

UNDERGRADUATE WOMEN
AND ECONOMICS
THE CHALLENGE

THE PROBLEM





WOMEN AND THE UNDERGRADUATE ECONOMICS MAJOR

Why are there two men for every one woman economics concentrator at Harvard and its peer institutions?



WOMEN AND THE UNDERGRADUATE ECONOMICS MAJOR

Why are there almost 3 men to every one woman
economics major nationwide?



WOMEN AND THE UNDERGRADUATE ECONOMICS MAJOR

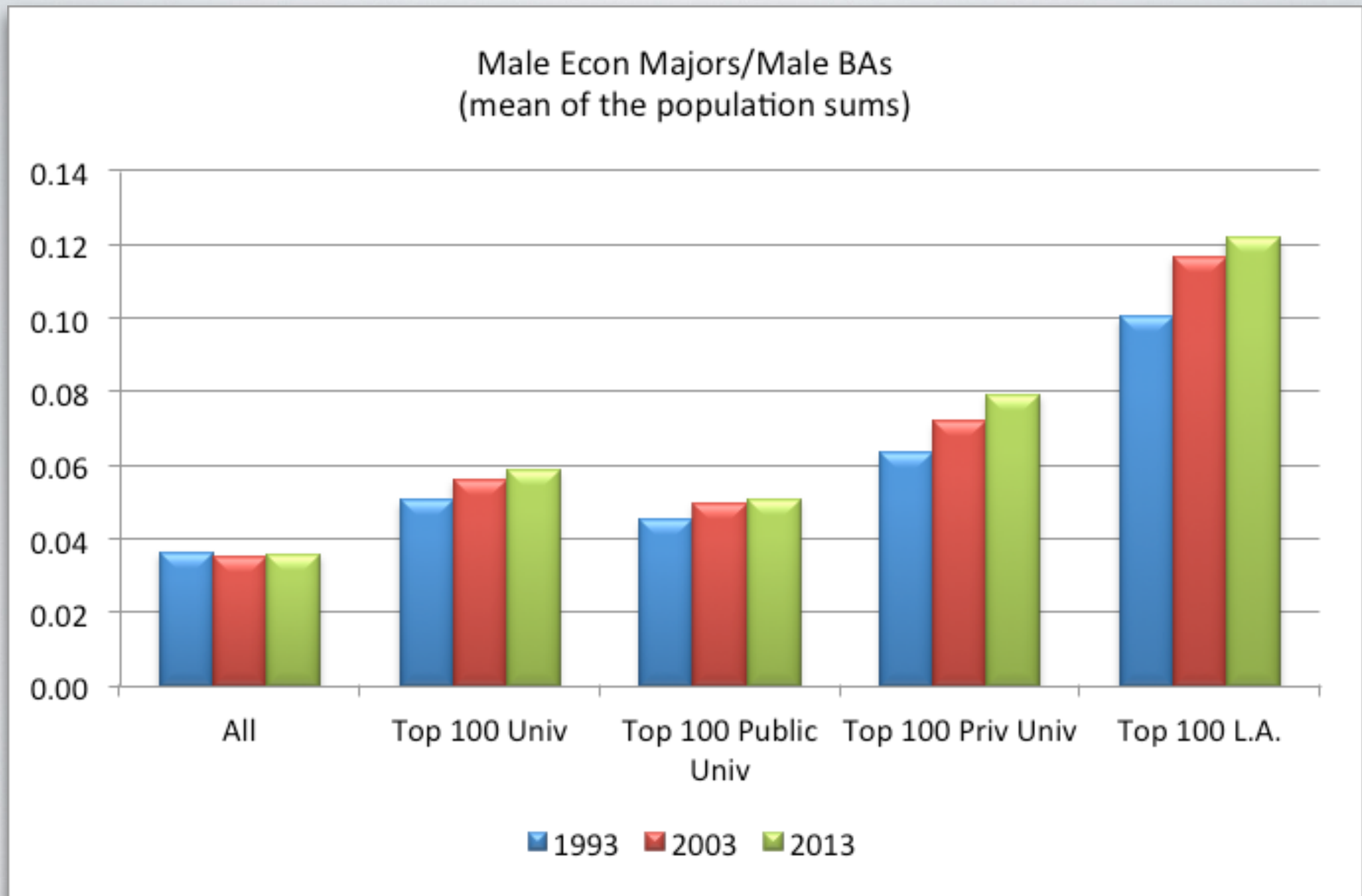
Why is it 2:1 at Harvard and its peers? Almost 3:1 nationwide? 2.6:1 in the top liberal arts colleges?



WOMEN AND THE UNDERGRADUATE ECONOMICS MAJOR

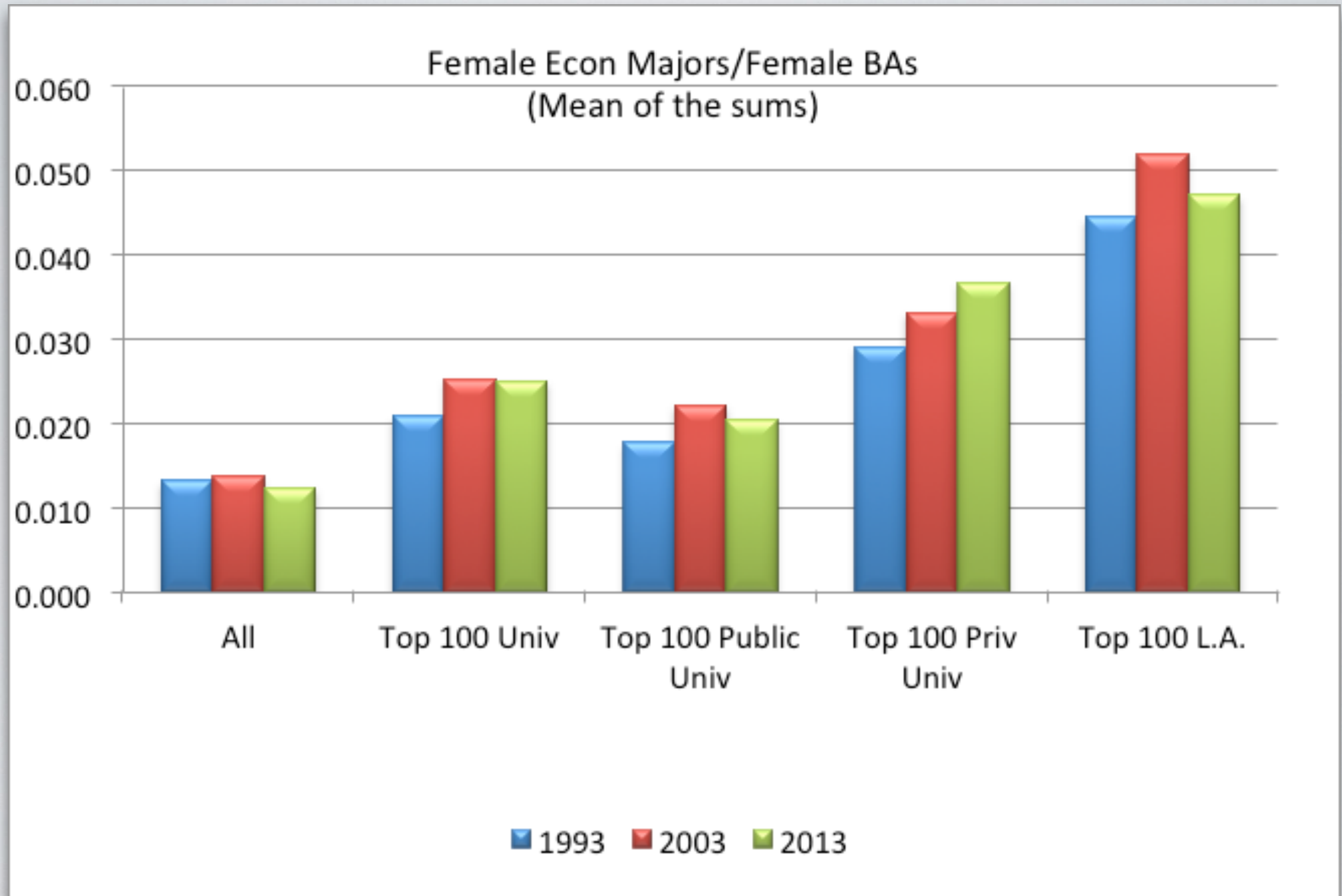
Why are there about 4 men to every one woman
economics major averaged across institutions?

