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Women in Science and Engineering: Are We Making Progress?

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There is a clear recognition of the benefits and need for gender diversity in all aspects of life, including in the science and engineering fields. The fact that women have the interest and capability to do science is indisputable, as seen by the fact that undergraduate chemistry classes are now typically over 50% female, while women represent an ever-increasing fraction (now ~30-40%) of graduate chemistry program enrollments. However, despite the efforts of many recruitment programs, women still represent a far lower percentage of faculty members in chemistry (and other science and engineering departments) at North American Universities. This talk will examine some of the recent trends in terms of the representation of women in the science disciplines, and will focus on some of the key factors that continue to dissuade women from taking on these positions. Also, some of the successful proactive programs for the recruitment and retention of women students and faculty members in the science disciplines, particularly in Canada, will be discussed.