

Staying in the academic pipeline: Growing professionally in an economic drought

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Economic conditions are placing unprecedented pressures on universities and funding agencies. For young scholars, this translates into fewer post doctoral and faculty lines. For highly experienced senior scholars, it emerges as fewer opportunities for new programs of research and collaborations, and this in turn limits the options available to senior scientists for training young scientists. Research and economic analyses expect the impact of the economic crisis to be more detrimental for females than for males (see, e.g., the 2009 ILO Report on Women and the Economic Crisis).

In this climate, it becomes essential to find creative ways to stay visible and to fund new and potentially transformative lines of research, and this may be particularly true for female scientists. Given the high level of interaction at the regular Women in Cognitive Science (WICS) workshops held at professional meetings (Psychonomic Society, Association for Psychological Science, European Society for Cognitive Psychology, Cognitive Science) and the active participation and involvement of both junior and senior scientists, WICS is in a unique position to address the concerns of junior as well as senior scientists. Based on our experiences at other WICS-meetings, we expect 75 people to attend.

During this meeting a panel of speakers will discuss solutions to foster visibility and to stay in the academic pipeline in times of economic drought. One way to offset the crisis of frozen faculty lines and limited funding opportunities in this economic climate is to create adjunct faculty positions and provide modest but realistic research facilities to the adjunct faculty hires. This arrangement incurs modest costs to the department that may be coverable with additional tuition income while fulfilling the departmental mission of education and research. Simultaneously, such an arrangement will create the much-needed opportunities for recent Ph.D.s and postdocs to continue to sustain and build their research and teaching credentials without creating unfortunate gaps in their scientific careers. While such arrangements may occur on an ad hoc and intermittent basis in some departments and universities, the aim of the WICS panel discussion is to

enable a formal and focused discussion of possible solutions so as to enhance flexibility within departments and across administrations with the goal of retaining junior professionals in cognitive science.

In the panel discussion, we will bring together junior and senior researchers, university administrators and department heads and chairs, cognitive science members of the Council of Graduate Departments of Psychology (COGDOP) and program officers/directors of major granting organizations. WICS will make special efforts to invite persons who are in the position to create opportunities for junior scientists.

Acknowledgments

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