MALE ECON MAJORS, AS A FRACTION OF BAS



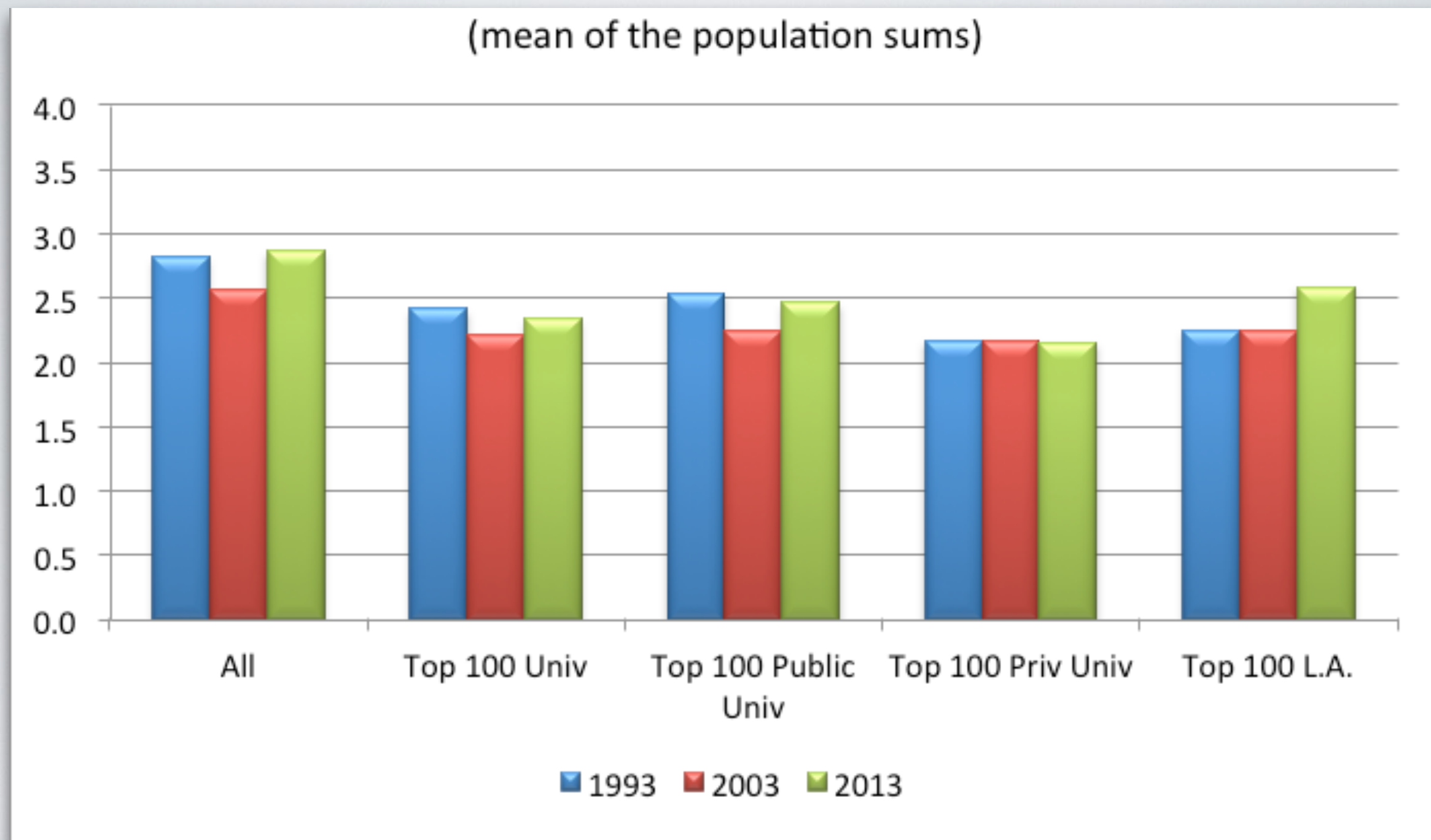
1993 to 2013. Economics is popular for males.

FEMALE ECON MAJORS, AS A FRACTION OF BAS



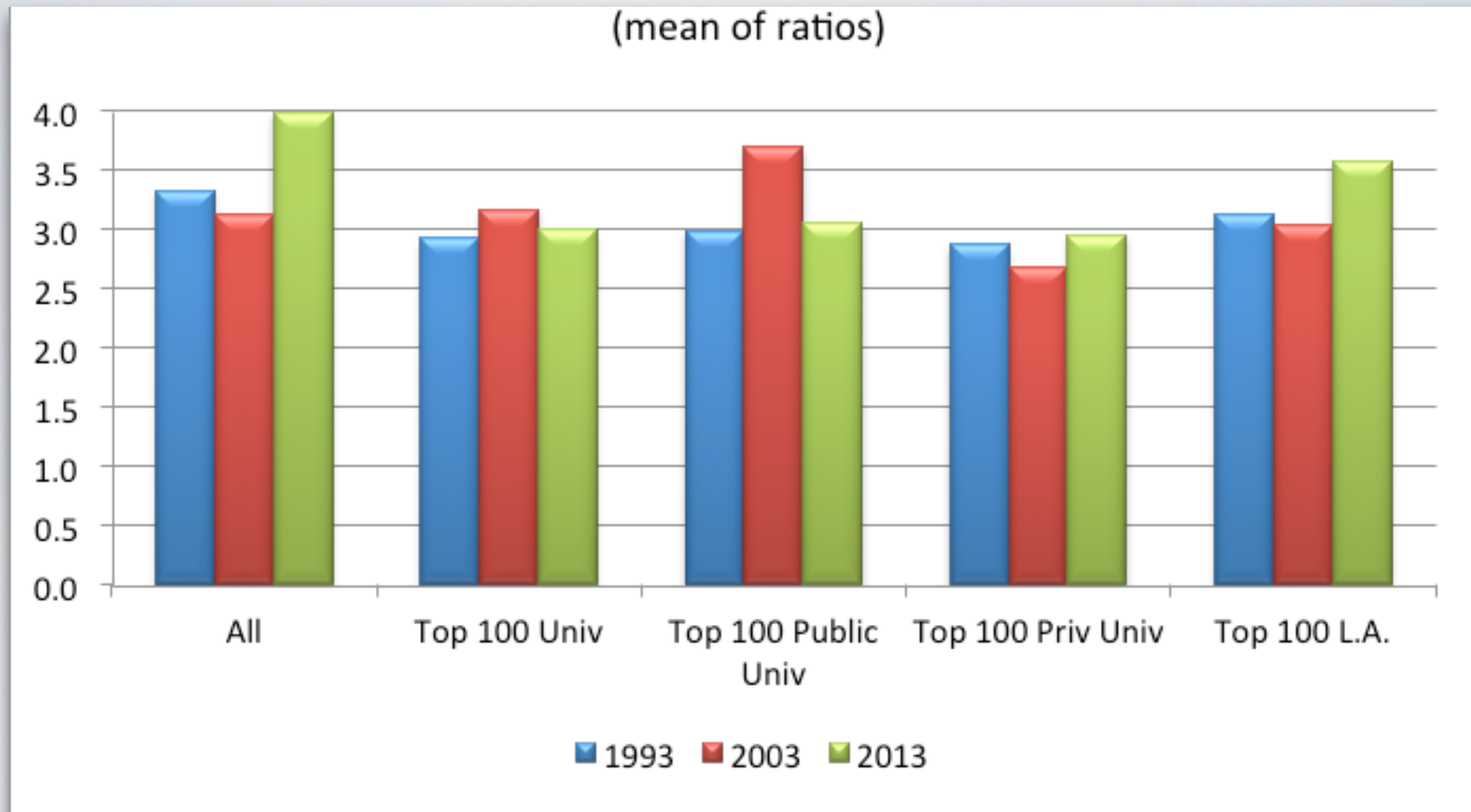
1993 to 2013. Economics is less popular for females.

MALE/FEMALE ECON MAJORS, AS A FRACTION OF BAS



"Conversion" ratios, 1993 to 2013. No change across 20 years.

MALE/FEMALE ECON MAJORS, AS A FRACTION OF BAS



"Conversion" ratios, 1993 to 2013. No change across 20 years.

