

**WRITERS GUILD OF AMERICA, WEST
THE 2014 HOLLYWOOD WRITERS REPORT**

Turning Missed Opportunities Into Realized Ones

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July 2014

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I. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The 2014 Hollywood Writers Report: Turning Missed Opportunities into Realized Ones is the eighth in a series of reports released by the Writers Guild of America, West (WGAW) examining employment and earnings trends for writers in the Hollywood industry. These reports have highlighted three groups of writers — women, minority, and older writers — who traditionally have been underemployed in the industry. The reports have documented the employment experiences of these study groups relative to their male, white, and younger counterparts in order to identify any patterns that suggest either progress or retreat on the industry diversity front. Using the reports as a diagnostic tool, the WGAW seeks to collaborate with the industry in efforts to increase the employment opportunities of all writers.

The 2014 report serves as a follow-up to its predecessor, The 2011 Hollywood Writers Report: Recession and Regression. While it focuses primarily on hiring and earnings patterns for the latest three-year period not covered in the previous report (i.e., 2010, 2011, and 2012), it also includes data for select years imported from previous reports. Prior reports provide summary data on trends going back to 1982.

Organization of the Report

This report is organized as follows: Section II discusses the sources and limitations of the data and provides background information on the types of analyses performed throughout the report; Section III provides a general overview of WGAW membership, employment, and earnings trends over the study period; Section IV focuses on the experiences of women writers, particularly as they compare to those of their male counterparts; Sections V and VI present similar, detailed analyses for minority writers and for older writers, respectively; Section VII summarizes the report findings and presents conclusions.

A Note on Other Groups of Writers

Depictions of gays, lesbians, and persons with disabilities have increased in film and television in recent years. Yet questions remain regarding the degree to which writers from these groups have been incorporated into the industry workforce, particularly to work on projects for which their perspectives and sensitivities might be most valued. Indeed, anecdotes suggest that television and film projects featuring depictions of gays, lesbians, and persons with disabilities all too often fail to employ writers from these groups. Beyond the industry experiences reported by select Guild members, however, the data do not currently exist to systematically examine the industry positions of these groups of writers.

The WGAW sponsors member committees that represent the special concerns of these groups of writers and that work with the Guild's Diversity Department to make sure that their concerns are addressed by internal Guild programs and industry-Guild, collaborative initiatives. The Gay Lesbian Writers Committee has advocated using current estimates of gay and lesbian representation in the overall population as a benchmark against which to measure the group's position in the industry. By this logic, at least one in ten voices and perspectives on a project writing staff ideally should be gay or lesbian. Meanwhile, there are only a handful of self-identified writers with disabilities who are members of the WGAW. This fact is associated, in part, with the dearth of characters with disabilities in film and on television. The mission of the Writers with Disabilities Committee is to nurture young writers with disabilities (future WGA members) and to serve as a resource for the whole Guild in matters pertaining to disability. Although one out of two Americans has a family member or close friend who is disabled, this reality has yet to be reflected on the big or small screen.

In an effort to increase the employment opportunities of all writers, the WGAW announced a Writers Access Program in January 2009 designed to identify and connect outstanding screenwriters from each of the diverse communities to showrunners looking to staff their television shows. To date, five cycles of this program have resulted in the recognition of 95 diverse writers (including 10 writing teams), 39 of whom subsequently secured WGA-covered work (including television staffing jobs). The WGAW's goal is to employ data from this report in order to increase the impact of the Writers Access Program, as well as collaborate with key industry players on rewriting the all-too-familiar story about the challenges faced by diverse writers.

II. STUDY DATA

The primary data for The 2014 Hollywood Writers Report come from the computerized files of the WGAW, which are based on member reports of employment and earnings for each quarter. The Guild collects these reports in the normal course of business for the purpose of establishing member dues. They include information on the nature of the employment (e.g., staff writer, executive story editor, rewrite, development deal, and so on), whether it was provided for the television or film sectors, the company and/or conglomerate for which the work was completed, and the amount of compensation for the work. The WGAW also keeps track of basic demographic information on its members, such as gender, ethnicity, birth date, and the year in which each member joined the Guild. This demographic information is linked to each work report in the computerized files. Three separate datasets — each based on member employment and earnings reports for a specific year between 2010 and 2012 — were analyzed to produce this report.

Because the cases examined in this report essentially constitute entire populations of interest (i.e., “current Guild members,” “employed television writers,” “employed film writers,” and so on), inferential statistics are unnecessary for making distinctions between groups and are thus not used.

Missing Data

Despite Guild efforts to collect basic demographic information on its members, some members choose not to identify their gender and/or ethnicity. In the 2012 earnings dataset, for example, less than 1 percent of the cases had missing information for gender, while about 6 percent had missing information for age and about 16 percent for ethnicity. Whenever feasible, the first name of members was used to identify gender for cases where the information was missing. Since an analysis of cases with missing ethnicity information revealed that these cases were more similar to white writers in terms of earnings than to other writers, and because research suggests that minority respondents generally are less likely to omit ethnicity information than non-minorities, cases with missing ethnicity information were coded as “white” for the purposes of analysis (which follows the practice employed in earlier Hollywood Writers Reports). Cases with missing age information were singled out and examined separately in some of the tables that summarize age differences in employment and earnings. In other tables that examine these differences, the year a member joined the Guild was used to approximate age if the exact age of a member was missing. That is, if the data show that a given member joined the WGAW 20 years or more prior to the year for which employment and earnings were being reported (i.e., prior to 1992 in the 2012 data set), it was assumed that the member was more than 40 years old in the report year (i.e., the case was coded as “over 40 age n/a”).

Earnings Statistics

“Median” earnings statistics are used throughout this report to compare earnings trends¹ among different groups of writers: non-minority writers, minority writers, white male writers, females writers, writers over 40 years of age, writers under 40 years of age, and so on.

The “median” refers to the value physically in the middle of a ranked distribution of numbers. Like the “mean” or arithmetic “average,” it is a measure of what is typical for a given distribution of numbers. But unlike the mean or average it has the advantage of not being unduly influenced by extremely high or extremely low values, which might otherwise produce a distorted view of what is typical for the distribution. For these reasons, the median is conventionally used to examine income distributions, as they often contain very low and/or very high values. In this report, the median is the primary measure used to identify any meaningful earnings differences between the different groups of writers.

The “95th percentile,” by contrast, provides us with a measure of what the highest paid writers in a particular group of writers earned in a given year. That is, only 5 percent of writers in a given group earned this amount or more, while 95 percent earned less. Using this statistic provides us with another way of thinking about any earnings differences between the groups: To what degree do earnings differences between the groups exist when we consider only the writers who are at the very top of the profession?

“Relative earnings” statistics are ratios used in some tables to compare a group’s earnings at the median or 95th percentile to those of another referent group. In this report, the earnings of women and minorities (numerator) are reported in relation to those of white males (denominator), while the earnings of writers over 40 (numerator) are reported relative to those of writers under 40 (denominator). When the ratio is below \$1.00, the group in question earns less than the referent group; when it is above \$1.00, the group earns more.

For reasons of writer confidentiality and because both the median and 95th percentile statistics are less reliable when the number of observations is low, earnings statistics are reported for a given group of writers only when there are five or more observations.

¹ While member-reported film earnings reflect the total earnings of writers from film employment, television earnings are reported on all script fees and on approximately the first \$6,100 earned per week by television writers employed in additional capacities.

Production Companies

Due to changes in media ownership since the previous Hollywood Writers Report, this report omits the production company analyses presented in earlier reports. The WGAW will provide a future addendum to this report that presents employment and earnings statistics for each group of writers by conglomerate and larger independent production company.

Comparing Tables and Figures Across Hollywood Writers Reports

The WGAW member reports on which this study is based are received by the Guild on a continual basis, sometimes significantly beyond the year in which the work was performed. For this reason, each of the three yearly data sets used to compile this report's tables may be adjusted in future reports as new member information is received by the Guild. By contrast, data reported herein for the years 2006 through 2009 (and earlier in some tables) have not been updated and thus conform to those presented in tables from previous reports.

III. OVERALL TRENDS

The 2014 Hollywood Writers Report provides an update on the progress of women, minority, and older writers on the employment and earnings fronts. Against the backdrop of momentous shifts in the diversity of audiences², the report identifies missed opportunities for tapping into the rich reservoir of experiences and perspectives afforded by diverse writers.

Since 2009 — the last year considered in the previous report³ — there has been modest progress for women and minorities in television, and gains for older writers in film. Women writers reduced the gender earnings gap in television in 2012, despite a small decline in the group's share of sector employment (from 28 percent to 27 percent). Minority television writers posted an increase in employment share (from 10 percent in 2009 to 11 percent in 2012), while also closing the earnings gap a bit with white male television writers. In the film sector, however, both women and minority writers continued to lag behind their white male counterparts, accounting for just 16 percent and 5 percent of sector employment, respectively. And on the film earnings front, the gaps for both women and minority film writers actually widened since the last report. Finally, older writers — particularly those aged 41 to 50 — claimed the largest share of employment in television and film, as well as the highest earnings in each sector. As previous reports have shown, however, the relative status of older writers tends to decline rather rapidly beyond the age of 60.

Earlier reports also have considered the impact of a recent WGAW initiative designed to address stagnation on the diversity front in television. But the findings of this report show much work remains to be done before writer diversity more fully reflects the face of America. Other industry players also will have to redouble their efforts if significant, sustained progress is to be achieved.

Below, specific findings from The 2014 Hollywood Writers Report are reviewed in order to document in greater detail recent trends in employment and earnings for women, minority, and older writers. The WGAW's goal is to employ these data to diagnose specific areas in need of intervention so that it can collaborate with key industry players to turn missed opportunities into realized ones.

² Minorities accounted for nearly 37 percent of the U.S. population in 2010, and by 2012 the majority of babies born in the United States were non-white. Data also show that minorities watch a disproportionate share of television and theatrical films, while the increases in their consumer spending outpace the rest of the nation. See *2014 Hollywood Diversity Report: Making Sense of the Disconnect*, Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies at UCLA.

³ The 2011 Hollywood Writers Report considered employment and earnings in television and film through 2009. It can be accessed on-line at: http://www.wga.org/uploadedFiles/who_we_are/hwr11execsum.pdf

Membership

Over the six-year period 2007 to 2012, the number of WGAW current members increased .9 percent, from 8297 to 8375 (see **Table 1**). These figures reflect the continuing reversal of a long-term trend in declining Guild membership identified in earlier Hollywood Writers Reports. **Figure 1** shows that current membership actually peaked at 8611 members in 2011, before declining to 2012 levels. Despite the upturn since 2007, membership numbers still have a long way to go before approaching the figure of 9056 seen in 2000.

Changes in WGAW membership between 2007 and 2012 were not evenly distributed across the study groups (see **Table 1**). The number of minority current members increased 13.9 percent over the period, from 648 to 738 members, but this increase had a more modest impact on the group's share of overall Guild membership. That is, minority writers comprised 8.8 percent of current WGAW members in 2012, up just a percentage point from the group's 7.8 percent share in 2007. Women writers also failed to significantly increase their share of Guild membership. Because the number of female members increased by just 1.7 percent over the period (from 1991 to 2025 members), the group's share of membership remained essentially flat (from 24 percent in 2007 to 24.2 percent in 2012).

