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Stanley Rothman, *Smith College*

S. Robert Lichter, *Center of Media and Public Affairs*

Neil Nevitte, *University of Toronto*

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Politics and Professional Advancement Among College Faculty

Stanley Rothman, S. Robert Lichter, and Neil Nevitte

Abstract

This article first examines the ideological composition of American university faculty and then tests whether ideological homogeneity has become self-reinforcing. A randomly based national survey of 1643 faculty members from 183 four-year colleges and universities finds that liberals and Democrats outnumber conservatives and Republicans by large margins, and the differences are not limited to elite universities or to the social sciences and humanities. A multivariate analysis finds that, even after taking into account the effects of professional accomplishment, along with many other individual characteristics, conservatives and Republicans teach at lower quality schools than do liberals and Democrats. This suggests that complaints of ideologically-based discrimination in academic advancement deserve serious consideration and further study. The analysis finds similar effects based on gender and religiosity, i.e., women and practicing Christians teach at lower quality schools than their professional accomplishments would predict.

Author Notes: Stanley Rothman, coauthor of *American Elites* (1996) among numerous books, is director of the Center for the Study of Social and Political Change and is Mary Huggins Gamble Professor of Government Emeritus at Smith College. S. Robert Lichter is Professor of Communication at George Mason University, where he directs the Center of Media and Public Affairs. His latest books are *The Mediated Presidency* (2005) and *The Nightly News Nightmare* (2003), both co-authored with Stephen Farnsworth. Neil Nevitte is co-investigator of the 1997 and 2000 Canadian Election Studies and principal investigator of the World Values Survey (Canada). His recent publications include *The Democratic Audit of Canada: Citizens* (2004; co-authored with Andre Blais, Elisabeth Gidengil and Richard Nadeau), *Value Change and Governance* (2002; editor), *Anatomy of a Liberal Victory* (2002; co-authored with André Blais, Elisabeth Gidengil and Richard Nadeau), and *Unsteady State: The 1997 Canadian Election* (2000). The authors wish to thank Dr. Ivan Katchanovski, a statistical consultant to the NAASS project, for his assistance in providing the statistical analysis for this paper.

The politics of professors is a subject of inquiry that has itself become politicized. On one side of the debate, those who argue that college faculty have a predominantly liberal or left-wing cast often link this with charges of a lack of intellectual diversity or the enforcement of “politically correct” ideas and behavior on college campuses (Kimball, 1990; Sykes, 1990; Horowitz, 2002). Conversely, those who reject this position sometimes characterize it as an attempt by conservative groups or institutions to intimidate liberal faculty (Lazere, 2004; Gamson, 1997).

For all the fervor that characterizes this debate, much of the evidence cited on both sides is anecdotal. The best-known large-scale surveys of academic attitudes are 20 to 30 years old, and the implications of these data for the contemporary debate are themselves disputed. Further, the argument that conservative faculty are discriminated against in hiring and promotion decisions is put forward by individual complainants but has never been tested systematically.

This study addresses the empirical issues under contention by means of a national survey of college faculty that is more recent than any other comprehensive survey and more comprehensive than other any recent survey. The data set permits us to chart the political self-description of American college professors and to test the hypothesis that an ideological homogeneity exists in academia that has become self-reinforcing. In short, that professional advancement is influenced by ideological orientation.

Previous Research

Research on the political orientations of American college professors has long drawn upon a series of national surveys of U.S. college and university faculty, which were conducted by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education in 1969 and 1975 and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in 1984. These surveys were conducted partly in response to the upheavals of the 1960s, which turned many American campuses into centers of social and political protest (Carnegie Council, 1978; Carnegie Foundation, 1989).

Studies based on the Carnegie data revealed that American professors were more liberal in their ideological orientations than the general population and professors in the humanities and the social sciences were more liberal than those in the natural sciences, engineering, and business (Lipset and Dobson, 1972; Ladd and Lipset, 1973; Ladd and Lipset, 1975). Liberalism was also positively associated with professional status among the professorate (Hayek, 1949; Lazarsfeld and Thielens, 1958; Ladd and Lipset, 1975).

