



From National to International Collaborations

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Goals of WiCS

Dedicated to advancing the status of women in cognitive psychology and cognitive neuroscience

- Improve the visibility of women: inclusion on editorial boards, influential committees, officers in societies, etc.
- Create an environment that encourages young women to join the field of cognitive psychology/science
- Provide support and training in dealing with home administrations
- Assist with professional development in the field
- Provide contacts with other women in the US and abroad

WiCS History

- Founded in 2001
 - Judith Kroll (Penn State U.)
 - Suparna Rajaram (State University at Stony Brook)
 - Randi Martin (Rice University)



Precipitating influences

- Women underrepresented as editors and on editorial boards of major journals
- Low rate of promotion of women to tenured faculty
- Not a pipeline issue: Around 50% female Ph.D.'s in cognitive psychology from 1990 - present
- Documentation
 - 1) **A Study on the Status of Women Faculty in Science at MIT**
(Molly Potter, Psychology Dept., MIT, committee member, 1997-1999)
 - 2) ***Why So Slow? The Advancement of Women***
(Virginia Valian, Psychology, Hunter College, 1999)



Funding

- Shoestring support in the beginning
 - Initially affiliated with the Psychonomic Society (leading US Experimental Psychology organization; decidedly apolitical)
 - Small amount of funding provided for initial meetings
 - Donations from senior women in the field
- Grant from the ADVANCE Program at the National Science Foundation (2004 - 2007)
 - Leadership Award (Kroll, Rajaram, Martin)
- No membership dues

Funding since 2008

- Conference grants from Perception, Action, and Cognition Program at the National Science Foundation (Janet Van Hell, Laurie Feldman, Natasha Tokowicz, Judith Kroll, Suparna Rajaram)
- Continued support from the Psychonomic Society; additional support American Psychological Association
- Current renewal of NSF conference grant (2019-2021) (Rajaram, Kroll, Feldman, Tokowicz)



Rajaram



Kroll



Tokoiwicz



Feldman



Van Hell

Growth of WiCS Organization

- Membership
 - 2001 - about 100 members
 - 2018 - over 1000 members (women & men)
 - All levels - graduate students, post-docs, faculty

Activities: Annual Programs

Programs at professional meetings (day before associated conference begins - e.g., Psychonomic Society Meeting)

- Lectures, panel discussions on professional development (2001 - present)
 - e.g., Grant writing, work/family balance, parental leave, increasing visibility, training in negotiation
 - Question and answer period
 - ~120 attendees
- Faculty awards for mentoring women scientists



Annual programs (continued)

- Speed mentoring (since 2016)
 - Following the workshop/panel discussion
 - Pairing junior scientists with senior mentors
 - 20 minute maximum session
 - Questions raised by mentees
 - Popular program



Expansion of Annual Programs

- Meetings in conjunction with
 - Psychonomic Society, Cognitive Science Society, Association for Psychological Science, European Society for Cognitive Psychology, International Convention of Psychological Science
- New branches
 - WiCS Europe (since 2016) - Teresa Bajo, Universidad de Granada, Cristine Cacciari, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia
 - WiCS Canada (since 2016) - Penny Pexman, U. of Calgary, Debra Titone, McGill U.
- New organizations formed by members of WiCS Advisory Board
 - FOVEA (Females of Vision) as part of Vision Science Society
 - Women in Math Psychology allied with Society for Mathematical Psychology

Research (funded by NSF Leadership award)

