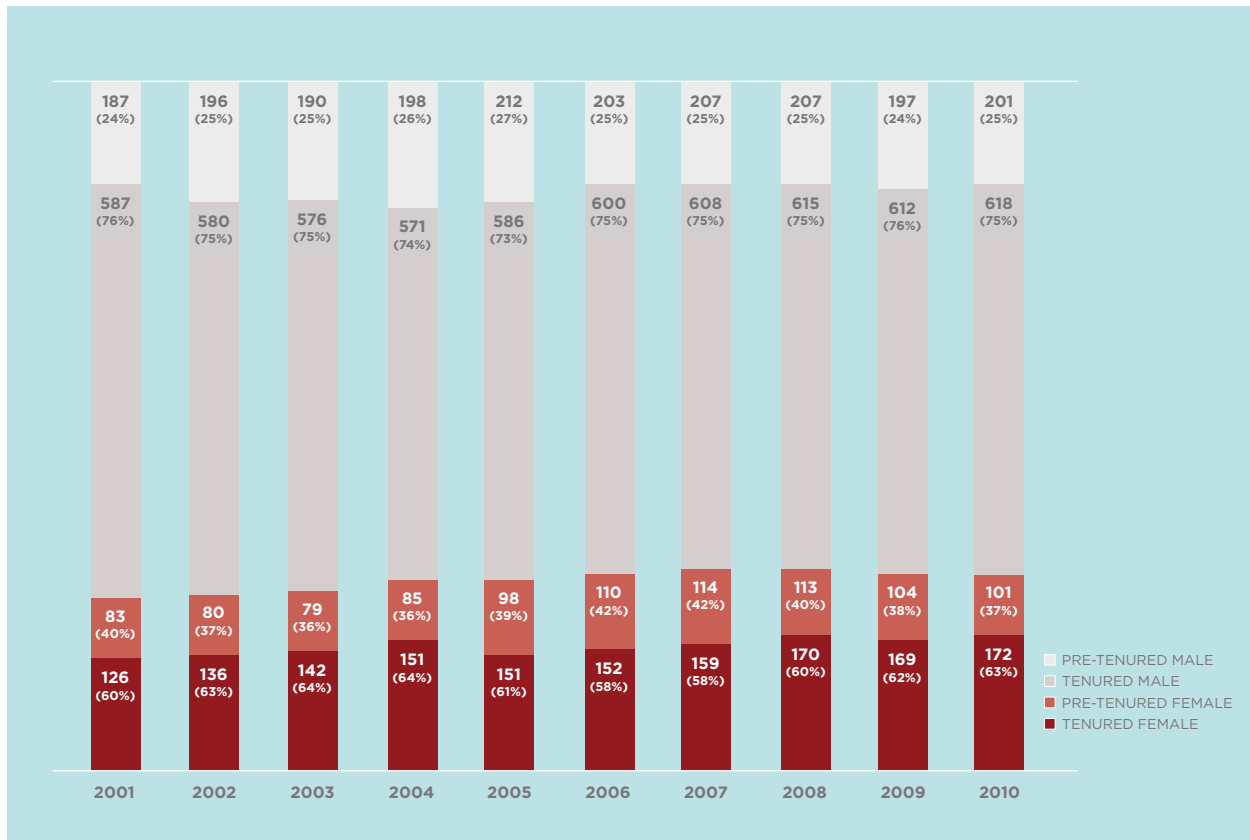


FIGURE 3 TENURE TRACK FACULTY BY SEX AND TENURE STATUS, 2001-2010

Source: Office of the Provost

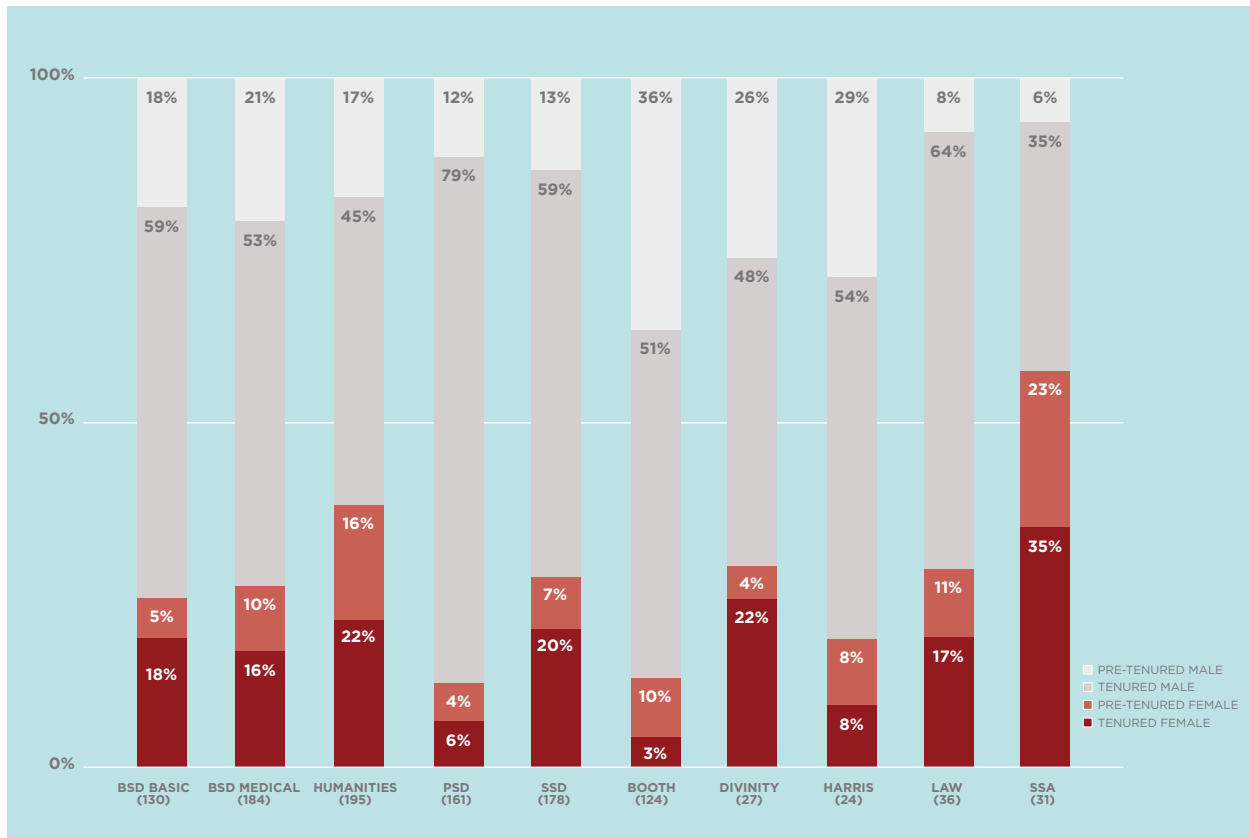


FIGURE 4 TENURE TRACK FACULTY BY SEX, TENURE STATUS, AND DIVISION OR SCHOOL, 2010

Source: Office of the Provost

see below) faculty within the university, faculty in the BSD Medical departments pursue both scholarly and clinical missions. In contrast, the departments in BSD Basic house tenure-track faculty and resemble academic units in other schools in possessing a singular mission of scholarly excellence without additional clinical responsibilities.⁵ Therefore treating BSD as two analytic units prevents obfuscating meaningful differences within a unit that has two functionally distinct cultures.

Figure 4 shows the proportion of men and women who were either pre-tenure or tenured across 10 different units as of 2010. Note that the number of faculty members in each unit varied from 24 in the Harris School to 195 in the Humanities Division.⁶ The proportion of women among the tenure-track faculty ranged from 9% in the 161-member Physical Sciences Division (PSD) to 58% in the 31-member School of Social Service Administration (SSA). Across the units, both the average and median proportions of women among the tenure-track faculty were 27%. The proportion of tenured women in the faculty ranged from 3% in the 124-member Chicago Booth School of Business to 35% in SSA, with an average for all units of 17%. The proportion of pre-tenure women in the faculty ranged from 4% in the PSD to 23% in SSA, with an across university average of 10%.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter pioneered the modern understanding of organizational marginalization of under-represented groups such as women or racial minorities.⁷ Members of outnumbered groups, if represented in radically small numbers, lose their individuality and are viewed as types of their minority group writ large. The presence of more minority group members within an organization allows for differentiation of minority individuals with distinct skills and promise. The inflection point in minority representation at which individuals enjoy accelerated improvement of their circumstances and their ability to influence the overall organization is termed critical mass. Reaching critical mass across campus is therefore essential. Unfortunately, it is only a first step in organizations such as the University of Chicago where departments and schools vary in size from a handful (e.g., Cinema and Media Studies, Social Thought) to 75 or more (e.g., Medicine, Booth). Here, critical mass cannot be defined unequivocally by either absolute numbers⁸ or percentages.