

CHAPTER 9

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AUSTRALIAN WOMEN IN THE ACADEMY: CHALLENGES AND ASPIRATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Over time and across continents, women have struggled to achieve the same rights as men in employment. Education is promoted as pivotal in the attainment of this fundamental human right. While women from all walks of life struggle to achieve gender equity, greater parity would seem likely for women academics in universities because they are well educated. However, the challenge of achieving gender equity is shared by highly educated women who have reached the professoriate (i.e., full or associate professors). In this chapter, we examine the aspirations and challenges experienced by women in the professoriate in Australian universities. As background, we provide an overview of women in universities, the Australian university context and Connell's (2002) ideas of gender in society. We then report the findings of an Australian study of women professors by discussing the challenges they experienced and their career aspirations. We conclude with avenues towards achieving gender equity in universities in the future.

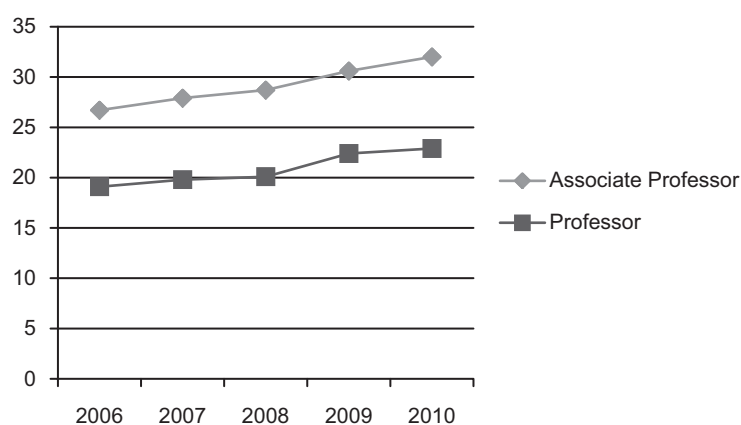
WOMEN IN THE ACADEMY

Historically, data show that gender inequity in universities at senior levels (full or associate professor) is a longstanding issue (Boreham, Western, Baxter, Dever, & Laffan, 2008; Brouns & Addis, 2004; Gardiner, Tiggemann, Kearns, & Marshall, 2007; Perna, 2005; vanAnders, 2004; White, 2004; Winchester, Lorenzo, Browning, & Chesterman, 2006). About a decade ago, women constituted less than 20% of the professoriate in the UK (9%), USA (16%), and Finland (18%) (O'Connor, 2000). Similarly, at about that time, in Australia, 18% of professors (Level D) and 13% associate professors (Level E) (Winchester et al., 2006) were women. In 2004, the figures had improved with women professors rising to 24% and associate professors to 16%. The gradual increase in women's representation in the professoriate has continued in recent years (Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Equity Services, 2011) (Table 1). However, at the current rate of progress, equitable

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Table 1. Percentage of women in the professoriate

<i>Year</i>	<i>Associate Professor</i>	<i>Professor</i>
2006	26.7%	19.1%
2007	27.9%	19.8%
2008	28.7%	20.1%
2009	30.6%	22.4%
2010	32%	22.9%

*Figure 1. Percentage of women in the professoriate.*

representation is still decades away based on the low level increases over a 5 year period (Figure 1). Additionally, even in 2010, many Australian universities had very low proportions of women in the professoriate with a range from 23.3% to 51.8% for associate professors and 15% to 52.7% for professors (QUT, 2011).

The under-representation of women in the professoriate cannot be explained by either a lack of women academics in the career pipeline or by discipline influences. For some time, participation rates for women at undergraduate levels in many disciplines has been over 50% with women making up over half of lecturing staff in universities (White, 2001). Although there is an under-representation of women in science-related disciplines, there is a concentration of women from faculties traditionally perceived as female-orientated (i.e., Health Sciences, Humanities and Arts, Social Sciences) (Winchester et al., 2006). Hence, overall, there appears to be a 'pipeline blockage' somewhere between women completing tertiary education and entering academe, and reaching the professoriate in Australia. This situation is similar elsewhere, for example in Canada (Sussman & Yssad, 2005; van Anders, 2004).

