

Work-family balance and success in Academia: Are we there yet?

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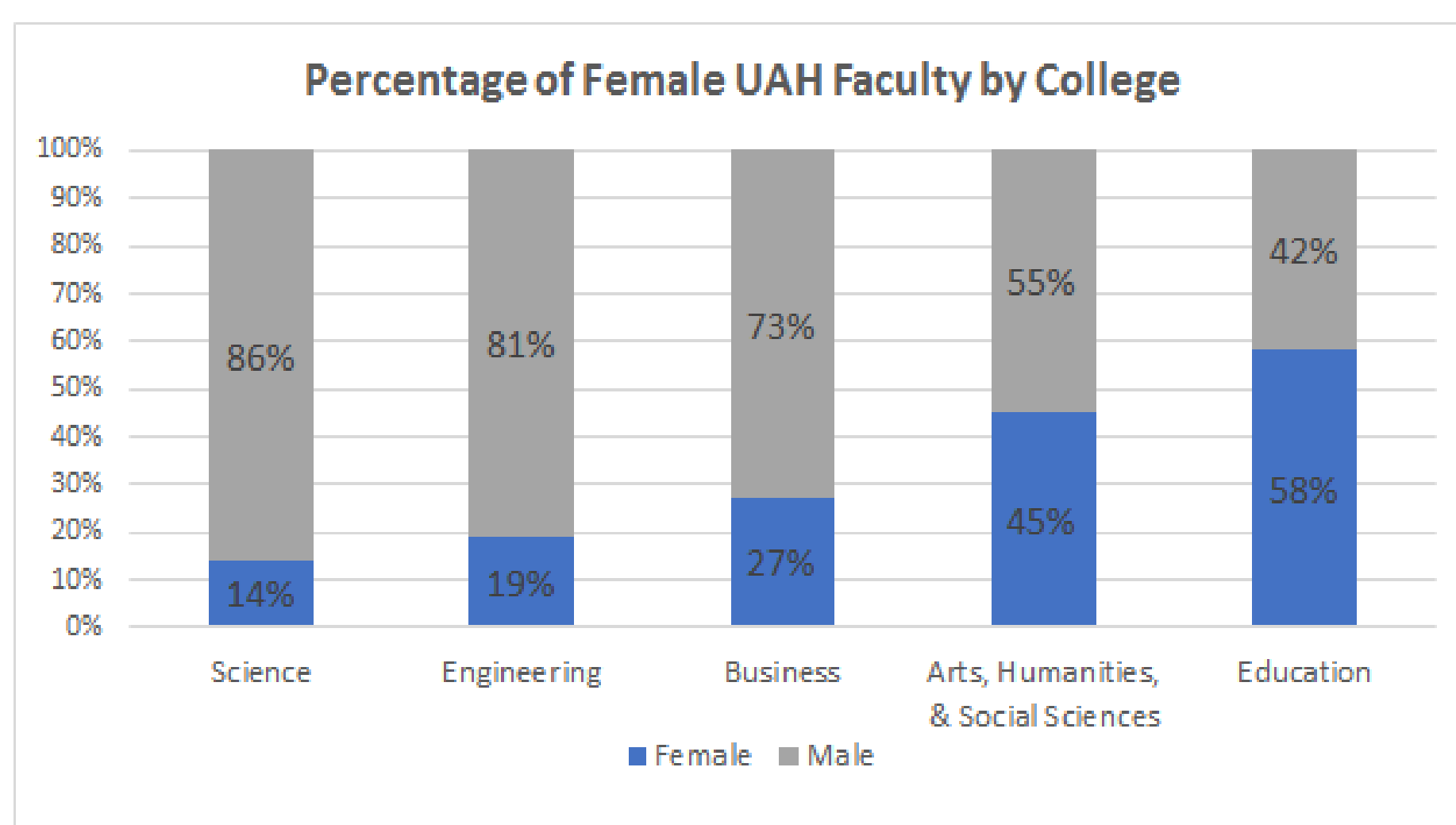
The Big Question: Why Do Women Still Face Obstacles in Academia?

As Academia strives for equality in employment, researchers investigate why women are still underrepresented by rank, tenure, leadership, and field.

Our research team strives to investigate why qualified women continue to face obstacles in their academic careers.

Some general research perspectives include: Theories on the causes of bias against women. Data includes objective career patterns for men and women across disciplines and ranks.

Figure 1: Percentage of women faculty varies across UAH colleges.



The Theories

● **Leadership stereotypes** depict leaders as agentic, but women are seen as communal - a follower role. From a **role congruity perspective**, women who are agentic may violate social norms and receive negative feedback.