⁹ Critical mass is further complicated in an academic setting because faculty members vary across so many dimensions - seniority, subfield, research methodology, etc. - in addition to gender.¹⁰ For this reason, achieving meaningful critical mass requires local attention. Like so much else at this institution, local groups possess the domain expertise and the real opportunity to effect the type of change that allows all to flourish both individually and collaboratively.

With a nod to both the importance and the limitations of critical mass, we analyzed the local representation of women in departments and schools across the university (**Figure 5**). In 36% of the units, including the Booth and Harris schools, the ratio of women to men was less than 1 in 5. In 39% of the units, including the Law and Divinity schools, women comprised between 20 and 40% of the total. In another 21% of units, including SSA, there was a balance of men and women. Women comprised 60% or more of the faculty in two departments with a total of 11 faculty members. The divisional averages varied from 10% in PSD (7 departments) to 38% in Humanities (15 departments and the Oriental Institute).

5 Pathology and Human Genetics both “bridge” the basic and medical departmental definitions. Pathology is included in BSD Medical and Human Genetics in BSD Basic for this report.

6 The Oriental Institute is included in the Humanities Division for the analyses in this report.

7 RM Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation*, 1977, Basic Books, New York.

8 Consider employing 5 as a potential threshold. Within an organization totaling 10, 5 minorities are certainly enough to constitute critical mass. However in a group of 100, 5 individuals are unlikely to influence organizational culture.

9 For this example, consider 15% as a possible threshold for critical mass. In a group of 7, 15% is a single individual, and thus a token. In a group of 100, 15 individuals (15%) may constitute critical mass.

10 Etzkowitz H, Kemelgor C, Neuschatz M, Uzzi B, Alonzo J, The paradox of critical mass for women in science, *Science*, 1994, 266:51-4.

