

# New Year's resolutions



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The Biochemical Society is committed to addressing the issues facing women in science. During 2008, we have significantly increased our work in this area. We have published original research in collaboration with the Royal Society of Chemistry and the UK Resource Centre for Women in SET (science, engineering and technology) on how the realities of the doctoral experience affect attrition rates. We have presented the work of the Society at international conferences and there is a section dedicated to Women in Science on the website.

In 2009, we will continue our work in this area with results of research on the use of quotas, gendered analysis of HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency) data concerning the employment destinations of undergraduate and postgraduate students and the launch of a new Society website that will see the existing section on women in science developed and expanded. Activism in this area is increasing, and there are many ways which you can get involved, in both supporting the work and promoting yourself as a woman in science. Here are five easy ways in which you can get involved

## 1. Join Biochemical Society Council



Council is an important body in the governance of the Biochemical Society. At present, there are three female members of Council and the Society is keen to see this number increase. Nominations should be supported by at least three members, arriving no later than Tuesday 31 March 2009. Nominations should be made on a form obtainable from Alison McWhinnie, Head of Human Resources and Corporate Affairs, and be accompanied by a photograph and personal details not exceeding 500 words. Email [Alison.McWhinnie@biochemistry.org](mailto:Alison.McWhinnie@biochemistry.org).

## 2. Promote the Athena SWAN (Scientific Women's Academic Network) charter

The Athena SWAN Charter is a scheme which recognizes and celebrates good employment practice for women working in SET in higher education and research. Any university or research institution which is committed to the advancement of the careers of women in SET in higher education and research can apply for membership. Recent award winners include the University of York, University of Bristol, University of Nottingham and King's College London. As the profile of the charter increases, it's important to ask why your university or institution is not involved. More information can be found at the Athena SWAN charter website ([www.athenaswan.org.uk](http://www.athenaswan.org.uk)).



## 3. Become a mentor

In repairing and preventing the leaky pipeline by which women leave science, mentoring is



an important tool. A good mentoring relationship can be highly influential, providing the mentee with both a sounding board and a role model. MentorSET is a successful mentoring scheme to help women working in SET that has created more than 320 mentoring pairs across the UK, encompassing many different careers. For more information, please visit the MentorSET website ([www.mentorset.org.uk/](http://www.mentorset.org.uk/)).

## 4. Join Daphnet



Daphnet is a mailing list for and about women in science, engineering and technology, including women returning to paid work after a career break. It has a current membership of approximately 400. The mailing list facilitates lively debate on topical issues and new research as well as advertising jobs and events. It's a great way of keeping up to date with what's going on and sharing opinions. Sign-up is quick and easy. Visit [www.wes.org.uk/daphnet.html](http://www.wes.org.uk/daphnet.html).

## 5. Tell us your story

Visible role models at all stages of a scientific career are important in providing guidance and inspiration. The Biochemical Society website already profiles women in science, and we are keen to expand this important resource. No matter at what stage of your career you are, why not tell us why you chose science as a career, what have been your biggest challenges and how you overcame them. Tell us about your greatest successes and share advice that has been helpful to you. Please contact [rebecca.smith@biochemistry.org](mailto:rebecca.smith@biochemistry.org) if you are interested in becoming involved. ■