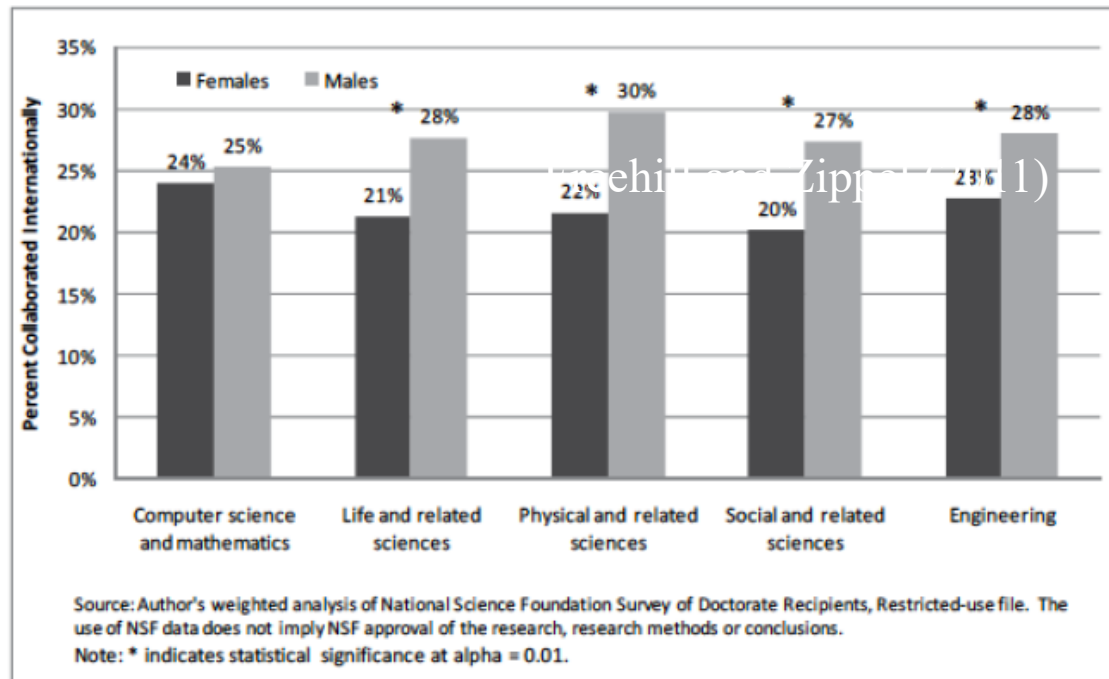
- Letter of recommendation study (Madera, Hebl, & Martin, *J. of Applied Psychology*, 2009)
 - Letters for psychology faculty applicants
 - Greater agentic terms for men than women (e.g., assertive, independent)
 - Greater communal terms for women than men (e.g., helpful, dependable, supportive)
 - Communal terms have negative relation with hiring decisions
- Doubt raisers in letters of recommendation (Madera, Hebl, Valian, Dial, & Martin, *J. of Business & Psychology*, in press)
 - Damning with faint praise; hedging (“may become an excellent researcher”; negative (“while not one of the best teachers”)
 - More for women than men
 - Experiment: even one doubt raiser amidst longer letter lowers evaluation of candidate
- For both studies, results were the same for letters written by women and men

Activities: Fostering collaboration for junior scientists (from 2004- present)

- Travel and networking awards (formerly just from WiCS, now partnering with Psychonomic Society)
 - Award to travel to Psychonomic Society Meeting
 - Must submit networking plan
 - Plan to meet with 1-2 senior scientists to get feedback on junior scientist's research
 - Justification for choice of mentor
 - Agreement from mentor(s)
 - Outcomes: post-doctoral opportunities, research and grant writing collaborations

Activities: Fostering international collaborations for junior scientists

Figure 2. International Collaboration, U.S. Doctoral-Degreed Scientists and Engineering at Academic Institutions, by Sex and Broad Field 2006



Freehill & Zippel, 2011
NSF data

Across fields, women less likely to participate in international collaborations

Planned activities (2019-2021): International collaboration

- Workshops/panels addressing barriers to international collaboration, sources of funding, carrying out research in different cultures
 - Speakers: senior and junior scientists with successful collaborations
- Travel awards to initiate an international collaboration
 - Up to three awards per year of \$2200 to travel to begin collaboration
 - Evidence of preparation for research, agreement from sponsor
 - Preference for data collection at international site

(Informal) Activities: Nominations for positions and awards

- Communications among WiCS advisory board in advance of nominations or voting deadlines:
 - Member of Governing Board
 - Keynote speakers for conferences
 - Research or career awards
- Advisory board members' contact their informal networks to encourage voting, discussing options
- Some success?
 - e.g., Psychonomic Society Governing Board historically high male dominated 16% female board at most until 1995. Now 36%; incoming chair female
 - Keynote speakers 33% female since inception in 2001

Activites: Plans for the future

- Live streaming of workshops
 - Accessible to those around the world unable to attend meetings
- Leadership awards for senior scientists
 - Not just for mentoring, but all activities promoting status of women in cognitive science
- Consideration of leadership training for mid-career women scientists

Continuing need for organization

- Positives
 - Interest in meetings
 - Expansion of organization
- Continuing issues:
 - Setbacks in visibility

Special issue of *Cognition*, February 2015
“The Changing Face of Cognition”
12 articles, 19 authors, 18 were male

 - Climate/harassment issues
 - “me too” movement, academia not immune
- Ongoing need for keeping issues in focus, taking action

Acknowledgements

