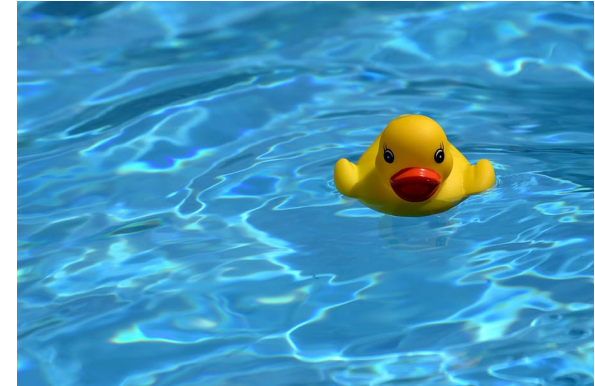


Everybody into the pool: Supporting career success for women in paleontology

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BGSU ALLIES project & team

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BGSU ALLIES: Building Inclusive Leadership Practices and Policies to Transform the Institution

Multi-year grant from National Science Foundation's ADVANCE Program



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Project Goal: To make allyship and inclusive leadership the expectation and norm at BGSU



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Motivating questions

1. Barriers to career advancement for women have persisted despite decades of efforts to remove them—how can we do better?
2. How has “success” in paleontology been traditionally defined in a gendered way?
3. How can we redefine “success” to be more inclusive and supportive of a variety of career paths?
4. How can more senior paleontologists support the career success of women early in their careers?

The “successful” paleontologist...

- Holds a tenured faculty position at an elite high-research-activity (“R1”) university
- Prioritizes research over teaching
- Does minimal academic service work
- Is rewarded for quantity and citation counts of publications in high impact factor journals
- Lands large external grants
- Wins prestigious awards
- Works most nights and weekends
- Spends many weeks each year away from home doing field work and attending conferences

These are all strongly gendered!



The “successful” paleontologist is a man!

- Holds a tenured faculty position at an elite high-research-activity (“R1”) university
- Prioritizes research over teaching
- Does minimal academic service work
- Is rewarded for quantity and citation counts of publications in high impact factor journals
- Lands large external grants
- Wins prestigious awards
- Works most nights and weekends
- Spends many weeks each year away from home doing field work and attending conferences
- Women are less likely to be hired on the tenure track or be tenured and promoted, and are more likely to work at non-R1 institutions, maybe also non-academic jobs
- Women spend more hours on teaching activities and do more, and more unrewarded, service work than men
- Women are less likely to be published, cited, or awarded external funding
- Women are less likely to be nominated or selected for research awards
- Women spend more hours per week than men on household labor and specifically on child and eldercare

COVID-19 made all of this worse!

The leaky pipeline model

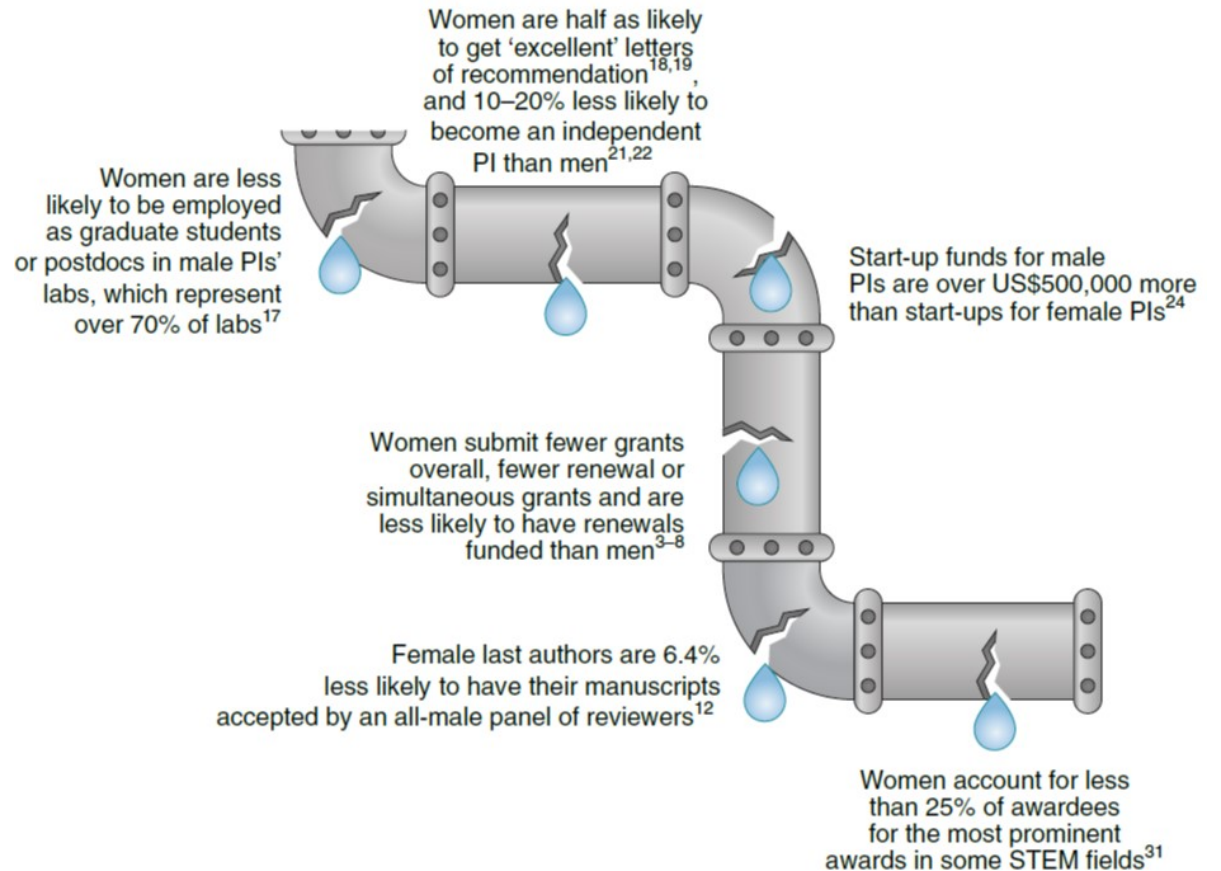
Problems:

