Department of Physics and Astronomy
College of Science

UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha
CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

Seminar

Friday, 24 April, 2015

11:00 am - Room 701

Dr Nicola Gaston

School of Chemical and Physical Sciences,
Victoria University

Why science is sexist

It is not a very original insight to remark that the proportion of men and women in scientific careers is out of balance. Outreach targeted at encouraging young women into STEM careers has become rather fashionable, and discussion of both the numbers [1] and suggested explanations for the gender disparity [2], have become increasingly accessible.

This talk will outline the published literature on both the data that demonstrates disparity [3,4] and behavioural studies [5] that explain why gender disparity in the sciences is persistent, with the aim of increasing general understanding of a rather complex issue. It will conclude with a discussion of what needs to change in order for gender equality to improve across the board, and discuss new results that give insight into why some scientific disciplines, such as physics, seem to perform so much worse than disciplines such as biology on this measure.

[1] Nature 495, 5, 2224, 25-27, 28-31, (07 March 2013)

[2] The Economist, Promotion and Self-Promotion, (31 August 2013)

[3] Guiso, L.; Monte, F.; Sapienza, P.; Zingales, L. 2008. Culture, gender, and math. Science 320:11641165.

[4] Knobloch-Westerwick, S.; Glynn, C.J.; Huge, M. 2013. The Matilda Effect in science communication: An experiment on gender bias in publication quality perceptions and collaboration interest. Science Communication 35: 603625

[5] Moss-Racusin, C.A.; Dovidio, J.F.; Brescoll, V.L.; Graham, M.J.; Handelsman, J. 2012. Science faculty[1]s subtle gender biases favor male students. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 109:1647416479.

All Welcome