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Efforts of the Chinese Physical Society to Promote Women in Physics in China

Funding in China is increasing year by year so prospects for physicists are bright, though not so much so for women. The ratio of women physicists in China is less than 25%, dropping at senior levels due to the “leaky pipeline” effect and the forced retirement of female professionals below the rank of associate professor at age 55 compared to 60 for men.. Paradoxically, the number of female graduate students has increased in recent years, but this is due to the new trend of employment discrimination against women as the country evolves towards a market economy.

Since the formation of the Chinese Physical Society’s Working Group on Women in Physics in 2002, much effort has been made to reverse this trend and to promote the image of women physicists. Statistical data are collected; a special session is held on gender issues at the Society’s annual meeting; each March issue of Physics magazine has articles devoted to women in physics; the Xie Xi-De Physics Prize for Women was established and first awarded in 2007; special prizes for girls are awarded at provincial Physics Olympiads. However, much still remains to be done.

Auteur principal: Prof. WU, Ling-An (Institute of Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences)

Orateur: Prof. WU, Ling-An (Institute of Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences)