

**The New Norm of Faculty Flexibility:
Transforming the Culture in Science & Engineering
October 10-11, 2008
Saturday World Café Conversations**

1. What are the career “norms” in STEM faculty ranks? How does the “glass ceiling” metaphor work in understanding the careers of women in STEM disciplines?

The group discussing this question noted that flexibility doesn't always work in STEM fields because of the need for face time. Advancement norms for faculty, however, do appear to be shifting.

2. How can the academy draw from career practices in business and industry? What will enable such cross-fertilization? What will prohibit it? Has it worked on your campus?

This group noted that business operates with a top-down model. Academe needs a more voluntary buy-in. We need to reframe questions of flexibility at all levels of administration. There needs to be accountability at all levels for setting benchmarks and meeting goals for change. We need to identify new leaders and train them effectively, use facilitators to implement plans, emphasize the advantages of diversity, and figure out how to evaluate and credit collaborative work.

3. How can institutions collect data, measure progress, and assess policies in order to analyze the place of gender, race, and ethnicity in STEM faculty careers?

The group answered that data needs to be transparent, accessible, standardized, but also remain confidential. There must be a sufficient amount of data, and some of that data needs to be longitudinal in order to gauge success.

4. How can we ensure that the conversations of the last two days engender productive conversations on our own campuses as well as other campuses?

This group commented that this conference was useful in developing new ideas, and suggested that chairs be required to attend such conferences. They also suggested that a database be created that universities could use to compare data and ideas with other universities. Discussions should be open to all populations, and these discussions needed to emphasize the costs of the lack of flexibility policies in the workplace. “Most of us have attended this conference because we believe that science, technology, and engineering will be enhanced with a fully diverse faculty and that change in the architecture of STEM careers is possible.

5. Most of us have attended this conference because we believe that science, technology, and engineering will be enhanced with a fully diverse faculty and that change in the architecture of STEM careers is possible. What steps are needed in order to institutionalize sustainable practices that promote the careers of women and persons of color in STEM disciplines?

The group discussing this suggested mentoring; organizational coaching, including a chair's school (an official university program that should encourage collaboration between chairs) and a dean's school, and the placement of sympathetic people in positions of power.



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6. What is the relative role of Presidents, Provosts, Deans, Department Chairs, Faculty, and others (students, alumni, governing boards, foundations) in increasing the diversity in STEM faculty ranks?

The discussants argued that those in the higher levels need to display leadership on these issues, and ensure communication throughout the hierarchy. Another group that might be included in discussions was the regents. Department chairs should establish rewards for performance. There needs to be mentoring, as well as multiple pathways for advancement.

7. What kinds of research are still needed to ensure that this conversation about optimal faculty careers in STEM continues? How should it be funded?

This group suggested greater dissemination of information to graduate students, and greater data on trailing partners in dual career couples. They also recommended that funding was needed for on-ramping programs, but that data needed to be collected regarding how best to target funding overall. More data is needed on same-sex individuals and couples, the disabled and international faculty. We also need to get more state funding and more funding for graduate students.