ORIGINS OF THE CHALLENGE



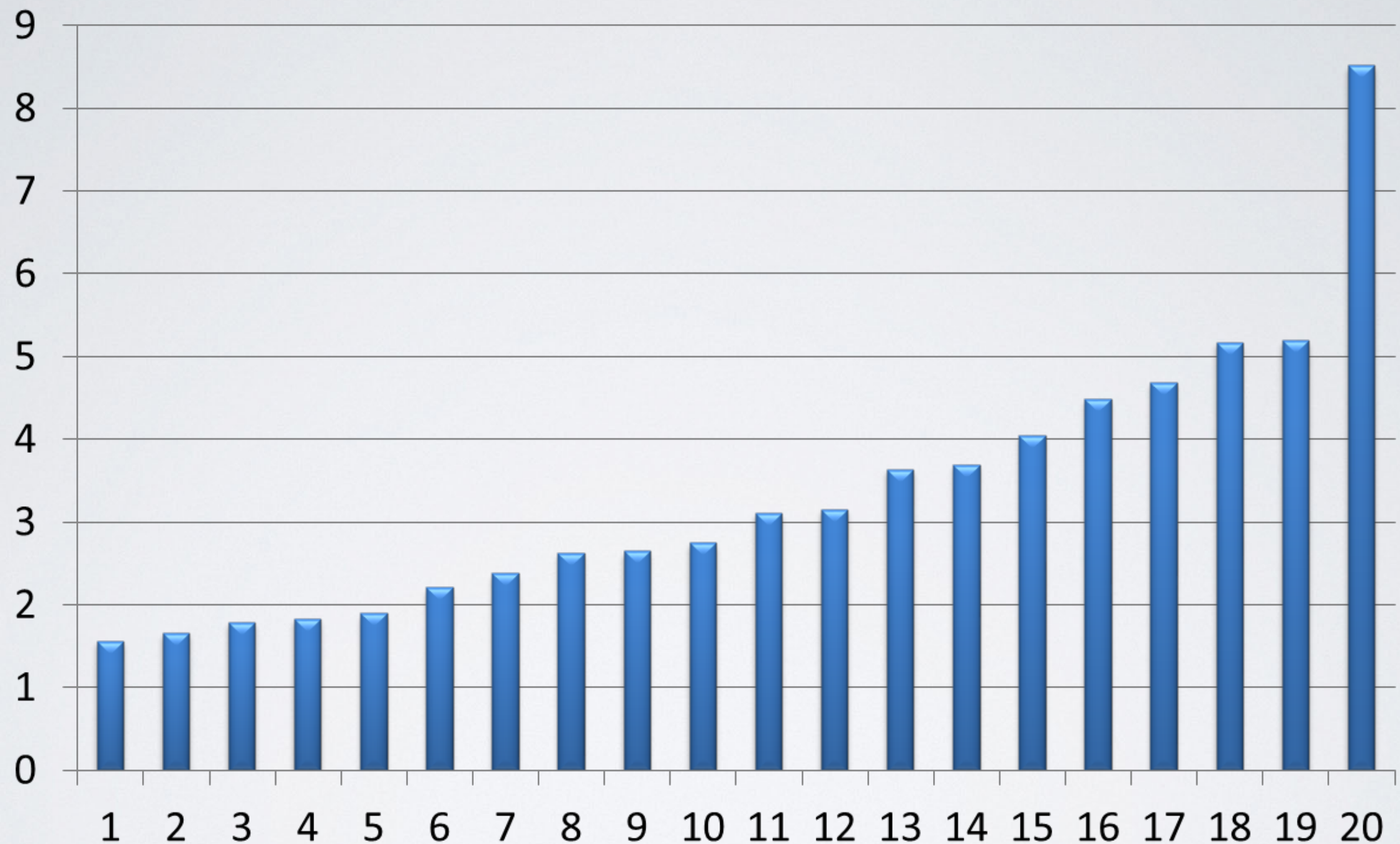
THE SAMPLE:
TREATMENTS (20),
CONTROLS (38),
OTHERS (30)



CHALLENGE TREATMENT AND CONTROLS

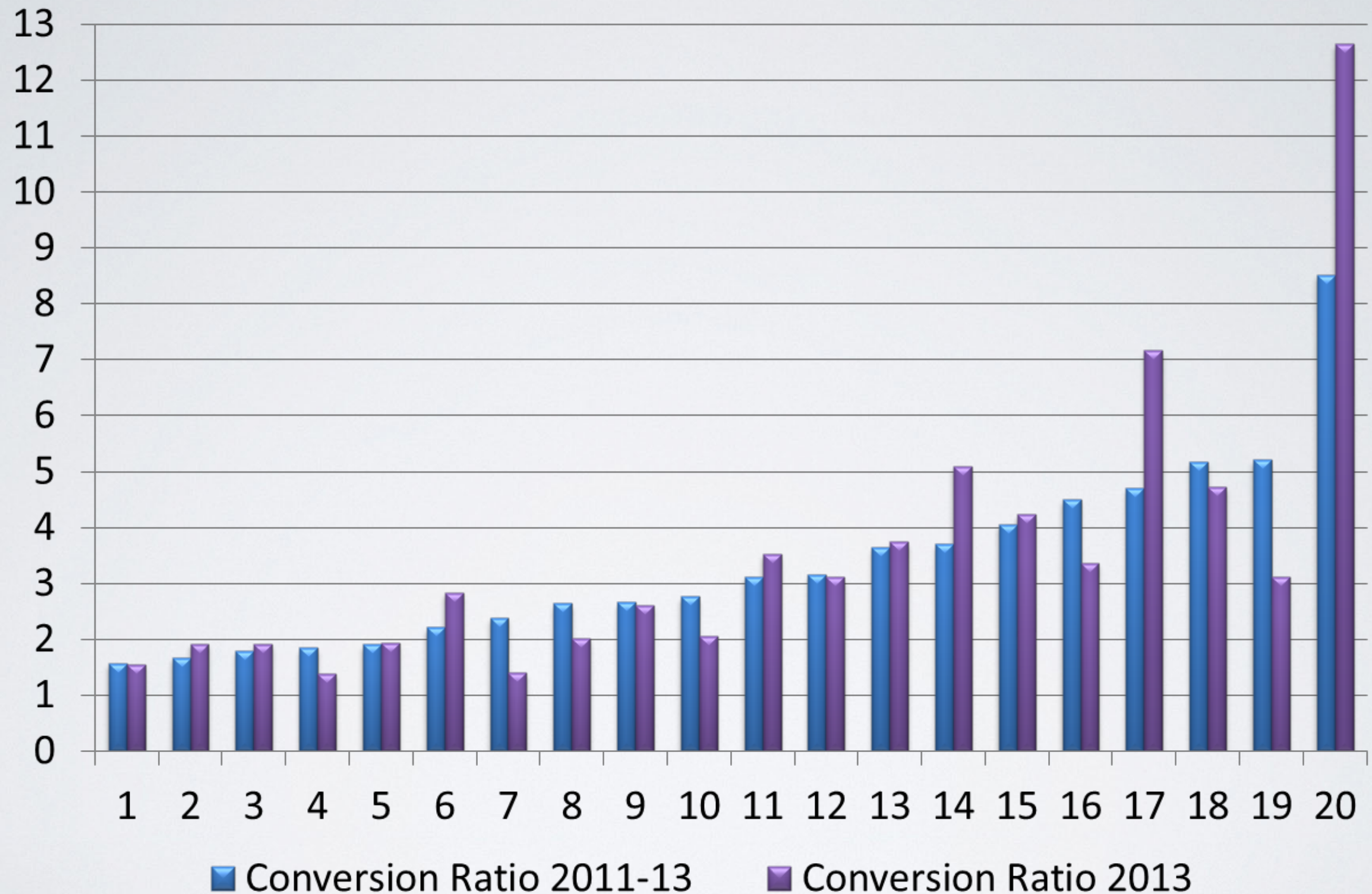
- **Invited** 325 schools with 15 or more economics graduates; 160 responded; 88 in “treatable” sample; 20 chosen at random; 38 of the others have agreed to be controls.
- **Treatments:** Brown; CO St.; CT Coll; Illinois State; Princeton; SMU; St. Olaf; UCSB; UC Berkeley; Univ. Central FL; UC Boulder; UConn; Univ. of Hawaii; Univ. of Illinois; Univ. of Richmond; UVa; Univ. of Wisc., Madison; Washington & Lee Univ.; Williams College; Yale.
- **Controls:** 38 comparable institutions
- **Others:** 30 “treatable” sample schools could be added controls.

