

Report on the CPA Equity Survey: historical trends

Mathieu Doucet and Guillaume Beaulac, with valuable research assistance from Shelly Jordan.

Introduction:

The data that we have from the past 20 years of surveys show some interesting trends. Many of these trends are positive: women are much better represented throughout the ranks of tenure and tenure-track faculty than they were in the early 1990s, and the proportion of faculty who are members of a visible minority has also increased substantially over this period.

While these gains are worth celebrating, it is worth remembering that they are gains made from very low starting positions. For example, while the results suggest that there are now proportionally more than twice as many women in the profession as there were in 1990, women still hold less than 1 in 3 faculty positions. The same general trend holds for members of visible minorities and people with disabilities: the situation is much better than in 1990, but the situation is nonetheless still one of fairly dramatic underrepresentation.

The data also show some worrying trends around sessional employment. Sessionals make up a much greater proportion of the total number of instructors than they did in 1990. Since their employment is unstable, lower paid, and involves worse working conditions, this represents a distinct equity concern. Worryingly, women make up a *smaller* percentage of sessional instructors now than they did in 1990, which suggest that previous inequities may be being reproduced in the hiring of sessionals today.

A cautionary note on the results:

Before reading too much into the results, it's worth noting the unavoidable limits of the data. This survey has never been mandatory-- how could it be?-- and as a result we cannot be confident that we have had a high or consistent response rate. Moreover, we haven't made an effort here to estimate what the response rate was from year to year. Having read through some of the correspondence the committee received when the survey was first proposed, however, we can say that there was a lot of quite angry initial resistance to completing the survey. We expect that some of this has faded, but there is enough fluctuation in absolute numbers from year to year to suggest that response rates have varied over time. In other words, the committee should not draw any strong conclusions on the basis of the absolute numbers. (We mention some changes in absolute numbers below, but mostly to give a sense to the cause of changes in ratios).

Given these concerns about response rates, we are likely to glean more information changes in the percentages than from the absolute numbers. Even here, though, there is some reason for caution, for at least two reasons. First, samples are unlikely to be representative (based on reading that correspondence, there is some reason to think that non-responses might come disproportionately from departments that do poorly on equity issues, and that responses might come disproportionately from departments that take equity seriously). Second, the pool of responding departments might not be stable over time, and so a jump in the percentage of, say, women full professors over a given year might not represent any real change in the state of the profession, and might just mean that, with turnover in chairs, some previously non-responding departments started responding, and other previously responding departments stopped responding.

Having said all of that, a historical look at the survey results reveals some very interesting things, and clearly indicate both genuine progress over the past 20 years and clear areas of continued concern for the equity committee.

