

Socrel response to gender trouble in THRS

Gender trouble is particularly affecting women in Theology and Religious Studies Department. Socrel, the Sociology of Religion study group of the British Sociological Association, is taking action to help reverse the trend that is harming women's livelihoods and well-being through extensive practices of alienation, discrimination and bullying in Theology and Religious Studies departments. Such problems are endemic in the academy in general, but women in THRS departments fare worse compared to other disciplines. That was the worrying finding from an intensive study conducted by a group of researchers from Durham and Kingston universities (Guest, Sharma and Song 2013). Their project, funded by the Higher Education Academy's Philosophical and Religious Studies Subject Centre, systematically charted this issue within the UK context.

Socrel Chair Dr Abby Day responded to the report (with Dr Dawn Llewellyn) at the Socrel Annual Conference (July 2-4 2014) panel session "The Crisis of Gender Diversity in Theology and Religious Studies: A Roundtable Discussion" organised by report authors Dr Mathew Guest and Dr Sonya Sharma. The full report can be found now on the Socrel site and pod-casts from key speakers at the panel: <http://socrel.org.uk/>

Specific actions agreed by Socrel members:

1. To facilitate a Socrel members' mentoring scheme led by Dr Sonya Sharma at Kingston University designed to support women by women. More details are available at the Socrel web-site <http://socrel.org.uk/>.
2. To create and disseminate mentoring guidance notes to allow other organisations/departments to set up their own schemes.
3. The annual 'Socrel Response Day' will focus this year on 'Achieving Gender Equality in the Academy: Intersections, Interrogations and Practices' October 4, 2014, BSA Meeting Room, Imperial Wharf, London, with guest speakers Professor Heidi Safia Mirza, Goldsmiths, University of London and Professor Helen Beebee, Philosophy, University of Manchester. A Call for Papers can be found on the web-site: <http://socrel.org.uk/>.

Reference:

Guest, M., Sharma, S. and Song, R. (2013) *Gender and Career Progression in Theology and Religious Studies*, Durham, UK: Durham University