The University Culture

Higher education has a traditionally masculine culture with women being ignored or regarded as having less impact (Diezmann & Grieshaber, 2009; White, 2003). At its least favourable, the university culture can include discrimination towards women and their career progression. Ward (2003) argues that although women experience isolation and anxiety, they are often hesitant to admit to direct personal discrimination. She claims further that “it is clear that women suffer from discrimination and that change is needed” (p. 96). Thus, the university culture can impact substantially on women’s achievements by creating favourable conditions for the progression of men and unfavourable conditions for women, for example, in workloads.

Three key differences have emerged from various studies of male and female academic workloads. First, female workloads are oriented towards teaching and pastoral care, whilst male workloads are oriented towards research and profile building (Bagilhole & White, 2003; Bazely et al., 1996; Boreham et al., 2008; Foster, 2001). For example, Forgasz and Leder (2006) conducted a study in one Australian university that involved 14 female and eight male academics. The participants completed a form detailing their work tasks at six times throughout the day over a two-week period. Results showed that work for men included research, administration, university committee duties and off campus presentations and lectures. In contrast, women mainly spent time preparing and conducting student work and advising students. Both female and male academics worked outside office hours on similar activities. The highest reported activities in order were: administrative work, preparing and evaluating students’ work, and scholarly writing.

Second, pastoral care is an important component of women’s work. A study by Chesterman, Ross-Smith and Peters (2003) that involved five universities revealed that women academics emphasised work that encouraged the development of staff and students, and, unsurprisingly, had a focus on values such as collaboration and consultation rather than hierarchical management duties. Thus, the work preferences of women might be a factor in their actual work tasks.

Finally, males are either equivalent to or more successful than females in research productivity including publication. Male academics prioritise research more than females and apply for more grants than females (Soliman, 1998). However the literature is divided on the publication of males and females. Boreham et al. (2008) report that women are less productive in publications than men with the gender gap more pronounced in the sciences and humanities but smaller in the social sciences. In contrast, Sax, Hagedorn, Arredondo and Dicrisi (2002) in an American study of 8,544 (6,160 male and 2,384 female), full-time faculty members found that factors affecting research productivity and publications were almost identical for males and females. Similarly, Sax et al. (2002) reported that family-related variables including having dependent children had little to no effect on research productivity. The report indicated that for women, child rearing does not impede research productivity. Sax et al. (2002) argue that this is possibly because women with children “attempt to

do more with their limited time” (p. 436). The reports of no differences in research productivity between males and females are heartening.

Apart from workload, a further outcome of the male hegemony of academia is that women have difficulty being promoted to managerial positions (White, 2003). White reports that in higher education in Australia “Male managers tend to promote those with a similar profile” (p. 50). Factors that might contribute to this culture include low percentages of women in senior academic positions (Burton, 1997; Carrington & Pratt, 2003), bureaucratic status quo (Thornton, 1996), gendered career structures (O’Connor, 2000) and informal male networks (Thomas & Davies, 2002). Some insight into the source of a traditional masculine culture was revealed in a comparative study of 30 female academics in Australia and Mauritius (15 from each country) (Thanacoody, Bartram, Barker, & Jacobs, 2006). These authors report that in Australia older men were oriented towards a traditionally masculine culture in academia, while in Mauritius, men of all ages held this view. This perspective may be due to traditional beliefs in Mauritius which place women in more conservative roles. However, the implication of these findings about older Australian men in academia suggests that the retirement of influential men from leadership roles might create more favourable conditions for women’s career progression.