Only one way in, starting in high school or earlier

Only one pathway through a career, with required steps along the way

Only one end goal, one way to be “successful”

Emphasis is on patching cracks, not on *why those cracks formed in the first place* (Grogan 2019) or *whether we WANT a pipeline at all!*



Grogan 2019

The community swimming pool model

No mandatory, predefined start and end points

Ladders to help people enter and exit easily at many different places

Lifeguards on duty

Lots of different activities to do while in the pool, different ways of being “successful”

Easy to change activities

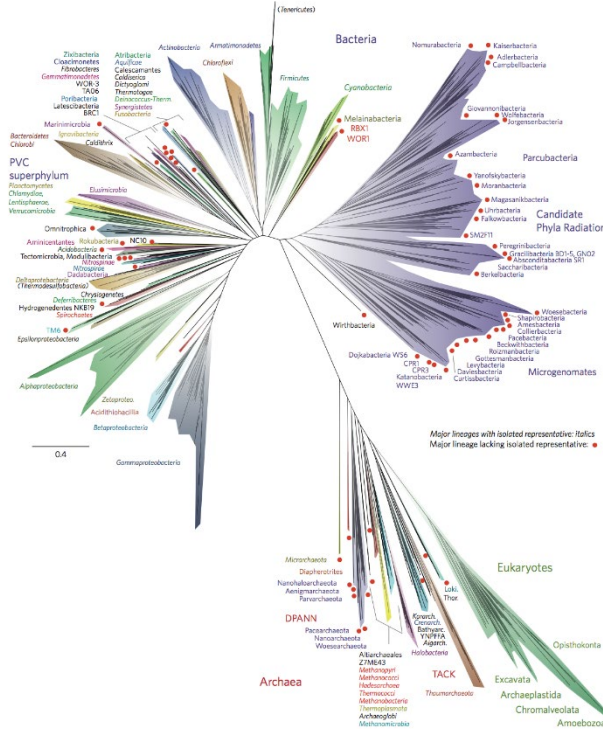
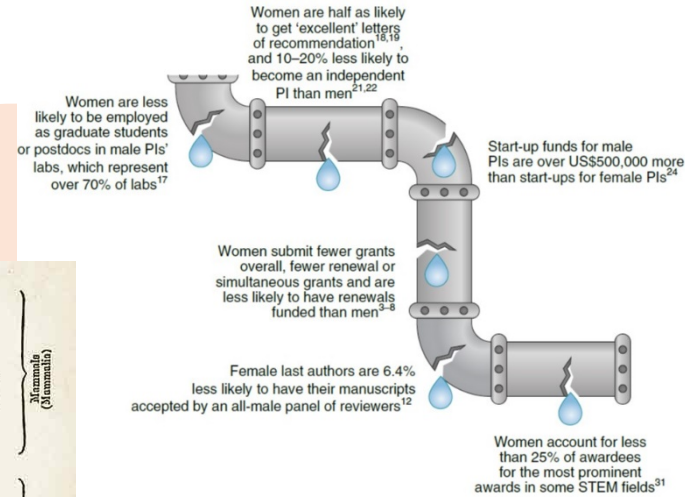
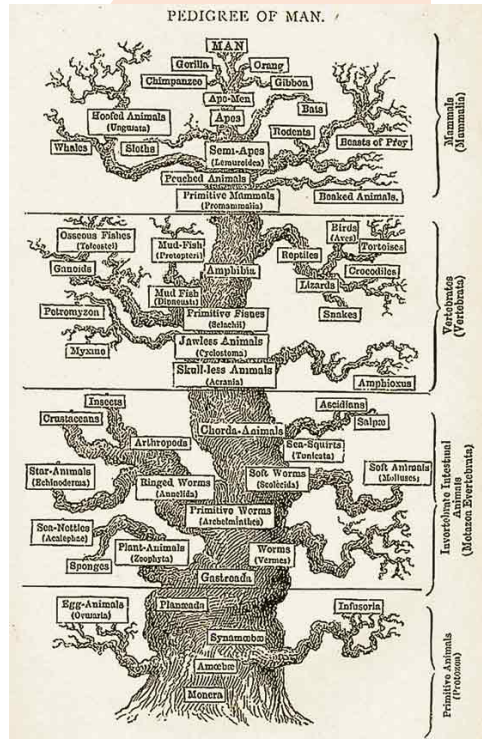
Still all one community!