Meanwhile, Guild membership continued to age relative to previous years. The largest group of older current members, those aged 41-50, registered a 6.9 percent increase in its numbers over the period (from 2268 to 2425 members), while the largest group of younger members, those aged 31-40, posted a 13 percent decline in its numbers over the period (from 2216 to 1928 members). It should be noted that the number of members aged 61-70 increased 46 percent between 2007 and 2012 (from 700 to 1022 members). This was the largest increase registered by any of the age groups. The youngest group of Guild members, those younger than 31, increased its numbers by a more modest 5.4 percent over the period (from 334 to 352 members), while current members aged 71-80 increased their numbers by a full 22.9 percent (from 297 to 365 members). As a result of these changes, the membership share of writers over 40 increased from 66.6 percent in 2007 to 71 percent in 2012.

When minority status, gender, and age are considered simultaneously (see **Table 2**), we find that white males over 40 posted, by far, the largest increase in the share of current Guild membership between 2007 and 2012 — 3.1 percentage points (from 46 percent to 49.1 percent). By comparison, white women over 40 and minority males over 40 both increased their shares of current Guild membership by a more modest 1 percentage point over the period (from 12.1 percent to 13.1 percent and from 2 percent to 3 percent, respectively). The figures for all other groups indicate smaller increases or decreases in current membership share between 2007 and 2012 or they remain flat.

Employment

The number of employed writers increased 2.2 percent between 2007 and 2012, reversing the decline reported in the last report coinciding with the Great Recession. That is, there were 4599 writers employed in 2012, compared to just 4501 in 2007 (see **Table 1**). As **Figure 2** shows, overall employment plummeted after 2007, reaching its nadir of 4189 writers in 2008, before commencing a sharp upturn in 2010. Between 2010 and 2011 alone — a period immediately following the official end of the Great Recession — overall employment increased 6.3 percent to 4499 writers. Employment increases for minority writers were even more marked (see **Table 1**). Between 2007 and 2012, the number of employed minority writers increased 21.7 percent, from 374 to 455 writers. This continues a recent trend first noted in the previous report that shows increases in the number of employed minority writers.

But when minority groups are considered separately, it becomes clear that not all groups advanced equally over the period. That is, while the numbers of employed Asian and Latino writers all increased markedly over the period (by 42 percent and 32.3 percent, respectively), the number of employed African American writers increased by a more modest 10.5 percent and the already small number of employed Native writers actually dropped by 30 percent.

Other notable losers over the six-year period include younger writers aged 31 to 40, whose employment numbers decreased 10.4 percent, and the small group of employed writers over 81, whose employment numbers plunged 75 percent. The youngest group of writers, those under 31, and writers aged 51 to 60 both experienced modest increases in their employment numbers between 2007 and 2012 — 4.5 percent and 6.9 percent, respectively.

Consistent with earlier findings about a post-recession rebound in employment for writers, **Table 2** shows that the overall employment *rate* for 2012 was 54.9 percent, up from 54.2 percent in 2007. Moreover, when we consider white males, white women, minority males, and minority women separately, we see that the overall employment rates for each of these groups — with the exception of white women — increased over the period. That is, the overall employment rate for white women declined from 55.4 percent in 2007 to 54.6 percent in 2012, while minority women enjoyed the biggest increase in employment rate over the period, from 57 percent to 65.5 percent. Employment rate increases for the other groups were more modest between 2007 and 2012: from 53.5 percent to 54.2 percent for white males, and from 58.2 percent to 59.2 percent for minority males. As we would expect given Guild requirements for new membership, the employment rates for younger members of each group were significantly higher than those for their older counterparts.

Table 3 compares the number of employed writers from each group, by year, between 2006 and 2012. It also presents each group's *share* of overall employment in any given year. The biggest winners in terms of numbers employed were minority

writers, who enjoyed a 26 percent increase in employment over the period (from 361 writers in 2006 to 455 in 2012), and over-40 writers, who posted an 18.1 percent increase in employment (from 2259 writers in 2006 to 2667 in 2012). As a result, each group registered a sizable increase in its share of overall employment between 2006 and 2012 — from 52.4 percent to 58 percent of all employment for over-40 writers⁴, and from 8.4 percent to 9.9 percent of overall employment for minority writers. Employment numbers for the other groups of interest increased more modestly between 2007 and 2012 or actually declined. That is, white males posted a 4 percent increase in employment (from 3073 to 3196 writers), women a 6.3 percent increase (from 1071 to 1138 writers), while writers 40 and under posted a 3.4 percent decrease in employment (from 1724 to 1665 writers).

Earnings

Overall median earnings increased 25 percent between 2006 and 2012, from \$100,000 to \$125,000. Parting ways with recent Hollywood Writers Reports, writers over 40 replaced white male writers in 2012 as the highest earning group, with median earnings of \$131,941 and \$130,135, respectively (see **Table 3**). Indeed, the median earnings for writers over 40 increased 31.9 percent between 2006 and 2012, compared to just 9.9 percent for those of white male writers. While the earnings of women and minority writers continued to lag behind those of white male and older writers, both groups posted notable increases in earnings over the six-year period: the earnings of women writers increased 23 percent to \$117,008 in 2012, and those of minority writers increased 21.2 percent to \$100,000. As a result of these developments, women writers earned 90 cents for every dollar earned by their white male counterparts in 2012, while minority writers earned 77 cents. It's worth noting that relative earnings for minority writers peaked in 2002, when they earned 90 cents for every dollar earned by their white male counterparts — the same as women in 2012. Finally, older writers earned \$1.18 for every dollar earned by their younger counterparts in 2012.

Group differences in earnings, as also noted in previous reports, were generally more pronounced for the most highly paid writers. **Table 3** shows that although women writers constituted the only group to experience a sizable increase in earnings at the 95th percentile over the period (21.2 percent), white males continued to dominate in 2012 with earnings of \$708,750, followed closely by over-40 writers with earnings of \$686,886. Writers 40 and under were next with 95th percentile earnings of \$493,435, which represented an 18.4 percent decline over the period. Minority writers continued to hold up the rear among the highest paid writers, posting 95th percentile earnings of just \$385,500 in 2012, a 15.3 decrease compared to the group's 2006 earnings. Relative to their white male counterparts that year, women writers and minority writers earned about 69 cents and 54 cents on the dollar at the 95th percentile, respectively.

⁴ Note: The totals for over-40 and under-40 writers do not sum to 100 percent in this table due to missing values for age; thus the magnitude of the increase noted for older writers over the period should be read as an estimate of the actual figure.

White Males Continue to Dominate in Overall Earnings; But Women Close the Overall Earnings Gap Further, While Minorities Lag Behind

The previous report noted that although white male writers continued to dominate in overall earnings, women had closed the gap significantly by 2009, while minorities continued to lag behind. **Figure 3** suggests the same general pattern held sway between 2009 and 2012 — a period in which women writers made gains in overall earnings relative to white males and minority writers gained little ground. In 2012, the overall earnings figure for white male writers was \$130,135, compared to \$117,008 for women writers and \$100,000 for minority writers, respectively. These figures represented increases for all groups since 2009, when overall earnings were just \$117,343 for white male writers, \$100,000 for women writers, and \$87,225 for minority writers. As a result, the overall earnings gap for minority writers remained stable over the period, \$30,118 in 2009 versus \$30,135 in 2012. For women, however, the overall earnings gap declined from \$17,343 in 2009 to just \$13,127 in 2012.

Conclusions

The familiar story of male and white dominance told in previous Hollywood Writers Reports still characterized industry employment and earnings patterns in 2012, the last year covered in this report. Some of the key findings:

Membership

- * WGAW current membership increased .9 percent between 2007 and 2012, an increase in membership about half the size of the increase between 2005 and 2010.
- * Writers aged 61-70, writers aged 71-80, and minority writers posted the largest gains in WGA membership, while the membership numbers for women changed very little between 2007 and 2012.
- * Male writers continued to dominate current membership, accounting for 75.8 percent of members in 2012.

Employment

- * The overall number of employed writers increased 2.2 percent between 2007 and 2012.
- * The overall number of employed minority writers increased 21.7 percent over the period, due primarily to increases in employment enjoyed by Asian American and Latino writers.

* Male writers continued to account for about 75 percent of industry employment in 2012.

Earnings

* Overall median earnings increased 25 percent since 2006.

* Older writers posted the largest median earnings increases, followed by women and minority writers, whose earnings nonetheless continued to lag behind those of older writers and white male writers.

* As in previous reports, group differences were generally more pronounced when only the highest-earning writers were considered.

* The earnings gap between white male writers and women writers closed considerably by 2012, while the earnings gap between white male writers and minority writers remained large.

* In 2012, women writers earned 90 cents and minority writers earned 77 cents for each dollar earned by white male writers.

The sections that follow provide more-detailed findings for women, minority, and older writers.

IV. WOMEN WRITERS

Television Employment

Table 4 presents employment trends by gender and industry sector for the seven-year study period, 2006 to 2012. Earlier reports show that women have traditionally claimed less than half of all employment in the television sector. **Table 4** shows this pattern continued throughout the study period. Indeed, women's share of sector employment actually decreased a bit over the period, from 28 percent in 2006 to 27.4 percent in 2012. The actual number of employed women writers, however, increased 16.1 percent, from 878 in 2006 to 1019 in 2012. The combination of increased numbers of employed women writers and a declining share of sector employment for the group is explained by the overall 18.4 percent increase in sector employment over the period and the fact that most of these gains were enjoyed by male writers.

Film Employment

In contrast to the growth story in television, employment in the film sector decreased 19 percent over the study period. Women writers felt this decline most acutely as the group's share of film employment dropped from 18.3 percent in 2006 to just 15.5 percent in 2012 (see **Table 4**). The actual number of employed women writers plummeted 31.5 percent between 2006 and 2012, from 352 to 241 writers. By contrast, the number of employed male writers fell just 16.1 percent, which explains how the group's share of sector employment increased despite a decrease in the number of employed male writers. These findings highlight the degree to which women writers — already traditionally underrepresented in the film sector — were hardest hit by reductions in theatrical film production associated with the Great Recession.

Women Writers' Overall Employment Share Rises Slightly Despite Declining Film Share

Since 2009, the last year examined in the previous report, women writers' overall share of industry employment rose by a little less than a percentage point to 25 percent (see **Figure 4**).⁵ This small increase in women's overall employment share was driven by the large increase in television employment relative to film employment for all writers, and by the fact that women's share of employment has traditionally been higher in television than in film. Indeed, women's share of film employment declined a percentage point to 16 percent since the last report, while the group's share of television employment also fell, albeit by a little less than a percentage point. The employment trend for women writers since 2008 is mixed: small gains in overall employment share

⁵ **Figure 4** rounds employment figures for male and women writers to the nearest whole number.

due to the general rise in television sector employment, offset by small declines in the group's share of television and film employment. As a result, women remained underrepresented by factors of nearly 2 to 1 among television writers and more than 3 to 1 among film writers in 2012.

Television Earnings

Table 5 presents earnings trends by gender and employment sector over the seven-year study period. It shows that overall median earnings in television increased 23.3 percent between 2006 and 2012. For women, median earnings in television increased considerably after 2007, peaking at \$113,602 in 2010 before declining to \$112,081 in 2012. Over the seven-year study period, women's earnings in television increased 23.9 percent (from \$90,486 to \$112,081), compared to a 23.3 percent increase for their male counterparts (from \$97,500 to \$120,242).