The political orientation of professors became part of the national political debate once again in the 1990s, when conservative critics began to argue that 1960s radicals and activists had joined university faculties in numbers sufficient

to tilt the balance of opinion in academia sharply to the left. This was linked to the charge that left-wing professors were promoting intellectual orthodoxies that made academia unwelcome to those who did not share their ideology (Kimball, 1990; Sykes, 1990; D'Souza, 1991). Critics dismissed this argument as the intellectual paranoia of those whose ideas had fallen from favor (Epstein, 1995) or the academic expression of a resurgent national conservative movement determined to stamp out dissent on campuses (Messer, 1995; Gamson, 1997).

Another line of criticism held that the entire conservative critique rested on faulty empirical assumptions. Hamilton and Hargens (1993) reanalyzed the Carnegie data and found that the proportion of faculty who identified themselves as liberal or left declined from 45% in 1969 to 39% in 1984. That placed college faculties well to the left of the general population, which was 17% liberal in 1969 and 18% liberal in 1984, but the difference seemed to be diminishing (Harris, 2002). The authors also argued that any liberal tilt was restricted to a limited number of disciplines, noting that liberal-left views were most common among professors in the social sciences (59%) and humanities (54%), and much less so in fields such as the physical sciences (37%), education (38%), engineering (23%), and business (17%).

This critique has provided the empirical grounding for others who have argued that, as Hamilton and Hargens put it, "the incidence of leftism has been considerably exaggerated." It has also been argued that leftist sentiments are largely limited to the social sciences and humanities, or to a small number of elite institutions. However, Hamilton and Hargens found only that two-year colleges housed the fewest liberal faculty. Four-year colleges and various categories of universities boasted similar proportions to each other of liberal faculty.

More recently this portrait has been challenged by studies of party preferences at elite universities and ideological self-descriptions by members of academic associations. A 2003 survey based on membership lists from the anthropology, economics, history, philosophy, political science, and sociology associations found that self-described liberals outnumbered conservatives by a ratio of seven to one (Klein and Western, 2004). Similarly, a 2001 Brookings Institution survey of professional associations found Democrat to Republican ratios of four to one in economics and history, five to one in political science, and 47 to one in sociology (Brookings, 2001).

Other research has focused more intensively on particular high-profile institutions. An examination of the political party registrations of faculty in 22 departments revealed that registered Democrats outnumbered Republicans by ratios of 8 to 1 at Stanford and 10 to 1 at the University of California-Berkeley (Klein and Western, 2005). The latter finding was reinforced by a Center for Responsive Politics report, based on Federal Election Commission filings, that the University of California and Harvard ranked first and second in per capita

employee contributions to the 2004 Kerry presidential campaign, with Kerry attracting \$19 for every dollar donated to Bush (Tierney, 2004).

Thus, a debate that was based largely on anecdotal charges rebutted by decades old data is finally beginning to be addressed with more current and systematic evidence. The recent findings are certainly suggestive of a dramatic change in faculty political affiliations. But the party affiliation evidence is restricted to a small number of very elite institutions, and the professional association data are limited to a few fields and hindered by a low response rate (30% in the Klein and Western study). Further, none of these studies have attempted to address empirically the argument that ideological homogeneity stems at least partly from the exclusion of faculty with competing perspectives.

Data and Method

The central tenets of the contemporary debate can be formulated as two linked hypotheses: First, do full-time faculty in four year colleges and graduate institutions have differentially liberal or left of center political views and Democratic Party preferences? Second, is there any evidence indicating that these liberal orientations are self-reinforcing? Do faculty who do not share the prevailing mindset find professional advancement more difficult?

We tested the first hypothesis through cross-tabulation of political self-descriptions, party affiliations, and social and political attitudes reported by a randomly-based national sample of American college faculty surveyed in 1999. The second hypothesis is explored using multiple regression analysis that examines the independent effect of faculty social and political ideology on professional success, when such other variables as academic achievement are controlled. Professional success was operationalized as the quality of academic institution with which respondents were affiliated, and achievement was operationalized in terms of publications and other professional and research-related activities (see Appendix).