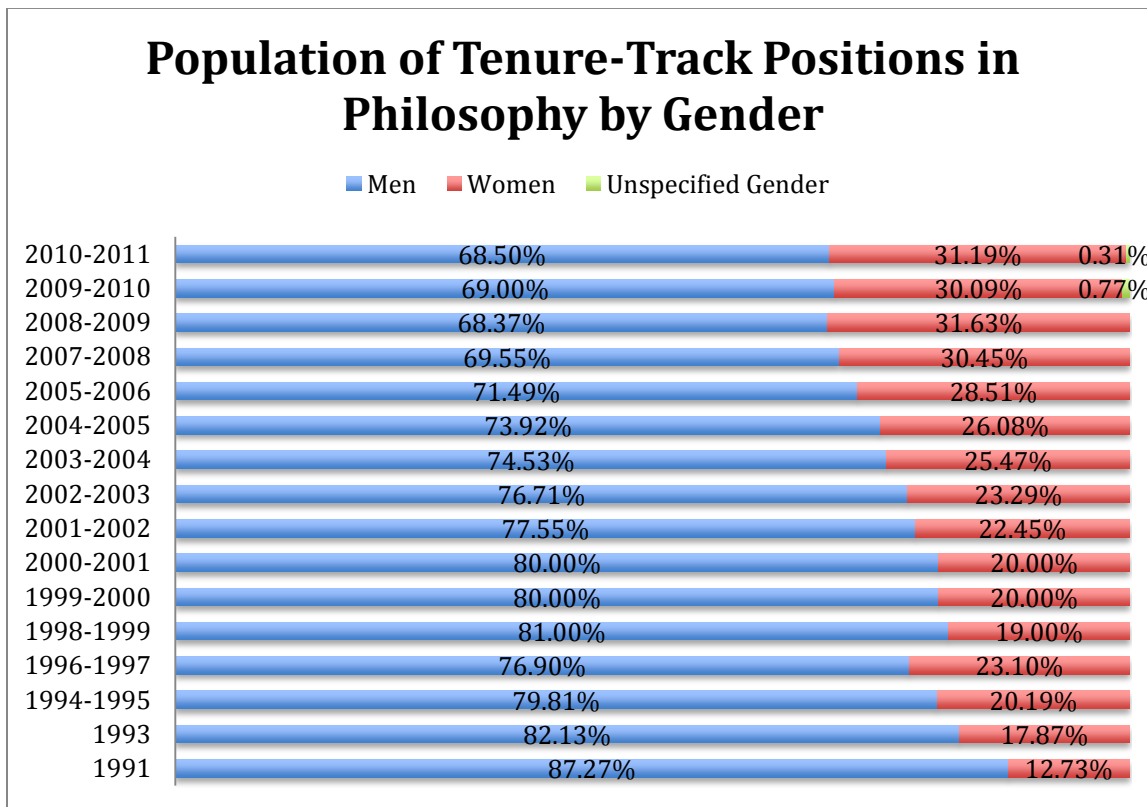
SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS:

Gender balance among tenure-line faculty overall:

The results of the survey suggest that the gender balance among tenure line faculty has improved dramatically since the early 1990s. This improvement, though impressive, is from a very low starting position, and so today fewer than 1 in 3 faculty positions is held by a woman.

To give numbers: In 1991 men held 87.3% of faculty positions. That has declined steadily in the years since: it was down to 77% by 1996, (where it hovered for several years), and was down to 68.5% by 2011. Women over the same period have correspondingly gone from 12.7% of faculty in 1991 to 31.2% in 2011.

The option to select ‘unspecified gender’ was included beginning in 2009-10, which is why it only begins appearing (though below 1%) in that year.



Gender balance at various ranks:

Full Professor:

The proportion of Full Professorships held by women has increased: they now hold 21.6% of such appointments, up from just 12.5% in 2001 (the earliest year for which we have data).

The numbers: In 2001 there were 160 male and 20 female Full Professors: in other words, 87.5% of Full Professors were men.

By 2011, there were 98 male and 27 female Full Professors: in other words, men now hold 78.4% of Full Professorships.

It's worth noting that most of the relative gains made by women in this area are a result of a drop in the number of (reported) male Full Professors: in 2011 there were 42 fewer reported male full professors than in 2001 (from 140 to 98), and 7 additional women (from 20 to 27). So this gain might be mostly due to a shrinking of the profession brought on by the retirement of senior professors, who were of course the most likely to be men.

Associate Professor:

The proportion of female Associate Professors grew between 2001 and 2011, from 30.8% to 37.7%. Again, the rise is explained by both a drop in the number of men *and* a rise in the number of women.

2001: 92 male, 42 female = 69.2% male, 30.8% female.