Gender Earnings Gap in Television Declines Slightly

The previous report showed that the gap in median earnings between women television writers and their white male counterparts reached \$9,400 in 2009, the last year examined in the report. Between 2009 and 2012, however, this earnings gap declined a bit to \$9,109 (see **Figure 5**). Median television earnings for women in 2012 were \$112,081, compared to \$121,190 for white males. In other words, women television writers earned about 92 cents for every dollar earned by white males in 2012, up slightly from 91 cents in 2009. It is worth noting that women posted the lowest relative earnings over the six-year period, 86 cents, at the height of the Great Recession, in 2008. In that year, the median earnings figure for women television writers was just \$88,207, compared to \$102,086 for their white male counterparts.

Film Earnings

Previous reports show that the earnings of women writers in the film sector have routinely lagged behind those of their male counterparts. **Table 5** shows this pattern continues, despite earnings gains women writers made relative to men over the seven-year study period. That is, though the earnings of women film writers increased 11.3 percent between 2006 and 2012 (from \$55,500 to \$61,776) and those of male film writers declined 2.5 percent (from \$80,000 to \$78,000), the earnings of women film writers continued to trail those of men in the sector. Across all film writers, earnings were flat between 2006 and 2012 (\$75,000).

Gender Earnings Gap in Film Widens Since Last Report

The gender earnings gap in film has traditionally been greater than the gap in television. Thus it was worth noting that in the previous report the film gap had closed significantly by 2009, to just \$14,017, which was less than half the \$40,291 gap evident two years earlier (see **Figure 6**). But between 2009 — the last year covered in the previous report — and 2012, the gender earnings gap in film widened again, to \$18,224.

In 2012, the median earnings figure for women film writers was \$61,776, compared to \$80,000 for their white male counterparts. In other words, women film writers earned just 77 cents for every dollar earned by white male film writers in 2012, down from 82 cents in 2009.

Conclusions

The previous Hollywood Writers Report noted that recent gains women television writers made relative to their male counterparts had stalled by 2009, while the group's progress in the film sector was more mixed. This story continues to aptly characterize the experiences of women writers in the television and film sectors as of 2012. Some key findings:

- * Since 2009, the last year covered in the previous report, women's share of television employment fell from 28 percent to 27 percent.
- * Women remained underrepresented among television writers by a factor of about 2 to 1.
- * Since the last report, women's share of film employment fell by a percentage point, to about 16 percent.
- * Women were underrepresented among film writers by a factor of more than 3 to 1.
- * The gender earnings gap in television declined slightly since the previous report.
- * Women television writers earned 92 cents for every dollar earned by their white male counterparts in 2012.
- * The gender earnings gap in film widened a bit after 2009, the last year covered in the previous report, despite an 11.3 percent increase in film earnings for women writers between 2006 and 2012.
- * Women film writers earned 77 cents for every dollar earned by their white male counterparts in 2012.

V. MINORITY WRITERS

Television Employment

Between 2006 and 2012, overall television sector employment increased 18.4 percent (see **Table 6**). White writers accounted for most of the growth in the sector, their numbers increasing from 2844 writers in 2006 to 3296 in 2012 — a 15.9 percent increase. For minority writers collectively, however, the percentage increase was much larger, if not the actual number of writers. The overall number of minority writers employed in television increased 43 percent over the study period, from 293 in 2006 to 419 in 2012. But this increase was not equally divided between the individual minority groups. Asian American television writers, as in the previous report, enjoyed the largest gain — a 105.8 percent increase (from 52 employed writers in 2006 to 107 in 2012). Latino television writers also posted a sizable 71.9 percent gain (from 64 to 110 writers). By contrast, Native American writers were the biggest losers in television employment. Between 2006 and 2012, the number of employed Native American writers declined 30 percent in the sector, from 10 to just 7 writers. Meanwhile, African American writers posted a 16.8 percent increase in television employment over the period, from 167 writers in 2006 to 195 in 2012.

Minority Share of Television Employment Increases Again

The previous report noted that the minority share of television employment had rebounded to 2005 levels by 2009 (10 percent), after declining by about a percentage point during the Great Recession. **Figure 7** shows this upward trend continued into 2012, when the minority share of television employment hovered at 11 percent — the highest level in at least a decade. Despite recent fluctuations in the minority share, however, this recent peak is consistent with a longer-term trend in which minorities have been regularly underrepresented by factors of about 3 to 1 among television writers.⁶ As previous reports concluded, it appears as if minority writers are at best treading water when it comes to their share of television employment, particularly when we consider that the nation is rapidly becoming more diverse.

In 2012, Latinos were the largest minority group in the nation, accounting for 16.9 percent of the population. The population shares for African Americans (13.1 percent), Asian Americans (5.1 percent) and Native Americans (1.2 percent) followed behind. When each individual minority group's share of television employment (see **Table 6**) is considered in tandem with the group's share of the U.S. population, we can compute the degree to which each group was underrepresented among employed television writers in 2012. Native Americans were the most underrepresented in sector employment, by a factor of 6 to 1, and Latinos were next, underrepresented by a factor of more than 5 to 1. By comparison, African Americans were underrepresented by a factor of less than 3 to 1

⁶ Collectively, minorities accounted for about 37 percent of the U.S. population in 2012.

in television, while Asian Americans were closest to proportionate representation, underrepresented by a factor of less than 2 to 1.

Film Employment

In contrast to the sizable increase in television sector employment between 2006 and 2012 noted above, employment in the film sector decreased considerably over the period (by 19 percent). **Table 6** shows that the overall number of employed film writers decreased from 1922 writers in 2006 to 1556 in 2012. These declines in overall employment were a reflection of reduced levels of theatrical film production during the Great Recession and the period immediately following it. Collectively, minority film writers were hurt more by declines in sector production than their white counterparts. That is, the overall minority share of sector employment plummeted 37.4 percent over the period, from 115 writers in 2006 to just 72 in 2012. By contrast, the white share of sector employment declined a more modest 17.9 percent, from 1807 writers in 2006 to 1484 in 2012. The biggest losers among minority film writers were Native Americans, whose numbers dived 57.1 percent over the period (from 7 writers in 2006 to just 3 writers in 2012). Asian American and African American film writers followed closely behind, their numbers dropping 52.4 percent (from 21 writers in 2006 to just 10 writers in 2012) and 40 percent (from 60 writers in 2006 to 36 writers in 2012), respectively. Latino film writers experienced the smallest decline in sector employment over the period, just 14.8 percent (from 27 writers in 2006 to 23 writers in 2012).

Taking into account the population statistics cited above, we find that Latinos were the most underrepresented among writers in the film sector — by a factor of about 11 to 1. Asian Americans were next, underrepresented by a factor of nearly 9 to 1. Meanwhile, African Americans and Native Americans fared moderately better compared to their minority peers, both underrepresented by factors of about 6 to 1 in sector employment.

Minority Share of Film Employment Remains at a Low

The previous report revealed that — after about a decade of being stuck at 6 percent — the minority share of film employment actually dropped a percentage point to 5 percent in 2009. **Figure 8** shows the minority share in film remained at this relatively low level in 2012, which contrasts with the small rebound realized by minority television writers over the same period. As a result, minorities collectively remained underrepresented by a factor of about 7 to 1 among employed film writers in 2012.

Television Earnings

Table 7 shows that median earnings for all writers in the television sector increased 23.3 percent between 2006 and 2012 (from \$95,579 to \$117,884), despite more than a \$10,000 drop between 2006 and 2007. This overall increase was led by the earnings of Asian American television writers, which rose 48.6 percent over the period (from \$87,349 in 2006 to \$129,817 in 2012). Asian American writers were the highest

paid of any racial or ethnic group of writers in 2012. White writers followed, posting a 23.6 percent increase in sector earnings (from \$97,588 in 2006 to \$120,579 in 2012). Meanwhile, the earnings of African American television writers increased 18.2 percent over the period (from \$77,829 to \$91,961) and the earnings of Latino television writers increased just 4.1 percent (from \$89,643 to \$93,355). By contrast, the earnings of the small group Native American television writers plummeted 26 percent between 2006 and 2012 (from \$149,061 to \$110,250).

Television Earnings Gap for Minorities Closes a Bit

The previous report noted that the television earnings gap for minority writers had closed significantly in 2007, before opening again to its widest level in about a decade in 2009. **Figure 9** shows that a similar pattern of progress and retreat has manifested since 2009. Median earnings for minority television writers declined from \$107,272 to \$100,040 between 2011 and 2012, while earnings for white males in the sector increased from \$117,178 to \$121,190 over the same period. Thus the minority earnings gap — which had closed to just \$9,906 in 2011 — more than doubled to \$21,150 in 2012.⁷ In other words, minority television writers earned just 83 cents for every dollar earned by their white male counterparts in 2012, down from the 92 cents earned just a year earlier. Nonetheless, the 2012 figure was an improvement over the 78 cents on the dollar minorities earned in 2009, the last year covered in the previous report.

Film Earnings

Table 7 shows that median earnings for all writers in the film sector were flat between 2006 and 2012 — \$75,000 at both the beginning and end of the study period. When racial and ethnic groups are considered separately, however, winners and losers become evident. Asian American writers posted the largest gains in sector earnings, a 62.5 percent increase (from \$78,500 in 2006 to \$127,579 in 2012). As in the television sector, Asian Americans were the highest paid writers in the film sector in 2012. White writers followed, their sector earnings increasing a weak 2.5 percent over the period (from \$75,000 in 2006 to \$76,848 in 2012). By contrast, African American and Latino writers both endured declines of about 24 percent in earnings over the period, from \$52,275 to \$39,750 and from \$61,305 to \$46,500, respectively.

⁷ It appears as if these shifts in relative earnings may have been driven at least in part by the different rates of employment growth for minorities and white males between 2010 and 2012 — a period of marked growth in overall television employment. That is, minority employment in television increased 10.7 percent between 2010 and 2011, when the gap closed dramatically, but only 6.6 percent between 2011 and 2012, when the gap reopened. By contrast, the increases in white male television employment were more stable over the period (5.5 percent between 2010 and 2011 and 5.1 percent between 2011 and 2012).

Film Earnings Gap for Minorities Widens Again

Collectively, minority writers have traditionally fared worse in the film sector than in television, both in terms of employment and earnings. While the previous report showed evidence of a notable closing of the film earnings gap for minorities, it ultimately concluded the closing of the gap was driven more by a significant decline in the earnings of white males (due to the Great Recession) than in any real gains by minority writers. **Figure 10** suggests business-as-usual has returned to sector earnings, as median earnings for minority writers declined between 2009 and 2012 (from \$55,653 to \$50,000), while they increased for white male writers over the same period (from \$76,517 to \$80,000). As result, the minority earnings gap in film widened again to \$30,000 in 2012, and minority film writers earned just 63 cents for every dollar earned by their white male counterparts. In 2009, the last year covered in the previous report, minorities earned 73 cents for every dollar earned by white male writers in the sector.

Conclusions

Figure 11 charts trends in minority employment share for the television and film sectors between 1990 and 2012. The slopes of the lines graphically depict the degree to which — over the long run — minorities are falling further and further behind in both sectors relative to their growing share of the U.S. population (i.e., the top line). Since the last Hollywood Writers report, however, minority writers gained ground on their white counterparts in television employment but the group's share of film employment remained at a low. The earnings story for minorities largely parallels the employment one. While minorities closed the earnings gap a bit in television since the last report, they fell further behind in film sector earnings. Some key findings:

- * The number of employed minority television writers increased 43 percent between 2006 and 2012.
- * Since 2009, the minority share of television employment increased a percentage point to 11 percent, the highest share on record.
- * Minorities remained underrepresented by a factor of about 3 to 1 among employed television writers.
- * The minority share of film employment remained at 5 percent in 2012, the lowest share since 1998.
- * Minorities were underrepresented by a factor of about 7 to 1 among employed film writers.
- * The television earnings gap for minorities closed a bit since the last report.
- * Minority television writers earned 83 cents for every dollar earned by white

male television writers in 2012, up from 78 cents in 2009.