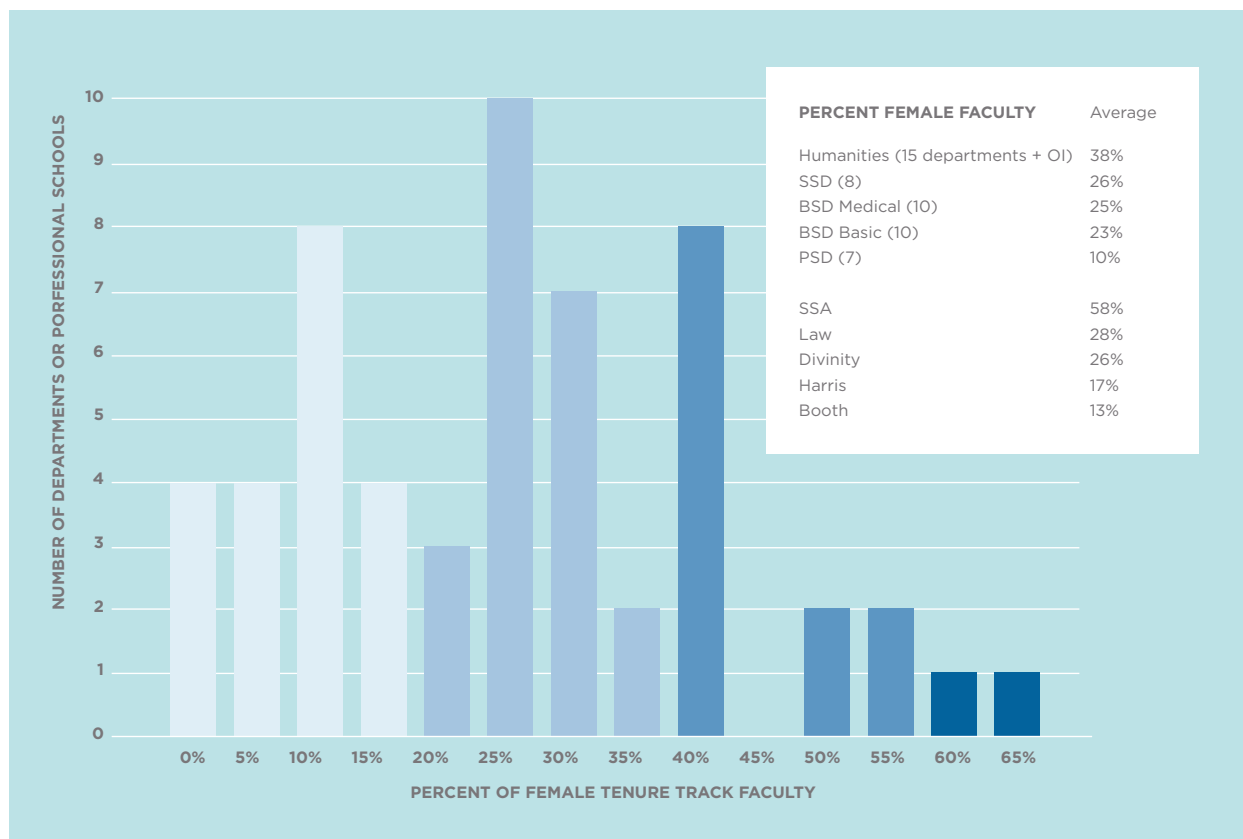


FIGURE 5 NUMBER OF UNITS BY LOCAL PROPORTION OF WOMEN FACULTY, 2010

Source: Office of the Provost

Three academic units have a significant number of clinical faculty in addition to tenure-track faculty (**Figure 6**). Clinical faculty members do not have an up-or-out tenure clock and can receive an indefinite number of term appointments. Clinical faculty in the BSD are on the School of Medicine (SOM) track and are distinct from tenure-track faculty with appointments in BSD Medical, meaning the medical departments of the BSD. BSD had the greatest number (456) of clinical faculty while Booth and Law had 18 and 7 clinical faculty members, respectively, in 2010. The proportion of women in the combined clinical faculties of BSD, Booth and Law (41%) was greater than the proportion of women on tenure-track (31%). The opposite was true for men, with men comprising a greater proportion of tenure-track (69%) than clinical (59%) faculties. Consequently, a majority of male faculty members in BSD, Booth and Law were tenure-track (54%) whereas a majority of female faculty members in the same units were clinical (58%) in 2010.

Between 2001 and 2010, about half of pre-tenure faculty members left the university (**Figure 7**). Faculty who left the university did so for a variety of reasons. Some left because they were recruited by another institution, others may have felt that tenure was unlikely, still others left for a personal reason or because they were denied tenure, and so on. It should be noted that the heterogeneity within this category may stem in part from the diverse tenure practices used by different academic units. For instance, the customary time limit to a tenure decision varies considerably across academic units.

Consistent with the greater proportion of men than women among pre-tenure faculty (67% men, see Figure 3), more men (182) than women (68) left the university. The rate of faculty attrition varied across academic units; the reader should note the far smaller sample sizes in the four smaller schools (Divinity, Harris, Law, SSA) than in other academic units. Attrition was highest in Harris (92%) and Booth (76%) and lowest in Law (18%) and SSA (17%). Despite the proportion of all pre-tenure men

