

## Research Staff Working Group Report

The recommendations of our group are broad and apply not only to women but to all research staff at Harvard University. These positions are very important for the running of complex facilities and large research groups and especially for the support of major research activities such as those the University expects to lead in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There are currently more than 350 people in such positions, and that number is likely to grow. The importance of these positions is also reflected in the fact that research staff members act as important role models to students both at the undergraduate and the graduate level.

One major finding is the importance of raising the status of these research staff positions so that they garner more respect. Doing so would benefit both the university and the research staff. To this end, Principal Investigator (PI) rights should be extended to research staff as is appropriate. This already happens in other universities and even in some parts of Harvard.

These positions may be an important part of the career path for women in science, and may function as stepping stones for later re-entry into the faculty pipeline or may reflect career decisions as legitimate and desirable positions in and of themselves.

There is also a clear need for re-training opportunities for individuals in these positions who choose to re-enter the faculty pipeline.

In addition, the working group sees a clear need for much improved mentoring of individuals in these research staff positions. Guidance and information about career options should be provided to them to make sure that they are in these positions out of real choice. Related to this, we see a need for training of supervisors so that they can act as well-informed and sensitive mentors.

Raising the level of prestige and importance of these positions can also help to solve the two-body problem of faculty who are being recruited to Harvard University, as these positions could be attractive options for the spouse or partner of a candidate. Doing this would differentially help increase the number of women entering the faculty pipeline, as women scientists more often than men have a spouse who is also in academia.

Given the increasing attention that the University is placing on research in science and engineering and the participation of women scientists in research, it will be particularly important to appreciate the significant contributions made by individuals in these positions, and to act to make their positions more desirable and valued in the academic community.