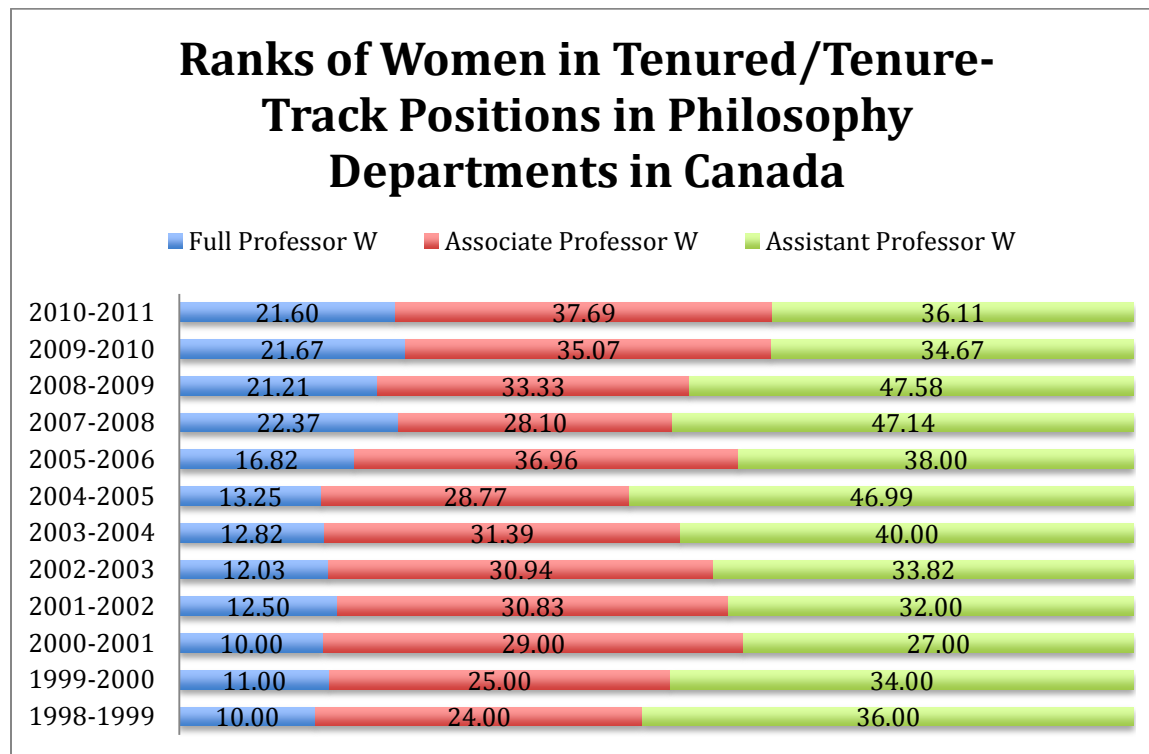
2010: 81 male, 49 female = 62.3% male, 37.7% female.

Assistant Professor (TT):

