Ocean Decades Laboratories Virtual Panel and Discussions, Breakout Room Notes – 07 Jul 2021

Women in Marine Technology and Science Breakout Room Notes

• Making going to sea/field work equitable
• Retaining more women in STEM studies and careers
• Reducing prejudice/stereotyping of women's abilities
• Easily accessible resources for managing relationships with majority male colleagues

Making going to sea/field work equitable –

• Stop accepting logistics as a barrier for women at sea and in the field
    o Culture shift away from binary division on ships for berthing, etc.
    o Make sure there is PPE and work gear suitable for women
    o Provide supplies and teach use for easy bathroom access in small boats and the field
• Hiring leadership needs to include women

Retaining more women in STEM studies and careers -

• Mentorship – making women more aware of the various career opportunities, training, funding, etc.
• Better promotion of engineering as a career path for women – that these opportunities exist but also that they exist for women (e.g., women still far from parity in ocean engineering)
• Promoting the different aspects of ocean science and technology careers outside of academia – don't have to follow the "traditional academic trajectory"
    o Promote opportunities by different degree level and training, etc.
    o Centralize information about paid internships, non-academic postdocs and fellowships
• Build a strong and diverse network of women who are willing to serve as mentors and provide networking for students and early careers, e.g., a forum – especially good for these non-academic careers
    o Need an easy way to identify people to talk to and connect with
    o Do better mentoring women on how to market themselves and apply for jobs – to demonstrate their potential to learn and grow
• Randomized breakout sessions at workshops like these are helpful – informal, you meet lots of new people
• Networking sessions for early careers at conferences are helpful, also early career committees in societies
• Welcoming environments – e.g., field work on small boats with no bathrooms are an issue – need to think about inclusion of women and their needs
• There's still a lot of "space" that can be made for women
• Perception that federal government allows for more work-life balance while still allowing opportunities for science and research
• Industry – seeing a push to hire more women, but still once hired the experiences are still unbalanced
• Leadership needs to resolve issues when they arise. Ignoring bias in these fields can leave women feeling disempowered.

- Academia is tough – probably institution dependent; leadership is important – we still don't have enough women in leadership positions in academia
  - Patterns of women leaving departments: consider what about a department is making people leave and how to change policies, etc. to improve retention
- Ocean sciences has problem of small departments and mostly white (issue of BIPOC people not seeing others like them) – how can we better support BIPOC students and faculty across our field? E.g., create more peer-to-peer networks and mentoring
- Equity issues, e.g., pay scale for technicians – women paid less in this field
- Paid parental leave for both men and women; companies with nearby or onsite childcare
- Webinars/networking etc showing field work and family life CAN coexist
- Collaborations with groups already going into schools to reach a younger audience regarding opportunities in STEM
- More creative ways to manage finances while going through training. The group acknowledged that grad school is hard financially and it can take longer to get through school if you have to work in between degrees to make it work financially.
- Starting a family is often the key issue that disproportionately affects women in careers, and this is certainly true in science. Having a more gentle system that supports women who want to have families AND careers.
- Having more diversity in your work group, representing women of all kinds in work groups. Allows for others to see that its doable to be female, unique, and working in science.

Reducing prejudice/stereotyping of women's abilities –

- Continue hiring strong women and immerse those with prejudice in situations where they can see, firsthand, that women are capable
- Creating opportunities for female students to develop their speaking and group leadership skills so when they are leaders in a professional setting, they can be successful. This should be part of early training from high school through grad school.
- Because progress is made, doesn't mean we are ever done.
- Create situations with positive reinforcement in terms of training of students, co-workers.
- Little things go a long way to setting a positive and constructive tone to work interactions. Being complementary, addressing problems with a focus on improvement instead of belittling. Keeping things positive and motivating.

Equity means:
- Certain resources-same chances as others
- Having opportunities in a fair manner
- Having the same resources to get where you want to go

Prejudice means:
- When certain threats are used against you
- White supremacy
- When people form opinions that are not fair

Reducing prejudice

- A Canadian effort to reduce prejudice resulted in organized "break out" groups across regions of Canada of women to report/discuss issues they have faced. That information was collated and shared with Government Leadership to begin to address and raise awareness of these issues. These discussions included all people and strived to be as inclusive as possible to hear as many voices and opinions.
- Resulted in simple fixes such as PPE that fits women, but also identifies six topics under which to "bin" the issues raised in the break out discussions. Regional and National Action plans were formed.
- One of the six topics was making field work more equitable. It boiled down to an issue that men liked to include other men when any field work staffing issue arose. There was an ingrained stereotype that women could not carry the necessary equipment in the field. This was completely disproven when certain equipment in question could not be carried alone by men either, and the super heavy equipment was screen for redesign or modernization, making much of the equipment lighter for all to carry.

Addressing diversity
- A representative from a multinational engineering firm shared that when she joined a short time ago, diversity was not a priority and the staff was not particularly diverse.
- Because there were so few women, women created a womens support network which ended up receiving good support from a few men and resulting in creating a diversity and inclusion group. This all happened very recently so there was nothing further to report at this time.
- In Canada, the Government does offer tools to help support the hiring of diverse people/color/disabilities, however they were still having a difficult time finding people of color to hire in the marine sector.
- The question was asked if Canada does any work to promote the marine sciences in K-12 to expose students to the possible careers. Canada does a lot to promote girls to get into STEM programs but not sure if programs are targeting people of color.
- A comment was made that all programs – especially college level programs claiming to serve people of color need to be clear about who they are trying to reach, and know how they will support people of color when they do come to the programs. Often this does not occur and people tend to leave the programs.

Easily accessible resources for managing relationships with majority male colleagues –

- Senior staff training for the majority male colleagues.
- Normalize salary discussions
- Create accessible classes to teach skills for managing these relationships, and others
- There are blind spots because of underrepresentation, so women need more voices in these scenarios to help create these resources that may not exist
- Develop resources for ourselves, as well as male colleagues.
- Networking and finding others who have had similar experiences.
- Create an atmosphere of mindfulness.