

# Women in Biomedical Careers



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

Joslyn Yudenfreund Kravitz, Ph.D., Editor  
Office of Research on Women's Health  
Office of the Director, National Institutes of Health  
United States Department of Health and Human Services

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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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## ***NIH Releases Meeting Proceedings of the Women in Biomedical Research: Best Practices for Sustaining Career Success Workshop***

On March 4, 2008 the Office of Research on Women's Health and the National Center for Research Resources coordinated efforts with the NIH Working Group on Women in Biomedical Careers to host a workshop: *Women in Biomedical Research: Best Practices for Sustaining Career Success*. The workshop had over 500 registrants from government, academia, industry, and other organizations, and put forward a variety of recommendations and best practices on career development which are summarized in the Meeting Proceedings which are now available in hard copy and electronically.

Hard copies of this report, as well as the Meeting Proceedings of the *National Leadership Workshop on Mentoring Women in Biomedical Careers* can be requested by e-mailing [womeninscience@nih.gov](mailto:womeninscience@nih.gov). Electronic copies of both reports can be downloaded from the NIH Women in Biomedical Careers website [www.womeninscience.nih.gov](http://www.womeninscience.nih.gov).

[Women in Biomedical Research: Best Practices for Sustaining Career Success](#)

[National Leadership Workshop on Mentoring Women in Biomedical Careers](#)

## ***NIH Publishes Policy Revisions for K-awards and Early Stage Investigators***

Recently, the NIH Office of Extramural Research announced two policy revisions aimed at helping scientists who need to work less than full-time early in their careers. K-awards, which are intended to support mentored or independent career development in preparation for an independent research career, require that awardees have a full-time appointment at the time of award. Under the new policy, existing awardees may request that their appointment be reduced to 75 percent for up to twelve months under certain circumstances including personal or family situations such as parental leave, child care, elder care, medical conditions, or a disability.

Early Stage Investigators (ESI), are New Investigators who are within ten years of completing their terminal research degree or medical residency. In an attempt to address the increasing average age of first time NIH grant recipients, last year, the NIH instituted a policy under which applications from ESIs are given special consideration during peer review and at the time of funding. Last month, this policy was revised to allow grant applicants to apply to have their ESI eligibility extended if at the beginning of their careers, they worked less than full time during for a variety of reasons, which include disability, family care responsibilities, extended periods of clinical training, and active duty military service.

[NIH Office of Extramural Research Nexus](#)

[Guide Notice on Change in K-award Policy](#)

[Guide Notice on Extensions for Early Stage Investigators](#)

## ***President Obama Nominates Women for Several Top Scientific Posts***

On February 28, Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius accepted President Barack Obama's request to become the next Secretary of Health and Human Services. If confirmed, Governor Sebelius would be the fourth woman in President Obama's Cabinet, which includes Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis, and Secretary of Homeland Security Janet A. Napolitano.

On February 20, President Barack Obama's announced his nominee to head the Health Resources and Services Administration, an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services, Mary Wakefield, Ph.D. The confirmation hearing for Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., President Obama's nominee to serve as the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, was held on February 12. The President's choice for Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency was confirmed by the Senate on January 23, 2009. Lisa Jackson, a chemical engineer, is the first African American to serve in that position. In late January, two women were confirmed by the Senate to lead key White House Councils – Nancy Sutley will Chair the Council on Environmental Quality and Christina Romer, Ph.D., will serve as the Director of the Council of Economic Advisors.

[Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius Tapped to be Next Secretary of Health and Human Services](#)

[Mary Wakefield Nominated to Head Health Resources and Services Administration](#)

[Jane Lubchenco's Written Testimony at her Senate Confirmation Hearing \(PDF\)](#)

[Full List of President Obama's Nominees](#)

## ***Legislation Introduced to Reduce Gender Bias and Make Science More Family-Friendly***

On February 25, Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson introduced The Fulfilling the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering Act of 2009. This legislation, which was also introduced in the previous Congress, has two components. The first would require that Federal funding agencies hold workshops to for grant review panels as well as chairs of STEM departments to familiarize them with issues of gender bias. The names of institutions participating in the program would be publicized so that their efforts may be recognized. The second component would mandate that Federal science funding agencies develop policies that help grantees balance career and family responsibilities. These include extensions of research grant support while grantees have family care responsibilities and enabling the hiring of temporary lab technicians while they are on family leave.

[Congresswoman Johnson reintroduces "Fulfilling the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering Act"](#)

## ***The National Academy of Engineering Includes Four Women Among Its New Members***

This month, the National Academy of Engineering, one of the National Academies of Sciences, elected sixty-five new members plus nine foreign associates. The 2009 class included four women: Kristi S. Anseth, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor and Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator, Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering, University of Colorado, Boulder; Deborah L. Estrin, Ph.D., Director, Center for Embedded Networked Sensing, University of California, Los Angeles; Claire L. Parkinson, Ph.D., Senior Scientist and Aqua Project Scientist, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center; and Monika Auweter-Kurtz, Dr.-Ing., President, University of Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany who was elected as a foreign associate. The National Academy of Engineering includes 2,246 U.S. members and 197 foreign associates. Of these members, 104 are women.

[The 2009 Class of the National Academy of Engineering](#)

## ***Research Shows that High School Science Teachers Face Gender Bias in Evaluations***

A recent report, published online in the journal *Science Education*, examines how gender bias affects the way college students in introductory science classes view their high school science teachers. If there were no gender bias in student evaluations of science teachers then the evaluations should be the same for men and women when corrected for teaching style and effectiveness. A national survey of 7000 college students showed that the gender of their high school science teacher had no significant impact on their success or persistence in college science courses. However, the study, found that female teachers were rated significantly lower than male teachers by male students in biology, chemistry, and physics, and female students underrated female teachers only in physics. The authors conclude that this bias may have a negative impact on the decision of girls to enter science and engineering fields.

[Unraveling Bias From Student Evaluations of Their High School Science Teachers](#)

## ***Two New Books Examine Diversity Issues in Higher Education***

Two books have recently been published that examine diversity issues in science from the standpoint of scientists and administrators. *Swimming Against the Tide: African American Girls and Science Education*, by Sandra L. Hanson, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology at Catholic University, presents statistics as well as personal insights into the various obstacles that are often faced and overcome by African American women who decide to pursue a career in science. *Doing Diversity in Higher Education: Faculty Leaders Share Challenges and Strategies*, edited by Winnifred R. Brown-Glaude, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Africana Studies at the College of New Jersey, explores the role that

professors play in promoting diversity on college campuses and how those efforts effect their own careers. The case studies present examples of successful diversity initiatives from across the country.

[Read an Interview with Sarah Hanson, Author of Swimming Against the Tide](#)

[Read an Interview with the Editor of Doing Diversity in Higher Education](#)

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