

Comments from the NIH

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*Roundtable of Representatives from
Federal Agencies and Professional Societies
Committee on Women in Science,
Engineering, and Medicine*

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Barriers to/Factors for Success: Biomedical Science Careers for Women

- Recruiting women & girls into scientific careers
- Lack of female role models & mentors
- Career paths/rewards (salaries, promotions, etc.)
- Family responsibilities/dual roles
- Need for reentry into biomedical careers
- Sex discrimination and sexual harassment
- Gender sensitivity
- Racial bias/special needs of minority women
- Research initiatives on women's health

ORWH Workshop Report,

Women in Biomedical Careers: Dynamics of Change, 1994



Efforts to Support and Advance the Careers of Women in Biomedical Careers at the National Institutes of Health



National Institutes of Health, Office of Research on Women's Health
and the NIH Working Group on Women in Biomedical Careers

Background

In January 2007, the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) established and became co-chair of the NIH Working Group on Women in Biomedical Careers (WG) in response to the recent National Academies report *Beyond Bias and Barriers: Fulfilling the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering*. That report concluded that women face institutional and environmental barriers to advancement at all career stages and called for broad, innovative action from universities, professional societies, and government funding agencies.

The Working Group, which is now co-chaired by NIH Director, Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D., and Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH) Director, Vivian W. Pinn, M.D., includes NIH Deputy Directors and Office of the Director (OD) senior staff, Institute and Center (IC) Directors, and other men and women representatives of NIH intramural and extramural staff.

The NIH intramural community is comprised of scientists and physicians who support and carry out research on the NIH campuses. The NIH extramural community is comprised of NIH employees who administer and manage NIH grants policies and operations, and NIH grantees at institutions throughout the Nation.

Under the leadership of the NIH Director and ORWH, the members of the Working Group are continuing to work towards even greater accomplishments, acknowledging that this will be a long journey and recognizing that sustaining advancement of women in biomedical careers will require persistent attention. This poster summarizes the primary activities and accomplishments of the WG to date.



Workshops

Two workshops, the *National Leadership Workshop on Mentoring Women in Biomedical Careers* and the *Women in Biomedical Research: Best Practices for Sustaining Career Success*, were held.

The recommendations continue to inform the activities of the WG and NIH policies.

ORWH also cosponsored the 2008 National Academies From Doctorate to Dean or Director: Sustaining Women through Critical Transition Points in Science, Engineering, and Medicine Workshop



Mid-Atlantic Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (M-A HERC)

The NIH helped establish and continues to play a leading role in the M-A HERC, which expands the job placement and other dual career resources available to spouses and partners of current and potential NIH employees by forming a network with over 50 colleges, universities, professional societies and other Federal agencies in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC. The members of the M-A HERC meet twice a year to share best practices on recruiting, diversity, and other issues. The Web site also hosts a CV/resume bank and a unique feature which allows dual career couples to search for two positions at all member institutions simultaneously. <http://www.midatlanticherc.org>



Resources on the WG Web site

- Links to over 250 news articles and reports relevant to women's careers
- Data on the participation of women in NIH extramural grant programs are available on the WG and Office of Extramural Research RePORT Web sites
- A list of FAQs which present relevant information related to NIH policies regarding the use of grant funds for parental leave and child care
- NIH, other Federal, and professional societies and organizations resources
- An e-newsletter featuring information on women's careers in science, highlights of best practices for supporting women in science, and profiles of junior women scientists which reaches over 600 subscribers

<http://womeninscience.nih.gov/>

Women in Science at the NIH 2007-2008

ORWH recently released *Women in Science at the National Institutes of Health 2007-2008*, a publication highlighting the accomplishments and career paths of 289 doctoral-level women scientists, administrators, and leaders at the NIH. In the profiles, the women shared their educational background, research interests, pivotal career events, insights on mentoring and work/life balance, and advice to women and men pursuing careers in science. Copies may be ordered and downloaded at the WG Web site.



