

Woman on the verge

Transitioning from graduate school to the “real world”

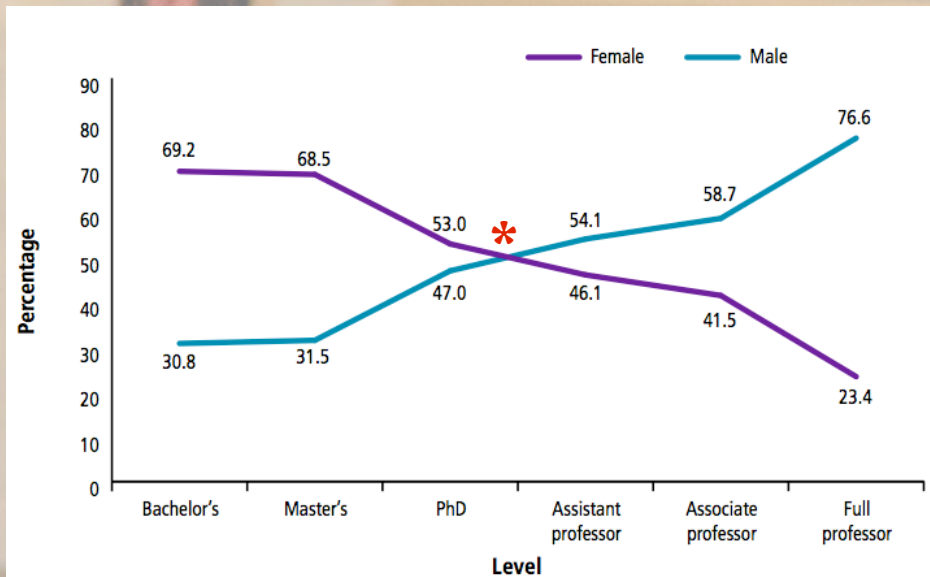


Anita Melnyk

Empowering Voices of Early-Career Scientists

Gender Summit 2013

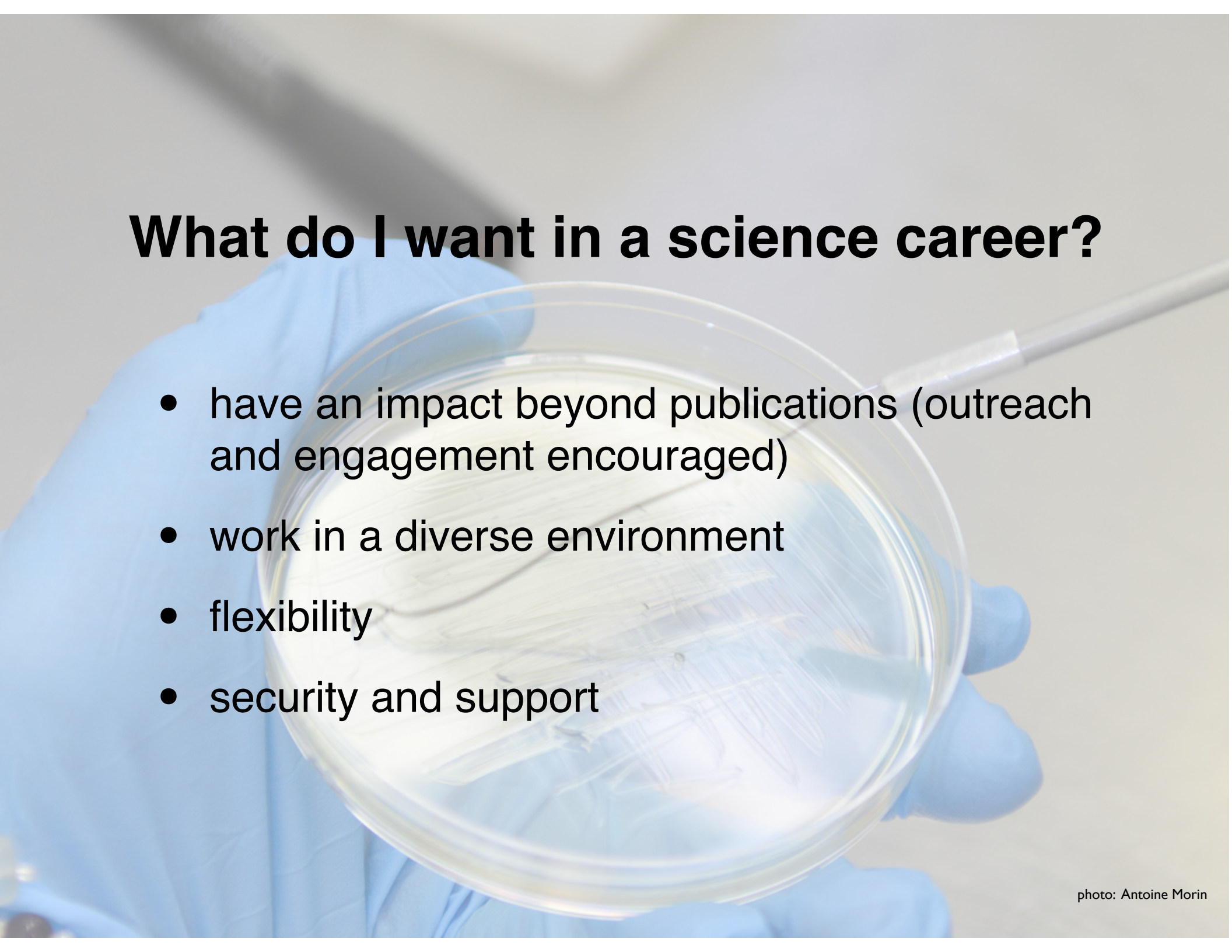
Anita Melnyk



Canadian Council of the Academies

- PhD candidate in biology at the University of Ottawa
- at a critical point in my career; transition from PhD to postdoc
- organizer of the Symposium for Women Entering Ecology and Evolution Today (SWEET)
- topics discussed include implicit gender bias and women developing the art of self-advocacy

What do I want in a science career?

A hand wearing a blue nitrile glove holds a clear petri dish containing a bacterial culture. The culture shows a streaked pattern of growth on a light-colored agar surface. The background is a soft, out-of-focus laboratory setting.

- have an impact beyond publications (outreach and engagement encouraged)
- work in a diverse environment
- flexibility
- security and support

Most importantly maintain work-life balance

A person wearing a white beanie and a dark jacket is walking across a wooden bridge over a stream. The background shows a grassy area, trees, and a building. The scene is bright and sunny.

- personal health
- it is possible; role models in academia
