

Leadership Excellence and Gender in Organizations

Longitudinal Career Patterns of Engineering Doctorates: Gender Diversity in the Academic Sector

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The underrepresentation of women in engineering has important consequences for meeting the United States' needs for a larger and talented scientific and technological labor force. Increasing the proportion of women in engineering will help increase the persistence probabilities of female undergraduate and graduate students in engineering, as well as contribute to the range and diversity of ideas toward innovations and solutions to the greatest engineering challenges. Applying a life course perspective analysis of longitudinal data from the Survey of Doctorates (2001-2010), this study finds that female engineering doctorates are more likely than their male counterparts to work in the academic sector. While female engineering PhDs with young children are less likely to be employed initially, they tend to obtain work in the academic sector as time progresses. Since 28% of engineering doctorates change employment sectors, higher education administrators can potentially increase diversity by shaping policies and programs to encourage multiple alternative career pathways to the professoriate.