WOMEN IN ACADEMIA: THE IMPORTANCE OF RECOGNIZING THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS

When research is intended to address the situation of women academics in higher education institutions, in addition to looking around to get an idea of what is happening on a daily basis, a literature search is conducted to find out what has been written. In reviewing the published articles, it can be seen that, in general, what tends to be written about most is the challenges, difficulties, gaps, gender biases, the difficulty of reconciling academic work with family life, the negative effect generated by structuring contexts such as neoliberalism or academic capitalism, among others. Currently, there is a more significant presence of women accessing higher education. However, in universities, they still constitute a minority within the hierarchies of associate or full professor and in those areas of knowledge related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Along with the above, during the last decade, both in Chile and in the rest of the world, a set of legal instruments have been generated to promote gender equality, as well as protocols against gender violence in the sphere of higher education. Consequently, there is a concern, both to make women's situations visible, as well as to achieve gender equity in this space.

Despite the existing and pending challenges, it is possible to find women who in their careers as professors have overcome a number of obstacles and have had remarkable achievements through the conduct of prestigious research, the publication of articles that contribute to the generation of knowledge, are international references in their areas, have are full professor, or have even led strategic processes in their universities. However, these achievements are often invisible or unnoticed by the academic communities, even to themselves, due to the high self-demands they impose on themselves.

It is at this point where we want to emphasize the importance for women who are in the initial stage of their academic career, for example pursuing their doctoral studies or as assistant professors, and even for those who are in the hierarchies of associate professors, to have role models, i.e., references of outstanding women. Knowing the achievements and successful experiences of women professors can not only inspire others, but can also show the way forward to those who are a few steps behind. Let us also consider how complex the academic profession is, whose "rules of the game" are often written in general terms in institutional regulations or policies, but without the details required to navigate and advance in the academy.

Therefore, universities should aim to socialize and recognize women's achievements through different platforms, so that women feel identified with these trajectories and can be considered as an inspiration for their own work, and at the same time connect with these women through collaborative networks or mentoring. In this way, it is possible to contribute to the development and growth of women in academia through the figure of a mentor who can advise, counsel and guide, based on her own experience, on how to overcome certain obstacles. In other words, to promote cooperation in an environment where competitiveness predominates.

When those who lead universities, faculties and/or departments highlight and recognize the achievements of women, new spaces of participation are generated where they can contribute from their experience and point of view to generate a change in the organizational culture for a more equitable and collaborative one that benefits each of its members.

Consequently, universities can contribute to fairer societies since they not only have a role in human capital formation but are also a benchmark in knowledge creation and, therefore, in intellectual reflection on the type of society we want.

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