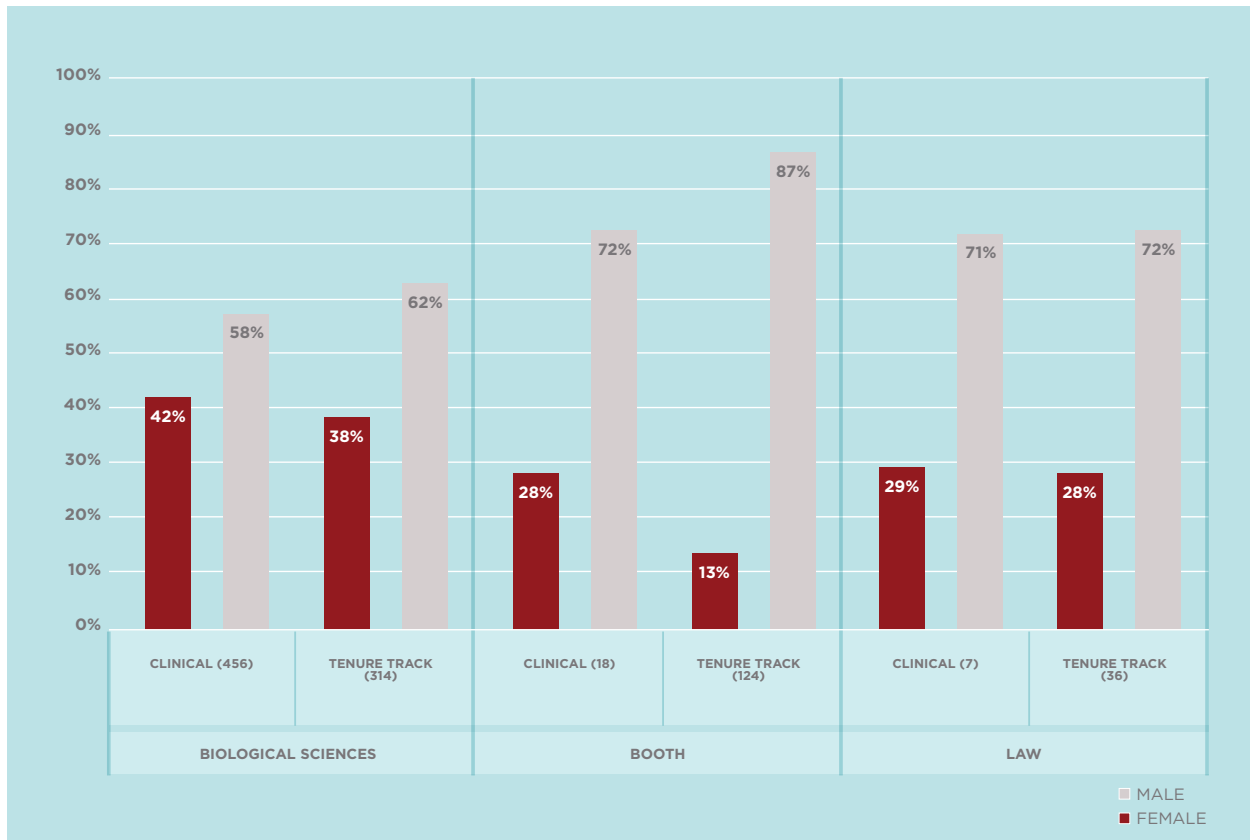


FIGURE 6 CLINICAL AND TENURE TRACK FACULTY BY SEX AND DIVISION OR SCHOOL, 2010

Source: Office of the Provost

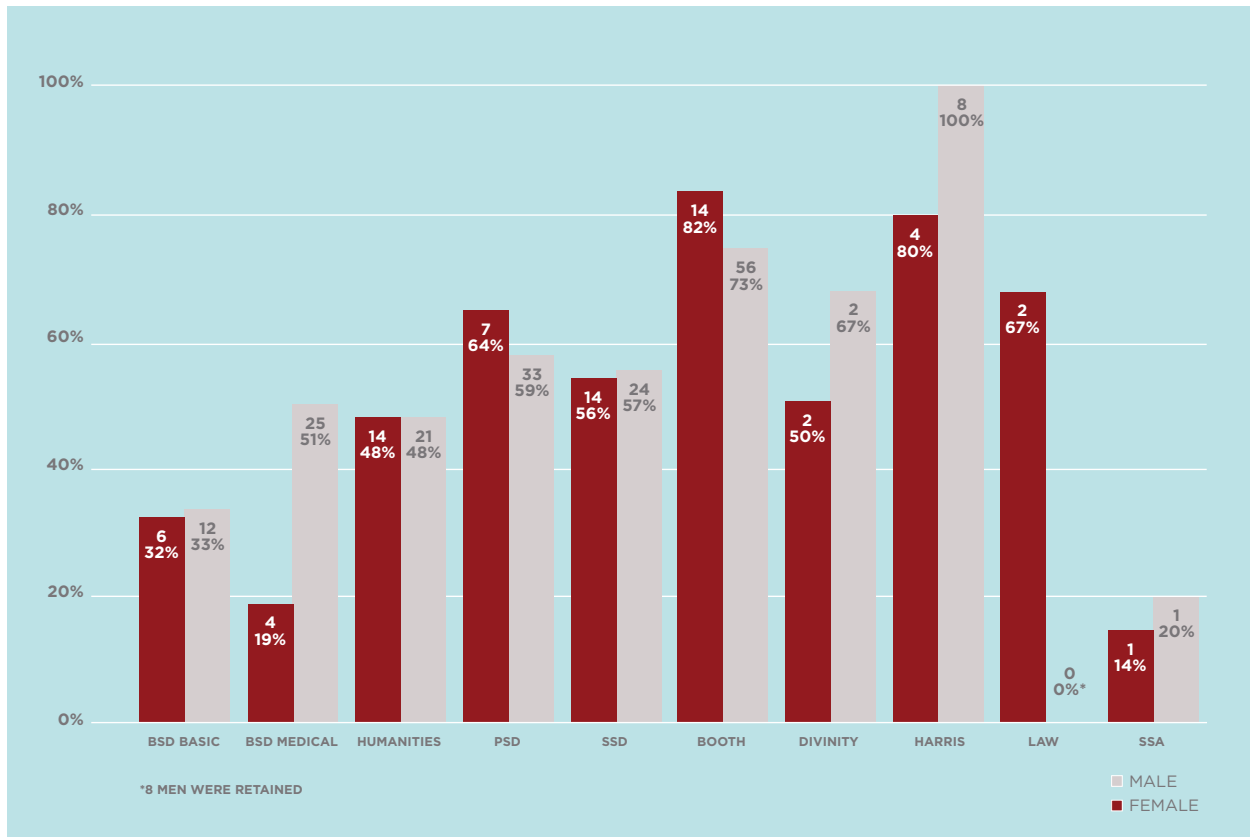


FIGURE 7 ATTRITION OF PRE-TENURE FACULTY, 2001-2010

Source: Office of the Provost

and women who left the university being the same, there were gender-related differences in several academic units. For example, none of the eight pre-tenure men in Law left whereas 2 of 3 women did. In contrast, in BSD Medical, Divinity and Harris, a greater proportion of men (35/60, 58%) than women (10/30, 33%) left.

We assessed the recruitment of full professors to the university over the past decade (**Figure 8**). Overall, 106 men (83%) and 21 women were hired at the full professor level from 2001 to 2010. In the first 5 years of the decade (2001-2005), women accounted for 8% of all full professor hires and in the final 5 years, for 26%. The highest proportion of women full professor hires occurred in 2008 when 3 of 8 full Professors hired were women. The lowest proportion of women among full professor hires (0%) was recorded in both 2004 and 2005. It should be noted that the hiring of women full professors was uneven across academic units. Ten units hired at least one male full professor and 6 units hired at least one female full professor.¹¹ BSD Basic, Booth, Harris and SSA hired a total of 18 men and no women at the full professor level.