Women’s difficulty in being appointed to managerial roles and the low overall proportion of women in the professoriate has flow on effects for female Vice Chancellors. Carrington and Pratt (2003) explain the relationship: “university senior executives (pro vice-chancellors, deputy vice-chancellors, and vice-chancellors) are nearly always drawn from the ranks of senior academics, 80 per cent of whom are male” (p. 7). Thus, women’s representation in the professoriate influences the number of female Vice Chancellors. Over the past decade, there has been a marginal improvement in the number of female Vice Chancellors in Australia with an increase from nine (23.9%) in 2000 (Carrington & Pratt, 2003) to 10 (25.6%) in 2012 (Universities Australia, n.d.). In 2000, none of the female Vice Chancellors was employed by the research intensive Group of Eight (GO8) universities but in 2012, there was one GO8 female Vice Chancellor (Carrington & Pratt, 2003; Universities Australia, n.d.).

THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

Since 2005, when a nationwide research quality assessment was announced, the academic labour market within Australia has been volatile with universities jockeying to recruit high performing researchers nationally and internationally and at the same time sometimes promoting their own high performing staff to encourage them to remain. Elsewhere, when research quality assessments have been undertaken, the effect on academic careers has been significant. For example, in the UK, the impact of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) on the labour market was far reaching (Jamrozik, Weller, & Heller, 2004): “academe temporarily becomes a giant intellectual meat-market as higher-education institutions vie with each other

to buy in staff with impressive CVs” (p. 553). Although such market conditions create opportunities for high performing researchers, women cannot necessarily take advantage of these opportunities if they require a change of location.

GENDER AND SOCIETY

The state of play in Australian universities in the second decade of the twenty-first century reflects contemporary Australian society. There continue to be challenges to longstanding institutional and interpersonal arrangements such as the dominance of men and male power in leading positions in the academy; and in some faculties, the dominance of men. Much feminist activity in the 1980s was located in universities and spawned approaches to equal opportunity. However, despite long-term presence, the effects of equal opportunity policies and their ability to transform established institutional and interpersonal relationships of power can be quite small (see Connell, 2006). For instance, policies for equal employment opportunities (EEO) have been in existence for approximately 20 years in Australia (Winchester et al., 2006) and have achieved much in making workplaces more family friendly and responding to the circumstances of women academics. Nevertheless, at the current rate of improvement of approximately one percent annually (Table 1), it will be approximately two decades before equitable representation in the professoriate.

Drawing on understandings of gender from Connell (2002) and notions of power and resistance from Foucault (1977, 1980), we understand gender as a “matter of the social relations within which individuals and groups act” (Connell, 2002, p. 9). Where patterns among social relations are “enduring or extensive” (p. 9) (such as gender), Connell (2002) sees them as structural, meaning that gender is part of the social structure of society. This being the case, gender is pervasive in that it is a “pattern in our social arrangements, and in the everyday activities or practices which those arrangements govern” (p. 9). Connell (2002) uses the term “gender regimes” to explain that such arrangements are a “usual feature of organizational life” (p. 53). Identifying gender regimes is, therefore, one way to investigate the established institutional and interpersonal relationships of power in universities. While gender regimes can and do change, resistance is often associated with any such change. Ongoing challenges to established gender regimes and any associated resistance mean that gender relations are constantly being re-worked and re-negotiated as part of the relationships of everyday life (see Foucault, 1980). Meanings associated with gender are the product of the social systems from which they emerged and, as such, privilege particular social interests and specific gendered ways in everyday life. Previous studies have documented the direct and indirect discrimination which women in the academy in Australia and elsewhere have experienced (e.g., White, 2003). A major factor in this discrimination is the “narrow white Anglo-Celtic male management profile” (p. 45). More recent data about the Australian context in the lead up to the first assessment of research quality in Australia — *Excellence*

C. M. DIEZMANN & S. J. GRIESHABER

in Research for Australia (ERA) — from a study commissioned by *Universities Australia*¹ follows.

THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to identify the catalysts and inhibitors in the careers of women who were appointed as full professors or associate professors between 2005 and 2008—a period of dynamic labour market conditions for academics in Australia. Henceforth, we refer to these women as “new women professors” (NWP). In this chapter, we discuss some of the challenges they have experienced as academics on the journey to becoming professors and their future aspirations.

This study had two phases. In Phase 1, the perceptions of new professors (female and male) were explored through an electronically administered survey titled *The New Professors in Australian Universities* survey. This survey had four sections. Sections 1 to 3 were based on Ward’s (2000) survey that was modified for electronic distribution. These sections related to “Current Appointment”, “Personal Background (Items 2a-26) and “Professional Background” (Items 27-46). This section also included an open comment space where respondents were invited to add additional comments about any of the questions. The new fourth section, “Focus Group Participation”, invited female participants who were interested in being part of the focus groups (Phase 2) to provide contact information. A total of 520 New Professors responded to the survey comprising 240 (48.5%) males and 255 (51.5%) females. New men professors were included in this survey for comparative purposes. (Twenty-five non-responses for gender were received and their surveys excluded.) In Phase 2, focus groups were conducted with 21 NWPs to gain further insight into the lives and careers of NWP, using conversational interviews. These conversations were underpinned by eight questions relating to the careers of NWP such as “What sort of encouragement and opportunities have you had in the academy on your journey towards becoming a professor?” Participants for the survey and focus groups were drawn from 33 (of 39) Australian universities.

The quantitative data from the survey were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The sample of new professors provides adequate gender representation for comparative purposes because an almost equal number of male and female participants responded to the survey (n=495; M=240, F=255). The qualitative data from the survey responses and the focus group interviews were analysed thematically (Creswell, 2008) using pattern matching and explanation building (Patton, 2002).

In all reporting, the participants in the survey and interviews are identified as follows. The first letter indicates whether they engaged in the Survey (S) or Interview (I). The second letter indicates if they were Female (F) or Male (M). A two or three digit code was also assigned to participants in the interviews (n=21) or surveys (n=520) respectively. Hence, the identifier S-F132 would indicate a survey respondent who was female and assigned the code of 132.

RESULTS

In what follows, we report findings from the survey and focus group interviews that provide insight into the challenges experienced by NWP, particularly experiences of discrimination, and their career aspirations.

Career Challenges for Women Professors

Career challenges for NWP are much more confronting and difficult to deal with than aspirations. The data revealed four inhibitors that act as barriers to the advancement of women in the academy. These are negative discrimination (discussed in what follows); the tension between personal and professional life; the boys' club, and isolation (see Diezmann & Grieshaber, 2009, 2010a, 2010b).

Survey responses about negative discrimination against women were overwhelming and included open and latent discrimination. Examples of open discrimination reported by respondents related to sexism and bullying (including rude comments and reference to physical characteristics), harassment and dismissive behaviour, a lack of leave for study, overloaded teaching responsibilities and limited leadership opportunities. The following comments by female academics describe open discrimination in relation to issues of employment, promotion and leadership.

I applied for a job that had been earmarked for an internal male candidate. The advertisement required a person who had taught in the areas that are my strength. I fulfilled all criteria, especially as I had supervised 25 PhDs to completion and been postgraduate convenor for a large department...the man who got it had not supervised one PhD to completion. The selection committee had no-one on it in the areas advertised, the external person was a friend of the successful candidate, there was one woman – from a different discipline. I appealed, was told that I had been unjustly treated, but they could not reverse the decision. The HoD [Head of Department] told me that the other candidate was a father of two children and I was not a 'breadwinner' and 'had a job anyhow'. (S-F168)

Being asked in a senior tutor role to carry out the same tasks as the senior lecturers in the institution. (S-F058)

I was denied a deputy directorship on the basis of having a career that involved "research and small children". (S-F064)

