

Hello everyone, I'd like to share with you today a few snippets of my own experiences as an early career academic in earth sciences.

One of the biggest things that has struck me throughout my career so far is the pervasiveness of the imposter syndrome amongst academic women across all levels. I was shocked as a PhD student when a leading female professor I greatly admired described how nervous she still feels before delivering a lecture or seminar. I watched my own advisor at Yale go through the tenure-track process convinced in her own mind that she may not get tenure when to me and everyone else surrounding her, such a possibility was and did turn out to be incomprehensible. I slowly began to realise that the feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt did not disappear with increasing accomplishments or seniority. That those who succeed, do so not because they are smarter and therefore more confident in themselves, but because they are brave. Brave enough to take a risk and give it a try, even when they are scared, and especially so when they are scared. Ability alone is not enough for women to succeed. We need someone to fight our corner, to believe in us and be our cheerleaders when we doubt the belief in ourselves. For every position I've been offered since PhD, I never intended to apply for it, I didn't think I could do it, I couldn't envision myself in that role until someone encouraged me to apply. I first heard about my current role while at a conference in San Francisco. I ran into Rhodri Davies, now a colleague of mine, and he told me that they'd be looking to hire a seismologist soon and that I'd be a good fit. I thought he was totally crazy. Six months later he emailed me the job advert. A year later I was on a plane to Australia.

Today at the Research School of Earth Sciences, less than 20% of the academics are female. A figure that hasn't changed much in 20 years, despite 50% of the undergraduates and 50% of PhD students being female, and is typical of most institutions. In 2014 the Equity and Diversity Committee was set up and many great initiatives have been introduced as a result. The first step to solving a problem is admitting there is a problem, and I was impressed in joining RSES that they had taken that step. This problem however is not universal. The year before I started my own PhD the geology and geophysics department at Yale hired six new early-career super-stars. Four were female, and two men, one Asian, the other was gay. As a result the overall diversity of the department exploded. People like myself went on the website looking for prospective advisors and found somewhere they could fit in, where they could see someone like themselves. It became a haven of diversity. At the time it felt like the department and the university welcomed everybody, they took on the best and brightest no matter their background, nationality or heritage. There were so many different kinds of people doing the most amazing science, that the stereotype of the nerdy white male scientist was smashed to pieces. That just wasn't the picture in front of me, and it allowed me to see what I could one day be. I saw plenty of examples that "scientist" didn't mean a particular personality type, or gender, or skin colour and that left a powerful lasting impression. I never fully realised the extent of this until I entered the job market, and started interviewing and visiting other institutions. To be confronted with such uniformity in other departments was alarming and jarring. I couldn't help but question what must be happening to create such imbalance when I knew it didn't have to exist. I remember speaking to my advisor after accepting the position at

ANU and expressing how thankful I was to have studied in an environment where women implicitly belonged. I am not the only one to have benefitted from this experience. In just one year, three women who had worked with my advisor (including me) secured permanent academic positions. It is my hope that we can cultivate the same culture and environment at ANU, that we are brave enough to create change that leaves a lasting impact not just on those who stay here but on those who will leave and carry it with them to new places. I hope that together we can be the driver of lasting change. I encourage us all to support one another, to promote positivity, and not be shy about reminding our friends, peers, and colleagues about how truly awesome they are.