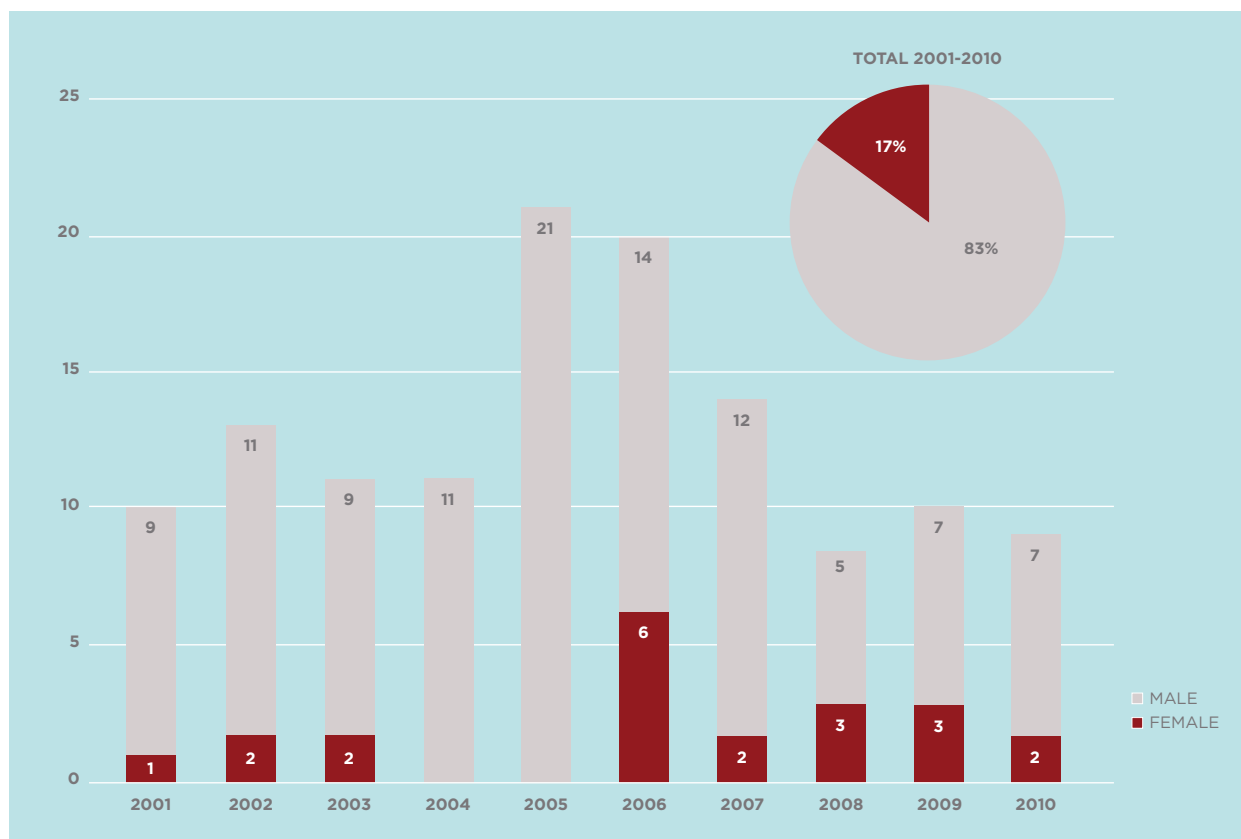


FIGURE 8 NEW TENURE TRACK FULL PROFESSOR HIRES BY SEX, 2001-2010

Source: Office of the Provost

Turning to the representation of women among the leadership, we considered the positions of dean¹² (n=11), collegiate master (n=5), and departmental chair (n=50) for the years between 2001 and 2010 (**Figure 9**). Of these 66 leadership positions, most (68%) were always filled by a man throughout the years of 2001-2010. Two leadership positions (3%) were always filled by a woman. The remaining 32% were filled by at least one woman and at least one man over the course of the last decade. Another perspective

¹¹ BSD Basic, BSD Medical, Booth, Divinity, Harris, Humanities, Law, PSD, SSA, and SSD all hired at least one male full Professor. BSD Medical, Divinity, Humanities, Law, PSD, and SSD all hired at least one female full Professor.

¹² The deanships considered here are those of the College, BSD, Humanities, PSD, SSD, Booth, Divinity, Harris, Law, and SSA; and the director of the Oriental Institute.

on these same data is that whereas virtually every academic unit (97%) was led at least once by a man, just under a third (32%) of academic units were led at least once by a woman. It should also be noted that since 2001, four men have served in the top two positions of the university as provost and president.

