



GEP REVIEW

www.hunter.cuny.edu/genderequity

FALL 2005



GEP Highlights

As of Fall 2005, twenty-six women scientists from Anthropology, Chemistry, Economics, Geography, Mathematics and Statistics, Physics, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology have participated in our Sponsorship Program. Since becoming GEP associates, these exceptional scientists brought in over one million dollars of external funding. Equally important, they encourage future generations of scientists through their work with over 100 undergraduates, 40 MA students, and 22 doctoral candidates.

Institutionalization of Gender Equity benchmarks was a requirement of our NSF ADVANCE Institutional Transformation award. These data are now being collected, analyzed, and reported annually by Hunter's Office of Institutional Research, with the assistance of the Office of Human Resources. The benchmarks are the result of three years of collaborative effort by the GEP, Human Resources, Institutional Research, and the Offices of the Dean, the Provost, and the President.

Our partnership with students, staff, and faculty in the Film and Media Department has produced a beautiful new website that features video interviews with some of Hunter's outstanding women scientists, who discuss their work and experiences in science. Check out the video interviews on our website. If you would like to be interviewed, please contact the GEP.

GEP News

Vita Rabinowitz, GEP Co-Director, gave the keynote address at the inaugural meeting of the New York Academy of Sciences' Women Investigator's Network (WIN), which seeks to advance women in science.

Virginia Valian, GEP Co-Director, participated in a congressional briefing on Women in Science in Washington, D.C.

Annemarie Nicols-Grinenko, GEP Coordinator, presented "Strategies for Change: The Gender Equity Project" at the Academy of Management conference in Honolulu, Hawaii in August 2005.

Margaret Chin, Sociology, published a new book, *Sewing Women: Immigrants and the New York City Garment Industry*. It offers a compelling portrait of the work lives of Asian and Latina women who reinvigorated NYC's garment industry in the 1990s.

Tracy Dennis-Tiwary, Psychology, received a \$150K grant from NIH as part of the SCORE program to study the emotional modulation of attention and an \$80K CUNY Collaborative Grant to examine whether parenting and control processes predict emotional self-regulation in children.

Purvi Sevak, Economics, received a \$25K grant from the U.S. Social Security Administration to investigate differences in asset accumulation by gender and marital status.

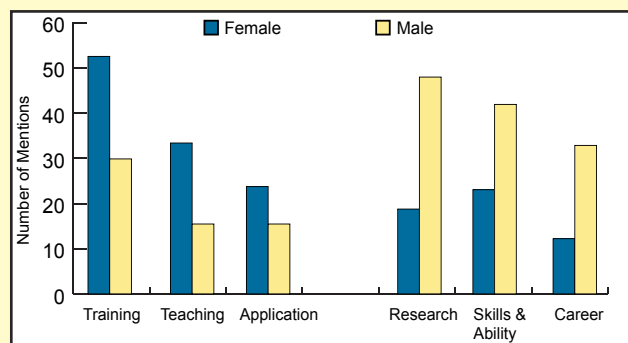
Yujia Xu, Chemistry, received a \$150K grant from NIH as part of the SCORE program to develop expression systems to produce recombinant collagen fragments in *E.coli* and yeast for the investigation of the mechanisms of molecular assembly of collagen triple helix.

Highlight on Research

Systematic Differences in Letters of Recommendation Written for Female and Male Medical Faculty

Trix and Psenka (2003) analyzed 312 letters of recommendation written for successful applicants for faculty positions at a large American medical school from 1992-1995. Of the applicants, 29% were female and 71% were male. Letters written for these female and male medical faculty showed differences in the terms used to describe them and in the length of the letters.

- Letters for females were shorter than those for males, included more phrases expressing doubts, used more "grindstone" adjectives, and mentioned their personal lives more often. Letters for women also included less repetition of standout words like "outstanding," "excellent," and "superb," and included fewer references to research, skills and abilities, and career.



Rank-ordered possessive phrases differed for women ('her training') and men ('his research'). Data are from equal numbers of letters for men and women at similar ranks.

- Letter writers are at risk of underselling the abilities and qualifications of the women they write for and of overselling the abilities and qualifications of the men they write for.

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.

For abstracts of more articles visit <http://hunter.cuny.edu/genderequity/equitymaterials.html>

GEP Spotlight: Frida Kleiman

Frida Kleiman, an Assistant Professor in the Chemistry Department and associate in the GEP Sponsorship Program, has received a three-year, \$450,000 SCORE grant from the National Institutes of Health to study how nuclear proteins respond to DNA damage in normal and breast cancer cells.