20 “TREATMENT” SCHOOLS: CONVERSION RATIOS, 2011-2013



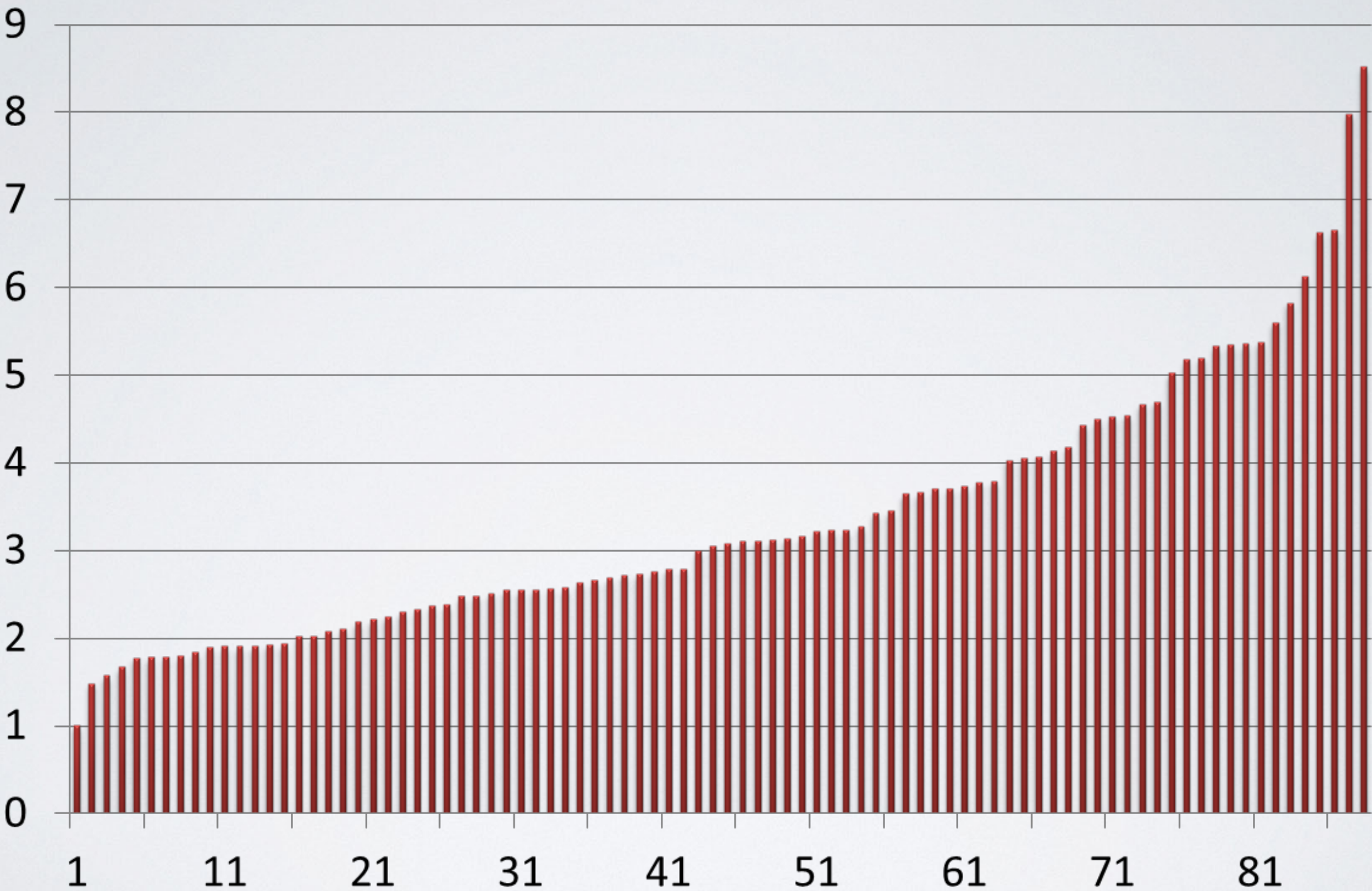
NOTE: Average of separate years, 2011-2013, from IPEDS data.

20 “TREATMENT” SCHOOLS: 2011-13 VS. 2013

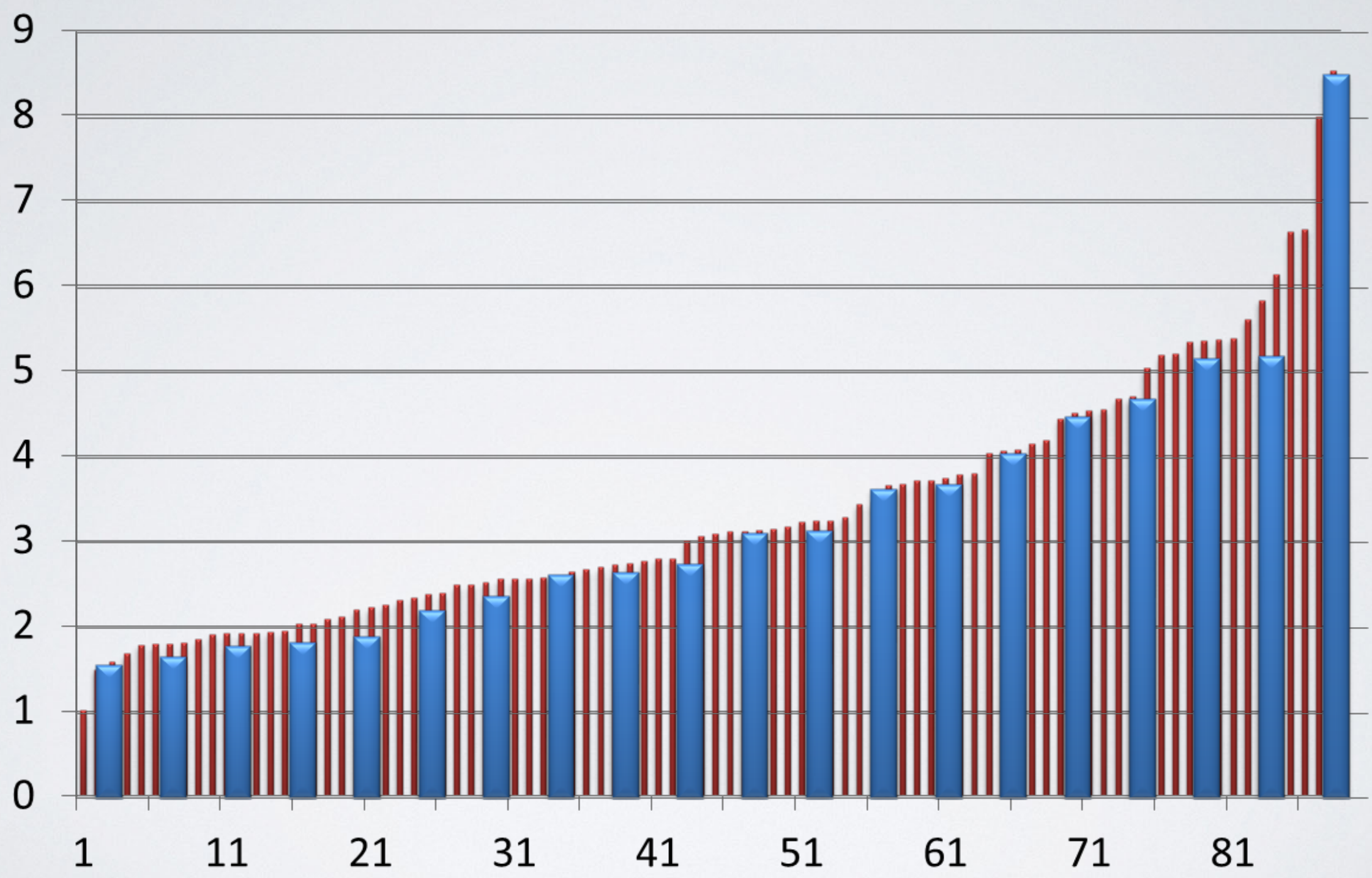


Year to year fluctuations even for schools with more than 25 economics BAs.

