

Proposed session length: We would like to have at least one hour for presentation and discussion, and would welcome 90 minutes if available.

Written materials: We will use PowerPoint slides for our presentation, and will make handouts of the slides available to all participants.

Competing points of view: We would like to devote at least 30% of the total session time to comments and discussion from the audience. If our presentation is recast as a panel, we hope that the conference organizer will suggest a respondent who can comment on our presentations. We welcome varied points of view on our research and findings.

What knowledge can attendees expect to gain?: Attendees will learn about the findings of Project TechForce, particularly those pertaining to the attraction and retention of women and men in the software and Internet industry in Massachusetts. Our findings are fascinating and provocative, and based on a survey of 1,690 respondents, as well as in depth interviews with 200 women and men, making it one of the largest studies of its kind. Because the mix of company types is similar in Massachusetts to the mix found in the US as a whole, our findings are likely to be applicable far beyond the boundaries of Massachusetts.

Names, affiliations, and background/qualifications of the speakers:

Joyce Nathalie Davis is Director of Research for *Project TechForce*, a National Science Foundation funded project examining the role of workplace conditions in shaping the attraction, promotion, and retention of women and racial minorities in the software and Internet industry. A Ph.D. candidate at Harvard University, her doctoral thesis focuses on organizational processes and practices that render social identities salient and consequential in workgroups. She has conducted research on organizational innovation and collaborative work practices in Japan, Germany, Italy, Great Britain, and the United States.

Sarah Kuhn is an Associate Professor in the Department of Regional Economic and Social Development at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. She is co-Principal Investigator for Project TechForce. She earned a PhD from MIT in 1987, and has devoted her research career to studying the workplace impact of new technology; technical work and technical workers; and education in engineering and computer science. She is the author of numerous scholarly and popular articles, and was a member of the National Research Council Committee “Workforce Needs In Information Technology.”

Chilly Climate? Engrossing Puzzle? Research Results on the Experience of Work in Computing Workplaces

Objectives: To inform conference attendees about the findings of Project TechForce, a National Science Foundation-funded study of men and women employed in the software and Internet industry in Massachusetts.

Who Should Attend: Anyone interested in learning about research results that shed light on the nature and experiences of women and men working in technology occupations.

Format: We propose this as a presentation with two speakers, both of whom are discussing aspects of Project TechForce findings, but would also be happy to create a panel by adding a respondent.

Topics:

Joyce Davis: *Perceiving Fairness at Work: The Role of Organizational Justice in Shaping Diversity Climate for Women in Information Technology*

There is considerable discussion in the literature on gender and work concerning the “chilly” climate of the workplace for women. Increasingly, diversity climate is recognized as critical to shaping the opportunities, participation, and commitment of women in the workplace. Based on Project TechForce surveys and in-depth interviews with women and men in IT workplaces in Massachusetts, over one-half of men and three-quarters of survey respondents in software and Internet firms report that their workplace has a strong “male” culture. But what exactly constitutes what many women report as an inhospitable and/or unsupportive, workplace environment for women? Identifying the specific organizational structures, processes, and practices that contribute to such a chilly climate is key to addressing issues concerning the attraction, promotion, and retention of women in IT workplaces. More specifically, we ask: What are the often more subtle policies and practices that may be affecting the participation and retention of women in IT? What factors may discourage or isolate women at work? This presentation draws on contributions from the growing research on organizational justice to examine the role that perceptions of fairness play in shaping gender climate in the workplace.

Sarah Kuhn: *The Meaning of Work in Computing: Puzzle Solving, Flexibility, and Social Impact*

What draws women and men into careers in computing, and what keeps them there? Are there gender or other differences with implications for how we attract and retain people in computing, especially women and other underrepresented groups? Drawing on survey and interview data from Project TechForce, this presentation discusses the role of such activities as a reported interest in “solving puzzles” and the availability of flexible work arrangements in attracting or retaining women and men. The issue of social impact of IT work, and the extent to which employees feel their work is socially meaningful, will also be considered in light of the data from the project.