

E-MAIL CONTRIBUTIONS**This debate is a 'non-subject'****RICHARD EBRIGHT**

This is a non-subject. It matters not at all whether a researcher is male or female. All that matters in terms of research performance is aptitude, attitude, and effort. All that matters in terms of equity is equal access. In the US life sciences, it is arrant nonsense to assert that institutional discrimination impedes access for women - with institutional preferences running decisively in the opposite direction.

Any researcher in the life sciences in the US involved in faculty recruitment, faculty promotion, graduate-student admissions, award review panels, grant review panels, seminar-series planning, or symposium planning *knows* that during the last decade institutional preferences have run decisively in favour of women. Indeed, in many cases, these preferences have been stated in writing, and, in some cases, they have been enforceable by administrative sanction. To read messages denying this reality is offensive.

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