

Overcoming Isolation: Women's Dilemmas in American Academic Science

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Minerva: A Review of Science, Learning & Policy. Summer2001, Vol. 39 Issue 2, p153-174.

Subject Terms:

- * WOMEN scientists
- * WOMEN in science
- * SEX discrimination in employment

Abstract:

Science is an intensely social activity. Professional relationships are essential for scientific success and mentors are indispensable for professional growth. Despite the scientific ethos of universalism and inclusion, American women scientists frequently experience isolation and exclusion at some time during their academic career. By contrast, male scientists enjoy informal but crucial social networks. Female scientists develop necessary strategies and defenses, but many leave or achieve less success in science when deprived of necessary interpersonal connections. There is indication that change within departments is occurring, but this is dependent upon institutional leadership.