I was being proposed as Head of School. The male academics of the School went on a visit to Chinese Universities. The two female academics could not go because of children responsibilities etc. The men decided, over some beers, that it would be better not to have me as Head of School. End of story. (S-F124)

[I] was told that I did not get a PhD scholarship as it was unlikely that as a mother I would continue to study. (S-F205)

C. M. DIEZMANN & S. J. GRIESHABER

More mentoring was provided to men to apply for grants. (S-F228)

A male academic colleague openly harassed me about receiving research grants and reducing my teaching responsibilities. EEO addressed the issue. (S-F243)

I was deputy chair of academic board and was told that I didn't have enough 'gravitas' to apply to be chair when the vacancy was in the offing. (The eventual 'anointed person' was of course a man). As I am now in a Dean's position elsewhere I suspect that whatever gravitas is, I probably have enough! I have also observed the way (at my previous university) women are discussed on various selection panels and internal grant applications and there has been little respect for women compared with men. (S-F230)

These examples illustrate the ways in which gender regimes manifest themselves overtly in university contexts. Male hegemony (White, 2001) produces relations of male dominance and female subordination, which is apparent in reasons provided by the respondents above for awarding a scholarship, appointments, promotion, and leadership roles. As part of an unjust social system, male hegemony provides distinct advantages to males while diminishing opportunities for females, and in some cases, oppressing females. Historical understandings of the gendered division of labour in capitalist societies have been given as 'reasons' for male 'breadwinners' to be privileged over female applicants, despite the circumstances of the female applicants.

Latent discrimination also included a culture in which there were different standards for males and females. Consistent with the literature, females reported doing work without extra pay, being expected to work harder, and as for the examples of open discrimination (above), females recounted experiences of gender-based differences in job appointments (see O'Connor, 2000; White, 2001).

When I was acting Head of Department I had to apply, address selection criteria and be interviewed. This is not the case for next year's HoD [Head of Department] – they were simply appointed and no one else invited. (S-F121)

I have found previously that there has been an expectation that I work harder (take on more work) than my male peers until I became HoD/Assoc Prof ... then I did it to myself! (S-F254)

...very subtle but instances of not receiving my title, Dr or Prof when male colleagues have. (S-F248)

I had to prove I was serious about my career at every point. It was never assumed that I would do postgraduate study (although I had excellent results), apply for promotion, apply for positions of authority. For male peers this was assumed and they were mentored into it. (S-F308)

Latent: Head of School giving greater teaching loads to women Lecturers and Senior Lecturers because 'they were good at it' (i.e. nurturing). This was sustained over many years, effectively diminishing opportunities for research. (S-F319)

Latent [discrimination] against [me] in terms of part time working with 3 young children (S-F347)

Latent: For several years, I and another female colleague were appointed as Clinical Directors – a common female pathway. A Departmental Review recommended that this was not helping our academic careers at all. (S-F363)

The difference in expectations and assumptions held about females and males is conspicuous in these examples. Assigning greater teaching loads (nurturing work) to female academics and making assumptions that females are not interested in further study and careers in the academy reinforces traditional stereotypes of women as nurturing, and as carers involved in home duties. In the case of one respondent (S-F363), instigating a Departmental Review was a positive step that should have produced more positive outcomes for female academics. This example shows how analysis of female career paths produced a deliberate action and subsequent change that has the potential to alter the career paths of women in this traditionally feminine discipline. Such close analyses of organisational regimes provide insight into the workings of power relationships at the individual and system level, and can potentially identify further 'invisible' but discriminatory practices.

Unsurprisingly, some respondents reported experiencing both open and latent discrimination.