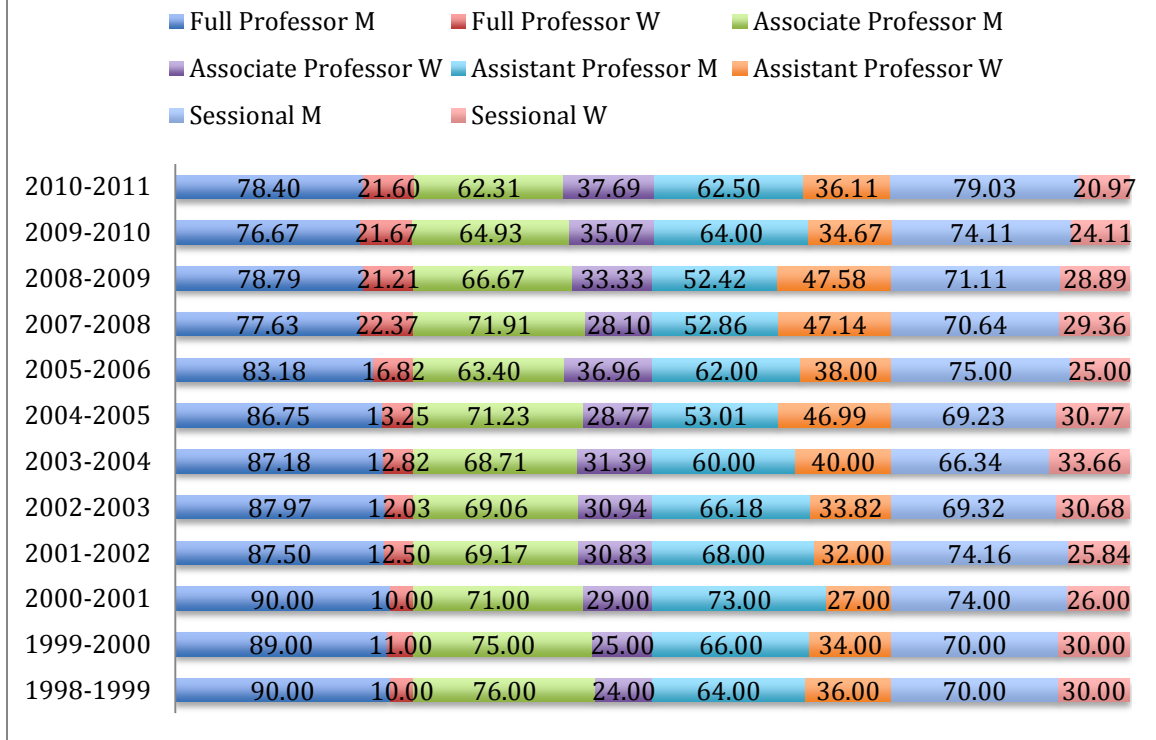
The proportion of female Assistant Professors also increased, though at lower rates than the proportion of Associate Professors.

2001: 34M/16F = 68% male, 32% female.

2010: 45M/26F/1 unspecified, = 62.5% male, 36.1% female.



Ratio of Men:Women at the Various Ranks in Philosophy Departments in Canada



Other equity-seeking groups:

The data on other equity seeking groups is less likely to be reliable than the data on gender balance. There are reasons to think that the actual numbers of faculty who are members of various equity-seeking groups will be higher than reported here, since surveys are completed by chairs rather than individual faculty members, and chairs may either not know, or not feel licensed to disclose, whether their colleagues are members of the relevant equity-seeking groups. Nonetheless, the data that we do have paint a picture of a profession that remains overwhelmingly white and able-bodied.

Visible minorities among tenure line faculty

No department indicates a member of a visible minority on faculty until 2001, when a total of 7 are reported, representing 2% of all faculty. In 2010, this number had risen to 18, representing 5.5% of the profession.

For comparison's sake, in 2001 13% of the Canadian population identified as belonging to a visible minority. In 2006, this had risen to 16%. The 2011 census data on visible minorities is not yet available on the StatsCan website, but it is certain to be higher than 16%.

Tenure line faculty with disabilities

Between 2001 and 2009, this number hovered between 1.5% (2001) and 2% (2009), with total

numbers between 5 and 7. In the most recent survey, this has fallen to 1 respondent, for 0.3%. Of all of the numbers we have, this strikes us as perhaps the most unreliable, given the way in which the surveys are completed.

Aboriginal Canadians among tenure line faculty

The most recent survey indicates a single Aboriginal Canadian among philosophy faculty, representing .3% of the profession. (For comparison, Aboriginals Canadians made up 4.3% of the population.)

Sessional employment:

At the same time as the discipline (and the academy at large) has made gains in gender equity, it has seen a worrying increase in inequality of a different sort. The profession is increasingly divided between, on the one hand, tenured and tenure track professors with highly paid and stable employment, excellent benefits and working conditions, reasonable teaching loads, time for research, and significant institutional support, and, on the other hand, sessional instructors with low paid and unstable employment, worse benefits and working conditions, heavy teaching loads, no paid research time, and much less institutional support.

Number of sessionals relative to tenure line faculty.

The total number of reported sessionals has increased over time, and the total number of tenured or tenure-track faculty has decrease over the same time. As of the most recent survey, sessional instructors make up 27.5% of the total number of instructors (tenure line and sessional combined). This number has varied considerably over time, getting as high as 39.95% at one point.