BRCA1 is identified as a gene that confers susceptibility to early onset of familial breast and ovarian cancers. Increasing evidence has supported roles for BRCA1 in tumor suppression, gene transcription, cell progression, and DNA repair. But determination of a mechanism by which functional loss of BRCA1 promotes tumor formation still constitutes a major challenge. Kleiman is developing a model in which BRCA1 helps to coordinate a ubiquitous cellular response to DNA damage, a response that includes general factors involved in RNA processing and control of gene expression.

Kleiman's studies promise to improve diagnosis of and therapies for breast cancer. Her research is part of the Breast Cancer Research Program, managed by the U.S. Army Medical Research and Material Command.



Sex Comparisons in the Sciences at Hunter

- To the extent that being a Distinguished Professor (DP) or holding a named chair represents leadership, women scientists are doing well (80% of Hunter's DPs and 50% of Hunter's named chairs are women).
- After removing chairs from the analysis, only 30% of the elected members of the department P&B committee members are women. (The department P&B is composed of the department chair and four elected members.)
- 60% of the new science hires in 2003-2004 and 38% of the new scientists hired in 2004-2005 were women.
- Women scientists were less likely to be retained at the assistant professor level than men during 1999-2004 (24% of women and 3% of men left).
- Women social scientists spend more time as associate professors than do their male colleagues.
- The percentage of men promoted from assistant to associate professor (29%) was higher than that for women (10%) from 1999 to 2004.
- Sex is not a predictor of salary at Hunter. Rank is the strongest predictor, but years since degree is also predictive.

To learn more visit
www.hunter.cuny.edu/genderequity/benchmarks.html

Improving Offer Letters at Hunter College

After analyzing offer letters in the eleven GEP departments from 1998 through 2004, the GEP discovered wide disparities in how much relevant information is included in any given offer. To ensure uniform and complete offer letters, the GEP created a checklist of items an offer letter should include, a sample narrative template, and a template organized by category.

The GEP worked on this project in consultation with Provost Pizer, Dean Friedlander, and Dean Henderson. Chairs now receive the checklist and both versions of the template for use in writing offer letters. We will be examining letters further to see if there are differences in letters written to men and women and if the apparent differences represent an interaction among sex, rank, and department.

Item mentioned in Offer Letter	%Women	%Men	%Total
	N = 23	N = 31	N = 54
Effective date of appointment	78	84	81
"Appointment is subject to approval of the Board of Trustees of CUNY and financial ability"	87	84	85
"Terms and conditions of employment are those of CUNY's Bylaws"	70	45	56
Collective bargaining agreement exists between University and PSC-CUNY	70	48	57
Start date of tenure clock	0	13	7
Consideration for early tenure or promotion	4	23	15
Length of contract	43	52	48
Length of appointment	22	16	19
Lab or office space and office equipment specified	13	29	22
Teaching assignment or release specified	30	10	19
Total of all start-up funds	83	84	83
When start-up should be used by	43	32	37

Hallmarks of Success: New Initiative

The Gender Equity Project is embarking on a new initiative – part basic research and part application – to determine “hallmarks of success” in science disciplines. Our aim is to increase women's success and influence in science. We will review the achievements of successful scientists to create a guide for different science specialties. We expect the hallmarks to include federal grant funding, high-impact journal publications, national conference presentations, and various awards and honors. We will examine sex, age, and specialty differences, among others.

We welcome participation from faculty members in all stages of this project. We can provide some support. We envision a series of steps for each research area that includes:

- developing objective indicators of success
- obtaining CVs from successful scientists
- interviewing leaders about successes, failures, and turning points
- developing a coding scheme to arrive at a list of hallmarks
- producing a guide with the hallmarks and how to achieve them

If you would like to contribute to any part of the project, please contact the GEP.

Other Science Faculty in the News

Derrick T. Brazill, Biological Sciences, was one of 58 young scientists to receive the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE), the highest national honor for young investigators. Professor Brazill's work contributes to an understanding of how organisms monitor and regulate cell density in different tissues. His use of a simple organism allows him to incorporate his research into several undergraduate laboratory courses in cell biology, providing valuable hands-on experiences to students.

Be a part of our spring newsletter. Submit your news by December 1, 2005
 E-mail: gender.equity@hunter.cuny.edu