Ladders vs. branches

"Life is a copiously branching bush...not a ladder of predictable progress."

Stephen Jay Gould, *Wonderful Life*




Supporting the career success of women in paleontology

BGSU ALLIES tips on allyship, inclusive leadership, mentoring and sponsoring are available at https://bit.ly/ALLIES_Tips (case-sensitive)



*Lists can be overwhelming!
Choose 3-5 items
to work on first*

Allyship and Inclusive Leadership Tips



Everyday Allyship

Supporting Marginalized People

- De-center yourself
- Educate yourself about the experiences of marginalized people via research and observation (and not by "interrogating" marginalized people)
- Validate and normalize experiences of marginalized people
- Intervene when someone is a target of microaggressions or other exclusionary behavior
- Make contributions of marginalized people visible
- Mentor and sponsor marginalized people
- Nominate marginalized people for desirable roles, awards, and recognition
- Co-author with marginalized people

Educating Others

- Provide accurate information/correct misinformation about equity and inclusion experiences
- Advocate for marginalized people

Mentoring and Sponsoring Tips

Definitions

- Mentoring is "a reciprocal learning relationship characterized by trust, commitment, in which the mentor supports the professional and personal growth of another by sharing [their] life experiences, influence, and expertise" (Zellers et al., 2008, p. 555)
- A sponsor is someone with influence and authority who acts to empower and advance a colleague's professional success (Kanter, 1977)
- An advocate also acts to publicly support and advance a colleague's career (Bruce 2017) but need not be in a position of power
- "While a mentor is someone who has knowledge and will share it with you, a sponsor is a person who has power and will use it for you." (Ibarra, 2019)
- Not mutually exclusive – effective mentors also engage in sponsoring activities

Strategies

- Become familiar with your mentee/sponsee's (M/S) credentials and experience, values and career plans
- Don't project your own experiences, values, or career goals onto your M/S
- Think outside the "pipeline" model of what a career path looks like; identify alternatives
- Ask your M/S what they feel they need to be successful, and listen non-judgmentally to describe the barriers they are facing
- Share your own experiences and the strategies you took to overcome barriers
- Share your successes and your failures, lessons learned
- Introduce your M/S to others in your institutional networks, including other institutional academic leaders, and those who will be making admissions, hiring, promotion decisions

Inclusive Leadership

- Exhibit self-awareness and acknowledge individual and organizational biases
- Align your personal values and those of your organization
- Listen attentively
- Seek to understand how others experience the world
- Develop ground rules for engaging in difficult conversations and hold the group to them
- Role model respectful behavior and inclusive language
- Align time, effort, and resources to effectively support equity and inclusion
- Empower individuals and groups through process and communication
- Work intentionally to expand and diversify your networks of support, influence, and power
- Challenge yourself and the system and be willing to take risks

Readings on Challenging the Pipeline

Batchelor, R., Ali, H., Gardner-Vandy, K.G., Gold, A., Mackinnon, J.A., and Asher, P. 2021. Reimagining STEM workforce development as a braided river. *Eos* 102. <https://doi.org/10.1029/2021EO157277>

Bernard, R.E., and Cooperdock, E.H. 2018. No progress on diversity in 40 years. *Nature Geoscience* 11(5): 292-295. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41561-018-0116-6>

Cannady, M.A., Greenwald, E., and Harris, K.N. 2014. Problematising the STEM pipeline metaphor: is the STEM pipeline metaphor serving our students and the STEM workforce? *Science Education* 98: 443-460. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sce.21108>

Davies, S.W. et al. 2021. Promoting inclusive metrics of success and impact to dismantle a discriminatory reward system in science. *PLoS Biology* 19(6): e3001282. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.3001282>

Grogan, K.E. 2019. How the entire scientific community can confront gender bias in the workplace. *Nature Ecology & Evolution* 3: 3-6. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-018-0747-4>

Be a lifeguard in the paleontology pool!

Bringing the community of paleontology together

Individual, interpersonal actions are not enough to change what we mean by “successful” and create the community pool!

How can we redefine “success” to be more inclusive and supportive of a variety of career paths?

How do we move from individual action to *collective transformation*?

What do we need to build the paleontology community pool and ensure all are welcome in it?

thank
you!