Women in Cognitive Science: Improving the Visibility of Women Scientists

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Background:

• Women in Cognitive Science (WICS) was founded in 2001
  Judith Kroll (Penn State)
  Randi Martin (Rice University)
  Suparna Rajaram (Stony Brook)

• Transition Team added in 2007
  Laurie Beth Feldman (Albany & Haskins)
  Janet Van Hell (Radboud & Penn State)

• Advisory Board: Mary Peterson (Arizona), Mary Potter (MIT), Valerie Reyna (Cornell), Lynn Robertson (Berkeley), and Kathryn Spoehr (Brown).

• Goal: to improve the visibility of women scientists by fostering an environment that welcomes young women scholars who wish to contribute to the fields of cognitive science, experimental psychology and cognitive neuroscience.

Foci: local: policy-making committees national: editorial boards, professional societies

Activities: Travel program Mentoring awards Annual meeting Letters or recommendation study Website: www.womencogsci.org

Travel Awards Program:

Travel Awards Program: enables junior women scholars to interact with (and be mentored by) senior women scholars at other institutions

Goal: Junior women attend a professional conference
  Junior women visit a senior colleague’s lab networking collaborative research project

Procedure: Develop a networking plan specifying:
  host scholar short-term goals of the visit longer-term goals of the visit

Follow-up: Awardees conduct a seminar at her home institution for graduate student women
  Awardees participate in a WICS sponsored panel at the Psychonomic Society meeting.

12 awards to junior women scientists over a three year period

Representative Example: Thank you so much for the award-- I felt that my networking experience was a tremendous success, and that it has led to greater professional opportunities (for example, I have noticed that I have been asked to review more sign-language-related manuscripts since the conference). My participation in the conference has certainly raised my profile in the international sign language community.

Mentoring Awards: a mechanism to recognize senior women and men scholars who have an exceptional record of mentoring junior women

Annual Meeting at the Psychonomic Society:

Leading professional society in Cognitive Science

Topics of NSF-supported yearly meetings of WICS:
2007: Judging Merit: Scholarship and professional evaluation
2006: Establishing professional connections and collaboration
2005: Children and academic careers
2004: Advancing women in science
2003: Dual-career issues in academia

Goal: Increase attention to the situation of women cognitive scientists gain insights into issue of under representation in key positions provide forum for professional development

Discuss: Best practices for the professional advancement of women at the institutional and individual level

Impact: Model ways to effect change at the home institutions

Format: Keynote speakers (junior and senior scholars; administrators) Panel discussion

Future plans:

Extend outreach by partnering with American Psychological Association Association for Psychological Science Cognitive Science Society

Expand travel awards for research collaboration

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