The data come from the 1999 North American Academic Study Survey (NAASS) of students, faculty and administrators at colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. This survey was conducted in 1999 by Angus Reid (now Ipsos-Reid), a survey research firm. The questionnaire included a wide range of items, among them demographic background variables; attitudes toward social, political, and academic issues; and (for faculty) academic background, activities, and accomplishments.

The American sample includes 1643 faculty members drawn from 183 universities and colleges. The sample of institutions is stratified by institution type according to the Carnegie classifications of doctoral, comprehensive, and liberal arts schools. The data set contains responses from 81 doctoral, 59 comprehensive

and 43 liberal arts institutions. Within each stratum, institutions were randomly selected from the universe of qualified institutions, with probability of selection proportional to size of faculty and student body combined. Full-time faculty members were then randomly chosen from each institution in numbers proportionate to its size. The response rate among the American faculty was 72%.

Findings – Political Attitudes

The NAASS instrument includes three separate measures of political identification: Ideological self-designation on a left-right scale, political party preference, and a set of items on social and political attitudes. The item on ideological self-identification is very similar to the one used in the Carnegie studies. The Carnegie surveys asked respondents to identify themselves as left, liberal, middle-of-the-road, moderately conservative, or strongly conservative. The NAASS form asked respondents to place themselves on a 10 point scale from "very right" to "very left;" with the responses recoded to match the five Carnegie categories.

Table 1. Ideological self-description of college professors and general public

	Professors (Carnegie 1984)	Professors (NAASS 1999)	U.S. Public (Harris 1999)	U.S. Public (Harris 2004)
Left/ Liberal	39%	72%	18%	18%
Right/ Conservative	34%	15%	37%	33%

*Excludes "n = middle-of-the-road," "n = independent," and "n = other"

The results indicate that a sharp shift to the left has taken place among college faculty in recent years. (See table 1) The 1984 Carnegie study found that only 39% of faculty members identified themselves as liberal, including only 6% that would describe themselves as "left," compared to 34% who identify themselves as conservative, including 4% who see themselves as "strong conservatives." The 1999 study found 72% of faculty to the left of center, including 18% who were strongly left (choosing "one" or "two" on the 10 point scale from "very left" to "very right"). Only 15% described themselves as right of center, including only 3% who were strongly right.

It appears that, over the course of 15 years, self-described liberals grew from a slight plurality to a 5 to 1 majority on college faculties. By comparison, among the general population in 1999, 18% viewed themselves as liberal and 37%

conservative. In 2004 the figures were almost unchanged -- 18% liberal and 33% conservative. Thus, according to these self-descriptions, college faculty are about four times as liberal as the general public.

In addition, the NAASS respondents were asked to identify their political party affiliation as Democrat, Republican, Independent or "other." Fully half (50%) identified themselves as Democrats, compared to only 11% who identified themselves as Republicans, close to the five to one margin among left versus right of center self-identifiers (see Table 2). An additional 33% called themselves independent, and 5% specified some other party. At that time, 36 percent of the American public identified themselves as Democrats and 29 percent as Republicans. (Harris 1999). The 2004 figures are 33 percent Democrats and 28 percent Republicans (Harris 2004).

These data also seem to show that the political differences across fields of study have narrowed considerably. Certainly the humanities and social sciences still lean farthest to the left, containing 81% and 75% liberals respectively. But that still leaves 67% liberals in all other fields of study. For example three out of four biologists and computer scientists now place themselves to the left of center, as do about two thirds of mathematicians, chemists, and physicists. Even among what appears to have once been the traditional enclaves of more conservative faculty, liberals outnumber conservatives, by a significant margin – for example, by 51% to 19% among engineering faculty and 49% to 39% among business faculty.

Similarly, although 62% of humanities faculty and 55% of social scientists are Democrats, that leaves nearly a three to one margin (43% to 15%) of Democrats versus Republicans among other faculty. Democrats outnumber Republicans by more than 4 to 1 among biologists and nearly 10 to 1 among physicists. Still, Republicans are somewhat less outnumbered than are self-described conservatives in a few fields. Business faculties contain equal proportions (26%) of Democrats and Republicans, and Republicans actually outnumber Democrats by 31% to 24% among agriculture professors, the only field in which the survey identified greater faculty representation on the right than on the left.