88 “TREATABLE” SCHOOLS: CONVERSION RATIOS, 2011-2013

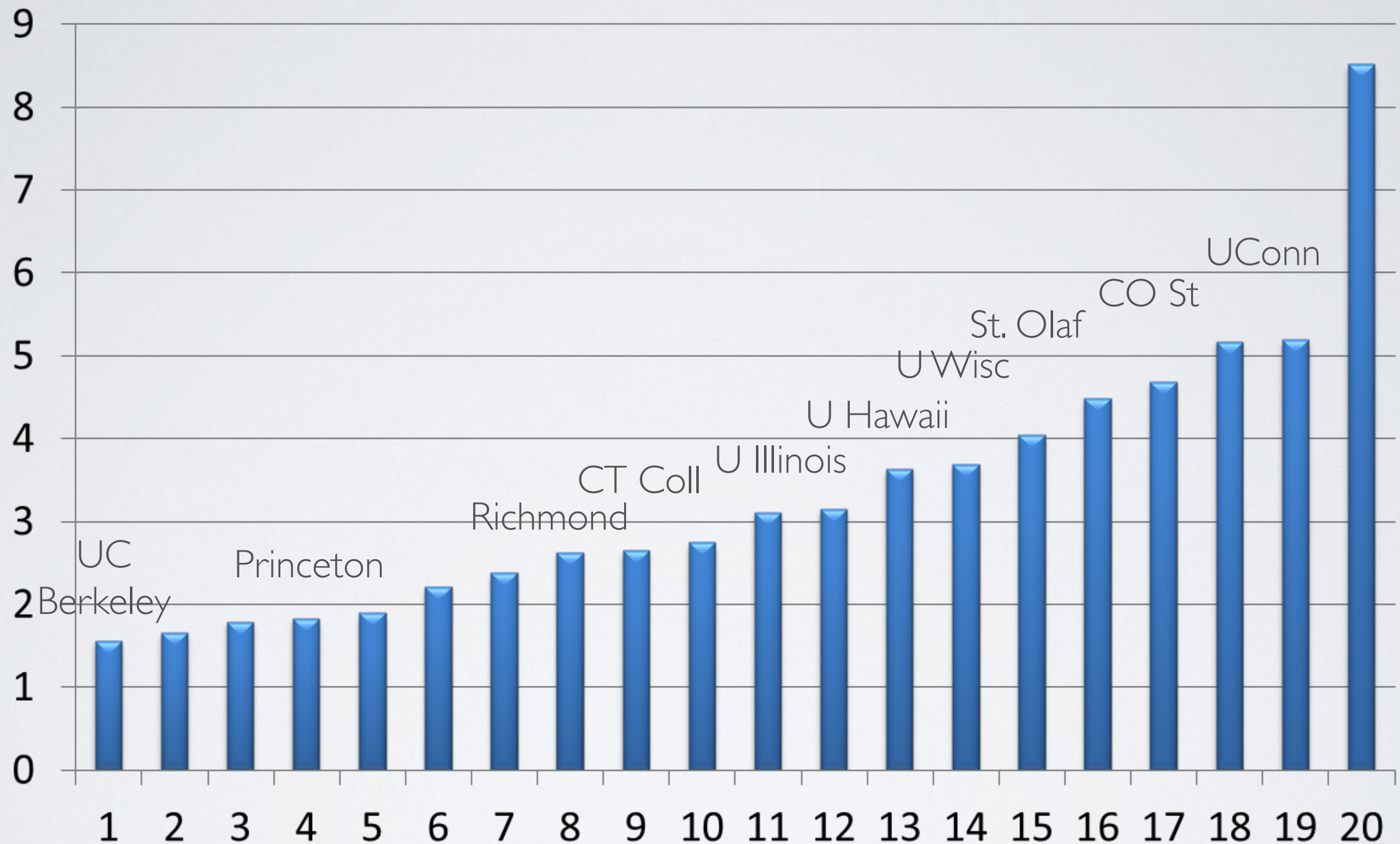


88 “TREATABLE” SCHOOLS (RED) & 20 TREATMENTS (BLUE)



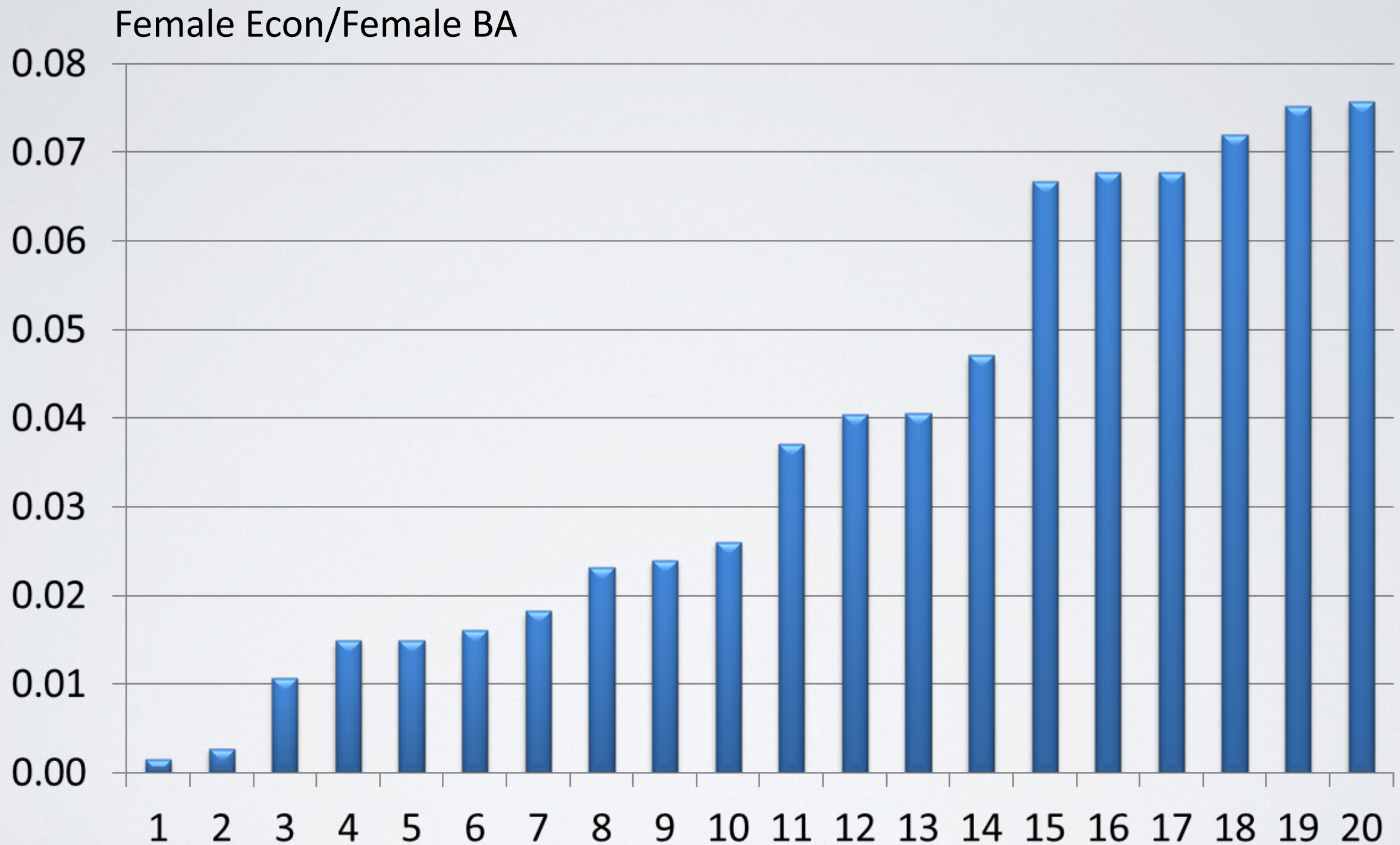
NOTE: Not surprisingly, the full “treatable” and the random 20 distributions are very similar.

WHERE IS YOUR INSTITUTION?