- options to make this more achievable include part-time tenure track positions, larger working groups, parental leave, and on-site affordable daycare



SWEET

SYMPOSIUM FOR WOMEN ENTERING
ECOLOGY AND EVOLUTION TODAY



Participants

Why is there a leaky pipeline?

- lack of funding / jobs
- few mentors
- more difficult to access networks
- gender bias
- lack of family friendly policies



SWEET

SYMPOSIUM FOR WOMEN ENTERING
ECOLOGY AND EVOLUTION TODAY

Recommendations

- increased mentorship between females at different career points
- women should be encouraged to foster negotiation and self advocacy skills
- important to frame advice around the current workplace environment





SWEET

**SYMPOSIUM FOR WOMEN ENTERING
ECOLOGY AND EVOLUTION TODAY**



Key points to be addressed to retain women in science

- job flexibility (part-time positions, familial leaves, dual career hires)
- increased diversity within workplace
- workplace willing to change with the times



SWEET

SYMPOSIUM FOR WOMEN ENTERING
ECOLOGY AND EVOLUTION TODAY



Scientific careers are changing

- new definitions of success as a scientist
- new paths to forge vs previous generation (less jobs, longer and more postdoctoral positions)
- demands for increased time with family irregardless of gender
- new challenges require new policies (e.g. how to overcome implicit gender bias)



