



NIH **U**pdates on Women in Science News for Yo**U** to Use!

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NIH Updates on Women in Science is brought to you by the [NIH Working Group on Women in Biomedical Careers](#). We encourage you to forward this e-newsletter to colleagues who may find it of interest.

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Funding Opportunity Announced: Research on Causal Factors and Interventions that Promote and Support the Careers of Women in Biomedical and Behavioral Research

On behalf of the NIH Working Group on Women in Biomedical Careers, the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) has published a Request for Applications (RFA) to support research on causal factors and interventions that promote and support the careers of women in biomedical and behavioral science and engineering. This initiative will provide \$2 to \$3 million to fund up to eight R01 awards in Fiscal Year 2009. The receipt date for applications is October 22, 2008. The aims of the RFA are to support research on 1) causal factors explaining the current patterns observed in the careers of women in biomedical and behavioral science and engineering; and 2) the efficacy of programs designed to eliminate sex/gender disparities and promote the careers of women in these fields.

[Read more ...](#)

NIH Reissues the Research Supplements to Promote Re-Entry into Biomedical and Behavioral Research Careers

The Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH), 23 participating Institutes and Centers, and the Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS) announce a continuing program for administrative supplements to research grants to support individuals with high potential to re-enter an active research career after a qualifying interruption for family or other responsibilities. This program provides administrative supplements to existing NIH research grants for the purpose of supporting full-time or part-time research by re-entering individuals in a program geared to bring their existing research skills and knowledge up to date. It is anticipated that the re-entering researcher will be in a position to apply for a career development (K) award, a research award (R), or some other form of independent research support at the completion of the supplement.

[ORWH Fact Sheet](#)

[Program Announcement](#)

AAMC Analyzes Retention and Attrition of US Medical School Faculty

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) investigated 10-year retention rates in US Medical School Faculty, with special attention to first-time assistant professors, finding that first-time assistant professors (43%) were more likely than faculty members overall (38%) to leave academic medicine. Comparisons between demographic groups revealed that women and non-white faculty have the highest rates of attrition (both groups approach 50% for the 1997-2007 cohort). The analysis concludes that "the disproportionately high departure rate of both women and non-white faculty from academic medicine, for example, points to challenges for recruitment and mentoring programs."

[Read more...](#)

Research Reported in Science: Gender Gap in Math Differs by Country

In an international collaboration, researchers from the European University Institute, University of Chicago, and Northwestern University, studied gender differences in mathematics and reading test performance across 40 countries. Boys perform better than girls on the mathematics tests in countries where gender equality measures were low. The gender gap in mathematics shrinks, and in some cases reverses, in countries where gender equality measures were high. In all countries, girls outperformed boys on reading tests, with the best performance occurring in countries where gender equality measures were high.

[Science Education Forum](#)

[News article from Chronicle of Higher Education](#)

New Reality Series Planned on Women in Engineering - "Nerd Girls"

Hollywood producers are planning a new reality series called "Nerd Girls", which will be about women in engineering. Students and Nerd Girls from Tufts University were showcased in an article, [Revenge of the Nerettes](#), in Newsweek. The Nerd Girls concept was started by Karen Panetta, a computer and electrical engineer with degrees from Boston University and Northeastern University. [Sciencewomen](#) (a blogger on ScienceBlogs) remarked on the stereotypical portrayal of the Nerd Girls in Newsweek, saying "the photo of the women profiled portrays them as classically beautiful - light skin, long hair, wearing skirts," and remarked that the article didn't discuss racial disparities. Karen Panetta, a professor at Tufts University, created the Nerd Girls Curriculum in response to comments from boys in her class that the girls they knew were "too cool" and "too pretty to be engineers."

[Nerd Girls Reality TV site](#)

[Nerd Girls Curriculum Program](#)

[Nerd Girls Community](#)

University of California Researchers Report on Gender Equality in Academia

University of California (UC) researchers performed qualitative interviews on gender equality with 80 female faculty from UC - Irvine; topics discussed included balancing professional and personal responsibilities, and concerns about structural problems, personal prejudices, and systemic discrimination within the academic system. Instances of overt and subtle discrimination were described, as well "gender devaluation" of positions once they were held by women. The researchers highlight possible solutions to improve gender equality: Redefine success and allow alternative paths to tenure; Reward service and build community; and Offer spousal hiring and daycare.

[Gender Equality in Academia: Bad News from the Trenches, and Some Possible Solutions](#)

[News article from Inside Higher Ed](#)

New Studies Describe Gender Bias in Medicine, Focusing on Surgery Departments

Two new studies highlight the lack of women faculty in academic medical schools, focusing on Surgery Departments. In a non-statistically significant study published in Gender Medicine, an open-ended questionnaire was distributed to 150 board-certified women surgeons in the US. Reports of gender-based discrimination (70%) and bullying (63%) were high, with several respondents noting the greater vulnerability to discrimination experienced by minority groups. The second study documents some of the responses to the Gender Equity Initiative at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, including collection of statistics relevant to the faculty recruiting process at each Department in the School of Medicine. This tracking system showed that 50% of the faculty searches conducted in the Department of Surgery between January 2003-January 2007 did not interview a single woman. Both articles include suggestions and recommendations to recruit and retain more women in surgery.

[Commentary in Gender Medicine](#)

[Education Forum in the Journal of American College of Surgeons](#)

[News article on University of Pennsylvania Study](#)

Gender Gaps Analyzed in Academic Faculty Salaries

New research in the Review of Higher Education analyzes the gender salary gap for faculty at four-year higher education institutions, finding that the pay disparity emerges over time, rather than occurring at initial salary negotiation. However, in Research Universities, recently-hired females received salaries that were 9% lower than recently-hired males, when all disciplines were considered. This gap was not evident for the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) fields at Research Universities, indicating that recent gender equity efforts for junior faculty may be having a corrective effect.

[Review of Higher Education article](#)

[News article from Inside Higher Ed](#)

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