

Re: Female scientists 'undervalued'

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.geo.geology/2005-02/1912.html>

From: jcon (cirejcon_at_yahoo.com)

Date: 02/25/05

Date: 25 Feb 2005 15:12:49 -0800

Jo Schaper wrote:

> *jmfbahciv@aol.com* wrote:

>

>> *In article <cvffab\$e7o\$1@info4.fnl.gov>,*

>> *EjP <noname@hackers.are.bad> wrote:*

>>

>>> *jmfbahciv@aol.com* wrote:

>>>

>>>> *In article <cvcvpf\$i7q\$1@info4.fnl.gov>,*

>>>> *EjP <noname@hackers.are.bad> wrote:*

>>>

>> *<snip>*

>>

>>>>> *I thought it was odd that the article focused on how women *feel* about*

>>>>> *their chances of being promoted rather than giving statistics about*

>>>>> *whether they actually *get* promoted.*

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>>>>

>>>> *Exactly. And this was reported to be spawned by scientists.*

>>>> *So much for their scientific training. I don't know who keeps*

>>>> *stirring this pot, but whoever is doing this has a hidden agenda*

>>>> *of female removal from the science biz.*

>>>>

>>>

>>> *My suspicion is that the original plan was to write an article*

>>> *showing that women were discriminated against, but the statistics*

>>> *didn't back that up, so they resorted to feelings.*

>>

>>

>> *Of course. It also smacks of a liberal arts educational background.*

>

> *Hey! I resemble that remark! There is nothing wrong with a rigorous*

> *liberal arts education, or for that matter, with conducting a study*

> *in*

> *which self-assessment of prospects is examined, and compared to how*

> *those prospects are actually achieved.*

That would be reasonable, except the article doesn't do that. It talks about feelings and stops before getting the comparison with reality.

> *Anyone who seriously argues that women have achieved numerical parity in science academia (especially the physical sciences) need only do a statistical study of faculty by gender, promotional or tenure status to see this is not so.*

Except that many people take as axiomatic that if there aren't an equal number of males and females in absolutely every profession, it automatically points to some sort of prejudice or "glass ceiling". You must at least consider the possibility that, on average, males and females may have statistical differences in their desires and motivations.

To give an example, there were once serious obstacles barring women from being doctors. Once those obstacles were removed, women literally flocked to medical schools and now I believe there are comparable numbers.

Law is similar.

On the other hand, after decades of trying to eliminate barriers to women in "pure" science, the numbers remain low.

I once taught at a university. At the beginning of the semester, we were given a list of all the the female students who even expressed the slightest interest and/or ability in science on their admissions forms. We were essentially told to "target" these students to try to attract them into science. The results were disastrous, and in one case prompted a letter from a student that essentially said "Leave me alone! *I'll* decide what I want to do".

This doesn't mean that women don't belong in science. Women who want to do science should be encouraged. It just means we shouldn't focus on quotas.

-jc

> *However, unlike many of these studies, I think the reason is complex, and not attributable entirely to genetics, educational, social, economic or psychological factors, but an*

interplay

> *of all five, as well as simple career decision making on the part of*
the

> *women involved.*

>

> *Jo*