* The film earnings gap for minorities widened between 2009 and 2012.

* Minority film writers earned 63 cents for every dollar earned by white male film writers in 2012, down from 73 cents in 2009.

VI. OLDER WRITERS

Employment Rate Increases for All Groups of Writers 60 and Under

“Employment rate” is a measure of the percentage of those seeking work that actually finds it. In this report series, “employment rate” is defined as the percentage of current Guild members who are actually employed in some capacity during the year in question. **Figure 12** shows that employment rate increased for all age groupings of writers 60 and under in 2012. Most notably, the employment rate for the largest group of older writers, those aged 41 to 50, increased to 66 percent, a rate that exceeded the 64 percent figure posted by younger writers aged 31 to 40 in 2008. This finding is significant because previous reports show clearly that the employment rate for Hollywood writers generally declines steeply with age. Though this overall pattern was still evident in 2012 — as marked by the downward trend in the chart’s bars — the recent gains in employment rate for writers in most age groups, particularly writers between 41 and 60, have distorted the pattern a bit. As a result, the drop off in employment rate beyond age 60 was somewhat more pronounced in 2012 than in earlier years. In short, while Hollywood writers generally find it more difficult to secure work as they age, older writers between 41 and 60 appear to have been a bit more successful in doing so in 2012 than in other recent years.

Television Employment

Between 2006 and 2012, employment in the television sector increased for every age category, except for the oldest group of writers aged 81 and over (see **Table 8**). Older writers generally enjoyed larger increases in employment over the period than did their younger counterparts. Indeed, the number of employed television writers aged 61 to 70 increased 64.9 percent over the period (from 94 writers in 2006 to 155 in 2012) — the largest increase of any age group. This group was followed by the smaller group of writers aged 71 to 80, who enjoyed a 53.8 percent increase in their numbers (from 13 writers in 2006 to 20 in 2012). The very youngest writers, those younger than 31, were next with a 45.2 percent increase in their employment numbers (from 166 writers in 2006 to 241 in 2012). But this healthy gain in employment was offset by a much weaker increase in employment numbers for the largest group of younger writers, those aged 31 to 40. Between 2006 and 2012, the number of employed writers in this age group increased only 8.8 percent (from 1054 writers in 2006 to 1147 in 2012), a figure well below the 22.1 percent increase across writers in all age groups. Meanwhile, older writers aged 41 to 50 (the largest group of television writers) and those aged 51 to 60 posted increases in their numbers that were more in line with the overall increase across age groups. That is, the number of employed writers aged 41 to 50 increased 26.2 percent (from 1020 writers in 2006 to 1287 in 2012), while it increased 25.6 percent for those aged 51 to 60 (from 508 writers in 2006 to 638 in 2012). When the 40-and under and over-40 shares of television sector employment are examined, we find that older television writers gained ground relative to their younger counterparts between 2006 and 2012. That is, television writers over-40 gained nearly three percentage points on their

40-and-under counterparts over the period (from 57.3 percent to 60.2 percent of all television employment).

Employment Share for Largest Group of Older Television Writers Unchanged

The previous report revealed a 2 percentage-point gain in employment share for television writers aged 41 to 50 between 2005 and 2009, adding to a 35 percent share that had remained unchanged since 2001. **Figure 13** shows there have been no additional gains for this group of older writers since 2009, its share remaining at 37 percent in both 2010 and 2012. By contrast, younger writers aged 31 to 40 posted steady declines in television employment share between 2008 and 2012 — from 36 percent in 2008, to 34 percent in 2010, to 33 percent in 2012. As recently as 2007, this younger group of writers claimed the single largest share of sector employment, 37 percent. Meanwhile, the employment shares for the youngest group of television writers, those younger than 31, and the older group of television writers aged 51 to 60 remained flat between 2008 and 2012 — 7 percent and 18 percent, respectively. In short, as the corps of employed television writers has aged a bit since 2008, the gains in employment share for television writers aged 41 to 50 have come almost exclusively at the expense of those aged 31 to 40.

Film Employment

Between 2006 and 2012, film sector employment declined 16.4 percent for all writers of known age (see **Table 8**). This drop in sector employment was felt by writers of all ages, except for two groups of older writers — writers aged 71 to 80 and those aged 61 to 70. The small group of writers aged 71 to 80 enjoyed a 53.3 percent increase in employment (from 15 writers in 2006 to 23 in 2012), while those aged 61 to 70 posted a 21.9 percent increase (from 73 writers in 2006 to 89 writers in 2012). By contrast, the number of employed writers plummeted 39.8 percent for writers younger than 31 (from 118 writers in 2006 to just 71 writers in 2012). The next largest loss was for younger writers aged 31 to 40, a drop of 29.7 percent (from 679 writers in 2006 to 477 in 2012). In 2006, this group of younger writers had enjoyed the largest single share of sector employment. By contrast, the largest group of writers in 2012, those aged 41 to 50, saw virtually no change in its employment numbers over the period (from 577 writers in 2006 to 571 writers in 2012), while those aged 51 to 60 posted a 19.5 percent decline (from 297 writers in 2006 to 239 in 2012). As a result, the 40-and-under share of film employment dived more than 8 percentage points over the period, from 45.3 percent in 2006 to just 37.2 percent in 2012.

Older Writers Aged 41 to 50 Claim Largest Share of Film Employment

Since 2008, writers aged 41 to 50 have replaced younger writers aged 31 to 40 as the age group enjoying the largest share of film employment (see **Figure 14**). In 2008, the younger group of writers claimed 37 percent of all film employment, compared to just 33 percent by the older group. The positions were flipped by 2012, with writers aged 41 to 50 posting a 39 percent share of film employment — a 6 percentage point increase — while the share for writers aged 31 to 40 dropped by 5 percentage points to 32 percent.

Meanwhile, the shares of film employment for writers in the other age groups declined between 2008 and 2012, from 6 percent to 5 percent for writers under 31, and from 18 percent to 16 percent for writers aged 51 to 60.

Television Earnings

Between 2006 and 2012, median earnings in the television sector increased 23.1 percent among writers of known age (see **Table 9**). All but the youngest and oldest writers enjoyed increases in earnings to varying degrees. Older writers aged 61 to 70 posted the biggest gain in earnings over the period. This relatively small group of older writers enjoyed a 43.5 percent increase in earnings (from \$50,034 in 2006 to \$71,801 in 2012). Older writers aged 51 to 60 followed closely behind with a 41.1 percent increase in earnings between 2006 and 2012 (from \$82,500 to \$116,428). The largest group of older writers — those aged 41 to 50 — enjoyed a smaller but also significant 33.5 percent increase in earnings over the period (from \$106,133 to \$141,698), while younger writers aged 31 to 40 posted a more modest 11.6 percent gain in earnings (from \$104,406 to \$116,556). By contrast, sector earnings for older writers aged 71 to 80 declined by 15.3 percent between 2006 and 2012 (from \$50,000 to just \$42,358), while those for writers younger than 31 declined by 10.4 percent (from \$79,047 to \$70,800).

Television Earnings Continue to Peak Among Older Writers

In recent years, median earnings in television have been highest among older writers aged 41 to 50. **Figure 15** shows that this pattern continued in 2012, with television writers aged 41 to 50 posting median earnings of \$141,698, a figure more than \$25,000 above that of any other age group. Meanwhile, median earnings for television writers aged 51 to 60 (\$116,428) approximated those for younger writers aged 31 to 40 (\$116,556) in 2012 — thus eliminating a sizable earnings advantage observed in 2010 and 2008 for the younger group of writers relative to the older one. Indeed, television writers aged 31 to 40 constituted the only age group under 70 to post a decline in median earnings between 2010 and 2012 (from \$125,210 to \$116,556). It's worth noting that the deviation from the age-earnings curve observed in the previous report — in which the median earnings of writers aged 71 to 80 surpassed those of writers aged 61 to 70 in 2008 and 2009 — had altogether disappeared by 2012.⁸

Film Earnings

While overall earnings were flat for writers of known age in the film sector between 2006 and 2012, there were winners and losers among the various age groups (see **Table 9**). The small group of older writers aged 71 to 80 enjoyed a 20 percent increase in sector earnings over the period (from \$62,500 to \$75,000) and the largest group of older writers aged 41 to 50 posted a more modest 10.3 percent increase (from \$85,000 to \$93,750). By contrast, sector earnings for the youngest group of writers

⁸ The 71-to-80 age group is particularly vulnerable to shifts in median income due to its relatively small size — just 11 writers in 2010 and 20 by 2012.

plunged 27.3 percent between 2006 and 2012 (from \$68,750 to just \$50,000), followed by writers aged 61 to 70, whose earnings declined 16.7 percent (from \$60,000 to \$50,000), and writers aged 31 to 40, whose earnings declined 12.2 percent (from \$82,500 to \$72,465). Meanwhile, the earnings of writers aged 51 to 60 were relatively stable over the period, increasing just 1.6 percent (from \$60,000 to \$60,969).

Older Writers Aged 41 to 50 Become Highest Paid Film Writers

In the previous two reports, median earnings peaked among the oldest group of film writers, those aged 71 to 80. **Figure 16** shows this pattern came to an end in 2012, when older writers in the 41-to-50 age group stood alone as the highest paid writers in film, with median earnings of \$93,750. Writers aged 71 to 80 fell to second place in 2012 (\$75,000), followed by writers aged 31 to 40 (\$72,465). The lowest median earnings were posted by film writers younger than 31 (\$50,000) and those aged 61 to 70 (\$50,000).

Conclusions

While older writers continue to dominate in employment and earnings in key areas, employment rate still declines sharply with age, raising questions about the ability of writers to find work once they pass certain age thresholds. Some key findings:

- * Since the last report, the employment rate increased for all groups of writers aged 60 and under.
- * Older writers continued to constitute the majority of employed television writers in 2012.
- * Since the last report, the employment share for the largest group of older television writers remained unchanged at 37 percent.
- * Between 2006 and 2012, only writers over 60 posted increases in their film employment numbers.
- * Older writers continued to constitute the majority of employed film writers, with writers in the 41 to 50 age group claiming the single largest share of sector employment.
- * Television earnings continued to peak among older writers aged 41 to 50 in 2012.
- * Since the last report, writers in the 41-to-50 age group became the highest paid film writers, replacing the small group of writers aged 71 to 80.

VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A snapshot of the typical employed woman writer in 2012 showed that she was a couple of years younger, had been a Guild member for two fewer years, and earned about \$10,000 less than her male counterpart. Meanwhile, the typical employed minority writer was more than five years younger, had been a Guild member for nearly four fewer years, and earned nearly \$30,000 less than his/her white counterpart (see **Table 10**, which also presents snapshots of the typical employed writer for each specific minority group).