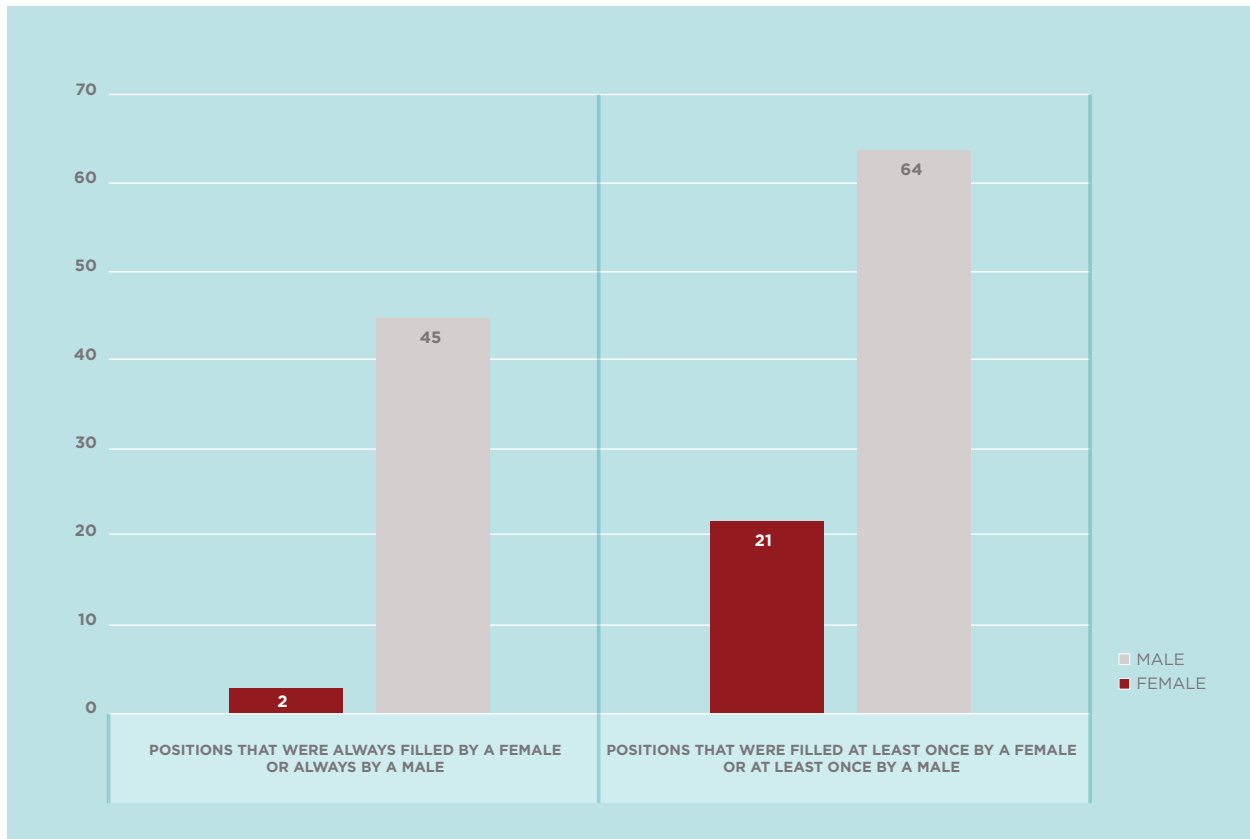


FIGURE 9 LEADERSHIP POSITIONS (DEANS, MASTERS, CHAIRS) BY SEX, 2001-2010

Source: Office of the Provost

The number of individual men and women who served in leadership positions during 2001-2010 varied across the type of position (dean, master, chair) and across the academic units (**Figure 10**). Of those who held dean positions, 25% were women, half of whom (3/6) served as Dean of Humanities. Of those who held the College master positions over the last decade, 1 of 13 (8%) was a woman. Of the 141 individuals who served as departmental chairs over the last 10 years, 21 (15%) were women. An average of 2.8 different individuals have held each of 50 departmental chairships across the divisions. Women have chaired 17 different departments (34% of all departments). Men have served as chairs of 49 of the 50 departments (98%) sometime during the last 10 years. The greatest proportion of women in departmental chair positions during 2001-2010 was in Humanities (23%) and the smallest proportion was in BSD Medical (0%).

The proportion of women among the divisional tenured faculty was greater than the proportion of leadership positions filled by women. The magnitude of this disparity varied across the divisions (**Figure 11**). In BSD Basic, PSD and SSD, the proportions of women among tenured faculty and

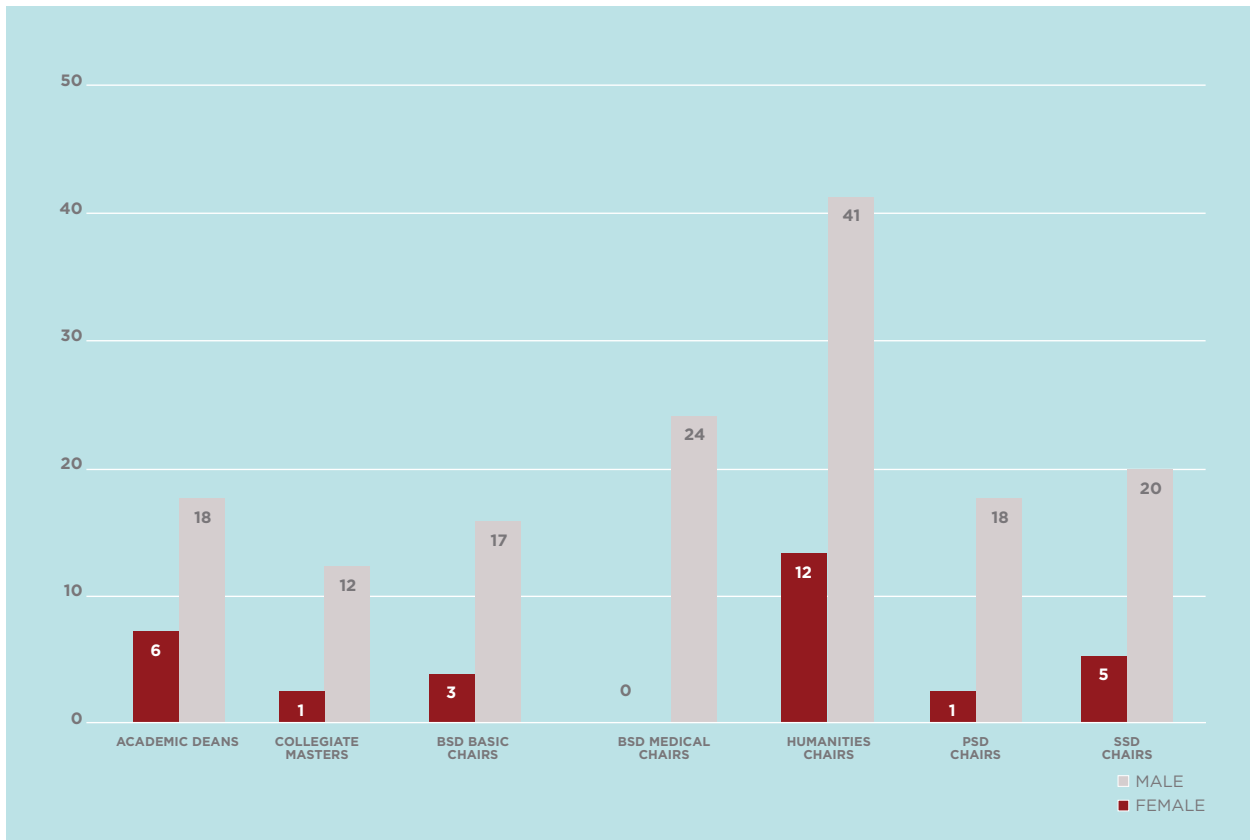


FIGURE 10 NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS BY SEX, 2001-2010