At the other end of the spectrum, the most heavily liberal and Democratic fields are virtually unanimous in their political orientations. In four different departments – English literature, philosophy, political science, and religious studies – at least 80% of faculty are liberal and no more than 5% are conservative. English literature and three additional departments -- history, linguistics, and performing arts – contain at least 60% Democrats and 5% or fewer Republicans. Sociology just misses making this list with 59% Democrats and 0% Republicans.

Table 2. Political identification of college professors by field (%)

Field of Study	Liberal*	Conservative*	Democrat ⁺	Republican ⁺	N
All Faculty	72%	15%	50%	11%	(1643)
Social Sciences	75	9	55	7	(289)
Humanities	81	9	62	6	(449)
Other	67	20	43	15	(905)
Selected Departments					
English Literature	88%	3%	69%	2%	(87)
Performing Arts	84	16	63	2	(31)
Psychology	84	8	63	7	(68)
Fine Arts	83	8	55	4	(36)
Theology/Religion	83	5	49	16	(26)
Political Science	81	2	58	8	(67)
Philosophy	80	5	62	11	(26)
History	77	10	70	4	(62)
Sociology	77	9	59	0	(61)
Biology	75	17	56	13	(59)
Communications	75	14	47	11	(66)
Music	74	8	56	6	(53)
Computer Science	74	26	43	21	(44)
Mathematics	69	17	43	15	(49)
Physics	66	11	48	5	(37)
Linguistics	65	11	64	2	(53)
Chemistry	64	29	41	25	(52)
Education	61	29	55	7	(88)
Economics	55	39	36	17	(44)
Nursing	53	47	32	26	(32)
Engineering	51	19	34	13	(90)
Business	49	39	26	26	(101)

Notes:

* excludes middle-of-the-road

⁺ excludes third parties and independents

Finally, the NAASS instrument fleshed out political self-designations with an index based on attitude items originally drawn from a 1995 survey of the attitudes of seven elite or “social leadership” groups in the United States (see below and Appendix). Exploratory factor analysis reveals that two factors account for the most variance in political attitudes among the elite groups. One factor captures a social liberalism dimensions while the other reflects what might be called political liberalism (Rothman and Black, 1999).

A factor analysis of the same items in the NAASS produces similar results. The six items that loaded most heavily on two general factors were combined into an additive index. As Table 3 demonstrates, they fill out the self-designations with a substantive portrait of the attitudes of American college faculty on a range of social and political controversies. The differences in attitudes are located not in the extent of agreement so much as in the strength of agreement with the liberal positions expressed. Thus, the level of agreement ranges from a low of 66% who believe that the government should work to ensure full employment to a high of 88% who favor greater environmental protection, even at the cost of price increases or job losses. In addition, 84% are pro-choice, 67% give a pro-gay rights response, 75% endorse cohabitation without marital intentions, and 72% favor government action to reduce income inequality. (The full item wordings are listed in the Appendix.)

Table 3. Responses of college professors to attitude items (%)

	Strong Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strong Disagree	Don't Know
Homosexual lifestyle as acceptable as heterosexual	44%	23	17	14	2
Women's right to have abortion	67%	17	7	7	1
Accept extramarital cohabitation	50%	25	12	11	1
Government should guarantee employment	25%	41	23	11	0
Government should reduce income gap	38%	34	17	10	0
Protect environment despite higher prices, fewer jobs	48%	40	9	2	1

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: NAASS 1999 Survey

Somewhat greater attitude differences between social and economic liberalism appear if we array these issues in terms of the percentage of faculty who express strong agreement. Two-thirds (67%) strongly endorse a pro-choice position on abortion, half (50%) feel the same about extra marital cohabitation, and nearly as many strongly support more environmental protection despite economic costs (48%) and the parity of homosexual and heterosexual lifestyles (44%). The figures drop to 38% who strongly support governmental reduction of income inequality and 25% who strongly agree that the government should ensure full employment.