The current report presents the good news of small rebounds for vulnerable groups of diverse writers, in certain sectors, since the easing of The Great Recession. Specifically, it shows there has been modest progress in the past few years for women and minorities in television, while older writers have posted gains in film. But much work remains to be done on the industry diversity front, as women and minorities remain severely underrepresented among the ranks of Hollywood writers, particularly in film. Similarly, though older writers have recently made strides in employment and earnings in both sectors, their employment prospects continue to fall precipitously beyond age 60. As a consequence, opportunities to tell the types of stories that are more likely to resonate with increasingly diverse audiences have been far from realized.

Realizing Missed Opportunities

Although comprehensive data are hard to come by, anecdotal evidence suggests that there is an explosion of storytelling taking place on the Internet. More than a few eclectically written and produced web series have “gone viral,” demonstrating the degree to which America’s increasingly diverse audiences hunger for the kinds of fresh stories the Hollywood industry thus far has not been structured to deliver. The status of net neutrality⁹ notwithstanding, it appears as if the growth of these fiercely independent productions will continue to fill a gaping void — unless, of course, the industry solves the longstanding problem of how to enlist more diverse voices in the production process.

Earlier reports in this series have consistently underscored the need to go beyond business-as-usual hiring practices if any real progress is to be made on the industry diversity front. Toward this end, the Writers Guild of America, West (WGAW) in 2009 announced a new initiative aimed at enlisting its own membership in the process of identifying and recognizing outstanding, yet underutilized diverse writing talent. The

⁹ Net neutrality refers to the prevailing U.S. policy of barring Internet service providers from favoring certain websites and content over others in terms of connection speeds. The Federal Communications Commission continues to mediate between proponents of net neutral and Internet service providers, who have a profit incentive in being able to charge higher fees for content providers who desire preferential treatment for their web sites (i.e., higher speed access). Should the FCC eliminate the policy of net neutrality (or significantly weaken it) access to the kinds of independently produced web series discussed here would be diminished as media conglomerates would be motivated to pay higher fees to ensure that consumers had faster access to their commercial web content.

Writer Access Project (WAP) is a WGAW-sponsored script-judging contest in which active showrunners review spec scripts from diverse writers with an eye toward selecting honorees they would feel comfortable hiring for their own show staffs. The idea is *both* to identify “showrunner-certified” talent for the broader television sector *and* to expose the judges (i.e., potential employers themselves) to the richness of the talent pool of diverse writers. Contestants compete in five categories — women writers, minority writers, writers with disabilities, older writers, and LGBT writers — categories associated with the Guild’s major diverse writer committees. Submissions are grouped by genre (drama or comedy) and subjected to two rounds of judging by multiple readers. The first cycle of the project was held in 2009, with successive cycles held each year since.

The 2009 cycle enlisted more than 149 judges and featured 156 submissions, 65 semi-finalists, and 31 honorees. Seventeen of the honorees were eventually hired as staff writers (54.8 percent), 12 in drama and four in comedy. Seven of the honorees hired in drama were minorities (three African Americans, two Latinos, and two Asian Americans), and four of the honorees hired in comedy were minorities (two Asian Americans, one African American, and one Latino). One woman honoree was hired in drama.

Submissions declined after the initial cycle,¹⁰ due largely to contest rules preventing the resubmission of scripts judged in earlier cycles, but rebounded to an all-time high of 164 (106 in drama and 58 in comedy) for the 2014 cycle. This latest cycle featured 35 semi-finalists, 19 honorees, and 93 WGA writer/producers serving as judges.

The WAP was conceived from the beginning with a dual function — both 1) to benefit mid-career diverse television writers by improving their access to those making hiring decisions during staffing season and 2) to serve as a resource for showrunners who are looking for diverse writers for their staffs. Five years in, the program continues to pay dividends. Honorees have gone on to obtain staff employment and many have moved up the ranks from staff writer into story editor or producer-level writing jobs. Showrunners are beginning to see the WAP as a trusted source — recommended by their peers — of quality, experienced TV writers from a wide variety of diverse backgrounds. In this capacity, the program provides an additional hiring resource beyond the writer referrals coming from talent agents and industry executives. This is especially significant in light of the underrepresentation of diverse writers on the rosters of the major agencies. Amidst the staffing season rush, the WAP offers a valuable resource for both sides of the hiring equation.

In 2013, the WGAW introduced a Feature Access Project (FAP), modeled after its successful television initiative. For FAP consideration, qualified minority writers were invited to submit a current, feature-length, unproduced spec script. Entries were read and scored on a blind submission basis by a panel of judges comprised of WGAW members

¹⁰ Nonetheless, the program continued to pay dividends in terms of diverse employment. For example, seven of the 19 honorees from the smaller 2010 cycle were eventually hired, all in drama.

recruited by the FAP Advisory Committee. The selected scripts are publicized and made available to entertainment industry decision-makers — including producers, studio executives, agents and managers — to help raise the writers' profiles and generate potential employment opportunities. Now in its second year, the FAP is being reviewed by WGAW to determine its effectiveness. The paths into feature film writing are less clearly defined than the ones for television writers, and there are simply fewer jobs today in the feature film arena. Thus, finding solutions to the lack of diversity among feature film writers remains a vexing challenge.

In short, interventions like the Writer Access Project and Feature Access Project are important first steps toward the goal of diversifying the contingent of storytellers whose work fuels the Hollywood industry. Before we are likely to realize meaningful, sustained change, however, other industry players — the networks, studios, and agents — will have to go well beyond what they have routinely done in the past to address the troubling shortfalls evident on the diversity front among writers. The project development process, for example, sets the stage for a number of creative decisions that ultimately impact not only story content but also the inclusion of diverse talent. Networks, studios, and agents must place diversity front and center during the development process in order to ensure that it remains throughout production. Only then will the industry effectively tap into the rich reservoir of experiences and perspectives afforded by diverse talent. Only then will the industry position itself to make the most of opportunities afforded by audiences whose story needs are becoming more diverse by the minute.

About the Author

Darnell Hunt is director of the Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies at UCLA and professor of sociology. He has written extensively on media and diversity issues, including several books, and numerous scholarly and popular articles. Dr. Hunt authored the previous four installments of *The Hollywood Writers Report*, which the Writers Guild of America released in 2005, 2007, 2009, and 2012. He also was lead author of the *2014 Hollywood Diversity Report*, the first in a series of reports by the Bunche Center on the overall state of industry diversity, and author of the *African American Television Report*, released by the Screen Actors Guild in 2000. Prior to his academic positions, he worked in the media (for NBC) and as a media researcher for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights' 1993 hearings on diversity in Hollywood.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the WGAW Current Membership, Employed and Unemployed Writers, 2012 and 2007

	2012				2007							
	Current Members	Percent of Total	Employed	Percent of Total	Unemployed	Percent of Total	Current Members	Percent of Total	Employed	Percent of Total	Unemployed	Percent of Total
Sex:												
Male	6349	75.8%	3461	75.3%	2888	76.5%	6306	76.0%	3393	75.4%	2913	76.7%
Female	2025	24.2%	1138	24.7%	887	23.5%	1991	24.0%	1108	24.6%	883	23.3%
Sex NA	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Ethnicity:												
African American	338	4.0%	210	4.6%	128	3.4%	357	4.3%	190	4.2%	167	4.4%
Latino	198	2.4%	123	2.7%	75	2.0%	141	1.7%	93	2.1%	48	1.3%
Asian	182	2.2%	115	2.5%	67	1.8%	128	1.5%	81	1.8%	47	1.2%
Native American	20	0.2%	7	0.2%	13	0.3%	22	0.3%	10	0.2%	12	0.3%
Total Minority	738	8.8%	455	9.9%	283	7.5%	648	7.8%	374	8.3%	274	7.2%
White/Other	7637	91.2%	4144	90.1%	3493	92.5%	7649	92.2%	4127	91.7%	3522	92.8%
Age Category												
<31	352	4.5%	280	6.5%	72	2.0%	334	4.4%	268	6.5%	66	1.9%
31-40	1928	24.5%	1385	32.0%	543	15.3%	2216	29.0%	1545	37.2%	671	19.2%
41-50	2425	30.8%	1605	37.0%	820	23.2%	2268	29.7%	1400	33.7%	868	24.9%
51-60	1581	20.1%	802	18.5%	779	22.0%	1633	21.4%	750	18.1%	883	25.3%
61-70	1022	13.0%	223	5.1%	799	22.6%	700	9.2%	149	3.6%	551	15.8%
71-80	365	4.6%	35	0.8%	330	9.3%	297	3.9%	29	0.7%	268	7.7%
81+	199	2.5%	2	0.0%	197	5.6%	189	2.5%	8	0.2%	181	5.2%
Total, Age Known	7872	100.0%	4332	100.0%	3540	100.0%	7637	100.0%	4149	100.0%	3488	100.0%
Over 40, Age NA	166		59		106		135		31		104	
Total, Age NA	503		267		340		660		352		308	
TOTAL	8375		4599		3776		8297		4501		3796	

Figure 1: Current WGA Members, 2003 to 2012

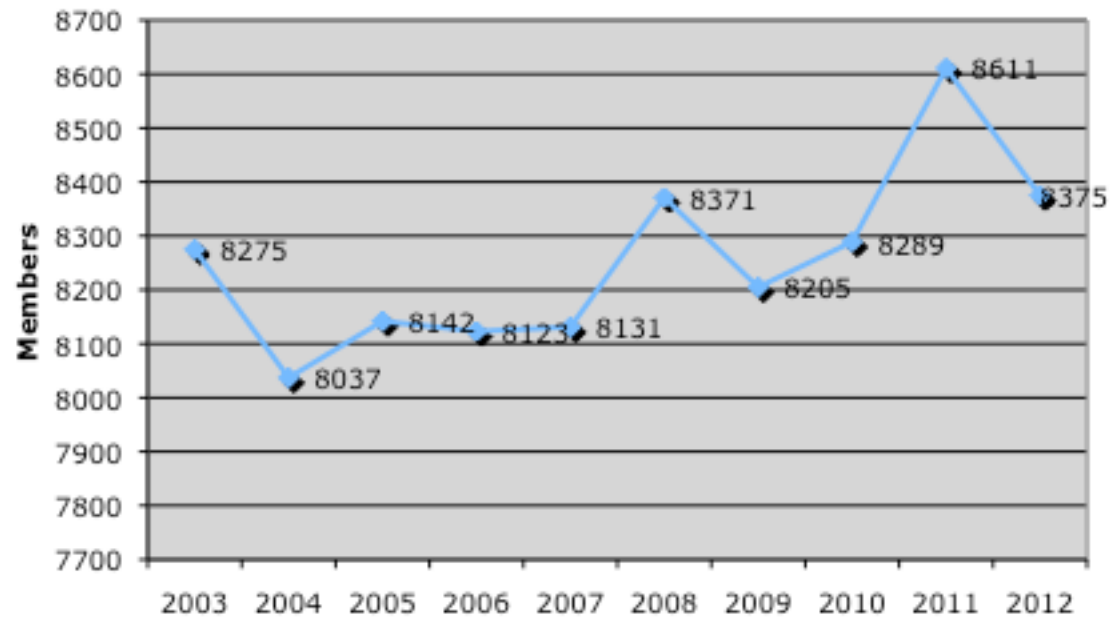
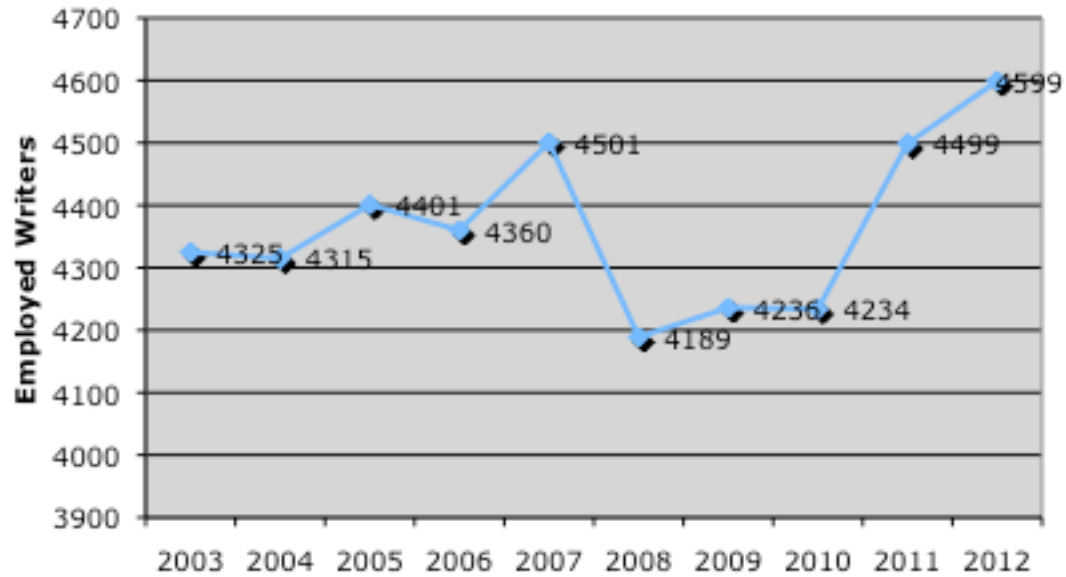


