
Women in Science: making it work

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Health



THE UNIVERSITY
OF ADELAIDE
AUSTRALIA



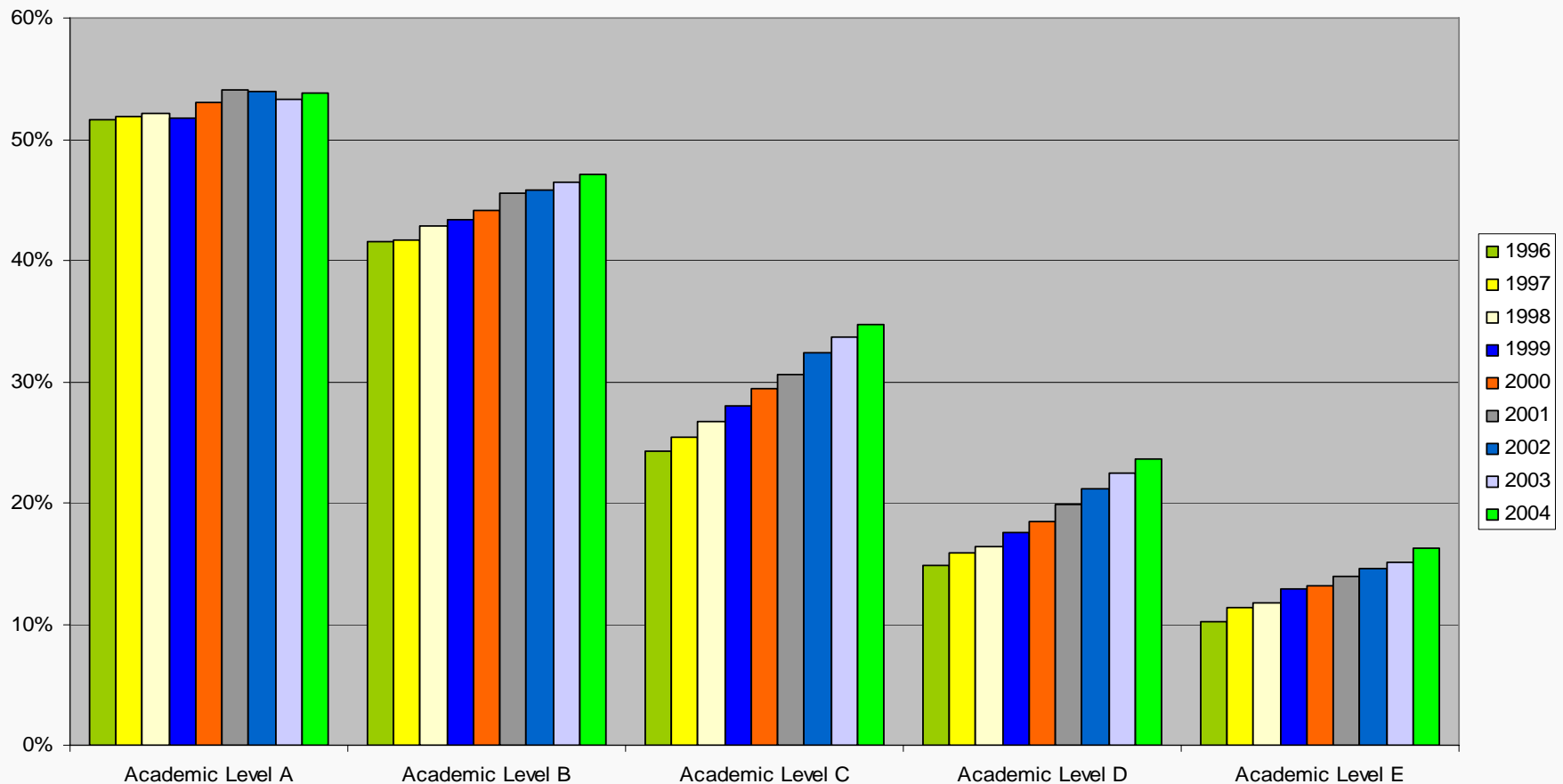
ARC/NHMRC Research
Network in Genes and Environment in Development



