

March 2013

REFLECTIONS

Celebrating Women's History Month



A Letter from the Editor

On behalf of the Office of Student Involvement and the Office for Women, Happy Women's History Month! Please check out the calendar of events that OSI Graduate Assistant Juhanna Rogers has compiled in order that all of the events for this month-long celebration are in one place. There are several events happening this month that you don't want to miss. From the 16th Annual Women's Leadership Awards on March 27th from 2:30 - 4:30 in the Campus Center Theater to the rescheduling of the Start Smart Workshop on March 25th at 4 pm in Campus Center 268, there are several fantastic opportunities to learn and celebrate this March. To view the complete calendar for Women's History Month, please click on the following link:

<http://life.iupui.edu/osi/social-justice/events/whm.html>

It's hard to believe, but our last newsletter for 2012-2013 is already in the works. Like last year, we are looking for reflections on the mentoring experience from both mentors and mentees.

Possible topics of focus are:

- What have you learned as a result of mentoring?
- Which topics, campus voices, research, or programming have resonated with you this year? How so?
- As a student, faculty or staff, how have you grown as a leader this year? We would appreciate hearing from as many mentors and mentees as possible.

Please keep all reflections to 500 words or less and submit them to hjtandy@iupui.edu by April 5, 2013. Enjoy your newsletter!

Heidy Tandy

Campus Voices

Feeling Lucky: One Way Women Can Get In Their Own Way

Mary, E. Dankoski, PhD
Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and Professional Development,
Indiana University School of Medicine

Many metaphors have been used to describe women's careers: a glass ceiling, a sticky floor, a labyrinth. While women have comprised more than half of the U.S. undergraduate and graduate student population for many years, progress is not uniform across disciplines. Women remain a minority of doctorate earners in computer science, engineering and math, for example. Further, the U.S. college and university faculty body does not match the gender diversity of the student body. While there are more women at the instructor and assistant professor ranks than ever, there are fewer women faculty at each progressive phase of the faculty career ladder, and very few at the most senior positions. Across degree-granting institutions in the U.S., there are well over twice as many men full professors than women full professors. This pattern is also true in the corporate sector; only a small number of Fortune 500 companies have women in the C-suite. The reasons for gender differences among positions of senior leadership are multifactorial and there is strong evidence that many barriers are institutional. For example, policies that limit flexible work arrangements and poor support for family leave have a disproportionate impact on women. Many women experience a chilly climate and feel less than welcomed in their work units, particularly if there are few role models of success. Further, there is a robust body of evidence supporting the cumulative impact of unconscious bias against women. In the recruitment process, advancement process, and in perceptions of leadership, study after study has shown that the competence of men tends to be overestimated and that of women tends to be underestimated. What is particularly striking about

many of these studies is that it's not just men who hold such biases. Women are also likely to underestimate the competence of other women relative to men. Even more striking is the finding that women also underestimate their own competence. Research has shown, for example, that when women and men are asked to predict their scores on a standardized test, men are far more likely to estimate a higher score. They predict and expect success. Women, however, tend to predict lower scores on average than men. They may predict adequate success, but they are more likely to underestimate their actual performance than men are. In a study on women and men who were considering running for political office, researchers found two major reasons why women were much less likely to run than men: they received less encouragement to do so, and were twice as likely as men to think they were unqualified. In addition, some studies have shown that when men are successful, they frequently attribute their success to internal factors such as their intelligence. However, when they are unsuccessful they are more likely to attribute this to external factors such as their professor or supervisor. Women sometimes do the opposite: blame failures on themselves but success on external factors such as being in the right place at the right time, having help, or luck. There are several consequences to this for women. When women feel as though their success was obtained through luck, they tend to undervalue their worth, be apologetic for their successes, are less likely to negotiate for resources, have lower confidence, and underestimate their personal choices. This can lead to missed opportunities and less feelings of ownership over one's career and life.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
THE FOLLOWING EVENTS
ARE SPECIFICALLY FOR
THE ADVANCING WOMEN
MENTORING PROGRAM THIS
SEMESTER:

END OF THE YEAR CELEBRATION
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2013
11:30-1:00 OM CE 307



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Like us today and look for more updates from the AWMP Team!