Table 2: Current Membership, Employment and Unemployment by Group, 2012 and 2007

Current Membership by Gender, Ethnicity, and Age					Employment and Unemployment by Gender, Ethnicity and Age						
	2012		2007			2012			2007		
	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total		Number Employed	Percent Employed	Percent Unemploy	Number Employed	Percent Employed	Percent Unemploy
NON-MINORITY MALES					NON-MINORITY MALES						
Over 40	4111	49.1%	3817	46.0%	Over 40	1948	47.4%	52.6%	1724	45.2%	54.8%
40 and under	1452	17.3%	1647	19.9%	40 and under	1061	73.1%	26.9%	1194	72.5%	27.5%
Age unknown	338	4.0%	450	5.4%	Age unknown	187	55.3%	44.7%	247	54.9%	45.1%
Total: All Ages	5901	70.5%	5914	71.3%	Total: All Ages	3196	54.2%	45.8%	3165	53.5%	46.5%
NON-MINORITY FEMALES					NON-MINORITY FEMALES						
Over 40	1095	13.1%	1005	12.1%	Over 40	513	46.8%	53.2%	479	47.7%	52.3%
40 and under	511	6.1%	560	6.7%	40 and under	373	73.0%	27.0%	398	71.1%	28.9%
Age unknown	129	1.5%	170	2.0%	Age unknown	62	48.1%	51.9%	85	50.0%	50.0%
Total: All Ages	1735	20.7%	1735	20.9%	Total: All Ages	948	54.6%	45.4%	962	55.4%	44.6%
MINORITY MALES					MINORITY MALES						
Over 40	249	3.0%	170	2.0%	Over 40	126	50.6%	49.4%	83	48.8%	51.2%
40 and under	179	2.1%	201	2.4%	40 and under	128	71.5%	28.5%	132	65.7%	34.3%
Age unknown	20	0.2%	21	0.3%	Age unknown	11	55.0%	45.0%	13	61.9%	38.1%
Total: All Ages	448	5.3%	392	4.7%	Total: All Ages	265	59.2%	40.8%	228	58.2%	41.8%
MINORITY FEMALES					MINORITY FEMALES						
Over 40	137	1.6%	95	1.1%	Over 40	80	58.4%	41.6%	50	52.6%	47.4%
40 and under	138	1.6%	142	1.7%	40 and under	103	74.6%	25.4%	89	62.7%	37.3%
Age unknown	15	0.2%	19	0.2%	Age unknown	7	46.7%	53.3%	7	36.8%	63.2%
Total: All Ages	290	3.5%	256	3.1%	Total: All Ages	190	65.5%	34.5%	146	57.0%	43.0%
Gender unknown	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	Gender unknown	0	NA	NA	0	0.0%	NA
GRAND TOTAL	8375	100.0%	8297	100.0%	GRAND TOTAL	4599	54.9%	45.1%	4501	54.2%	45.8%

**Figure 2: Employed WGA Writers,
2003 to 2012**



**Figure 3: Median Earnings,
Employed Women, Minority, and White Male
Writers, 2002-2012**

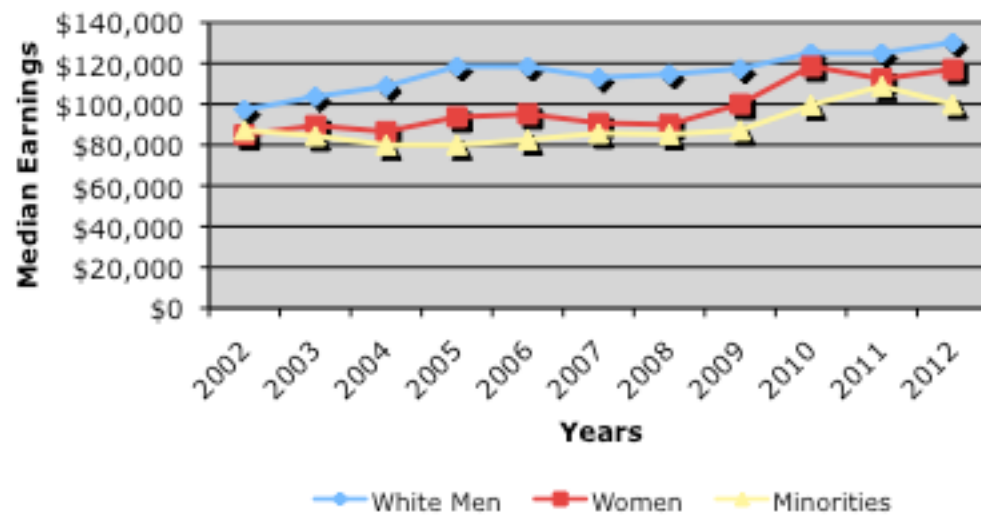


Figure 4: Women Writers' Share of Employment, 2008-2012

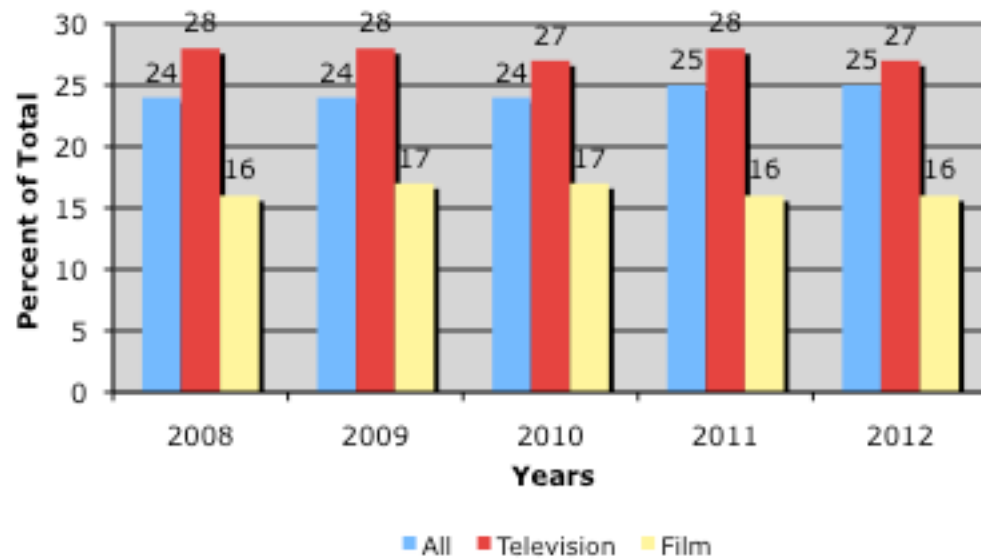


Table 5: Earnings Trends by Gender, by Sector, 2006-2012								
	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	% Change 2006-2012
MEDIAN EARNINGS-TV								
Male	\$120,242	\$117,069	\$117,602	\$104,489	\$100,000	\$85,938	\$97,500	23.3%
Female	\$112,081	\$109,242	\$113,602	\$98,600	\$88,207	\$82,707	\$90,486	23.9%
TOTAL	\$117,884	\$116,262	\$116,390	\$103,210	\$96,351	\$84,756	\$95,579	23.3%
MEDIAN EARNINGS-FILM								
Male	\$78,000	\$75,645	\$78,750	\$75,000	\$77,857	\$95,000	\$80,000	-2.5%
Female	\$61,776	\$64,640	\$58,000	\$62,500	\$48,299	\$57,428	\$55,500	11.3%
TOTAL	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$74,645	\$75,000	\$84,490	\$75,000	0.0%

