



NIH Updates on Women in Science **News for You 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 share this e-newsletter with colleagues.

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Feature Article

"Sponsorship: A Path to the Academic Medicine C-suite for Women Faculty?" Travis, E; Doty, L; Helitzer, D. *Acad Med.* (2013) 88:1414–1417.

Abstract: Despite increases in the percentages of women medical school graduates and faculty over the past decade, women physicians and scientists remain underrepresented in academic medicine's highest-level executive positions, known as the "C-suite." The challenges of today and the future require novel approaches and solutions that depend on having diverse leaders. Such diversity has been widely shown to be critical to creating initiatives and solving complex problems such as those facing academic medicine and science. However, neither formal mentoring programs focused on individual career development nor executive coaching programs focused on individual job performance have led to substantial increases in the proportion of women in academic medicine's top leadership positions. Faced with a similar dilemma, the corporate world has initiated sponsorship programs designed to accelerate the careers of women as leaders. Sponsors differ from mentors and coaches in one key area: They have the position and power to advocate publicly for the advancement of nascent talent, including women, in the organization. Although academic medicine differs from the corporate world, the strong sponsorship programs that have advanced women into corporations' upper levels of leadership can serve as models for sponsorship programs to launch new leaders in academic medicine. [LINK](#)

Articles of Note

"Changing the Culture of Academic Medicine to Eliminate the Gender Leadership Gap: 50/50 by 2020" Valentine, H; Sandborg, C. Acad Med. (2013) 88: 1411 – 1413.

Abstract: Central to the daily struggles that successful working women face is the misalignment of the current work culture and the values of the workforce. In addition to contributing to work-life integration conflicts, this disconnect perpetuates the gender leadership gap. The dearth of women at the highest ranks of academic medicine not only sends a clear message to women that they must choose between career advancement and their personal life but also represents a loss of talent for academic health centers as they fail to recruit and retain the best and the brightest. To close the gender leadership gap and to meet the needs of the next generation of physicians, scientists, and educators, the authors argue that the culture of academic medicine must change to one in which flexibility and work-life integration are core parts of the definition of success. Faculty must see flexibility policies, such as tenure clock extensions and parental leaves, as career advancing rather than career limiting. To achieve these goals, the authors describe the Stanford University School of Medicine Academic Biomedical Career Customization (ABCC) model. The authors argue that with vision, determination, and focus, the academic medicine community can eliminate the gender leadership gap to achieve 50/50 by 2020. [LINK](#)

"Career Benchmarks from the Burroughs Wellcome Fund's Early Faculty Career Development Awards". McGovern, V; Kramarik, J; Wilkins, G. Acad Med. (2013) 88: 1732 – 1739.

Abstract: Documenting the career characteristics of a highly selective group of researchers provides some insight into how a successful career begins. In 2010, the authors extracted information by hand from the curricula vitae of 196 basic scientists who have been supported by the Burroughs Wellcome Fund's early faculty career development programs from 1982 to 2010. Analyses quantified participants' time to terminal degree, faculty appointment, and first R01; determined their publication productivity; and calculated their rates of training graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. Results showed that this group moved into jobs and gained first R01s faster than average. Surprisingly, those who train the most students and fellows do not publish the most. Women and men trained different numbers of undergraduates, PhDs, and postdocs. Women awardees had fewer publications on average than men. Researchers who are highly competitive at the early faculty career stage have generally been both timely in their arrival at important benchmarks and productive in terms of their scientific output. Newly trained researchers and the people and institutions that train them share responsibility for attaining expeditious progress, developing a substantial track record, and staking out fertile intellectual ground from which to grow an independent faculty career. [LINK](#)

"Gender disparities in research productivity among 9952 academic physicians" Eloy, JA; Syider, P; Cherla, D; Diaz, L; Kovalerchik, O; Mauro, K; Baredes, S; Chandrasekhar, S. *Laryngoscope* (2013) 123 (8):1865–1875.

Abstract: The number of women in medicine has increased considerably over the past 3 decades, and they now comprise approximately half of medical school matriculants. We examine whether gender disparities in research productivity are present throughout various specialties and compare these findings to those previously described among otolaryngologists. Research productivity, measured by the h-index, was calculated for 9,952 academic physicians representing 34 medical specialties. The h-index provides a measure of the number (h) of articles published that have a minimum of h citations each. This takes into account the relevance of the work, as judged by the number that are consistently cited, and thereby provides a measure of quality and influence. Additionally, trends in how rate of research productivity changed throughout different career stages were compared. Overall, women were underrepresented at the level of professor and in positions of departmental leadership relative to their representation among assistant and associate professors. Based on the study considerations, female academic physicians appeared to have lower research productivity relative to men. The authors speculate that this may be one factor contributing to the underrepresentation of women at the level of professor and departmental leader, relative to their proportions in junior academic ranks. Potential explanations may also include fewer woman physicians in the age groups during which higher academic ranks are attained, greater family responsibilities, and greater involvement in clinical service and educational contributions. [LINK](#)

Current News

SPOTLIGHT: Jeane Ann Grisso, MD, MSCE

Jeane Ann Grisso, MD, MSCE (or JA as she likes to be called) will be a Professor Emeritus at the University of Pennsylvania (UPENN) beginning in January 2014. During her impressive career, Dr. Grisso has served as principal investigator of many federally-funded investigations which focus on urban women's health, including studies of intimate partner violence, reproductive health, menopause, and aging. Dr. Grisso also founded the FOCUS on the Health & Leadership of Women, a nationally recognized faculty development program that has supported women faculty at Penn for over 20 years. Dr. Grisso took a seven year hiatus from UPENN to work at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) where she led many of the Foundation fellowship programs, including the RWJF Clinical Scholars and the RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars. At RWJF, she also led an initiative on intimate partner violence which included a national program to prevent dating violence, called *Start Strong: Building Healthy Teen Relationships*.

