



Executive Summary

The Office of Research in Women's Health, Office of the Director, National Institutes of Health, in conjunction with the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and The American Society for Cell Biology, convened "AXXS '99" to explore the roles of scientific societies in advancing science by building the careers of all women in science, from the predoctoral stage to the senior scientist level. The workshop was held December 9–10, 1999, as a satellite meeting to The American Society for Cell Biology Annual Meeting at the Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C. More than 140 participants representing more than 50 scientific societies, organizations, and government agencies gathered to

- develop action items that societies can consider for their membership
- contribute to an annotated bibliography of the career resources that can be made available as a national resource on the Internet
- exchange information with other workshop participants on the strengths and weaknesses of existing and planned societal programs and resources for their female membership.

Action-planning tracks for the 1 1/2-day workshop focused on the roles of societies related to one of the following issues:

- Mentoring and networking to promote the contributions of women scientists
- Career development for women scientists at the mid and senior levels
- Representation of women in scientific societies
- Sharing model systems that work
- Outreach and collaboration within and between societies and other organizations to advance science by promoting women in science

Working groups developed goals for each issue, identified the major obstacles to achieving those goals, and designed action plans to reach defined goals. The action plans were presented for discussion in a plenary

session. The recommendations of the working groups include 14 action plans for addressing major obstacles to the careers of women in science. Major recommendations are to

- Establish a national report card on the status of women in science and engineering and develop a database of women scientists
- Create an umbrella organization of professional societies to facilitate the exchange of information on women's career issues and activities
- Establish a national mentorship system for women, through the societies, and encourage societies to develop effective mentoring programs and make mentoring a core society activity
- Formalize mechanisms for opportunities, awareness, and development for women in science
- Design best practices for the advancement of women in science and establish a best practices clearinghouse
- Encourage societies to increase the number of women in their organizations' leadership roles by establishing (a) leadership development programs for women, (b) forums to highlight the successes of their women membership, and (c) a networking website for the scientists whom they serve.

Workshop leaders and participants expressed a high degree of enthusiasm for the results-oriented event. A follow-on meeting in June 2000 is planned to capitalize on the momentum generated at AXXS '99 for advancing women's careers in science.

It was one of the best workshops I have attended! I am looking forward to seeing the action items generated play out as advances for women in science.

Julia B. Freeman
National Institute of Arthritis and
Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases
National Institutes of Health

Congratulations on an excellent program and a really productive day and a half.

Jennifer P. Stevens
American Academy of Pediatrics

Congratulations. I was relieved to finally participate in a meeting that was so action oriented. Hopefully this is just the beginning.

Gina Pastino, Ph.D.
McLaren-Hurt, Inc./Chem Risk

I think this was a very worthwhile endeavor. It is rare that one walks away from a full day plus evening event with some concrete ideas that can be implemented quickly, and make a difference, as well as a sense of excitement about future plans. Bravo.

Joan R. Goldberg
American Society for Bone and Mineral Research

I thought the meeting was terrific. I arranged for a junior colleague to go to the AAMC mentoring meeting for new professionals this spring, and I'm spreading the word about ELAM — the development workshop for mid-career women. I learned about both at AXXS '99. I hope to incorporate more of the ideas from the meeting at the NSF.

Janice M. Hicks
National Science Foundation

It was exciting to participate in what may be another milestone event in the history of women in science. I learned a great deal and enjoyed the opportunity to interact with women from other disciplines.

Rosalyn C. Richman, M.A.
ELAM
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Academic Medicine