Failure to consult, being ignored and blatant sexist remarks being made at meetings etc. by male peers and chairs. (S-F047)

[I was] sexually harassed, not promoted when men were promoted with similar qualifications. (S-F322)

I have had tremendous support, but also been openly ignored and put down because I was female by others. (S-F070)

However, it was not only females who commented about discrimination. Female views were supported by comments from some new male professors: "I have seen wonderful women torn to shreds and their ashes fertilise ego driven male Deans and one VC" (S-M039). A small number of comments indicated that males were not solely responsible for discrimination against women.

I was overlooked for promotion and positions of authority (until I changed institutions) by an older woman who, I believe, felt threatened by me. My experience of discrimination has been from both sexes (I have also had great bosses of both sexes), but the most active and overt discrimination came from a female boss. (S-F316)

Stereotypes of leadership based around male models; male jealousy and feelings of threat at having a woman in authority; active resistance and undermining from males; also some women have also been influenced by stereotypes and tend to respect men in authority more than women. (S-F486)

Discrimination appears to be a cultural issue in universities. It can affect a range of staff including females and males and is practiced variously by males (predominantly) and reportedly a much smaller number of females.

Career Aspirations of New Women Professors

Responses to the survey and conversation during the interviews indicated that a considerable number of NWP were interested in career advancement beyond reaching the professoriate and some had future career plans. Career paths for women differed from men in that they were more varied than the traditional path that males usually followed (Chesterman et al., 2003; Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Career advancement. The survey revealed that approximately two-thirds of new professors (66%) (n=326) were interested in further career advancement (Survey Question 41a), with no discernible differences in responses compared by gender. The new professors' career aspirations varied but related predominantly to a role other than pro vice chancellor, deputy vice chancellor or vice chancellor (Survey Question 41b).

The majority of both female and male survey respondents considered that "professor" was the optimum career rank (Table 2). Responses for career rank when considering further career advancement resulted in seven categories namely, Full Professor, Research Position, Head of School/Department, Dean, Position Outside University, Not Sure and Other (Table 2). Responses were mostly similar for females and males across each category with the exceptions of Full Professor and Not Sure categories. Approximately 15% more females than males indicated that they aspired to be a Full Professor. Conversely, approximately 10% more males than females

Table 2. Optimum rank for further career advancement

<i>Optimum Rank</i>	<i>Female (n=99)</i>	<i>Male (n=99)</i>
Full Professor	64.6%	49.5%
Research position	9%	12.1%
Head of School/Department	8%	10.1%
Dean	5%	6%
Position Outside University	5%	4%
Not Sure	6%	16.2%
Other (Federation Fellow, Nobel Prize)	2%	2%

(Source: Diezmann & Grieshaber, 2009, p. 55)

stated that they were Not Sure of their future career aspirations. A further difference was noted in the reasons for selecting the Other category. The males' Other responses were aspiring to be a Federation Fellow² and to win a Nobel Prize. In contrast, a couple of females aspired to advance to Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC). Thus, in neither gender was there a substantial pool of staff aspiring to senior leadership positions within the university.

Over 60% of staff (n=369) were confident or optimistic that they would achieve their ambition (Survey Question 41c). However, a comparison of male and female responses to this question revealed a statistically significant difference that can most likely be attributed to males being more confident. That NWP's were less confident than males is consistent with Ward's (2003) finding that the majority of female professors in Australia experienced anxiety and self-doubt about their professional roles.

Female respondents were asked about the likelihood of a female being promoted to a key role compared with a male of similar qualifications and age (Survey Question 41d). A comparison of the "more likely" and "less likely" responses indicated that 35% and 50% respectively of NWP's consider that a female is less likely to be appointed than a male to deputy vice chancellor (DVC) (n=246) and vice chancellor (VC) (n=244) roles respectively. The decrease in likelihood of promotion from deputy vice chancellor (35% consider this more likely) to vice chancellor (50% consider this less likely) might be a reflection of women's confidence in achieving these ambitions. It could also be that women are well aware of the dominance of males in vice chancellor roles in Australian universities and possibly see deputy vice chancellor as more attainable than vice chancellor. This dominance or gender regime (Connell, 2002) works to perpetuate the *status quo* through historical factors such as the gendered division of labour and the seemingly 'natural' association between males and appointment to powerful positions. Women have a breadth of career aspirations that extend beyond senior leadership roles in universities. However, it is unclear whether this is a deliberate choice or whether it is the result of the unavailability of attaining a senior leadership role within a university. Few women aspire to senior leadership positions in a university (e.g., DVC, VC). Thus, the current disproportion of men compared with women in these roles is likely to remain unless there is considerable intervention and support for women.