As a professor of Public Health, Medicine and Nursing at UPENN, Dr. Grisso has played key leadership roles in the Center for Public Health Initiatives and the School of Nursing's program, *Healthy Women, Healthy Cities*, an exciting initiative focusing on the global impact of urban life on women. Currently, Dr. Grisso is working on research related to intimate partner violence in primary care, community, and workplace settings. She is also evaluating the experiences of women released from urban jails.

Dr. Grisso became a **Casual Factors RO1** ([RFA-GM-09-012](#)) recipient in 2009; the RFA "Research on Causal Factors and Interventions that Promote and Support the Careers of Women in Biomedical and Behavioral Science and Engineering," was an activity of the NIH Working Group on Women in Biomedical Careers. The RFA supported 14 grants to determine the drivers affecting representation of women at higher career levels in the biomedical workforce, as well as to determine testable interventions addressing trends of underrepresentation. Dr. Grisso and Dr. Stephanie Abbuhl are Joint Principal Investigators of their winning proposal, "Women & Academic Medicine: A Randomized Multi-level Trial", which is testing whether a cluster-randomized multi-faceted intervention trial will improve the culture of the work environment to enable women faculty to succeed fully in academic medicine.

The grant program came to a close in 2012; however, the grantee groups united to continue their work, establishing the **Research Partnership on Women in Science Careers**. The Partnership is a trans-institutional partnership that works to build awareness for advancing career and leadership responsibilities, and research opportunities for women in biomedical, biobehavioral, and engineering fields.

Dr. Grisso was a leader in founding and steering the Research Partnership. According to Dr. Janine Clayton, Director of the NIH Office of Research on Women's Health and Co-Chair of the NIH Working Group on Women in Biomedical Careers, "*JA was definitely a leader in forming the Research Partnership; she pulled together the leaders of the group to form what is now their Executive Committee. We are extremely grateful for Dr. Grisso's leadership, as well as the Research Partnership's ongoing positive impact on research that improves the success of women in science.*"

Dr. Grisso had this to say about the Working Group, the Causal Factors RFA experience and the newly formed Research Partnership: "*In November 2012, Dr. Janine Clayton convened the 14 research teams and other leaders from NIH and the scientific community. Through our discussions that day, we realized the impressive scope and depth of research that this funding opportunity had supported... as well as the critical need to expand scientifically rigorous research on gender equity and diversity in science. We were inspired to form the Research Partnership to increase the impact of the knowledge gained and to expand support for building the scientific capacity, leadership and careers of diverse groups of women scientists. Our vision is to capitalize on the success of the individual investigations and work toward institutional and culture change to diversify the face and voice of science in America.*"

Dr. Grisso's research and her leadership will leave a lasting impression not just at PENN, but also on the Research Partnership and the successes of women in science going forward.

Sixty Percent of NIH-Funded PECASE Winners are Women

On December 23, 2013 President Obama named 102 recipients of the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE). The award is the highest honor granted to scientists and engineers by the U.S. Government, and is bestowed upon individuals that are selected for their "pursuit of innovative research at the frontiers of science and technology, and their commitment to community service as demonstrated through scientific leadership, public education or community research." PECASE honorees are selected by OSTP from a pool of Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) program recipients. By receiving awards through the CAREER program, PECASE winners have already demonstrated success in their field of expertise, as well as in integrating research and education within the context of their organization's mission. The NIH issues a press release naming the awardees here: [LINK](#). The award process is managed by Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and the award is presented to honorees by the President of the United States.

Of the 102 winners, the Department of Health and Human Services funded 23 researchers, 20 of which were investigators funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) (3 were NIH employees). Overall, 60% percent of NIH awardees were women. In addition, several of the research areas were topics related to Women's Health, such as the following NIH-supported research: **Dr. Ida Spruill** ([Medical University of South Carolina](#)) [5R01NR012432-02](#) for work on ethno-cultural barriers to health literacy and disease management in African Americans; **Dr. Debra Auguste** ([City College of New York](#)) [1DP2CA174495-01](#) for research on personalized therapeutics for inhibiting breast cancer metastasis; **Dr. Sandra McAllister** ([Harvard Medical School](#)) [5R01CA166284-02](#) for studies to understand how breast cancers activate and respond to the systemic environment; **Dr. Sallie Permar** ([Duke University School of Medicine](#)) [1DP2HD075699-01](#) for studies of maternal immune protection against congenital CMV infection.

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