The Association for Women Geoscientists is continuing its involvement with the ADVANCEGeo Partnership with a newly awarded National Science Foundation grant, the ADVANCE Partnership: Empowering scientists to transform workplace climate through the ADVANCEGeo community-based intervention program. The intent of this grant is to focus on the community aspect of workplace climate, which includes:

1) Recruiting departments and working with them over a full academic year to reach pre-defined workplace climate goals and

2) Developing a trainer certification program so that more individuals can learn how to effectively facilitate and lead these workshops. AWG will administer all workshop coordination and logistics for the ADVANCEGeo project, contribute to the intellectual development of the research component of the project, and oversee the advisory council and trainer network committee.

The Principal Investigators on the ADVANCE Partnership grant are: Erika Marín-Spiotta (UW-Madison), Blair Schneider (University of Kansas), Jessica Blois (University of California, Merced), Melissa Burt (Colorado State University), Meredith Hastings (Brown University), Sora Kim (University of California, Merced), Allison Mattheis (California State University, Los Angeles), Deb Hanneman (Association for Women Geoscientists) and Billy Williams (American Geophysical Union).

From NCSEGSA session on retention of women in geosciences, spring 2022

Pandemic Parenting & Re-imagining Research: Saved by Slugs!

Christy C. Visaggi, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA

Women have long faced inequities in the geosciences and in academia overall. The COVID-19 pandemic created new challenges for women and magnified problems that already existed. Everyone faced personal and professional stress during the pandemic, but for many mothers, or other primary caregivers, we had to do so while additionally caring for young children as daycares and schools closed. We rapidly learned new technology to deliver instruction online while also attempting to support virtual learning for our own children in K-12. Trying to maintain professional responsibilities, while attending to family needs, as well as ourselves, and doing our best to support our students who were also stressed, made for an incredibly hard and exhausting experience during the pandemic. Now, many of our kids have returned to school, and many of us have returned to the office. Yet, we are still feeling our way back to normalcy as the effects of that prolonged abrupt shift in our lives has had long-lasting impacts.

Numerous studies have examined the effects of the pandemic on women in academia, especially mothers (e.g., Malish et al., 2020; Minello et al., 2020; Staniscuaski et al., 2020; Langin, 2021; McCrory Calarco et al., 2021; Fulweiler et al., 2021). Compared to childless colleagues and men, studies revealed a drop in paper and grant submissions, lack of participation in reviews or panels, and a complete loss of any sort of “work-life balance” as availability and hours to work were reduced. Many of my colleagues were waking up before sunrise, going to the office all weekend, and/or holding meetings after kids went to bed in order to get their work done. While conferences became more accessible through virtual participation, distractions due to responsibilities at home limited many mothers from being able to fully engage in these opportunities. At the same time, women were more likely to pick up additional course loads or service responsibilities at work due to shrinking university budgets, and as is always the case, supporting students beyond classroom learning disproportionately fell on the shoulders of women.

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