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Professional Socialization as a tool to Recruit and Retain Women in Graduate

Mathematics. Preliminary report.

The purpose of this study was to investigate policies and practices associated with the increased participation of women in doctoral level mathematical sciences at the two departments: Computational and Applied Math at Rice University and Math Department at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Despite the under-participation of U.S. women citizens in math, especially at doctoral level (Kirkman et al, 2006), the two departments have made concerted efforts to increase the participation of women in recent years. Guided by the policymaking process model (Fowler, 2000) and the professional socialization theory (Weidman, Twale & Stein, 2001), the study attempted to answer this research's main question (What departmental policies and practices influence the process of professional socialization and increase the participation of women in doctoral level mathematical sciences?) through interviews with faculty and female graduate students. The analysis of the existing data and the data I obtained personally by conducting additional interviews in the same departments revealed that the major policies that influenced the process of professional socialization and retention of women revolved around the concepts of reaching out for women and providing them with a supportive environment. (Received September 19, 2007)