These findings are consistent with what one would expect given the distributions of faculty self-identifications and party preferences. They suggest an across the board commitment to positions that are typically identified with contemporary liberal ideals. Further, this commitment is strongest in the realm of social or "lifestyle" liberalism than it is in economic liberalism. Because these six items provide considerably more information and specificity than the other single-item measures of political or social orientation, we combined them into an arithmetic ideology index (see Appendix) for the multivariate analysis that follows.

Findings – Ideology and Professional Status

The survey data confirm the first hypothesis, which posits a predominance of liberal to left faculty on American college campuses. But is there any merit to the claim that homogeneity makes it more difficult for conservatives to enter and advance in the profession? That proposition is more difficult to test systematically. In addition to the finding that conservatives are underrepresented in college faculties, it is necessary to show that conservative academics are hindered in their career advancement, and that this disadvantage is not simply due to a lack of merit on their part.

To address these issues we examined the correlation between quality of academic affiliation (the dependent variable) and three measures of ideological orientation – left-right self-identification, political party identification, and the ideology index. The index scores were standardized to a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 10. Higher scores indicate more liberal attitudes and lower scores more conservative attitudes.

An academic achievement index (see Appendix) was constructed from items measuring the number of refereed journal articles, chapters in academic books, books authored or co-authored, service on editorial boards of academic journals, attendance at international meetings of one's discipline, and proportion of time spent on research. This more inclusive measure was highly correlated with a simple count of academic publications. (Such counts have been criticized as

simplistic or unidimensional measures of achievement, hence our use of an index including other factors.)

There are various emblems of individual success among academics, ranging from monetary compensation to awards to chaired professorships. Perhaps the most significant single indicator of the academic status hierarchy is the quality of the college or university with which an individual is affiliated. We can construct an institutional quality index (see Appendix) by combining the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching classification with the well-known *US News & World Report* rankings of universities and colleges.

The widely used Carnegie classification divides schools into two levels each of research universities, doctorate granting universities, comprehensive universities and colleges, and liberal arts colleges. Altogether these make up what are described as eight “tiers” of institutions. While controversial among some quarters, the *US News* rankings are widely used, and they are derived from an intuitively reasonable and measurable set of variables, including peer ratings, test scores of incoming students, resources available to students, etc. One most frequently heard criticism is that the rankings measure institutional reputation rather than quality of students’ education; for our purposes this is not necessarily a disadvantage.

US News places the best colleges and universities in its “national” rankings. Institutions that do not make it into the national ranking are ranked regionally. We modified *US News*’ ratings by placing the “national” institutions in the top four Carnegie tiers and the “regional” institutions in the bottom four tiers, with the particular tier determined by the school’s ranking. The institutional status index was standardized to a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 10.

To try to detect whether professional advancement is influenced by ideological orientation over and above the effects of scholastic achievement, we turned to a multivariate model in which the achievement and politics of faculty are the key independent variables, and the dependent variable is professional advancement.

The multivariate approach not only makes it possible to evaluate the independent effects of many factors simultaneously, by measuring the effect of each while all others are held constant, but it also allows us to compare effects of different determinants on the quality of institutional affiliation.

We entered each of the three measures of ideological orientation separately into three equations. This was done to provide a comparison of the statistical power of the various measures while avoiding problems of multicollinearity. In addition to the political variables, we included several other factors that have been cited as sources of discrimination in other social contexts, among them race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and marital status.

Preliminary bivariate analysis showed an interactive relationship between religion and institutional affiliation – institutional affiliation was related to religion only among active practitioners (defined as those attending services “at least once or twice a month”). Therefore we included “practicing Christians” and “practicing Jews” as dummy variables in the equation. (Other religions contained too few practitioners for statistically valid comparisons.)

Table 4 reports the unstandardized and standardized (beta) regression coefficients and amount of variation explained when political ideology and partisan orientation, respectively, were incorporated into models used to predict the quality of institutional affiliation. Both the ideology index and party affiliation, when entered into multiple regression analyses, independently predict the quality of a subject's institutional affiliation. As we would expect, academic achievement matters the most in determining the quality of schools in which faculty teach. But ideology is the second most powerful predictor in Model I (beta=.09, $p \leq .001$), accounting for more than one-fifth as much variation in quality of institutional affiliation as does achievement (beta=.39, $p \leq .001$). That is, more liberal responses to the attitude questions predict a significantly higher quality of institutional affiliation, after controlling for scholarly achievement.