Figure 5: The Gender Earnings Gap, TV, 2007-2012

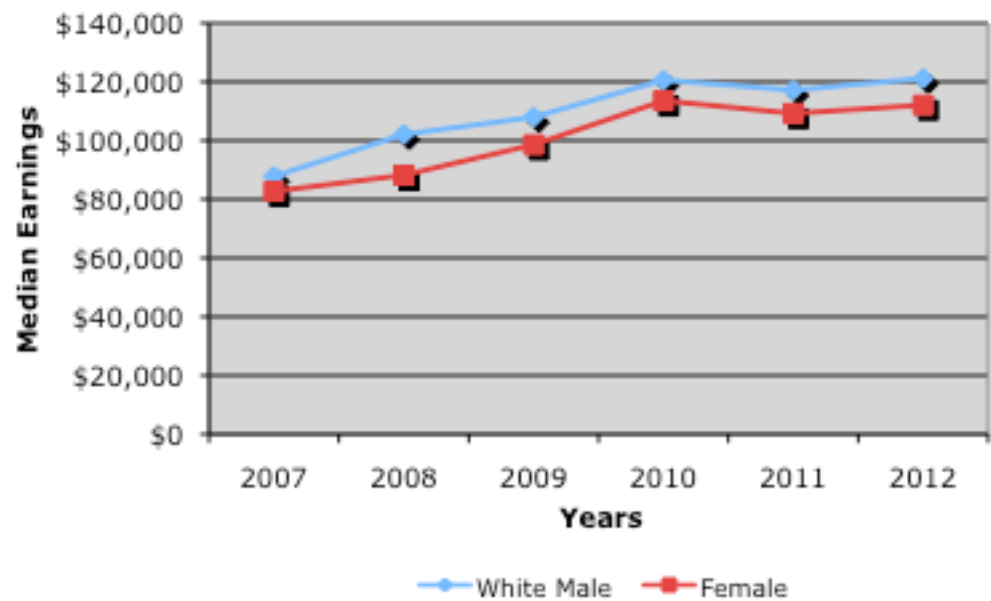


Figure 6: The Gender Earnings Gap, Film, 2007-2012

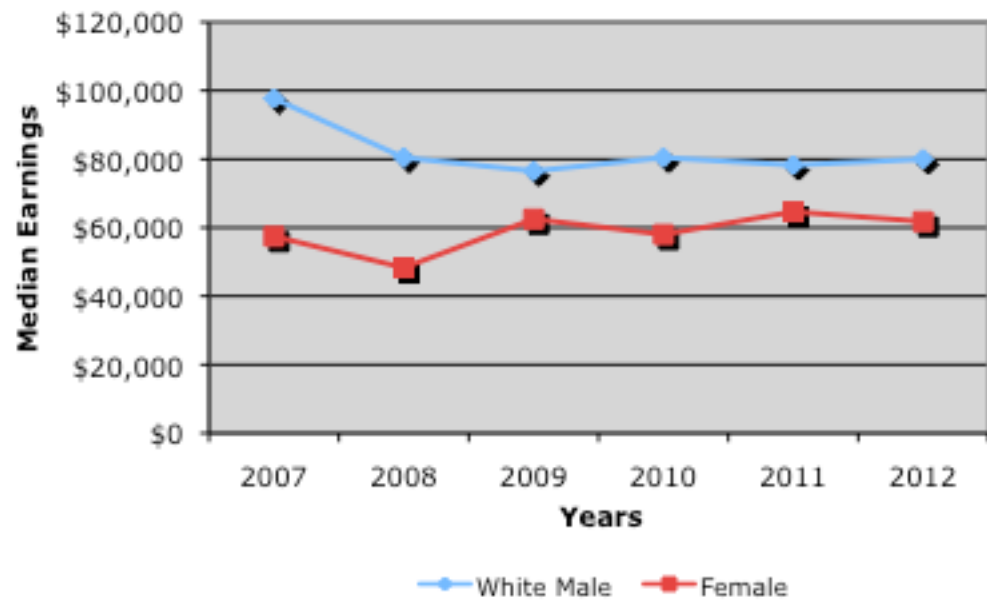


Figure 7: Television Employment by Minority Status, 2008-2012

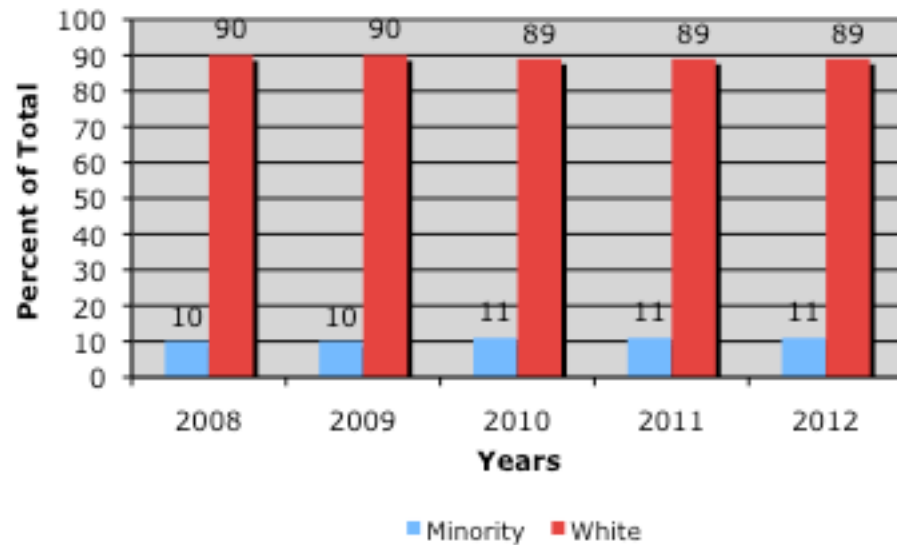


Figure 8: Film Employment by Minority Status, 2008-2012

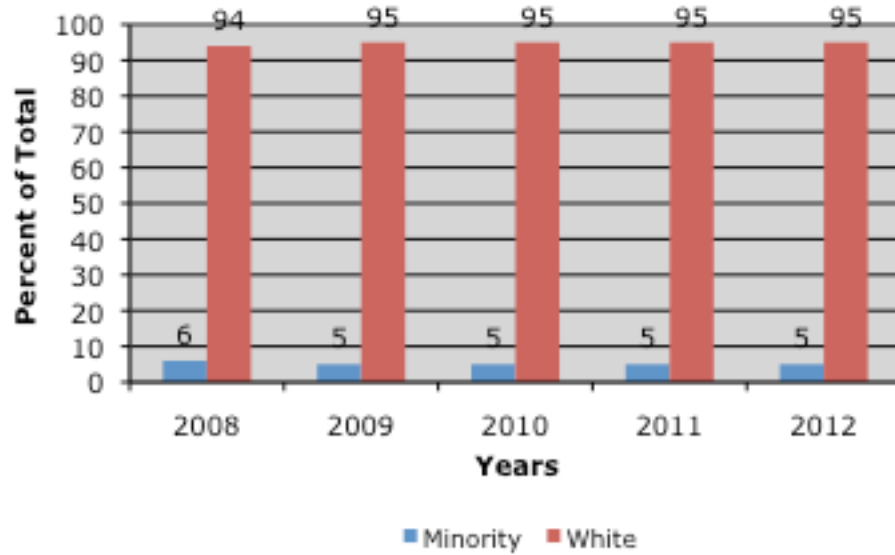


Table 7: Earnings Trends by Race/Ethnicity, by Sector, 2006-2012								
	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	% Change 2006-2012
MEDIAN EARNINGS-TV								
African American	\$91,961	\$98,901	\$86,297	\$87,244	\$75,300	\$72,703	\$77,829	18.2%
Latino	\$93,355	\$100,128	\$105,637	\$82,400	\$80,633	\$80,920	\$89,643	4.1%
Asian	\$129,817	\$120,250	\$123,171	\$83,990	\$105,000	\$77,672	\$87,349	48.6%
Native American	\$110,250	\$94,317	\$83,693	\$67,959	\$51,826	\$137,678	\$149,061	-26.0%
White/Other	\$120,579	\$116,733	\$119,581	\$106,276	\$99,103	\$86,393	\$97,588	23.6%
TOTAL	\$117,884	\$116,262	\$116,390	\$103,210	\$96,351	\$84,756	\$95,579	23.3%
MEDIAN EARNINGS-FILM								
African American	\$39,750	\$75,000	\$57,500	\$50,859	\$49,500	\$48,636	\$52,275	-24.0%
Latino	\$46,500	\$60,000	\$76,756	\$103,125	\$33,209	\$111,500	\$61,305	-24.1%
Asian	\$127,579	\$37,500	\$34,148	\$32,700	\$62,500	\$76,875	\$78,500	62.5%
Native American	n/a	\$23,500	\$47,125	\$58,500	n/a	n/a	\$87,500	n/a
White/Other	\$76,848	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$85,523	\$75,000	2.5%
TOTAL	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$74,645	\$75,000	\$84,490	\$75,000	0.0%

Figure 9: The Earnings Gap for Minorities, TV, 2007-2012

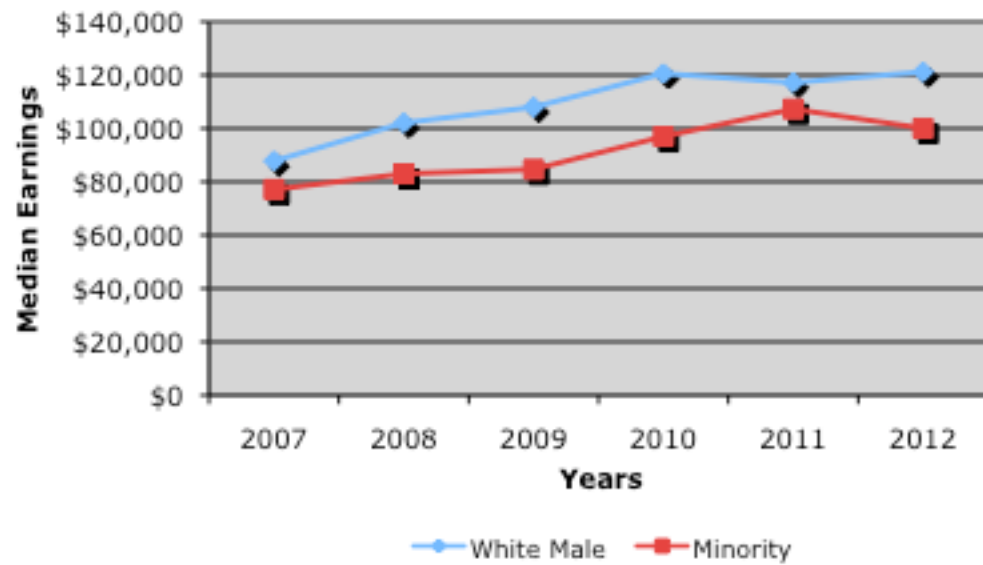
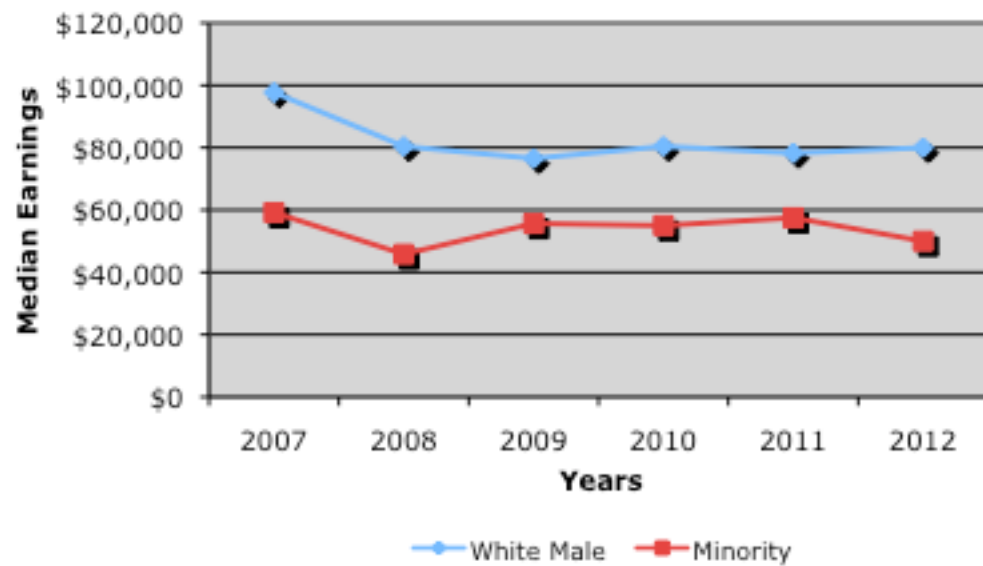


