Changing discourses in women and science policy: responding to austerity in gender and SET

Conference Item

How to cite:


For guidance on citations see FAQs

© 2012 The Authors
Version: Version of Record

Copyright and Moral Rights for the articles on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. For more information on Open Research Online’s data policy on reuse of materials please consult the policies page.

oro.open.ac.uk
Changing discourses in women and science policy: responding to austerity in Gender and SET

Clem Herman (OU), Pat Morton (SHU), Jane Butcher (UKRC)
Why women in science?

• What do we mean by science? Natural sciences, SET, STEM, all academic research?

• Science and technology as gendered (Cockburn, Wajcman, Harding, Haraway etc)

• Biological determinism

• Equal opportunities (linked to second wave feminism)

• Skills shortages and wasted talent
30 years of UK policy

• Eighties / Nineties
  – Finniston Report / WISE
  – Women in science academia (Athena)
  – Promoting SET for Women Unit in Office of Science and Technology
  – Europe

• 2000 on
  – SET for Success and SETFair - the growth of 'STEM' and set up of UK Resource Centre for Women in SET (UKRC)
Enduring metaphors

Leaky pipeline

Career ladders
Measuring impact

- “Plethora of initiatives” (Bebbington 2002, Greenfield 2003, Phipps 2008)
- What does success look like?
- Individual – women returners, role models and success stories
- Institutional – CAT, SET Fair, Athena
- Societal – number crunching (eg SHE Figures)
Responses to austerity

- Cumulative impact of cuts for women
- Turn from gender to diversity in policy/industry
- Tension between gender/equality experts and STEM professionals
- Elitism and narrowing of agenda to research scientists

http://fawcettsociety.org.uk/
Futures

• Professional bodies – Royal Society & Royal Academy of Engineering
• Scottish government funding
• HE - Athena SWAN and research funding councils
• EU - [re]turn to ‘fixing the science’
• Will it be déjà vu – or is there a new vision?