

naturejobs

**JOBS OF
THE WEEK**

The poor representation of women and minorities in science is an all-too-familiar tale. Despite some degree of progress, the issue has yet to be fully addressed. Often when magazines and journals tackle the subject, they do so from the perspective of equal rights — emphasizing that these under-represented groups deserve to take their rightful place within the scientific enterprise at universities, in industry and in government.

This is, of course, true. But the issue goes well beyond equal rights. As the demographics in, for example, the United States change, it is imperative that women and under-represented minorities have the chance to contribute — not only because they deserve to, but because the scientific enterprise of the future needs their contribution if it is to remain healthy, vibrant and talent-rich. Barriers related to cultural mores, money or child-bearing prevent talented scientists from pursuing research, effectively shrinking the applicant pool. On page 98, we explore some of these barriers in the United States and how they could be addressed.

In Europe, attempts to get more women into science have been complicated by the region's diverse culture and history, as detailed on page 101. But here too, efforts are being made to improve the mobility and career prospects of women scientists. As well as antidiscrimination legislation, there are a number of initiatives such as bids to improve networking and the sharing of career advice among women.

But regardless of whether you're talking about Munich or Maine, one issue is consistent wherever you look: institutions worldwide need to find ways to keep women scientists in the profession beyond the assistant professor stage.

Unfortunately, the upshot of repeated efforts to increase participation of women and minorities all-too-often can be summed up with: "There's been some progress, but much more needs to be done." Nevertheless, it is worth updating researchers and administrators about the state of such efforts. The more that fledgling under-represented scientists know, the better off they will be — and the better off the scientific enterprise will be as well.

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