Efforts to Support and Advance the Careers of Women in Biomedical Careers at the National Institutes of Health



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Extramural Activities

- The allowed period of paid parental leave for Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards trainees has been doubled to sixty calendar days.
- The Research on Causal Factors and Interventions that Promote and Support the Careers of Women in Biomedical and Behavioral Science and Engineering grant program was established and 14 R01 awards were made in 2009 with contributions from 11 ICs and 4 OD offices (\$16.8M over 4 years). Topics being studied include:
 - The roles mentoring and funding support play throughout women's academic careers;
 - The impact of family-friendly policies in retaining women in the scientific workforce;
 - The economic factors related to gender disparities in science;
 - Factors which specifically impact the career paths of women of color.
- The ORWH Re-entry Supplement Program, which provides opportunities for fully trained researchers to re-enter careers in science after a hiatus due to family or other responsibilities, has been expanded to include postdoctoral researchers.
- The WG, with funding from ORWH, is developing an online platform to provide a forum for interaction and collaboration between students, researchers, and policy makers interested in supporting the development of a diverse scientific workforce and to provide networking, mentoring, and career development opportunities for women of color in biomedical careers.
- The WG is finalizing a proposed series of mechanisms by which NIH leadership can recognize and promote excellent mentoring in the extramural community.
- In January 2010, the NIH Support for Conferences and Scientific Meetings (Parent R13/U13) was updated to require that applicants "Describe plans to identify resources for child care and other types of family care at the conference site to allow individuals with family care responsibilities to attend. That information should allow attendees to make arrangements for family care as needed" and that this be used as a review criterion.
- The Office of Extramural Research, with input from the WG, is currently developing a mechanism to allow applicants to explain breaks in their publication and employment record on NIH grant applications.

Intramural Activities

- A thorough review of intramural programs, practices, and policies resulted in a series of initiatives that may serve as models that other institutions might implement. These include:
 - Extension of the period of paid parental leave for NIH trainees to eight weeks;
 - Extension of the tenure-clock for NIH scientists by one year to accommodate family leave;
 - Establishment of a program to enable NIH investigators to hire a temporary lab manager to while they are on extended leave;
 - Implementation of an NIH leave bank which provides NIH employees with access to paid medical leave if they or a family member becomes sick or is seriously injured, and for the birth of a child, after the employee has exhausted all of his or her own leave;
 - Construction of an additional child care center on the Bethesda campus, which will increase overall capacity when completed, and other child care services available from the Office of Research Services.
<http://does.ors.od.nih.gov/childcare/>
- Three focus groups of NIH investigators, staff scientists and clinicians, and postdoctoral fellows were held to garner insights and recommendations for improving the NIH climate for all scientists. The data from these focus groups has been analyzed and a comprehensive response and series of implementable actions have been approved by NIH Intramural leaders.
- The recommendations of a Trans-NIH Mentoring Committee regarding individual development plans and annual reviews for NIH trainees, evaluation of mentoring by investigators as part of their review, and exit interviews for all NIH are being implemented, with provisions for accountability by NIH leadership.
- To enable intramural researchers to find all of the policies related to their position in one place, as well as demographic data on the intramural program, the Office of Intramural Research has add a "Everything you need to know about your intramural position (but were afraid to ask)" section to its Web site. <http://sourcebook.od.nih.gov/>

INTRAMURAL RESEARCH SOURCEBOOK

National Institutes of Health

Search the SourceBook

Everything you need to know about your intramural position
(but were afraid to ask)

<input checked="" type="radio"/> About the Office of Intramural Research	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Scientific Reviews of the Intramural Research Program
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Intramural Research Scientific Programs	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Oversight of Intramural Research
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Search the NIH Annual Reports	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Committees Advisory to the DDIR
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Board of Scientific Directors	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Intramural Research Communications and Resources
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Scientific Directors' Orientation Guide	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Ethical Conduct & Mentoring
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Intramural Professional Designations and Procedures	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Conflict Resolution and Staff Assistance

Committees of the NIH Working Group on Women in Biomedical Careers

- Committee on Communication and Public Outreach
- Committee on Evidence Development and Institutional Change
- Committee on Extramural Activities and Mentoring Programs
- Committee on the NIH Intramural Research Program
- Committee on Integration of Women into Bioengineering Fields
- Committee on Women of Color in Biomedical Careers
- National Library of Medicine Programs

Summary

The NIH has become a leader among Federal funding agencies in developing initiatives to maximize the potential of women scientists and engineers. The WG is committed to making the NIH a model for achieving the highest caliber of science by capitalizing on the perspectives, talents, and energies of a diverse and well-rounded workforce.



Major Accomplishments of the NIH Working Group on Women in Biomedical Careers

- The application for NIH Conference Grants has been amended to require that applicants describe plans to identify resources for family care at conference sites
- The NIH reentry supplement program has been expanded to include postdoctoral researchers
- Extension of the period of paid parental leave for NIH intramural and NIH-funded extramural trainees to eight weeks
- Implementation of an NIH leave bank
- Extension of the tenure-clock for NIH intramural scientists by one year to accommodate family leave
- Establishment of the Mid-Atlantic Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (M-A HERC) with over 50 regional partners, expanding the job placement resources available to partners of current and potential scientists and trainees in the area



NIH Conference Grant Application Now Requires Identification of Child Care Resources

- In January, the NIH Support for Conferences and Scientific Meetings (R13/U13) was updated to require that applicants:

Describe plans to identify resources for child care and other types of family care at the conference site to allow individuals with family care responsibilities to attend. That information should allow attendees to make arrangements for family care as needed.