Future career plans. New women professors who participated in the focus groups identified four main categories of response with regard to future career plans: contentment with current position; building international links; succession planning; and research leadership. While building international links is not discussed here, it is important that women should be considered for leadership positions that include a degree of international work.

Six NWP's (28.6%) stated in the interviews that they were content in their current position and had no ambition to go into more senior university management. In some cases, there was an added qualification that they were content for the moment as they

wanted to consolidate their current position; however, they might seek promotion in the future. Two participants recently achieved their Professorships and while one was “psychologically and emotionally growing into that role” (I-F03), the other stated she had to “learn to become an academic” (I-F14). Others had experienced acting roles as head of department that they found stressful and difficult in terms of managing people, which made them feel happy with their current position (I-F106). Being content in their current position may reflect a plateau effect given the effort required to achieve professorial status and the low proportion of women reaching the professoriate in many countries (e.g., O’Connor, 2000). These statistics suggest that while reaching the professoriate is not out of bounds for women, it remains a male dominated organisational regime (see Connell, 2002) that is proving difficult to infiltrate.

For another NWP, the stringent requirements for further promotion at her university (presumably to full professor), including “needing a lot of research funding” (I-F19), mitigated any further promotion applications. This type of criteria in promotions or appointment can inhibit women’s progress. Statistics suggest that women overall are not as successful in obtaining research funding as their male counterparts. For example, the outcomes of the Australian Research Council’s (ARC) funding in 2009 showed that the participation rate for females compared with males in the Discovery grant scheme was 1:3 (ARC, n.d.). Additionally, female applicants had a lower success rate (19.6%) compared with males (22.4%). The lower success rate for females compared with males has remained constant since 2005, with female rates being between 2.5% and 5% lower during this period. Thus, there is need for attention to the participation of women in this grant scheme and to the factors affecting their lack of success. Factors worth considering include the possibility of assessors discriminating (consciously and unconsciously) against female or ethnic minority academics, given that this has occurred in the assessment of undergraduate student work by academics (see Francis, Read, Melling, & Robson, 2003). Increasingly, tacit dimensions of gender regimes (Connell, 2002) are being revealed as researchers investigate the dynamics of power relationships operating at the micro level (see Foucault, 1977).

Succession planning. Seven NWPs (33.3%) reported in the interviews that they were aware that there was a need to plan for the future, or as they stated, to look into succession planning. This took the form of developing plans for the department and also developing plans to replace themselves. In part, this included mentoring younger academics and encouraging younger members into an academic career and to the Professoriate.

I am also looking at succession planning – developing people who can take over. I am not going to be around forever. I am pretty satisfied with where I am but looking at the department within here rather than the university or other positions. (I-F12)

The situation we have in [discipline] is that we are all pretty much the same age; we are all pretty much between 45 and 55 so I think we need to think about how we want to encourage younger [staff] to want to pursue an academic career otherwise in 10 years time we will be in trouble. Also in the Department I would like to see more A/Profs and Profs by the time I go. (I-F11)

According to Barden (2006), succession planning involves anticipating a change in leadership and preparing for it internally. Whitchurch (2006) argues that as universities become increasingly complex in providing mass higher education to regional as well as international markets, programs for academic managers, such as heads of department, to provide succession planning are increasingly important.