"You can't give people pride, but you can provide the kind of understanding that makes people look to their inner strengths and find their own sense of pride."
Charleszetta Waddles

Women's Assessment of Self

by Kathleen Grove, Director,
IUPUI Office for Women

There are enough obstacles to career success without women getting in their own way by inadvertently underestimating their own competence or attributing their success to factors outside of themselves. While many interventions to right the gender gap need to be done at the institutional policy level, women must, at the individual level, become conscious of the impact of unconscious bias on their own expectations of themselves and take deliberate steps to counteract it.

College Students:

Research from Linda J. Sax¹ indicates that there are non-uniform effects of the experience of college on the genders. In general, women students continue to undervalue their academic ability even when performing well and doing better than men and routinely undervalue their math abilities.

Using data from the national longitudinal survey by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program at the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles, Sax showed that women students rate themselves lower in nearly every assessment of academic ability over the 4 decades of the study.

Working Women:

Research by Jill Flynn, Kathryn Heath, and Mary Davis Holt² based on a review of one thousand "360" performance assessments showed that men in the sample thought women's primary problem at work was that they exhibited low self-confidence. Four specific "low-confidence behaviors" that women exhibit that were noted by both male and female managers include: being overly modest, not asking, blending in, and remaining silent.

¹Sax, L.J. (2008) *The gender gap in college: Maximizing the developmental potential of women and men*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Sources:

- 1) Brzezinski, M. (2010). *Knowing your value*. Weinstein books.
- 2) Correll, S.J., Bernard, S., & Paik, I. (2007). Getting a job: Is there a motherhood penalty? *American Journal of Sociology*, 112, 1297-1338.
- 3) Ely, R. J., & D. E. Meyerson. (2000). *Theories of Gender: A New Approach to Organizational Analysis and Change*. *Research in Organizational Behavior* 22.
- 4) Lawless, J.L. & Fox, R.L. (2010). *It still takes a candidate: Why women don't run for office*. NY: Cambridge University Press.
- 5) National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics 2011*. Available: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/2012001.pdf>
- 6) Trix, F. & Psenka, C. (2003). Exploring the color of glass: Letters of recommendation for female and male medical faculty. *Discourse and Society*, 14, 191-220.
- 7) Valian, V. (1999). *Why so slow? The advancement of women*. MIT Press.

"How can you say luck and chance are the same thing? Chance is the first step you take, luck is what comes afterward."
Amy Tan.



The authors also cite a 2011 European study³ that supports this finding and showed that men were more confident across all age groups, with 70% of males in the study having high or very high levels of self-confidence, compared to 50% of the women surveyed.

Contributing Factors:

Many social and cultural forces may contribute to these results. In her article on women and ambition, psychiatrist Anna Fels describes two requirements for success: mastery and recognition. She describes how women are equally interested in mastery of skills and knowledge but how their expectations for recognition from society are often disappointed.

In addition, she believes that women have "to face powerful cultural imperatives that equate ambition and quest for recognition with a lack of femininity." Her suggestions for women include identifying and purposefully developing "spheres of recognition" that can provide sustaining affirmation and learning to promote your talents and abilities to people who have the power to advance your work."⁴

A number of studies also illustrate how women often face "stereotype threat" especially when trying to succeed in science or math. Stereotype threat occurs when the possibility of social exclusion or social evaluation through a negative stereotype impacts one's performance. The concept originated in the 1990's when a study by Claude Steele and Joshua Aronson demonstrated that lower scores resulted when members of a minority group were reminded of a negative stereotype prior to taking a test. Subsequent research has demonstrated that the same result is attained for girls whose parents, teachers convey negative stereotypes about their math abilities impacting their performance and



interest in science, technology, engineering and math.⁵

Of course, women can succeed and do succeed and are proving their competence in all spheres of civic and work life. We are creating the opportunities for our own advancement. We need to take credit for our hard work and enlarge our images of ourselves to match the reality of our achievements.

²Four Ways Women Stunt Their Careers Unintentionally -Harvard Business Review, http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2011/10/four_ways_women_stunt_their_careers.ht

³(http://www.i-l-m.com/downloads/resources/centres/communications-and-marketing/ILM_Ambition_and_Gender_report_0211.pdf)

⁴Fels, Anna, *Do Women Lack Ambition?*, Harvard Business Review, 2005

⁵Shapiro, Janessa R.; Williams, Amy M., *The role of stereotype threat in undermining the girls' and women's performance and interest in STEM fields*, Springer Science and Business Media, LLC, 2011



"The bravest thing you can do when you are not brave is to profess courage and act accordingly."
Corra Harris