- The rationale for this requirement is stated as:

Attendance for some individuals will be dependent on the availability of resources for family care.

- The description is listed as specific review criterion:

Provision of Family Care Facilities. Are the plans to inform attendees about family care resources adequate?



Extramural Funding Mechanisms and Policies

- Review of federal policies associated with child care, parental leave, extension of time, and availability of temporary replacement help to understand the benefits available under extramural grants.
- FAQs have been posted on Working Group website and OER website
 - http://grants.nih.gov/training/faq_childcare.htm

Funding Opportunities

[Funding Opportunities \(RFAs, PAs\) & Notices](#)

[Unsolicited Applications \(Parent Announcements\)](#)

Research Training & Career Development

[Extramural Training Mechanisms](#)

[Intramural](#)

[News](#)

[Career Resources](#)

[Q&A and FAQs](#)

[Small Business \(SBIR/STTR\)](#)

Frequently Asked Questions Policies Related to Parental Leave and Child Care

Updated: 10/04/2007

- [1. Can institutions use grant funds for dependent care expenses?](#)
- [2. Can grant funds be used for child care when employees of grantee institutions attend project-related conferences and meetings?](#)
- [3. Can institutions use grant funds to provide interim administrative support to researchers to accommodate family care needs?](#)
- [4. Can institutions use grant funds to provide interim technical support to researchers to accommodate family care needs?](#)
- [5. How do NIH supported institutions cover costs for child care or interim administrative support in their fringe benefit or indirect cost rates?](#)
- [6. Can the final budget period of a federal grant be extended for researchers who take a leave of absence due to care-giving responsibilities?](#)

7. If a grant is going to be absent for an extended period of time, can the institution request cancellation of an interim

Voluntary Leave Transfer Program & Leave Bank

- Extended paid leave for NIH employees is often achieved through donations of excess leave by employees to those who need it through the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program (VLTP).
- Efforts of the Working Group lead to increased use of this program in the past two years.
- The Working Group has worked with the Office of Human Resources to develop a leave bank which aims to streamline the leave donation process and increase the amount of leave transferred to those who need it. With funding from ORWH this will provide paid leave so NIH employees can attend to family responsibilities (currently being piloted in NCI, will be expanded to all NIH employees in 2011)



- Initiate usage of social media to enhance the inclusion of women of color in biomedical research careers
- Provide a platform which individuals can share professional interests, exchange ideas and form networks that increase collaboration and engagement in the larger scientific community
- Provide ORWH and NIH with an active audience that may contribute to expanding the diversity of the scientific workforce.
- Expected to go live in Summer 2010



Early Stage Investigators (ESI)

- NIH grant applicants who have not had significant independent NIH funding are classified as New Investigators
 - Applications from New Investigators are considered separately from established investigators during the peer review process.
 - Study sections must make the same percentage of awards to New Investigator applicants as they do to established investigators
- New Investigators who are within ten years of the conclusion of their training are called Early Stage Investigators (ESI)
- Applicants may request an extension of their ESI status beyond ten years if they have had interruptions in their research due to:
 - Family responsibility (child rearing, other dependent care)
 - Personal illness
 - Pursuit of non-research endeavors that would permit earlier retirement of debt incurred in obtaining a doctoral degree
 - Non-research training (residency, specialty training)
 - Military service
- See NIH New Investigator Website at
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new_investigators/index.htm



NIH Policy Concerning Career Development (K) Awards: Temporary Reduction in Percent Effort and Part-Time Institutional Appointments

- At the time of initial award, all candidates must meet the full-time appointment requirement as well as the minimum 75% effort requirement.
- Under certain circumstances, an awardee may submit a written request to the NIH awarding component requesting a reduction in professional effort to less than 75% (equivalent to 9 person-months) for up to 12 continuous months.
- Under the new policy, K awardees may request to reduce their appointment to less than full-time (but not less than three-quarter time) for a period not to exceed 12 continuous months during the K award project period.
- However, awardees may not simultaneously request a reduction in appointment status from full-time to part-time AND a reduction in percent effort to less than 75%.
- Note that these two options are only available after a K award has been issued. At the time of application and initial award, all candidates must meet the full-time appointment requirement as well as the minimum 75% effort requirement.

