Climate and diversity in our field

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1. Climate
2. Harassment
3. Meetings
4. The leaky pipeline
5. Avoiding bias

Note: These are opinions, suggestions, and information gathered from other sources. I am not an expert on this topic. There are many true experts in this area! See http://www.astrobetter.com/wiki/Diversity for useful links.
(1) Climate

AAS Code of Ethics: *All people encountered in one’s professional life should be treated with respect*

Meg Urry, Yale: *The culture of astronomy departments should favor the well-being of students as much or more than faculty*

Good practice: undertake climate surveys in departments and collaborations

Example: Berkeley climate survey covers
- Sexual Harassment Census
- Gender and Racial Equity
- LGBTQ Support
- Support for persons with disabilities
- Supervisor Relations
- Knowledge and Resources

[https://cdn.webvanta.com/000000/51/21/original/ACS16_Report.pdf](https://cdn.webvanta.com/000000/51/21/original/ACS16_Report.pdf)

Collaboration survey examples I am aware of:
- SDSS, LSST, Simons Observatory...
(2) Harassment

(i) know what it is (aka, everyone should get training)
Both junior and senior members need training on what is acceptable and what is not. Training junior people helps them identify when to speak out.

Your institution should have a definition
Here is excerpt of the AAS definition of sexual harassment:

unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It refers to behavior that is not welcome, is personally offensive, debilitates morale, and therefore, interferes with work effectiveness.

Examples of behavior that, when unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment: sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions; verbal comments or physical actions of a sexual nature; sexually degrading words used to describe an individual; a display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; sexually explicit jokes; unnecessary touching.

https://aas.org/policies/anti-harassment-policy-aas-division-meetings-activities
40% of women of color reported feeling unsafe in their workplace because of their gender 28% said they felt unsafe due to their race. 13% women skipped at least one class, meeting, fieldwork opportunity, other professional event due to this. Some men of color also skipped events as a result of hearing racist comments at school or work.


2017 study: https://doi.org/10.1002/2017JE005256
(iii) **Know what to do if it happens**

Check your institution’s guidance
Ideally there will be clear points of contact

This is excerpt from AAS instruction:

**Reporting an Incident**
Write everything down (times, places, nature of the incident, and comments made).
Save emails, notes, etc.
Tell someone you trust.
It is likely that you will have to write and sign an official letter of complaint, documenting the nature of the harassment and/or discrimination. Be as detailed as possible.
Supporting documentation and statements from witnesses should be submitted with your letter.

(iv) **Senior people: know your institutions policies and procedures.**
Make sure there are well-defined procedures and training in place.

Meg Urry: ‘It is important for men, particularly senior scientists, to speak out on the issue of sexual harassment’
Welcome  Why Allies?  Allies Blog  Allies Pledge  The Allies  Becoming an Ally

What are the Astronomy Allies?

**Allies are a safe zone.**
This means that our primary purpose is to listen, and to provide you with a safe space to air your frustrations and talk through what you want to do next. It is a judgment-free zone. We will strongly recommend that you file a formal complaint, we can be confidential. At the AAS (and other astronomy conferences), look out for the official totally awesome Ally button. This button is a badge of trust, saying that the person has actively volunteered to help you. And if you ask for help, you know that someone wearing that button is coming to help you.
(3) Meetings

Good practice includes:
• Choose diverse speakers
• Encourage diverse/junior questioners
• Have a code of conduct
• Be family friendly
• Have points of contact/ombudsperson at meetings (and e.g. Astronomy Allies)

Invited speakers: ask SOCs about their good practices before accepting LSST DESC and Cosmo21 are good examples.

Ten Simple Rules to Achieve Conference Speaker Gender Balance

Jennifer L. Martin

Published: November 20, 2014 • https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1003903
(4) The Leaky Pipeline

Diverging trends

Data from the UK’s Higher Education Statistics Agency for the number of women and men in physics and chemistry (courtesy of Sean McWhinnie).
How can we fix?
Post-doc extensions after babies
‘Stop-the-clock’ concept - a ‘5th’ year post-doc who has had two kids and been a significant carer becomes a ‘3rd’ year (or <3) post-doc
Encourage paternity leaves
Avoiding bias (we are all unconsciously biased)

we should all get trained, particular those in charge of hiring/selection

Debriefing

The sorting test you just took is called the Implicit Association Test (IAT). You categorized Male and Female words with Science and Liberal Arts.

Here is your result:

Your data suggest a moderate automatic association for Male with Science and Female with Liberal Arts.

Difference in test scores for Canadian proposals

https://arxiv.org/abs/1805.06508
Letters (watch out when writing)

What gets written in reference letters matters!
When writing letters, imagine switching the gender of the letter subject.

Affectionate, helpful, kind, sympathetic, nurturing, agreeable

Helping others, taking direction well, maintaining relationships

confident, ambitious, dominant, forceful, independent, daring, outspoken, intellectual

Speaking assertively, influencing others, initiating tasks