# Academic Career Advancement in IS: Does Gender Matter?

*Emergent Research Forum (ERF)*

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## Abstract

Female faculty play an important role in serving as mentors and role models to students and other faculty. However, there is a low number of women (around 25%) working in Information Systems (IS) academia. It is important to investigate and analyze the process for IS academics' career advancement within the IS community and the impact of gender on career paths and advancement.

This mixed methods research-in-progress aims to enhance the richness and depth of understanding of career advancement in IS academia. First, we collected faculty data for all IS departments from institutions accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) in the United States. We analyzed the data based on gender, rank, and type of institution using Excel and SPSS. Initial analysis of the AACSB data collected shows that as rank increases, there are fewer female IS faculty members. There appears to be more women faculty in non-tenure positions, such as instructor or clinical faculty member. At the tenure track ranks, there are still more men than women. However, the number of female faculty is relatively stable for assistant professors and associate professors. The number drops dramatically when one looks at the rank of full professor. A desire to gain deeper insight into the reasons for this phenomenon motivated the second part of this research.

In the second study, currently in process, we are interviewing IS faculty members of different genders, ranks, and types of institution. Faculty members were randomly selected from the AACSB data collected, ensuring that we had an equal number of (ranks) assistant, associate, and full professors. For the type of institution, we selected individuals from both Ph.D. and non-Ph.D. granting IS programs. (We selected this criteria rather than the Carnegie Classification, which classifies institutions overall and does not distinguish by specific areas or departments. This approach seemed more appropriate, since some IS programs have Ph.D. programs, thus indicating a higher level of research focus than those who do not). The result is a two by three by two matrix of interviews. Three males and three females were interviewed for each category (rank + institution type) resulting in a total of 36 interviews. Invitation emails, approved by the Institutional Review Committee, were sent out to faculty randomly, which has mentioned earlier. Overall, the study asks each respondent about his/her experience within his/her academic working environment and advancement process. Though a majority of the questions are similar across rank, there are a few that delve into the respondent's specific rank and university. Interviews are ongoing. Interviews range between 30 to 40 minutes in length. For those who agreed to it, interviews were audio recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy of notetaking. Though we have not completed all the interviews, we have randomly analyzed two female faculty's interviews and two male faculty's interviews using NVivo. Initial analysis of interviews shows that female faculty mentioned "women" most frequently and male faculty mentioned "research" most frequently. Female faculty appear to be concerned about various topics, such as journals, service, time, move. Male faculty, however, take academic-related issues as their primary concerns. This is very preliminary data and we offer it to demonstrate some of the research that will be performed. This study is continuing and an in-depth analysis of all the interviews collected will be performed to better understand the status of both men and women in IS academia, examine the factors that promote or deter IS academics' career advancement, and ground our work in theory.