Second, religiosity is negatively related to quality of institutional affiliation among practicing Christians (beta=-.06, $p \leq .05$), but not among Jews. The other variable that is a statistically significant contributor to the equation is gender: Being female is a negative predictor of institutional quality (beta=-.07, $p \leq .01$). None of the other potential sources of discrimination for which we have measures is significantly related to the dependent variable. Overall, this regression model explains just under 20% of the variation in the quality of schools in which faculty teach.

This analysis confirms the expected impact of achievement on professional status, but it also suggests that ideology plays an independent role. In effect, the ideological orientations of professors are about one-fifth as important as their professional achievements in determining the quality of the school that hires and retains or promotes them. In addition to conservatives, our analysis finds that women and religiously observant Christians are disadvantaged in their placement in the institutional hierarchy, after taking their professional achievements into account.

Model II shows that similar results are obtained when political party identification is substituted for ideology in the equation. The same four variables predict quality of institutional affiliation, although the role of Christian religiosity, which was significant only at the .05 level in Model I, is more clearly evident (beta=-.08, $p \leq .001$). Once again, achievement accounts for the lion's share of variation, but Republicans, women, and practicing Christians fare significantly worse than their colleagues at similar levels of achievement.

Table 4. Variables associated with quality of school in which faculty teach****

	Model I		Model II	
	Unstandardized coefficients	Standardized coefficients	Unstandardized coefficients	Standardized coefficients
Ideology index	.084***	.086		
Republican			-2.547**	-.073
Independent			-.982	-.042
Female	-1.743**	-.069	-1.692**	-.067
Black****	1.706	.026	1.405	.021
Asian	1.333	.025	1.246	.024
Gay or lesbian	1.296	.025	1.375	.026
Married	.710	.028	.601	.023
Practicing Jewish	1.041	.019	1.058	.020
Practicing Christian	-1.402*	-.063	-1.788***	-.081
Faculty achievement index	.433***	.388	.436***	.391
Constant	46.959***		55.913***	
Adjusted R squared	.197		.196	
N	1562		1562	

* Significant at the .05 level; ** significant at the .01 level, *** significant at the .001 level.

****Historically Black colleges are excluded from this analysis.

Finally, although the left-right self-designation was significantly related to institutional affiliation on a bivariate level, the relationship disappears in a multivariate context. The results for the other variables are nearly identical to those obtained in the other models, as is the overall level of explained variation. Therefore, this relatively poor showing may reflect the imprecision of the left-right self-designation in capturing ideological orientation, relative to an index derived from responses to specific issues.

To summarize, the second hypothesis is confirmed when socio-political orientation is operationalized in terms of ideological attitudes or party identification, although not as left-right self-designation. These results show that individual scholarly achievement is by far the most important factor in predicting the quality of a professor's institutional affiliation. But being a Republican or conservative significantly reduces the predicted quality of the college or university where he or she teaches, after taking scholarly achievement into account.

In addition, the regressions uncovered some relationships that clearly warrant further research, principally the role of gender and religiosity in academic advancement. The contemporary debate over discrimination against female faculty in hiring and promotion is beyond the scope of this paper, although our data seem to provide *prima facie* support for this allegation. We are not aware of similar allegations of discrimination on the basis of religion, but this is clearly a topic that demands greater scrutiny on the basis of our findings. We plan to pursue some of these questions in forthcoming papers.

The analysis also suggests that being male confers a significant advantage. However, no competitive advantage is conferred by being black or white, gay or straight, married or single. Thus, when the logic of testing for differential outcomes according to race, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation is applied to ideology and religion, being a conservative, a Republican or a practicing Christian confers a disadvantage in professional advancement greater than any of these other factors.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to inquire as to whether data from a large scale summary of American Academic institutions sheds any light on the contentious debate over the political culture of academia. Is it true that most professors in American colleges and universities are left of center politically? And is there any evidence to indicate that this ideological homogeneity hinders the professional advancement of political conservatives?