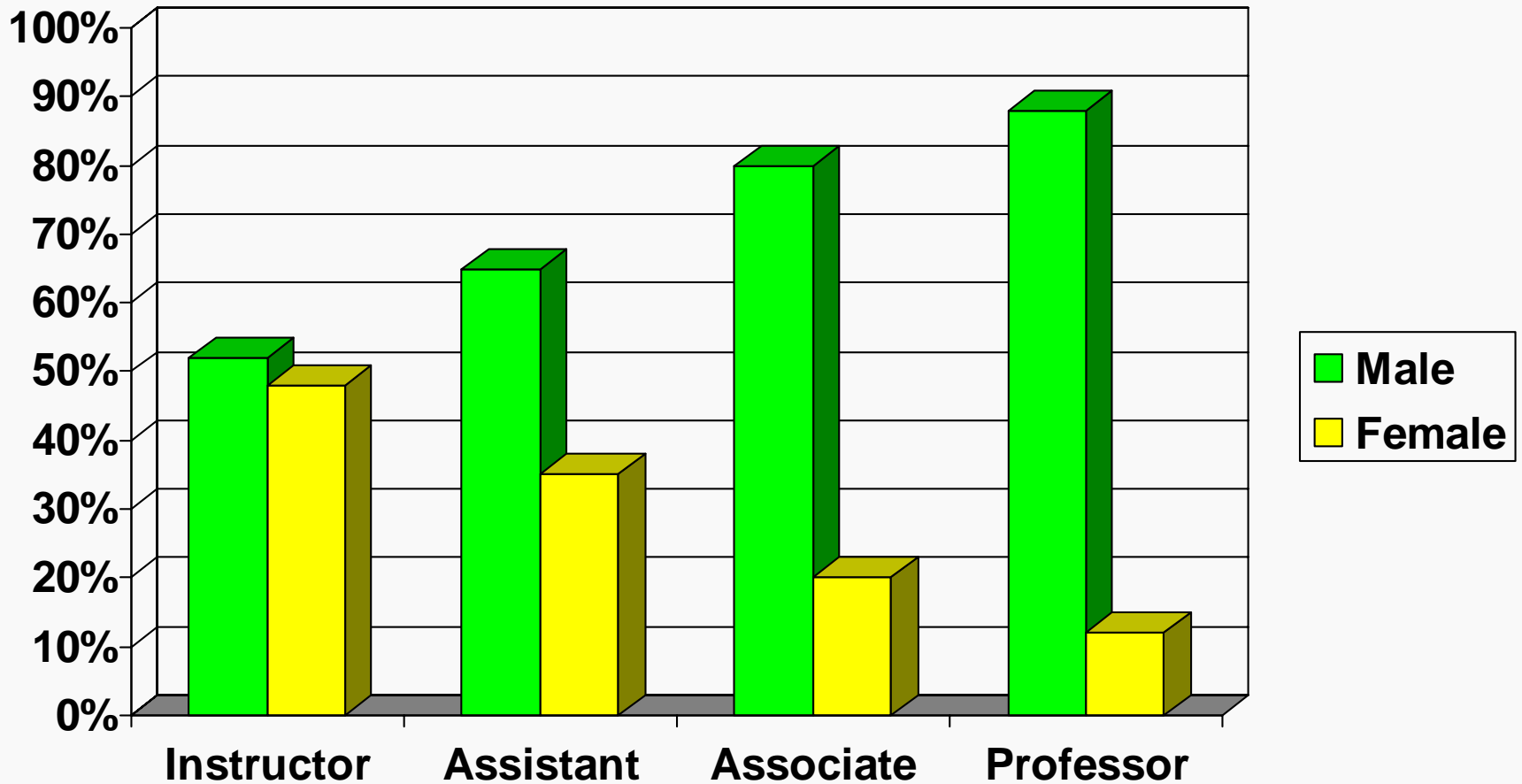
Government
of South Australia

The Female Academic Career Trajectory?

**%Female full time and fractional full time staff as % total staff by Current Duties
Classification 1996 -2004**



Beyond Australia



Source: Payroll/Institutional Research Data

Case Western Reserve University

The Female Academic Career Trajectory?

At the current rate of change in Australia, it will be 2057 before 50% of Professors are female

But we don't have to accept that fatalistically!

