Women in academia facing more prejudices

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Recommended Citation
Romero, Aldemaro Jr., "Women in academia facing more prejudices" (2016). CUNY Academic Works.
https://academicworks.cuny.edu/bb_pubs/924

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In past columns I have mentioned many of the issues that women face in academia. One, according to a study published last year in the journal “Science,” is that general perception is that women are “less smart” than their male counterparts. The other is that despite the fact that 10 percent of postdoctoral students — the main pipeline for college professors — are women, only 6 percent of full professors are women. According to a study by the American Association of University Professors, women earn on average 80 cents to the dollar of their male counterparts.

And now there is even worse news. In certain disciplines women who form part of a research team with men are considered less important to the work than male counterparts. According to a study by Heather Sarsons, who is currently completing her PhD in Economics at the University of Michigan, women are given less credit when doing collaborative work with men. She found that in 80 percent of the citations, based on my own observations, it is the same in many other disciplines.

Sarsons compiled data on the publications records of researchers who have worked on the same project, the U.S. over the last 40 years. She found that despite the fact that women who do more unaided work, men are twice as likely to be destined to become household names. She also found that when men and women are part of a research team who enjoy the same career success as men alone worked, which means that if they collaborated

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with male colleagues, researchers write no more or less than as appreciated as those of their male counterparts. Her study titled “Gender Differences in the Recognition of Group Work,” concluded that male and female authors write nearly equally credit for work they perform alone, but in group work, women receive little to no credit.

Obviously, when a female-economist writes a paper on her own, “there are no questions about who will receive the credit and each individual sole research paper raises the probability of getting tenure by about 3 percent, according to Sarsons. Thus, the career benefits from publishing a solo paper is about the same for both men as it is for women. The problem, according to her study, is that women have to work a whole lot harder to receive the same amount of credit for their research contributions as their male counterparts. And, according to a study by the American Economic Association, women who form part of a research team with men receive about 21 percent less credit for their work than men.

Further, when women write with co-authors, the benefits to their career prospects is much less than half that accorded to men. Women get full credit, in terms of names on papers, only when their co-authors are other women. Writing one with a man has no effect on their career prospects. Women cannot expect to publish as sole authors. Of course, that would be unfair but the one thing that is clear is that the loss of opportunities for women in academia is a sad reality. One of the steps colleges and universities can take to diminish the impact of sexism in academia is to create a step that has been taken by many professional journals in the areas of natural sciences and social sciences. Of course, another alternative for administrators is to encourage and even mandate that female authors write as single authors.

The multi-day activity included the students testing the students of their structures as a writing assignment where they will write about their experienced learning and engineering. Students began to build their own buildings in the learning is hands-on and takes a bit of time. Students will be following ideas about safety which is the main topic. But the sirens prompted one group of students to start a discussion about tornadoes and safety which led to the idea of building a “tornado-proof” building.

First grader Lydia Becker works on her marshmallow-and- toothpick structure in Ginger McDaniels’ class at Glen Carbon Elementary School.

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