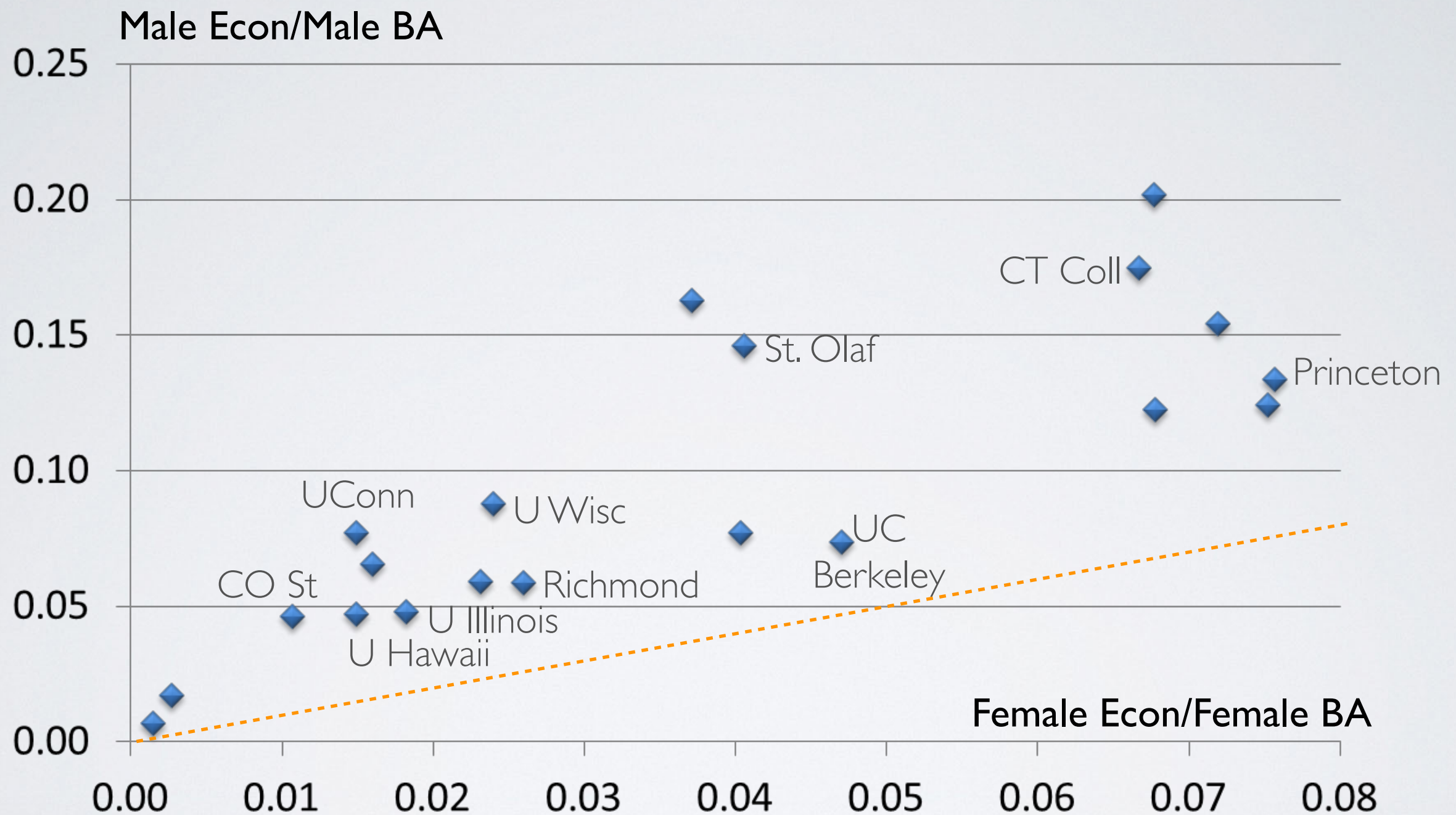
NOTE: Average of separate years, 2011-2013, from IPEDS data.

20 TREATMENT SCHOOLS: FEMALE MAJOR RATIO, 2011-2013



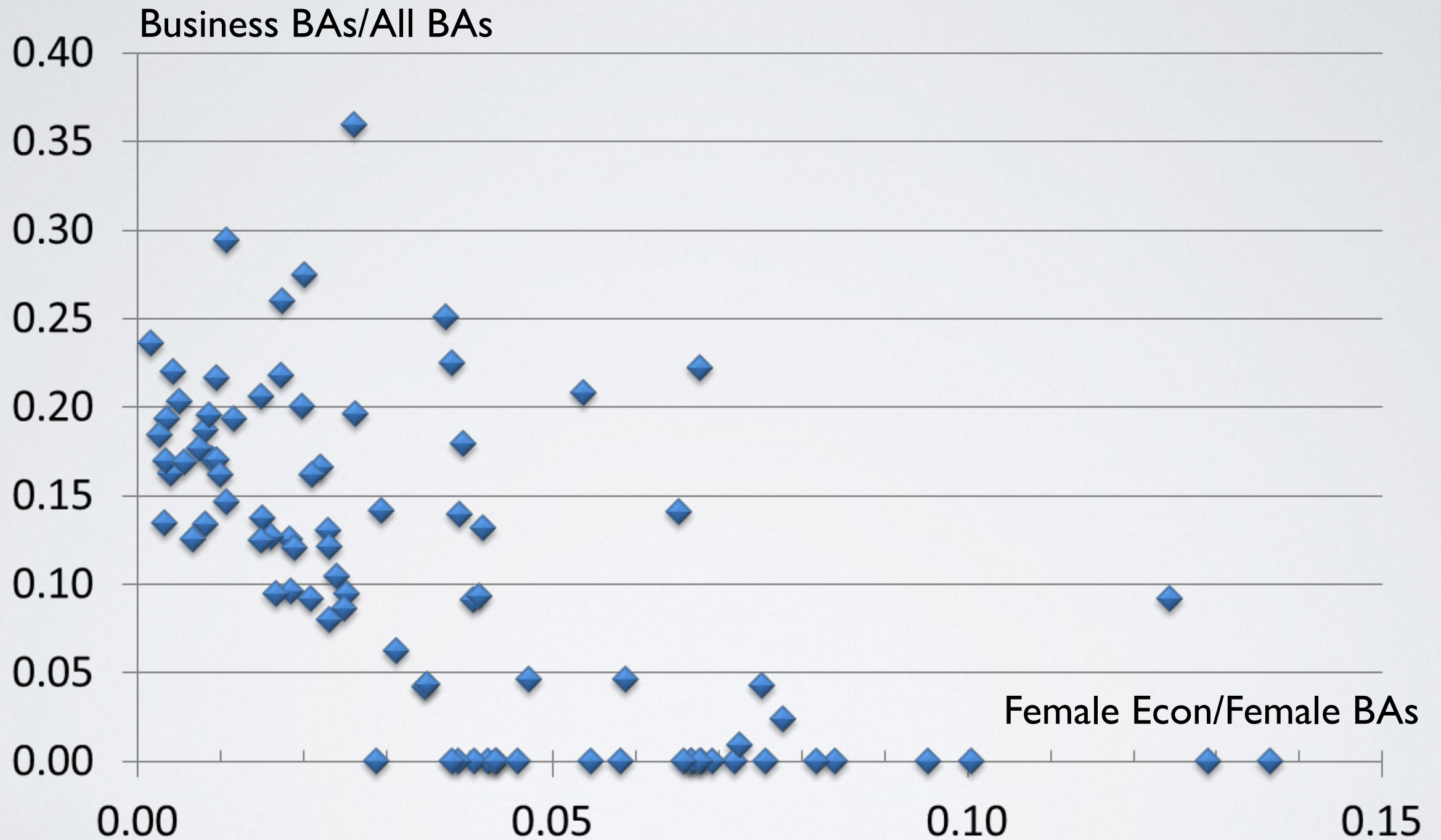
NOTE: Female major ratio = (Female Econ/Female BA). Average is of the aggregate 2011-2013 female Econs divided by the aggregate female BAs for all years combined.