You are the storyteller of your own life, and you
can create your own legend or not

Isabel Allende, Chilean Novelist
Niece of Salvador Allende, Assassinated Chilean President



1942-

My path

BA Politics & Philosophy Flinders

1976-1978



Organic vegetable grower

1979-1983



Mother

1983-



BSc part-time Adelaide

1981-1988



BSc Hons full time Adelaide

1990



PhD Adelaide

1991- Feb 1995



Postdoc Adelaide

Jan 1995-



Research Group Leader Adelaide

Find Your Career Direction

- Where are you going?
- How badly do you want to get there?
- What else do you want to do in your life?

There are no shortcuts to any place worth going

Beverly Sills, Opera Singer



1929-2007

Future Work Options

- Bench scientist
- Hospital scientist
- Business development management
- Biotechnology industry
- Clinician
- Public servant eg health policy
- Science communication
- Company sales or technical representative
- Research administration
- Documentary maker
- Conference organisation
- Media consultant
- Bioinformatics
- Facility management
- Or something completely different

Translatable Skills

The skills that you develop as a graduate student and postdoc can be real assets in the private sector.

Our talents, it turns out, are really quite marketable, and quite useful.

Alex Pang (Editor of Encyclopaedia Britannica)

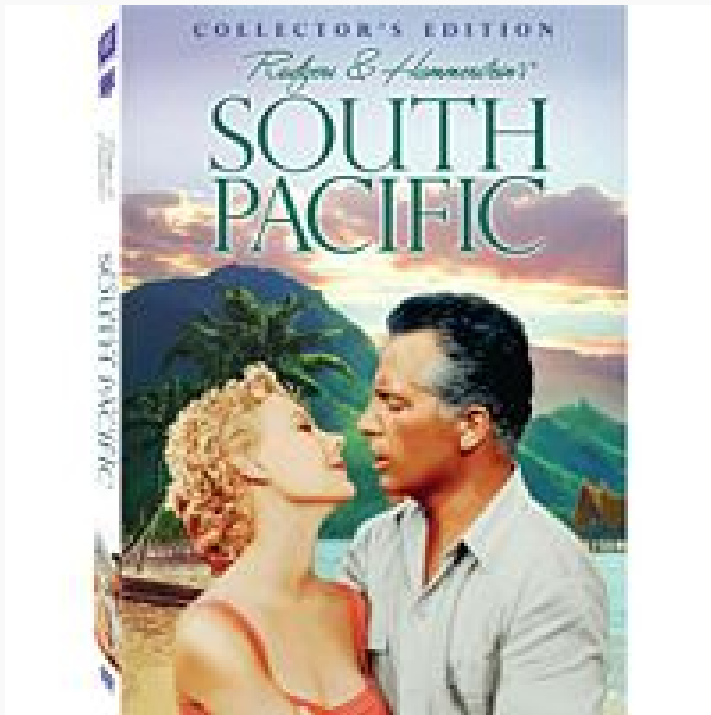
Translatable Skills

- Report writing and public speaking
- Time management, ability to prioritize, working to deadlines
- Critical thinking skills
- Ability to work independently, collaboratively & in a team
- Ability to ask why and constantly learn new things
- Integrity, creativity, attention to detail, persistence
- Exposure to diversity in people helps to make you more accepting of difference and aids life in the global economy
- Increasingly, ability to deal with the media and commercial people
- A PhD gives credibility

How do you get where you are going?

- Plan
- Ambition
- Develop attitude

Planning and ambition



You gotta have a dream,
cos if you don't have a
dream, how you gonna
make a dream come
true

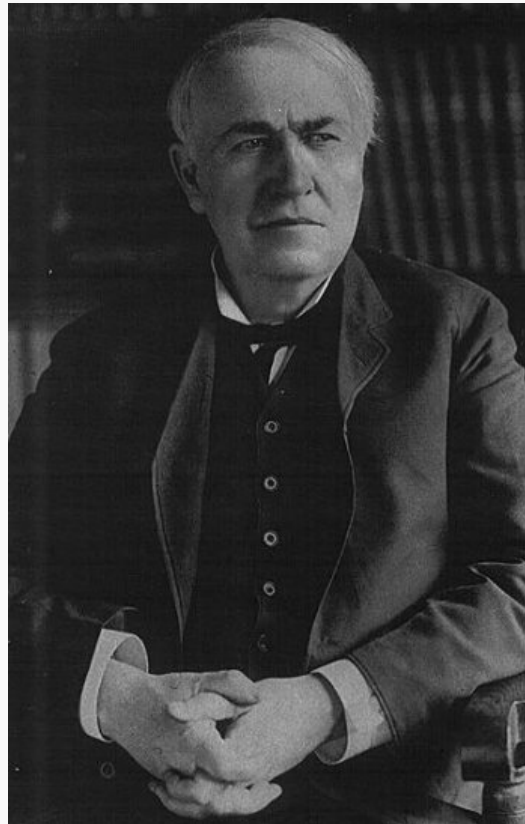
Rodgers and Hammerstein 1958

How do you get where you are going?