● **The caregiver bias** may cause employers to view women and caretakers in general as less dedicated to work, assuming they spend more time with family. This may be why **tenure clock stops** have unexpected effects on career outcomes.

● **Tokenism** happens when qualified employees are hired primarily as a “token” but remain outsiders due to their minority status.

● **Social capital** is absent when employees are without mentors or established support networks. Both organizational and societal cultures may reinforce traditional prejudiced stereotypes leading to limited mentoring.

● **Institutional inertia** suggests that institutions are resistant to change. The dominant institutional group may feel threatened and deny real access to the same privileges to a minority group.

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Our Research and Findings

Phase I (current research): We collected institutional data on a sample of the top 200 American research universities. We have approximately 56,000 individual entries. We analyze objective patterns regarding career status in different colleges and disciplines. The objective data from UAH is used as a representative example of a prominent research university.

Phase II (future research): Design and disburse questionnaires capturing the psychological dynamics of the workplace.

Below is a sample of objective data patterns at UAH.

Figure 2: Total number of male and female professors by rank.

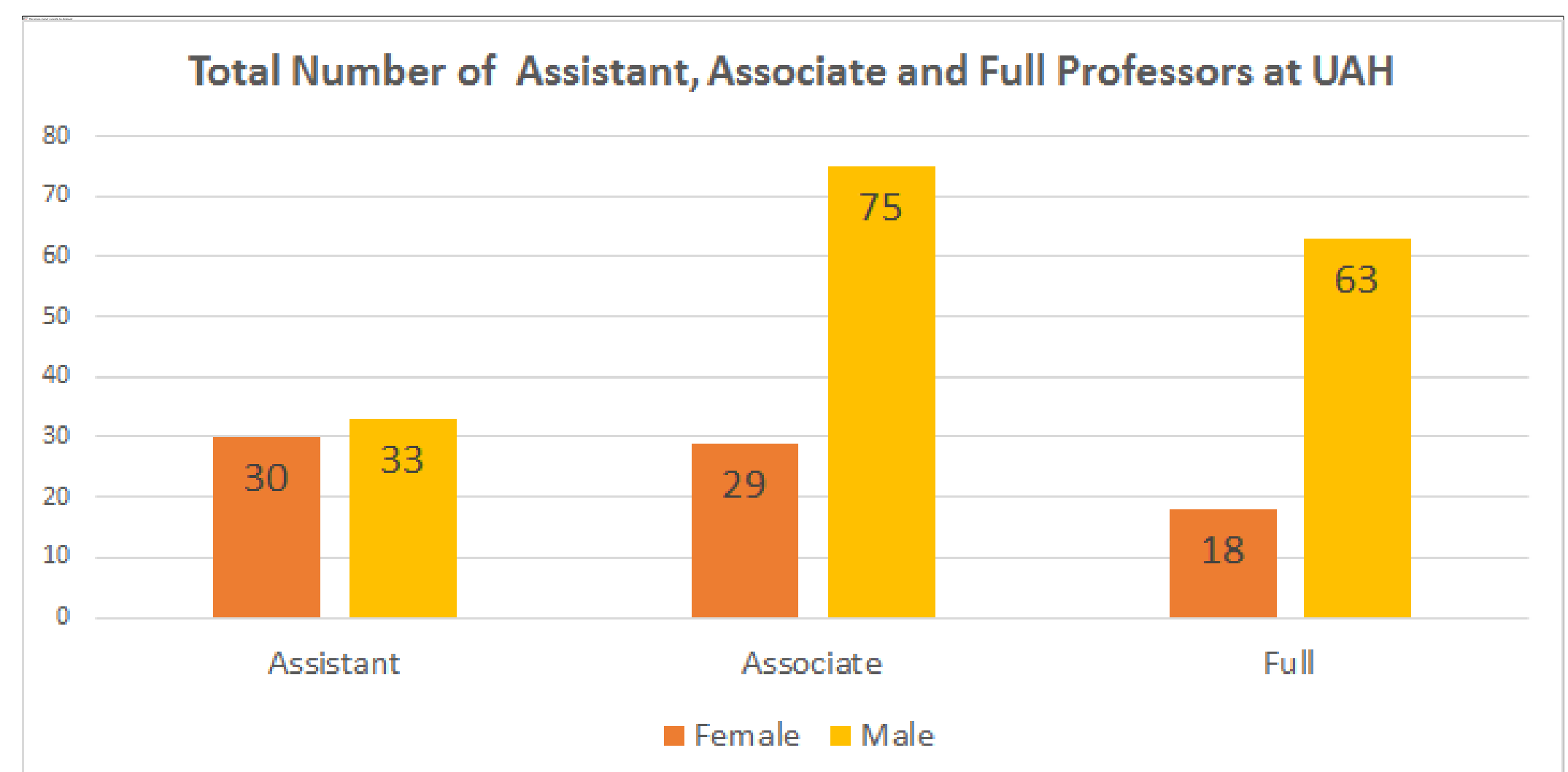
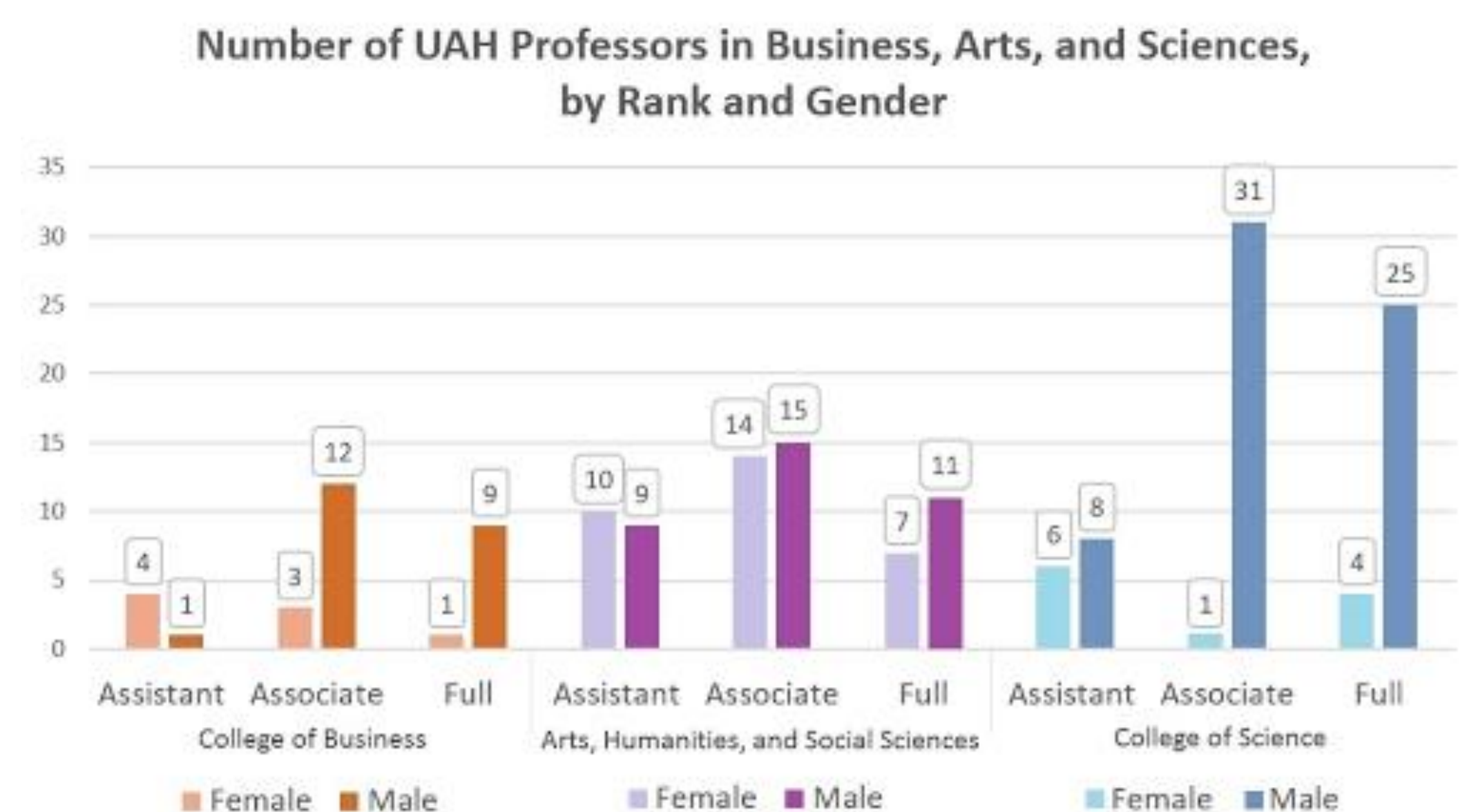


Figure 3: Absolute number of male and female assistant, associate, and full professors in three of UAH's colleges.



Conclusion and Future Steps

- Our findings from UAH suggest that women who climb the ladder may face obstacles (e.g. stereotypes, social capital issues, etc.) due to their minority status, particularly at higher ranks and in some disciplines.
- We hope to raise awareness of the barriers to women and minorities among key decision-makers and institutions.
- We encourage institutions to be inclusive by working proactively to reduce the discrepancy between the potential of the diverse workforce and where we stand today.

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