1991: 605 tenure line, 65 sessionals. (9.7% of total number of instructors)
1993: 431/50 (10.4%)
1996: 426/96 (18.4%)
1997: 347/109 (30.6%)
2002: 343/89 (20.6%)
2003:365/88 (19.4%)
2004:373/101 (21.3%)
2005: 395/102 (20.5%)
2006: 249/128 (39.95%)
2008: 300.5/128 (38.96%)
2009: 303/90 (22.9%)
2010: 329/112 (25.4%)
2011: 327/124 (27.5%)

Given the clear variation in response rates, it's hard to know what to make of the numbers. They do seem to suggest an increase in the number of sessionals relative to tenure line faculty. (The absolute numbers of the former increase, while the latter decrease.) And of course we have lots of independent evidence of this.

It's worth noting that this just measures actual instructors, not number of courses. There's reason to think that the number of courses taught by sessional instructors will be quite different, and that

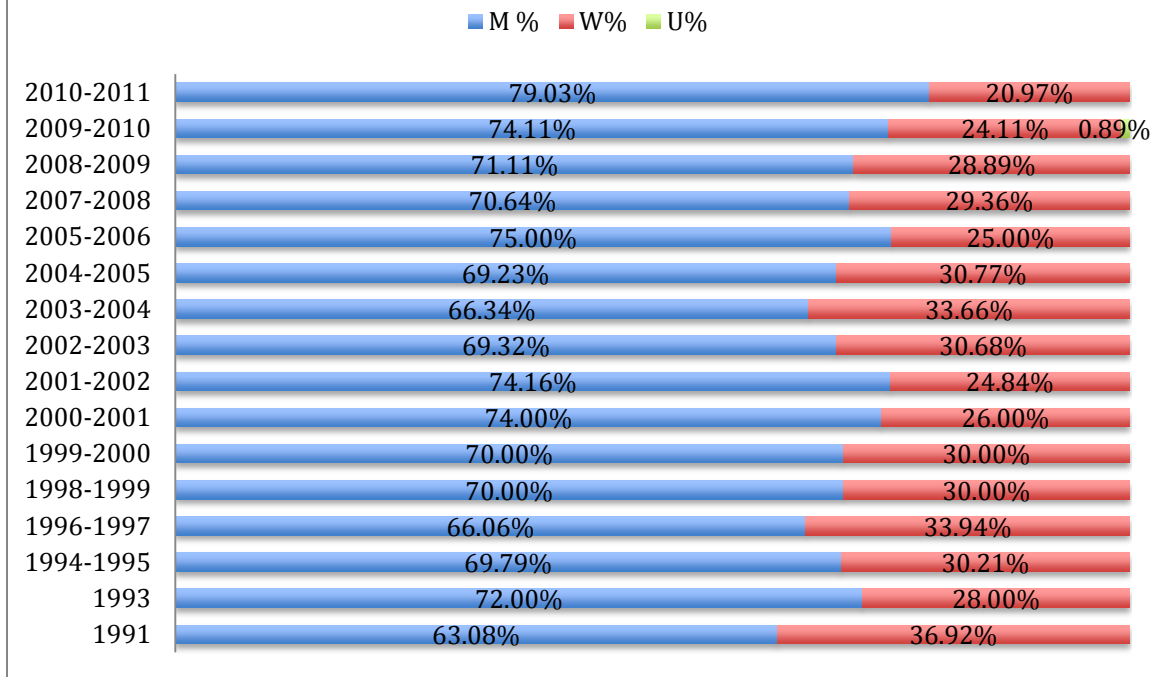
it will vary between departments. (Many sessionals teach a higher load than tenure line faculty, though some teach only a single course.)