These NWP are aware of the need for succession planning in their organisational units. Involving them might provide opportunities for women to rise through the ranks and along the way make inroads into some of the gendered organisational regimes within universities. Therefore, universities should actively provide for women to be involved in succession planning.

Research leadership. Six NWPs (28.6%) reported in the interviews that they were currently research managers and their future plans involved consolidating that position or applying for more grant funding to sustain their position. One participant aspired to a research only position and was finding difficulties in achieving this goal.

I'm trying to go down the route of getting a research only position. That is what I would like to do. I have applied for NHMRC [National Health and Medical Research Council] Fellowships and have not been successful. The process was so soul destroying I won't continue. . . So I am continuing to apply for grants and bigger grants, leading an international cohort of researchers as well. . . But I still want to make my mark and I am struggling to make that mark in the remaining 10–12 years that I've got. I know what mark I want to make but it is a hard slog. (I-F09)

For this participant, the Fellowship application process had proved elusive, as well as emotionally damaging from a professional perspective (and probably personally). Little other information was provided about this situation, but effective mentoring and appropriate advice from the university research office may have assisted this academic in knowing and understanding the expectations and requirements. Ensuring that women who aspire to research leadership roles have access to support mechanisms is part of the reorganisation of gender regimes required. If the current rate of improvement is any indication, EEO policies are not the only answer. More needs to be done about university practices and the everyday “social relations within which individual and groups act” (Connell, 2002, p. 9). University practices should be proactive in supporting women to attain research leadership positions within their faculties and at the university level. However, university culture often interferes with policy that is well intentioned: “*I have been the beneficiary of affirmative action*

C. M. DIEZMANN & S. J. GRIESHABER

policies, as well as the subject of ongoing sexist views – from the same institutions. Official policies support women's participation but informal culture does not" (S-F329). This informal culture of power relationships is often invisible to the perpetrators but has significant effects on those outside these relationships.

CONCLUSION

Women face considerable challenges in the academy to achieve career success at the professorial level. Negative discrimination is a major inhibitor to women academics' achievement. The data shared in this chapter provide insight into open and latent discrimination occurring in the social relations enacted on a daily basis in universities around Australia. They provide evidence of the pervasiveness of gender regimes and how gender operates in multiple and complex ways to affect the lives of both female and male academics. Discrimination against women suggests that the traditionally masculine culture of universities is still troubled by informal and powerful male networks (Thomas & Davies, 2002), male hegemony (White, 2001), and gendered career structures (O'Connor, 2000). This inequity extends beyond the professoriate to the low proportion of women in senior leadership roles. Although some NWP are content and do not aspire to further advance their careers, others have indicated that their aspirations have been curtailed due to systemic issues, such as the interrelationship between research funding and promotion. Despite EEO policies over the past couple of decades, open and latent discrimination against women show few signs of abating. This culture needs to be addressed because it privileges males and discriminates against females, thus reducing opportunities for females to succeed in the academy. Hence, specific, targeted and proactive analyses and programs that go beyond the auspices of EEO policies are required urgently if there is to be any hope of achieving equity for women in Australian universities before the next few decades slip away. Given the challenges women face in achieving success in the academy, particular attention is needed to identify and ameliorate any further negative influences that might occur from the research quality assessments undertaken in Australian universities in 2010 and again in 2012 (i.e., ERA).

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AUSTRALIAN WOMEN IN THE ACADEMY: CHALLENGES AND ASPIRATIONS

NOTES

- ¹ Universities Australia is the peak body representing the university sector Australia's 39 universities.
- ² The Federation Fellowships scheme reflected the ARC's commitment to supporting world-class researchers to work in Australia however new funding for this scheme ceased in 2008. The current ARC Australian Laureate Fellowships scheme has a similar brief.

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C. M. DIEZMANN & S. J. GRIESHABER

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AUSTRALIAN WOMEN IN THE ACADEMY: CHALLENGES AND ASPIRATIONS

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