Source: Office of the Provost

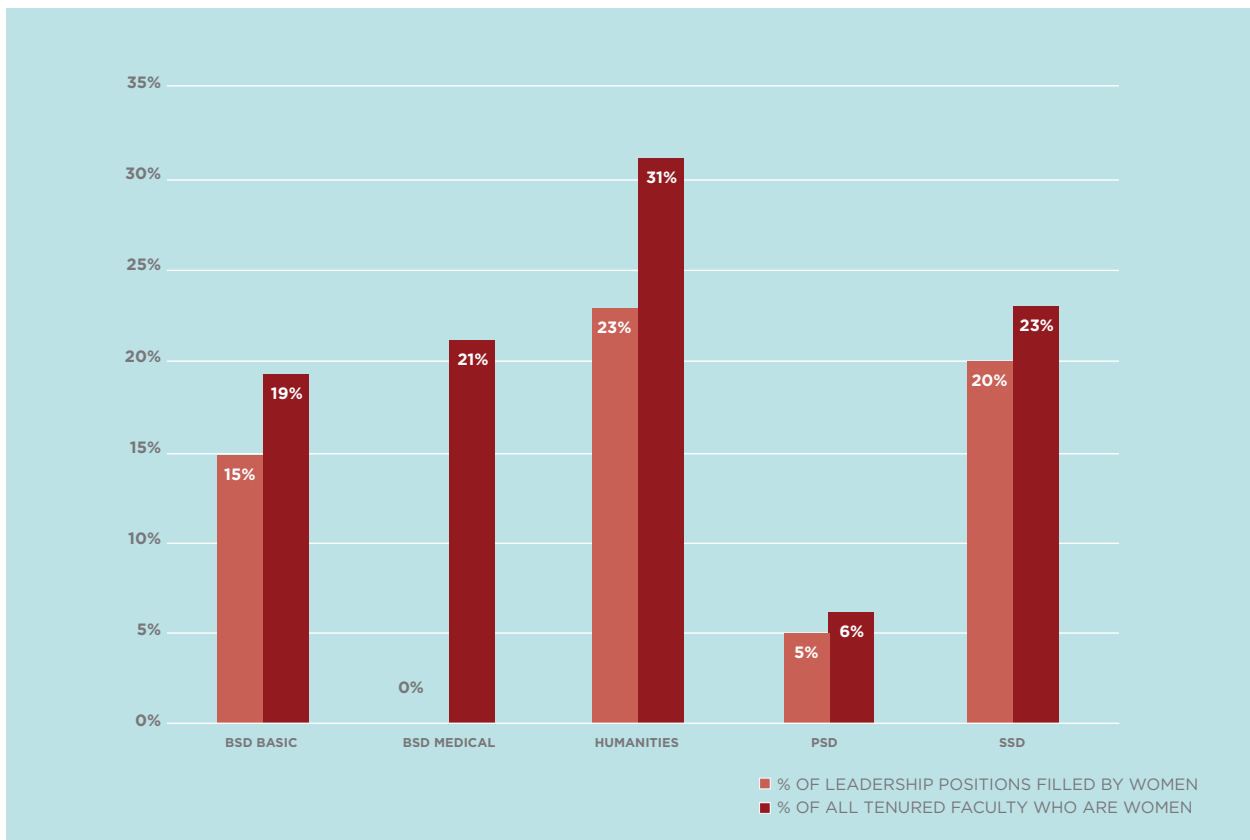


FIGURE 11 WOMEN CHAIRS VS. TENURED WOMEN FACULTY IN THE DIVISIONS, 2001-2010

Source: Office of the Provost

departmental chairs were within 5% of each other. In Humanities, the proportion of departmental chairs filled by women was 23% whereas women comprised 31% of all tenured faculty. In BSD Medical, no women chaired a department during the last decade¹³ despite 21% of tenured faculty being women in these same departments.

