

The Gender Equity Panel at the SPIE 2016 Astronomical Telescopes and Instrumentation Conference was extremely successful:

- The session was reasonably well attended (~given the fact that it was competing with a number of other presentations taking place at the same time in other conferences of the symposium.

- A number of high profile SPIE community members were in attendance, including the symposium chair/co-chair Colin Cunningham and Suzanne Ramsay, and the SPIE CEO Eugene Arthurs.

- The session has been reported on in the SPIE conference news stream (text copied below), see:

<http://spie.org/about-spie/press-room/spie-astronomical-telescopes--instrumentation-2016-news-and-photos>

- One immediate effect of the panel discussion which took place on Tuesday afternoon was the announcement this morning Thursday that the SPIE had modified their policy forbidding children on the conference premises (text copied below), see:

<http://spie.org/conferences-and-exhibitions/astronomical-telescopes-and-instrumentation>

Update from SPIEastro

SPIE appreciates feedback on policy regarding admission of young children to conference activities.

In an effort to accommodate this year's attendees as best we can, for the remainder of SPIE Astronomical Telescopes + Instrumentation 2016, the policy is being modified to allow children to accompany their parents into conference activities.

Going forward, this policy will be reassessed by SPIE leadership.

We regret any negative impacts the existing policy has had. In addition to accommodating parents at our meeting, we hope that children might be inspired by this exposure to explore the Universe through photonics.

Toward gender equity in a difficult year

The past year has been emotionally difficult for the astronomy community, noted **Claire Max** (above right), director of the University of California Observatories and chair of a panel discussion Tuesday afternoon on Effective Ways to Deal with Gender Equity in the Adaptive Optics Community.

Comments reflected that year's difficulties, ranging beyond the panel's stated scope as attendees related multiple factors that create challenges in the pursuit of a career in astrophysics. Participants cited issues with sexual harassment; unconscious bias; workplaces that are not designed to comfortably accommodate women as well as men; conferences scheduled on weekends, when it is difficult to find child care; and policies against bringing young children into conference or poster sessions.

(One result of hearing attendees comments was an adjustment by SPIE of its policies for SPIE Astronomical Telescopes + Instrumentation to allow parents to bring their children into those activities; see the "[Update from SPIEastro](#)" on the event web site for details.)

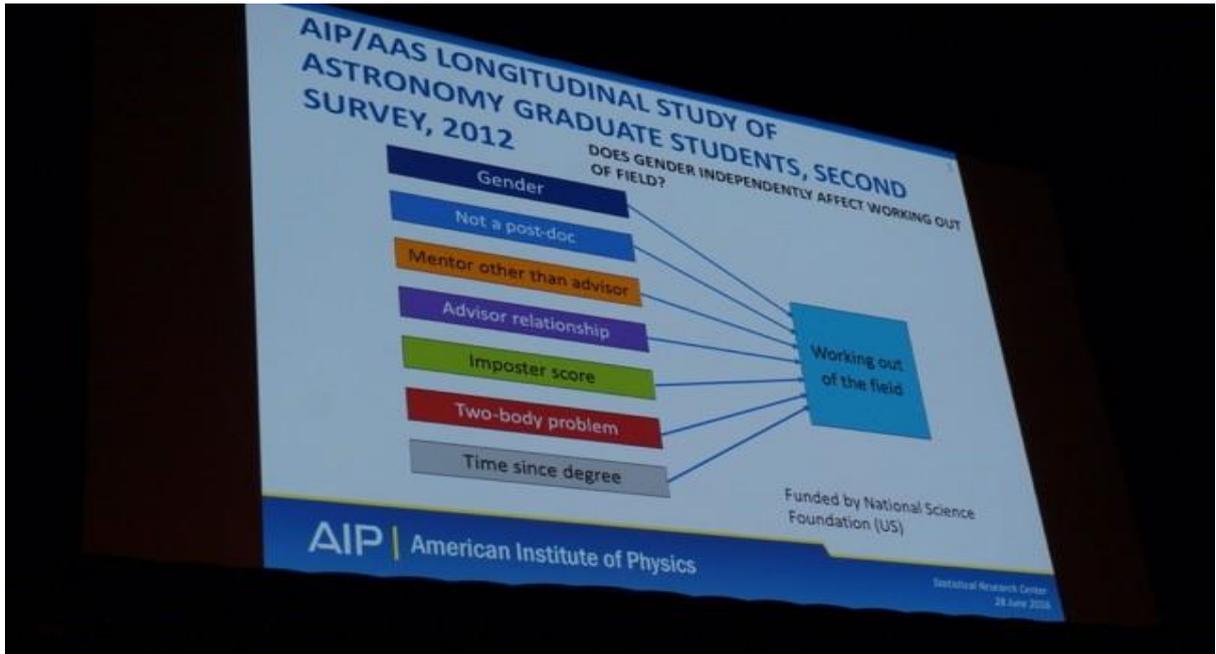
Panelists -- **Michèle Péron**, Director of Engineering of the European Southern Observatory; **Neill Reid**, Space Telescope Science Institute Associate Director for Science; **Madeline Close**, Gemini Observatory Systems Engineer Group Manager; and **Rachel Ivie**, Director of American Institute of Physics Statistical Research Center (from left above) -- provided information from several studies on topics such as whether there is a "gender effect" on why PhDs transition out of the field, data on representation of women and men in technology fields, and methods such as Athena Swan assessments and Project Juno for raising awareness and effecting improvements support gender equity.

Symposium chair **Colin Cunningham** responded to a suggestion from participants that the topic of gender equity be given higher profile at a future SPIEastro meeting, saying he would bring the matter to the attention of the symposium steering committee later in the week.











 **Past Gender Diversity Activities**

- Participation to gender networks
 - GENERA (Gender Equality Network in the European Research Area)
 - Working Group of Women in Astronomy of the IAU
 - Events and meeting organized by the Society of Women Engineers
- These initiatives provide support to organizations for:
 - Assessing the status of gender issues
 - Evaluating and improving gender equality plans
 - Raising the awareness on related topics (e.g unconscious bias)
- Internal discussions on gender related topics such as unconscious bias
- Changes to the working conditions (flexible working hours, on site day nursery and kindergarden)
- A lot of thoughts put in the hiring process of students and fellow
- Participation to the Girls Day