SWEET

SYMPOSIUM FOR WOMEN ENTERING
ECOLOGY AND EVOLUTION TODAY



To conclude

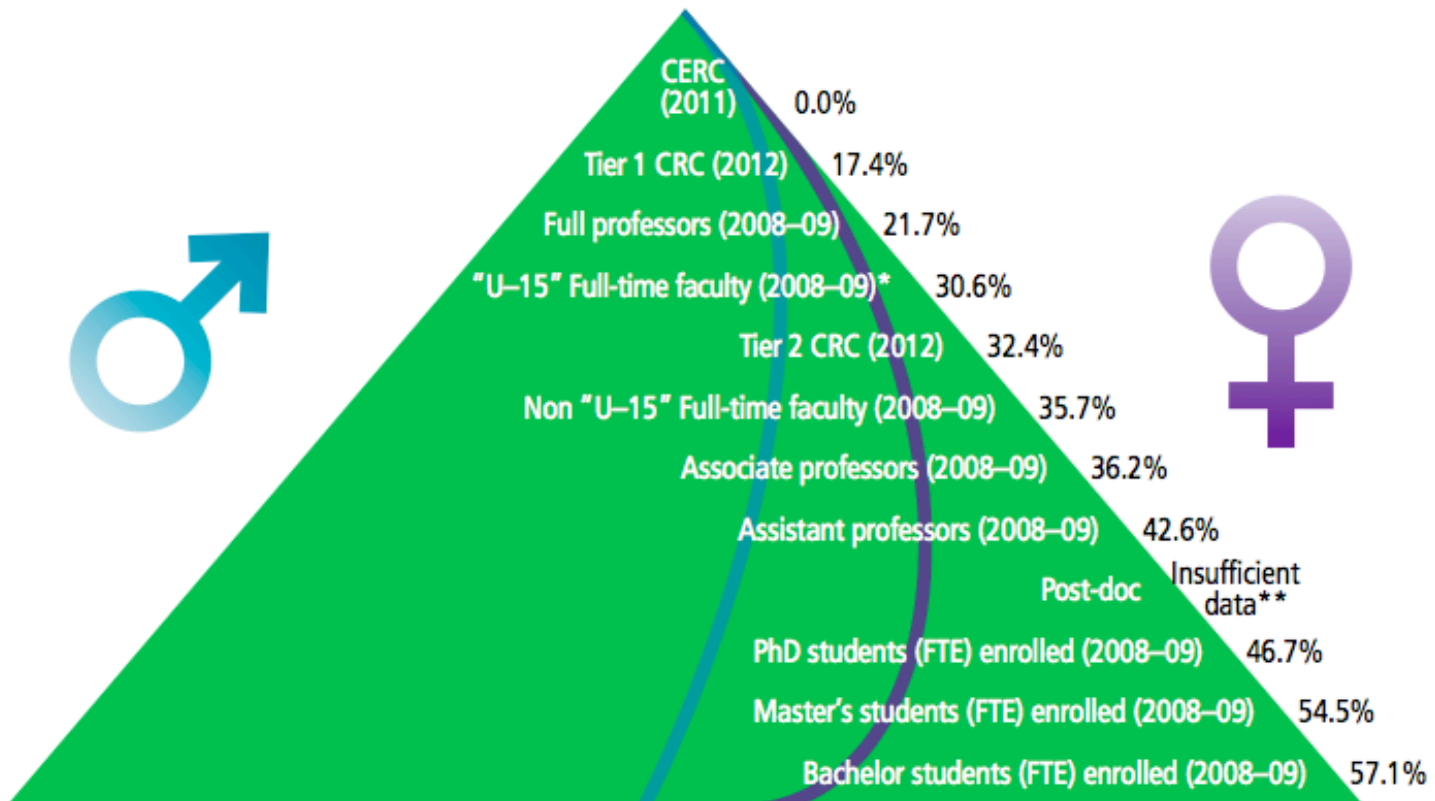
- personally, mentorship and networking will allow me to effectively transition from “the verge” to a postdoctoral position
- changing definition of a “science career”
 - increased pressure to achieve work-life balance
 - less funding and job availability has led to **longer postdoctoral career stage**
- changing workplace means that it will be necessary to effectively take experiences of well-established female scientists and use it to address issues currently faced by female students & postdocs in STEM disciplines

Thanks



- organizers of the Gender Summit 2013 for inviting me to participate
- Rees Kassen & Risa Sargent
- colleagues past and present in the Kassen, Rundle, Sargent labs
- SWEET organizing committee and participants (2012, 2013, 2014)

The “pyramid effect”



Canadian Council of the Academies