20 “TREATMENT” SCHOOLS: FEMALE & MALE MAJOR RATIOS



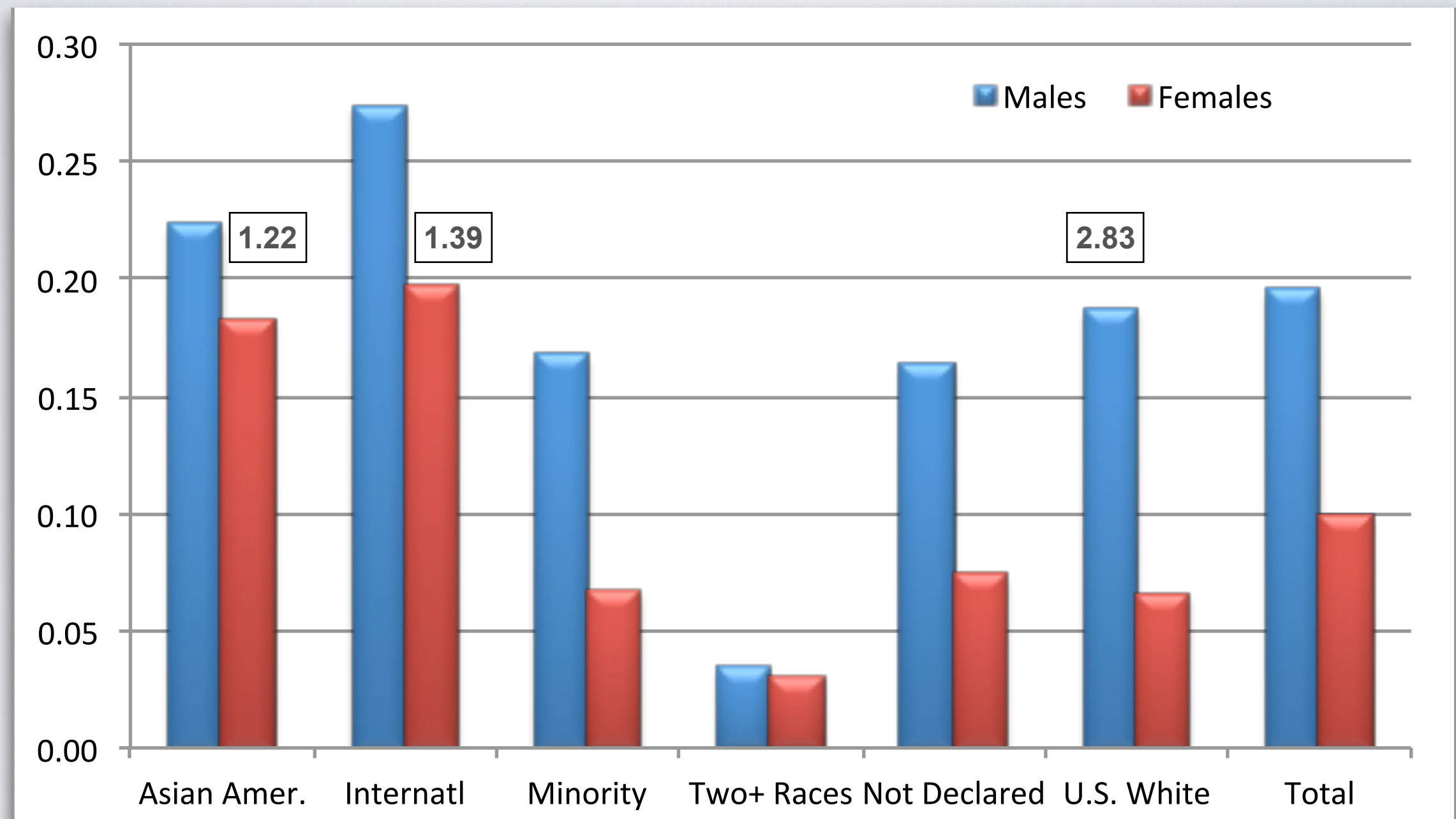
NOTE: Ratios given are the average of the three years 2011-2013.

88 TREATABLE SCHOOLS: FEMALE MAJOR RATIO
AND BUSINESS BAs/ALL BAs): 2011-2013 AVERAGE



More business majors “means” fewer female economics majors. NOTE: Female major ratio = (Female Econ/Female BA) is average of 2011-2013 totals, as is (Business BAs/All BAs).

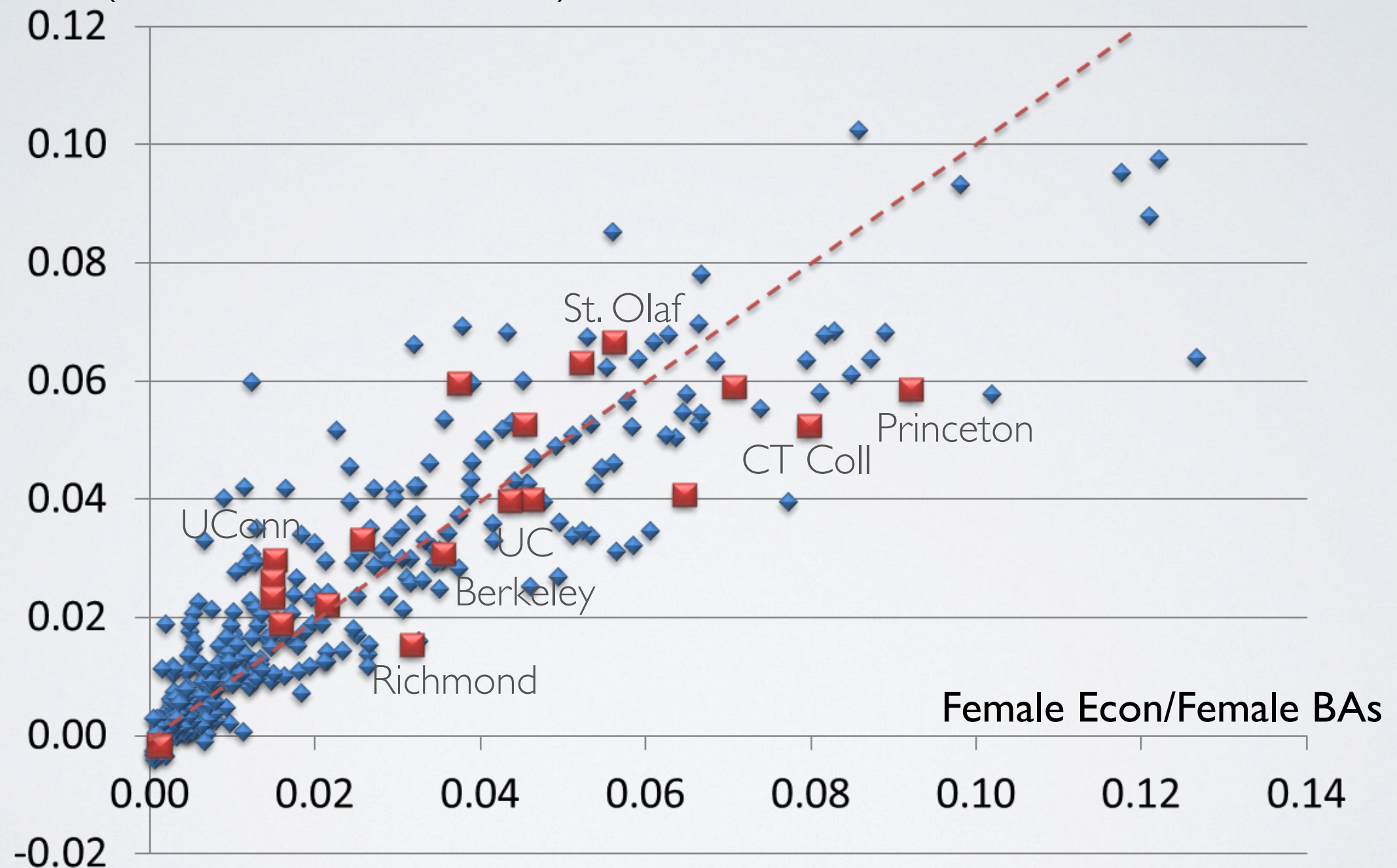
FRACTION MAJORING IN ECONOMICS AT ADAMS DIFFERS BY RACE, ETHNICITY AND COUNTRY ORIGIN



Gender difference is smaller for Asians and International students and wider for US whites.

