

California State University, Northridge



Nobel Prizes for Women

Women in Mathematics, Science & Engineering

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1. INTRODUCTION

- What is Nobel Prize? Who? Why?
- Since 1901, Nobel Prize has been awarded 597 times to 950 people and organizations.
- 53 women have been awarded the Nobel Prize. 1901(4) - 2019(24)

2. BODY PARAGRAPH

- What is the problem?
- Reference “Double Bind: The Price of Being a Minority Woman in Science”[PC05]
- Reference “The Path to Nuclear Fission, The Story of Lise Meitner and Otto Hahn”[Kop06]
- Problem in Nobel Prize: Laureates - 923, organizations - 27, only 54 Laureates are women (5%)[AB20]

3. CONCLUSION

- Nobel Prize should not implement quotas to improve the gender balance.
- Reason being, quotas can potentially overlook better qualified candidates.
- Another solution is eliminate biased selection by removing names of nominees.
- Also, ensure that Nobel Committees has an equal gender ratio.

The Nobel Prize originated start of 19th century because of a gentlemen, by the name of Alfred Nobel who had substantial worth due to his many inventions. His interests in physics, chemistry, physiology, literature, and peace work are the reasons why the Nobel Prize is divided into five different categories. As one of his will before he passed away, his wish was to give out his fortune as prizes to those who can bestow the greatest among humankind in the five categories he was most interested. The process of selecting a winner can seem quite confusing, as it begins with about 300 nominees (aka laureates) whom are selected by Nobel Committee and other individuals working in the relevant field. Then the nominated laureates will be awarded and revealed 50 years later. This prestigious ceremony overtime has been rewarded to 950 people and organizations, however, there is a significant difference in women laureates compared to men laureates. [AB20]

Although the number of women laureates has increased since 1901, the numbers are increasing rather too slowly. An explanation in early 19th century has to do with gender bias, but explaining why it's still low numbers today has more explanation.

“The traditional male domination of the science fields has made the attainment of and participation in science careers for women difficult at best. The price of a professional science career is therefore significantly higher for a woman. The demands on women to assume family-related responsibilities are not thought to be compatible with study for or work in these traditionally male professions. The mode of academic preparation and work-style have been developed around traditional majority male lifestyles which differ substantially from the varied life patterns of women. Role stereotyping and sex discrimination add to the personal costs of women who seek to fulfill career goals as scientists, engineers, or biomedical professionals.” [PC05]

Double bind is similar to what psychologist might call double standard and unfortunately our society still has a lot of double bind and double standard. Women are often portrayed

Don't implement quotas to improve gender balance because doing so could possibly override potentially better ideas by forcefully selecting lesser nominee due to quotas. I believe another solution may benefit both the purpose of what Alfred Nobel wanted as his last will to honor men and women for their outstanding achievements and also to increase the percentage for women as winners. To increase the numbers of women as nominees, biased nominations need to be eliminated by simply having equal gender ratio as Nobel Committees. To further eliminate any bias selection, keep all the nominees names anonymous for the obvious reasons of pre-judgement by names.

References

- [AB20] Nobel Media AB. *The Story of Lise Meitner and Otto Hahn*. 2020. URL: <https://www.nobelprize.org/alfred-nobel/>.
- [Kop06] The Path to Nuclear Fission Kopie van PBS. *The Story of Lise Meitner and Otto Hahn*. 2006. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVT0suIlzXQ&feature=youtu.be>.
- [PC05] Pamela and Brandi Campbell. *The Double Bind: The Price of Being a Minority Women in Science*. 2005. URL: <http://web.mit.edu/cortiz/www/Diversity/1975-DoubleBind.pdf>.