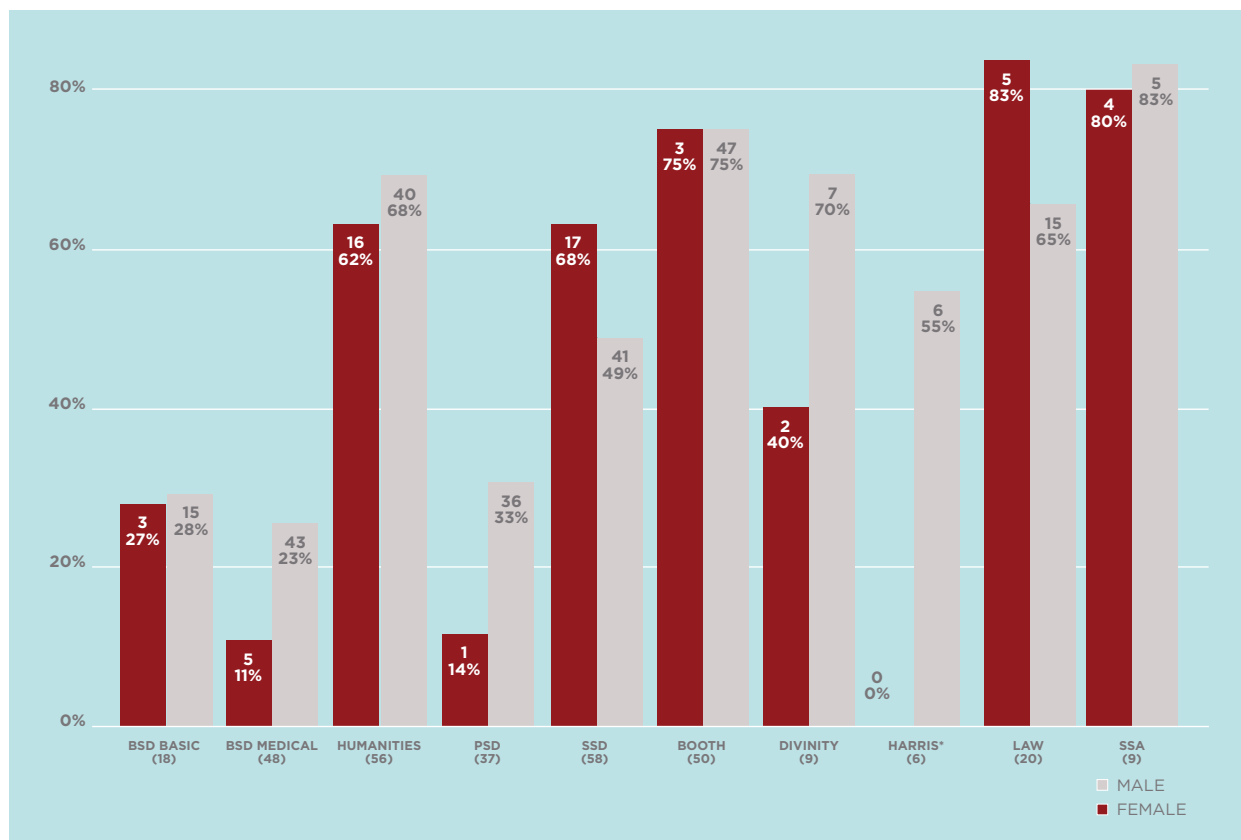


FIGURE 12 NAMED PROFESSORSHIPS AS A PERCENT OF ALL FULL PROFESSORS BY SEX, 2010

Source: Office of the Provost *Harris has two female full professors.

Finally, we examined the proportion of male and female full professors with named professorships in 2010 (**Figure 12**). For example, in Booth, 3 of 4 female professors have named professorships and 47 of 63 male professors have named professorships so that in both cases 75% of full professors had named professorships in 2010. The proportion of male professors with named professorships was greater than the proportion for women for 5 units (BSD Medical, Humanities, PSD, Divinity, Harris), the same or nearly so for 3 units (BSD Basic, Booth, SSA), and less for 2 units (Law, SSD).

While revealing, the data here are likely to leave most readers wanting more information. Some additional data are available but were left out in order to keep this inaugural report to a reasonable length. However, many data were simply not available. In this regard, we are happy to report that the Provost's office has already started collecting additional data on faculty recruitment, offer letters, and attrition as well as on students and other academic personnel. These data will be discussed in future Reports on the Status of Academic Women at the University of Chicago which will occur on a regular but, given the inevitably slow time frame of demographic change, not yearly basis.

13 This has remained true in the years since 2010, up to and including the time of this report's release.

The Women's Leadership Council encourages lively and vigorous discussions across campus on where our university community should be headed and how fast we should try to get where we are going. These issues are not data-driven but rather depend on individual values, opinions, and policy preferences. The university-wide community is no more or less likely than the 12-member WLC to unanimously embrace one way forward. Yet, frank and respectful conversation will certainly help us move forward.

As we think about the balance of men and women in our scholarly community, there is a simulation created by Tim McKay, Professor of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Michigan that may be useful to consider. The simulation takes as a starting point a physical sciences department consisting of 5 women and 55 men. Each year, randomly chosen faculty members leave the department and new faculty members are hired. New faculty members are hired from a pool of candidates made up of equal numbers of men and women so that there is a 50% chance that each new hire will be a woman. With two random variables (gender of departing and incoming faculty), this simulation has a large number of solutions. From a group of 100 runs of this simulation, the shortest time needed to reach a 50:50 gender balance is 35 years and the average is 120 years. The average time to reach 40% women in this simulated department is 50 years. This exercise is sobering and dramatically illustrates the point that there are no fast and easy solutions. Factors present here at the University of Chicago provide both mitigating and exacerbating influences. On the mitigating side, women comprise on average about 25%, not 10%, of the departments and schools across the University of Chicago. On the other hand, women comprised 33% rather than 50% of the tenure-track Assistant Professors hired during 2001-2010. In addition, the relatively small proportion of women among the full Professors recruited to the University of Chicago over the past decade (17%) would further delay reaching gender balance in the simulated department.

The data presented in this report can be the precursors to any number of goals from keeping the status quo to developing and implementing new policies aimed at shifting the gender balance among the faculty and leadership of the University of Chicago within a short period of time. Just as members of the Women's Leadership Council have diverse opinions on the most desirable goal, the university community at large is also expected to enjoy a wealth of opinions. It is our highest hope that with this report, we engage the wider university community in active discussion on the means and ends that will lead us to a full inclusion of all intellectual talents and ultimately to an even more vibrant and prominent community of scholars than we already enjoy.

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEMBERS (PAST AND PRESENT)¹⁴

Yolanda Becker, Catherine Brekus, Halina Brukner, Emily Buss, Suzanne Conzen, Lenore Grenoble, Colleen Grogan, Mary Harvey, Julia Henly, Ariel Kalil, Young-Kee Kim, Stacey Kole, Kay Macleod, Peggy Mason, Angela Olinto, Jennifer Pitts, Victoria Prince

¹⁴ The WLC thanks Beth Niestat, Brian Clark, Diana Jergovic, Elsabe Dixon, Kathleen Fabiny, and Meggan Lee for their invaluable and generously provided help during the preparation of this report.