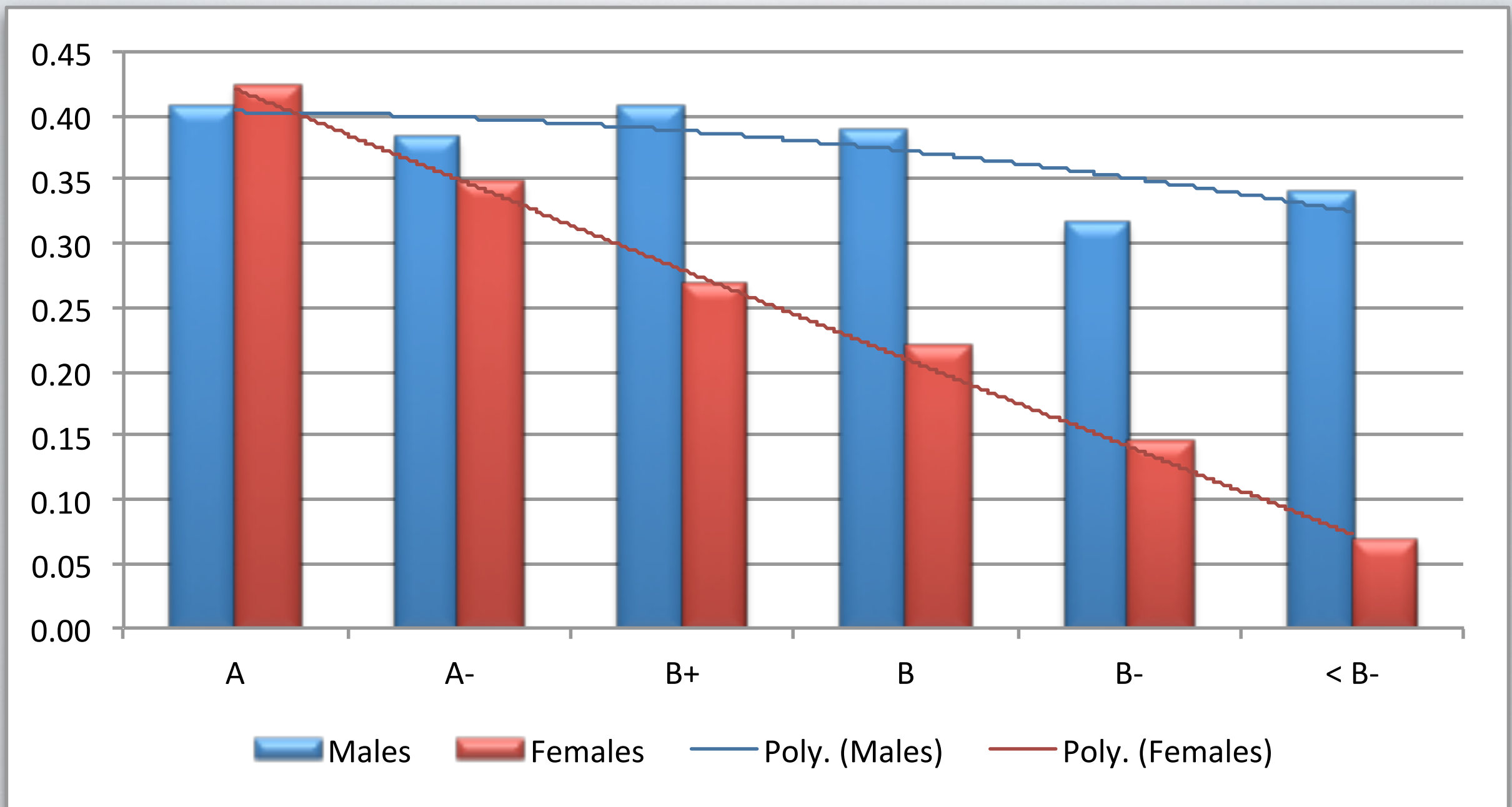
(FEMALE ECON/FEMALE BA), ACTUAL AND PREDICTED FOR 325 SCHOOLS AND 20 TREATMENTS: 2013

Predicted (Female Econ/Female BAs)



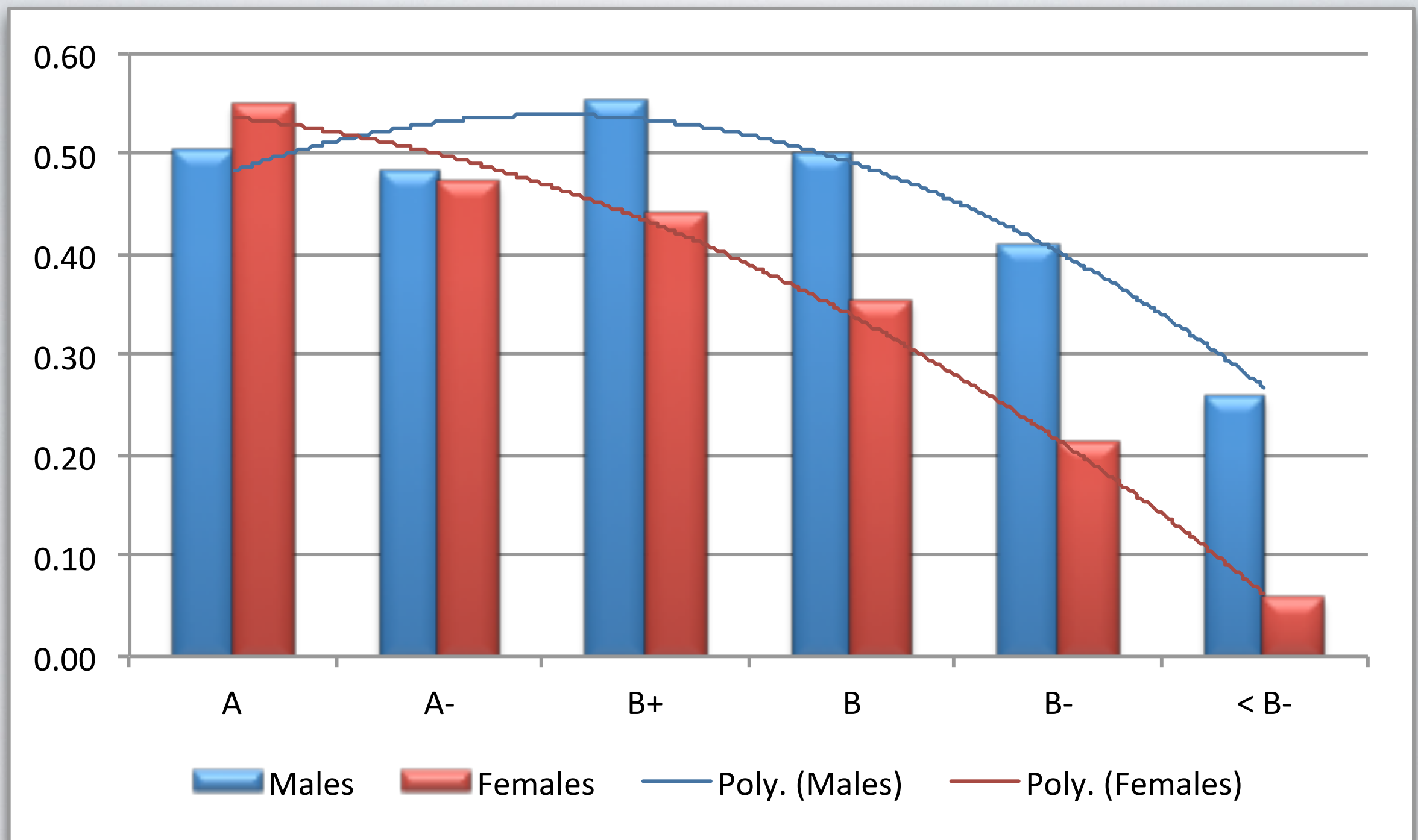
NOTE: (Female Econ/Female BA) is for 2013; predicted values are derived from a regression of all 325 schools in 2013 with 15 or more economics BAs/year averaged from 2011 to 2013.

MALES VS. FEMALE ECON MAJORS AND EC101 GRADES



By grade in Ec101, fraction of female majors declines but not by much for male majors at Adams.

MALES VS. FEMALE ECON MAJORS AND EC101 GRADES



The fact still holds conditional on picking economics as a likely major in the summer before attending Adams.

HOW TO GET MORE WOMEN TO MAJOR IN ECONOMICS: TREATMENTS

- Emphasize the enormous breadth and importance of economics to critically important issues including health, the environment, education, inequality, and economic growth.
- Have better counseling for all students.
- Make Ec 101 and beyond more evidence-based and applied.
- Improve information. Make the choice a real one. Turn on the lights.



CHALLENGE LOGISTICS

- **What we need from you** and at what frequency.
 - *Web-based reporting* of economics course enrollments and declared majors by sex.
 - *Reporting dates and precise reporting details* will be circulated soon. First we need more information from you (Group Discussion II).
- **Rewarding your institution** to support the Challenge goals.
 - \$2.5K as soon as you fill out a few forms.
 - \$5K around Sept. 1 or before; when you send a brief description of the planned interventions.
 - \$5K end of January (beginning of second semester) when you provide brief description of Fall term and Winter activities during the first year.

OUR GOALS TODAY



- What are the issues and barriers facing your institution in increasing the number of female majors?
- Institutional details concerning: data collected on intended majors; when majors are declared; secondaries; dual majors; your Principles and Intermediate sequences. Institutional research group. Role of the business major.
- Discussion of potential interventions.
- Your questions and suggestions about the Challenge.