Gender balance of sessional instructors

The data on gender and sessional employment reveal a worrying trend: as the gender balance has improved among tenure line faculty, it appears to have gotten *worse* among sessional instructors. Because of uncertain response rates, we can't be confident about *how much* worse, but it seems fairly clear that it has at least not significantly improved since the 1990s. In 2001, 36.9% of sessional instructors were women. By 2010, that number had *fallen* to 20.97%, though there has been wide variation from year to year over the past number of surveys.

A bit of speculation: tenure line hires are made by officially constituted hiring committees and have much more institutional oversight than the hiring of sessional instructors. One thing we have clearly established from running the survey is that virtually all Canadian departments and universities now have equity hiring policies in place, which is a significant change from the situation in 1990. Tenure line hires are also widely advertised (as is typically required by policy). Sessional positions, on the other hand, are often unadvertised or are less widely advertised, receive less institutional oversight, and hiring decisions are often not made by departmental hiring committees. This suggests that there is a good chance that the kinds structural and implicit inequities that were pervasive in tenure line hiring in the early 1990s remain in place today in the hiring of sessional instructors. This would partly explain what seems to be a decline in the proportion of sessional instructors who are women.

Men, Women, and Unspecified Gender Sessionals in Philosophy Departments in Canada



Some things we didn't get out of the data we looked at here, but could look at with a bit more number crunching:

- From 2005, we have some data on hiring pools, so we could establish a) the ratio of ratio of male to female *applicants*, and b) the ratio of male to female *hires*.
- We have over 20 years of data on graduate students, and so we could analyze it to determine the change over time in the proportion of female graduate students, at both the MA and PhD level, and the change in proportion of PhDs granted to women. (This information would help us to put some of the results reported here in context, since it would give information on the state of the 'pipeline.')
- From 2002, we have data on the applicant pools for graduate programs, so we could establish the a) ratio of male to female *applicants* (at both MA and PhD); b) ratio of male to female *offers* (at both levels); and c) ratio of males to females who *accept* offers and begin graduate study.

Appendix: Suggestions for future surveys

The biggest limitation with the survey is that it is voluntary, and so response rates will vary and may be unrepresentative. There are a few things that we can do to try to improve the response rate, but there are also some things we can do to try to establish whether the survey is representative.

1. *Review of department websites:* One way to get a sense of whether our survey is representative of the profession as a whole is to do a systematic review of the faculty listed on department websites. This would not have been possible 20 or even 10 years ago, but would now be relatively straightforward. We could perform this each time the survey is run, and it would give us an idea of how representative the survey results were, and of what the demographics of non-responding departments are like. It would also give us a more accurate idea than we currently have of the overall size of the profession in Canada. This method would have limits, of course, since websites can be incomplete or out of date, and since it would be difficult to accurately track visible minorities and people with disabilities, gender breakdown would likely be approximate, and those who would prefer to be listed as ‘gender-unspecified’ would be unlikely to be captured by this method. Nonetheless, it would likely give us more reliable data for some questions than the current survey does.

2. *Review of past surveys.* Something else we could try is to see if there was anything different about the way the survey was run in the years that seemed to get higher response rates (1991, 1993, 2010, and 2011, for example). We’d be limited to the information contained in the Equity Committee’s scanned files, but there may be some clues contained in them.

3. *Gathering hiring information.* Another independent source of information is the CPA’s own efforts to collect information on hiring: <http://acpcpa.ca/en/hiring.php>. While this will also be incomplete, it gives us some sense additional information on hiring trends.

4. *Additional questions on sessional employment.* Given the growth in sessional employment, and the worrying trend reported above, future versions of the survey might benefit from asking more detailed questions about sessional hiring. For example, we could ask about:

- How departments make sessional hiring decisions, and whether they have equity policies in place for such decisions.
- How departments advertise such positions.
- What proportion of classes are taught by sessionals.
- The typical/average teaching load of sessional instructors.
- The number of sessional instructors who are graduate students in the department offering the course. (Perhaps the growth in sessional instructors simply tracks the growth of graduate programs.)