For women in the climate sciences, a struggle to find a voice

Lindsey Konkel
The Daily Climate
In surprising numbers, women in climate science in particular and the physical sciences in general are abandoning academic careers. The reasons are as varied as the individuals — some leave for maternity issues or other family pressures, others give up in the face of subtle gender bias within the academic world. And others feel there are better platforms than a university position to apply the science they love and to speak out to a broader audience, with greater impact. Regardless of the cause, the female brain drain from the academy has an impact on climate science, say researchers. A 2008 study found that while 34 percent of all geosciences doctoral degrees were awarded to females, women comprised only 8 percent of top-rankng geosciences faculty positions at U.S. colleges and universities. Scientific inquiry is surely at stake, said Mary Anne Holmes, a mineralogist at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and former president of the Association for Women Geoscientists. “Women may have a different way of asking questions about the science and communicating the consequences,” Holmes said. Read the full article.
From the delightful Dear Professor Einstein: Albert Einstein’s Letters to and from Children comes the following exchange between Einstein and a bright, witty South African girl named Tyfanny, who reminded Einstein of his own granddaughter and with whom he exchanged several letters despite being at the height of his career and cultural prominence.

In a letter dated September 19, 1946, Tyfanny writes:

I forgot to tell you, in my last letter, that I was a girl. I mean I am a girl. I have always regretted this a great deal, but by now I have become more or less resigned to the fact. Anyway, I hate dresses and dances and all the kind of rot girls usually like. I much prefer horses and riding. Long ago, before I wanted to become a scientist, I wanted to be a jockey and ride horses in races. But that was ages ago, now. I hope you will not think any the less of me for being a girl!

Sometime between September and October 1946—a snappy response time by the day’s standards—Einstein replies:

I do not mind that you are a girl, but the main thing is that you yourself do not mind. There is no reason for it.

Six UNL mathematicians named AMS fellows

Six UNL mathematicians have been invited to join a prestigious national organization’s inaugural class of fellows. The first class of American Mathematical Society (AMS) fellows includes: professors Luchezar Avramov, Jim Lewis, David Manderscheid and Judy Walker and emeriti professors Roger Wiegand and Sylvia Wiegand.

“The selection of six members of our faculty for this honor is evidence of the strength of UNL’s Department of Mathematics. Only 62 institutions worldwide had five or more fellows - including 11 of our peer CIC institutions,” said Ellen Weissinger, Senior Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs. “This is a powerful validation of the importance of the work being accomplished by our mathematics faculty. It is a privilege to have these six outstanding scholars among our colleagues.”

Read the full article in Today@UNL.

GoldieBlox, Inc. is a toy company founded in 2012 by Debbie Sterling, a female engineer from Stanford University. [Their] mission is to create really fun toys that develop spatial skills and teach basic engineering principles. By designing construction toys from the female perspective, we aim to appeal to a broader audience of children and parents who previously considered engineering a “boys club.” By challenging this stereotype, we hope to inspire more girls like Debbie, like Goldie, to become engineers. Learn more.
Kerry Ann Rockquemore, PhD is President of the National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity. Her scholarship has focused on interracial families, biracial identity, and the politics of racial categorization. She is author of two important books: Beyond Black and Raising Biracial Children, as well as over two dozen articles and book chapters on multiracial youth.

After Dr. Rockquemore became a tenured professor, her focus shifted to improving conditions for pre-tenure faculty by creating supportive communities for writing productivity and work/life balance. Her award-winning work with under-represented faculty led to the publication of her most recent book: The Black Academic's Guide to Winning Tenure Without Losing Your Soul. Dr. Rockquemore provides workshops for new faculty at colleges across the US, writes a weekly advice column for Inside Higher Ed and works with a select group of new faculty each semester in the Faculty Success Program.

May 7, 2013
ADVANCE-Ne Workshops with Kerry Ann Rockquemore
9:00–12:00pm Writing Your Next Chapter: Midcareer Faculty (City Union Regency Suite)
1:30-4:30pm Getting What You Need: Junior Faculty (East Campus Arbor Suite)

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Scholarly Study Examines Gender Differences in Language Use on Twitter
A paper presented at the annual conference of New Ways of Analyzing Variation at Indiana University found significant gender differences in the use on language on Twitter. The researchers examined more than 9 million tweets in the English language.
Read the full article.

Have an article or news item of interest about women in STEM Fields you’d like to share? We’d like to hear about it! Send your article to advance2@unl.edu.