



Special Seminar

Advancement of Women in STEM Academics: A Comparative U.S.-European Perspective

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January 30, 2023 | 4:00 pm MST
Biodesign Auditorium (B105)

Abstract. In my nearly three decades as a professor, I spent roughly half my time in the U.S. (in California) and half in Switzerland. When I moved to Switzerland in 2007, it was my impression that I had stepped back in time. In terms of women's positioning in academia, it seemed to me that Switzerland was far behind the U.S. Although my personal impression has persisted, it is not entirely supported by the statistics. I have also noted a puzzling disconnect between policies related to parental leave and accessibility of childcare – both of which are generally far better in Europe than in the U.S. – and women's advancement in academia. With this presentation, I take a broad view of this question, considering the steps being taken in Europe to promote the advancement of women in academia, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and further challenges related to the training of early career researchers.

Speaker Bio. At the end of 2022, Prof. Janet Hering retired as Director of the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science & Technology (Eawag) and Professor at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zürich (ETHZ) and Lausanne (EPFL). Prior to moving to Switzerland in 2007, Prof. Hering was a faculty member at Caltech and UCLA. She is a former Associate Editor of *Environmental Science & Technology* and former member of the Board of Reviewing Editors for *Science*. She is an elected member of the U.S. National Academy of Engineering and Academia Europaea. Over her career, Prof. Hering's research interests have included the biogeochemical cycling of trace elements in natural waters, treatment technologies for the removal of inorganic contaminants from drinking water, and knowledge exchange at the interface of science with policy and practice. She has also been very engaged in promoting diversity in academia, particularly in supporting women in academic leadership. She received a Distinguished Women in Chemistry or Chemical Engineering Award from the IUPAC in 2015. Prof. Hering was the founding Vice Chair of the ETH Women Professors Forum, serving as Vice Chair from 2012 – 2016 and Chair from 2016 – 2020.