To test these hypotheses we made use of the 1999 North American Academic Study Survey, the most systematic and comprehensive data set on the

characteristics of American college faculty since the Carnegie surveys that were conducted between 1969 and 1984. First, we examined the political party preferences of faculty members, their ideological self-descriptions on a left-right scale, and their views on controversial social issues, ranging from government intervention in the economy to environmental protection to abortion rights.

The results show that the political orientation of the professoriate is tilted toward liberal attitudes and the Democratic Party. Further, the predominance of liberal and Democratic perspectives is not limited to particular types of institutions or to those occupying particular fields of study. A comparison of the 1999 survey with previous surveys of American faculty indicates a substantial shift to the left in party identification and ideology since the mid-1980s, at a time when ideological and party identification among the general public has been relatively stable.

Second, multivariate analysis of the available data show that even after taking into account the effects of academic achievement, along with many other individual characteristics, conservatives and Republicans taught at lower quality schools than did liberals and Democrats. The results do not definitively prove that ideology accounts for differences in professional standing. It is entirely possible that other unmeasured factors may account for those variations. That said, the results are consistent with the hypothesis that political conservatism confers a disadvantage in the competition for professional advancement.

These results suggest that conservative complaints of the presence and effects of liberal homogeneity in academia deserve to be taken seriously, despite their self-interested quality and the anecdotal nature of the evidence previously presented. In conjunction with other recent studies, our findings suggest strongly that a leftward shift has occurred on college campuses in recent years, to the extent that political conservatives have become an endangered species in some departments.

Our findings on the more controversial issue of discrimination against conservative faculty should be regarded as more preliminary. Indeed, if the findings are interpreted in this way, then they raise questions about the professional status of women and observant Christians in academia as well. To our knowledge this is the first time this sort of empirical analysis has been applied to this question, and there may be much more to learn from additional data analysis or examination of other data sets. Our goal is to draw attention to the application of rigorous methods to evaluate this controversy systematically, rather than letting the debate deteriorate into anecdotal charges and counter-charges. Our statistical analysis suggests that conservatives may have a legitimate complaint. The important thing is that their complaint be evaluated by methods that minimize the impact of the strong feelings that such disputes bring out on both sides.

Appendix

Composition of indices:

The Ideology Index includes six questions that measure respondents' views on political and social issues: "The government should work to ensure that everyone has a job" (codes reversed); "Government should work to reduce the income gap between rich and poor" (responses reversed); "More environmental protection is needed, even if it raises prices or costs jobs;" "Homosexuality is as acceptable a lifestyle as heterosexuality" (responses reversed); "It is a woman's right to decide whether or not to have an abortion" (responses reversed); and "It is alright for a couple to live together without intending to get married" (responses reversed). A Cronbach's alpha of .79 was computed for the index, indicating high inter-item correlation.

The Institutional Quality Index is based on the Carnegie Foundation and *US News & World Report* rankings of universities and colleges. The best colleges and universities in the US are listed in the *US News* national rankings. Institutions that do not make it into the national ranking are ranked within each region of the US, e.g. North East. We have modified *US News*' tiers by placing the "National" institutions in Tiers 1 through 4 and the "Regional" institutions in Tiers 5-8. Tier 1 is the most prestigious and Tier 8 the least prestigious. The index is recoded so that higher score means higher quality. The institutional quality index is standardized to the mean of 100 and the standard deviation of 10.

The Academic Achievement Index includes the following questions from the 1999 Academic Study Survey: "Within the past five years, and counting anything now in press, how many articles, if any, have you published in refereed journals, or as chapters in academic books?;" "Again, within the past five years, and counting anything now in press, how many books, if any, have you authored or co-authored?;" "Have you served on the editorial board of an academic journal?;" "How often, if at all, do you attend the international meetings of your discipline?;" and "All things considered, what percentage of your working time would you say you spend on research?" A Cronbach's alpha of .70 was computed for the index, indicating high inter-item correlation.

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