- Find your niche
- Find a good mentor
- Publish all your work in a timely fashion
- Be strategic
- Question everything
- Be prepared to take risks
- Be entrepreneurial
- Take every opportunity

Opportunity is missed by most people because it is
dressed in overalls and looks like work

Thomas Edison, Inventor



1847-1931

1,093 US
patents

Life is what happens to you while you're busy
making other plans

John Lennon



1940-1980

How do you get where you are going?

- Dare to win, don't accept mediocrity
- Select 1-3 things to focus on in next 12 months
- Set yourself realistic milestones

Be a legend in your own environment

- Be honest with yourself
- What do you want to be known for?
- What do you do such that others would be prepared to fund you?
- To stand out you need to be different, are you?
- Do you have the necessary outputs?
- If not, why not?
- Is it you? Or something systematic?

In matters of love...

- Choose your partner carefully

When is the right time to have a family?

- There is never a right time

- Papers to write
- Grants to apply for
- Fellowships to apply for
- Students to help
- Conferences to attend

When is the right time to have a family?

- There is a biological clock

When is the right time to have a family?

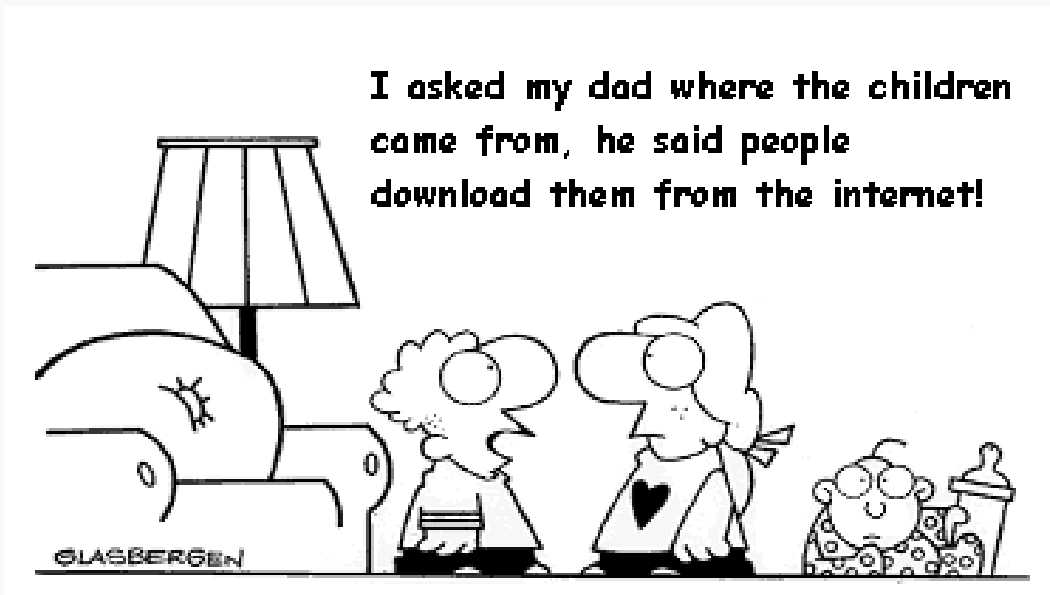
- There is a biological clock
- Female fertility declines after 30, after 35 it is still possible but after 40 it is very hard to become pregnant and maintain it until term

When is the right time to have a family?

- There is a biological clock
- Female fertility declines after 30, after 35 it is harder but after 40 it is very hard to become pregnant and maintain it til term
- Male fertility also declines with increasing sperm DNA damage with age although it is not as critical as it is for women

When is the right time to have a family?

- When it's the right time for you and your partner



At every step of the way

- It's not **what** you know but what you **do** with that knowledge that will make for a successful career and satisfying life

How do you get where you are going?

Just do it!