Figure 10: The Earnings Gap for Minorities, Film, 2007-2012



**Figure 11: Trends in
Minority Employment Share,
1990-2012**

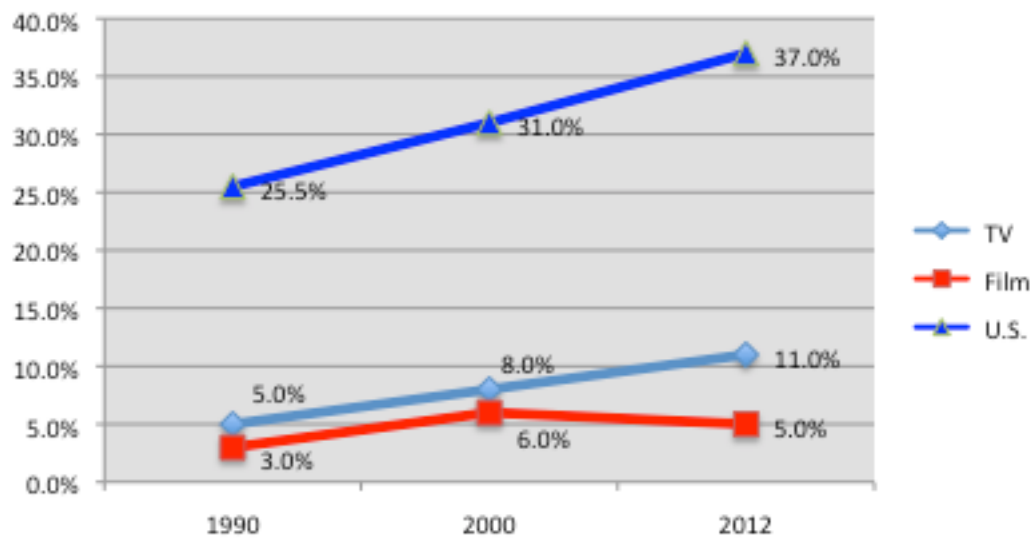


Figure 12: Employment Rate by Age Group, 2008, 2010 and 2012

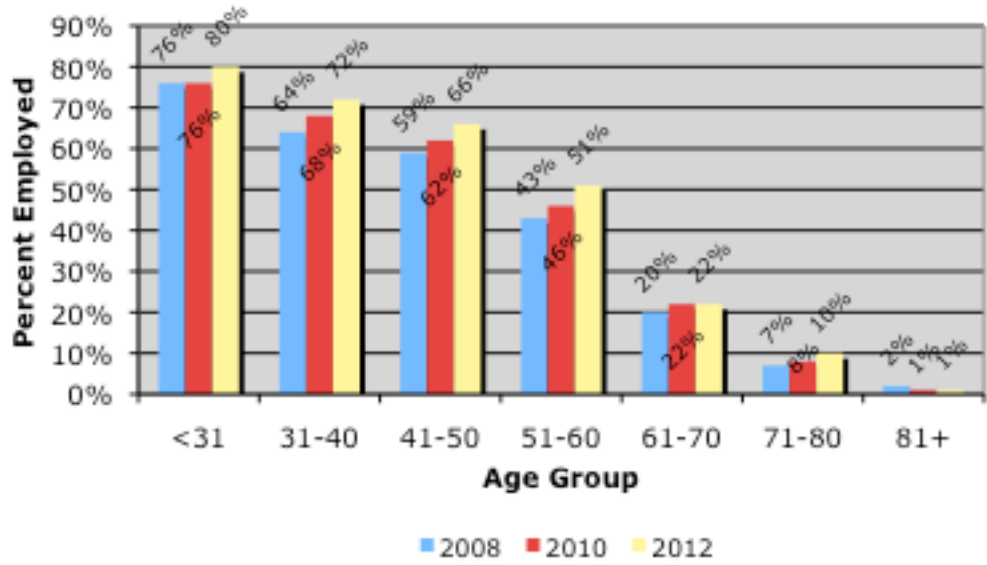


Figure 13: Share of Television Employment, by Age Group, 2008, 2010, and 2012

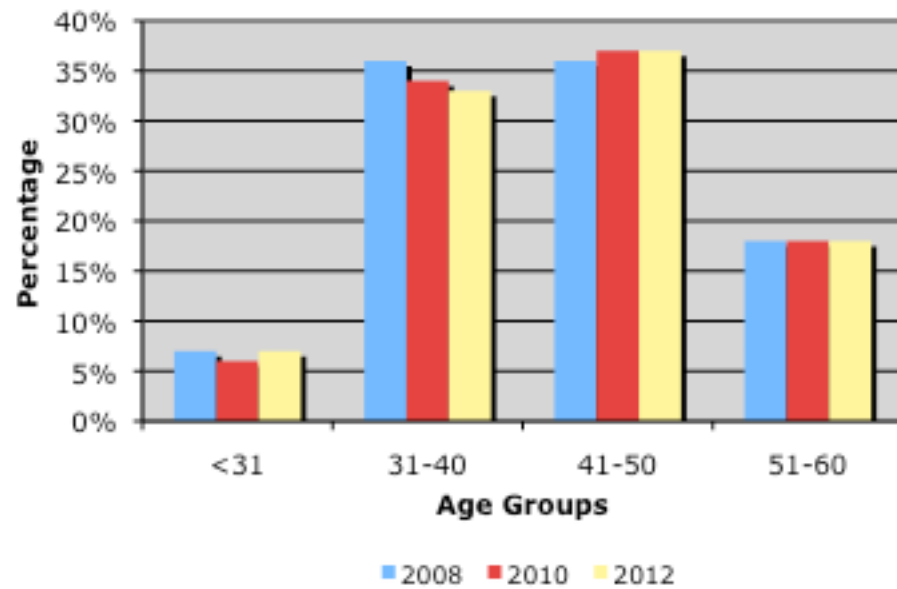


Figure 14: Share of Film Employment, by Age Group, 2008, 2010, and 2012



Table 9: Earnings Trends by Age Group, by Sector, 2006-2012

	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	% Change 2006-2012
MEDIAN EARNINGS-TV								
<31	\$70,800	\$78,672	\$66,257	\$63,632	\$67,951	\$62,272	\$79,047	-10.4%
31-40	\$116,556	\$120,137	\$125,210	\$109,471	\$112,150	\$87,500	\$104,406	11.6%
41-50	\$141,698	\$138,000	\$132,073	\$123,500	\$112,500	\$102,608	\$106,133	33.5%
51-60	\$116,428	\$105,000	\$111,621	\$88,784	\$70,250	\$75,000	\$82,500	41.1%
61-70	\$71,801	\$55,087	\$62,149	\$42,775	\$40,500	\$58,315	\$50,034	43.5%
71-80	\$42,358	\$37,800	\$55,800	\$57,967	\$68,000	\$70,938	\$50,000	-15.3%
81 and over	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total, Age Known	\$116,611	\$113,862	\$113,606	\$102,051	\$96,212	\$84,756	\$94,744	23.1%
Total, Age N/A	\$134,894	\$153,242	\$150,000	\$109,288	\$108,320	\$84,216	\$105,660	27.7%
TOTAL	\$117,884	\$116,262	\$116,390	\$103,210	\$96,351	\$84,758	\$95,579	23.3%
MEDIAN EARNINGS-FILM								
<31	\$50,000	\$56,875	\$54,688	\$50,000	\$57,500	\$55,000	\$68,750	-27.3%
31-40	\$72,465	\$70,000	\$68,397	\$82,500	\$78,918	\$93,750	\$82,500	-12.2%
41-50	\$93,750	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$90,000	\$80,500	\$100,000	\$85,000	10.3%
51-60	\$60,969	\$61,250	\$70,000	\$61,250	\$59,500	\$62,500	\$60,000	1.6%
61-70	\$50,000	\$54,276	\$43,025	\$42,563	\$65,000	\$110,000	\$60,000	-16.7%
71-80	\$75,000	\$61,250	\$100,000	\$134,438	\$123,750	\$112,250	\$62,500	20.0%
81 and over	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$48,292	n/a	n/a
Total, Age Known	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$74,575	\$75,000	\$85,000	\$75,000	0.0%
Total, Age N/A	\$108,750	\$82,188	\$100,000	\$74,715	\$72,500	\$72,750	\$66,250	64.2%
TOTAL	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$74,645	\$75,000	\$84,490	\$75,000	0.0%

Figure 15: Television Earnings by Age Group, 2008, 2010, and 2012

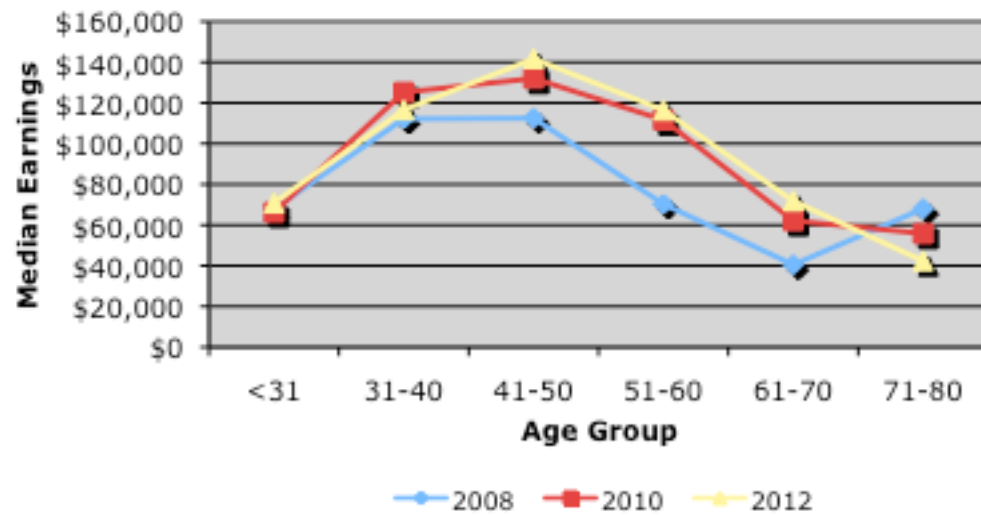


Figure 16: Film Earnings by Age Group, 2008, 2010, and 2012

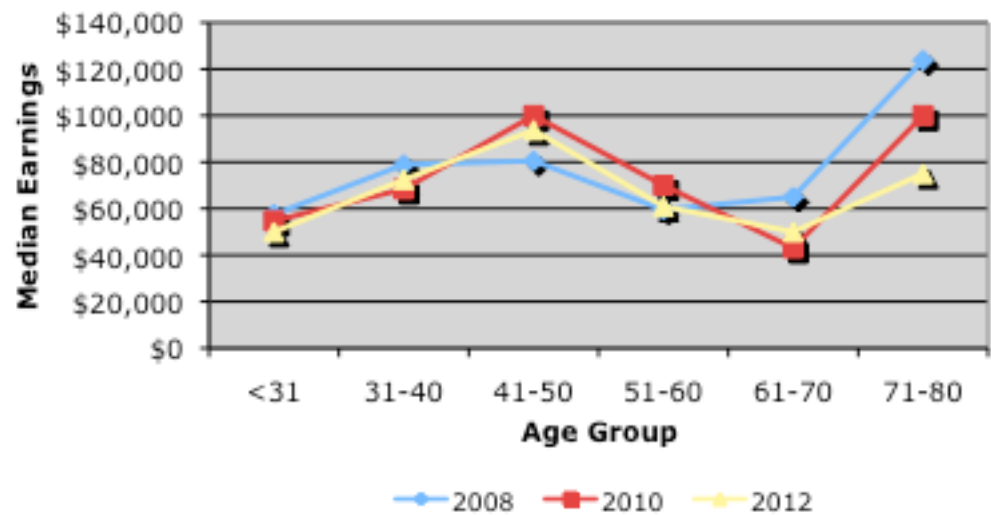


Table 10: Snapshot of Employed Writers, 2012				
	Mean Age	Mean Years Member	Median Earnings	n
Male	48.5	12.7	\$127,534	3461
Female	46.8	10.5	\$117,008	1138
White	48.6	12.5	\$128,819	4144
Minority	43.3	8.8	\$100,000	455
Black	45.2	10.7	\$92,964	210
Latino	43.2	8.1	\$95,000	123
Asian	40.4	6.1	\$127,500	115
Native	39.1	9.4	\$157,791	7

