About Sheila Tobias:

Sheila Tobias is a feminist educator, an early founder of Women’s Studies courses and programs and a contemporary of all the second-wave feminists in the U.S. She was trained at Harvard-Radcliffe and did a terminal master’s at Columbia University in the 1960s, to become – rather than a scholar, what she dubbed a “scholar-activist” -- a change agent and early adopter of women’s studies at Cornell, Connecticut Wesleyan, Vanderbilt, and UC-San Diego. She is particularly credited with efforts to enlarge the proportion of women enrolling in mathematics and the sciences at college and to fashion a post-graduate (master’s level) STEM curriculum to meet women’s changing roles. In that connection, she pioneered the issues of “math anxiety” and (physical) science avoidance, in terms of seen and unseen barriers to women’s full participation in the STEM subjects. She is the author of 14 books for the general public including Overcoming Math Anxiety, They’re not dumb, they’re different, Rethinking Science as a Career, Women, Militarism and War (co-editor), Science Teaching as a Profession, and Faces of Feminism: An Activist’s Reflections on the Women’s Movement. Overall, she has devoted herself to new thinking about strategies for bringing women from margin to mainstream.

Clearinghouse on Women’s Issues presents:


January 28, 2014
12:00pm

11 Dupont Circle NW, 2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20036

Special thanks to our host, Alliance for Justice

Welcome

Sue Klein
Co-President, Clearinghouse on Women’s Issues

Harriett Stonehill
Co-President, Clearinghouse on Women’s Issues

Introduction: Janice Koch

Speaker: Sheila Tobias

About the program

When Sheila Tobias co-wrote Rethinking Science as a Career in 1995, academic jobs in science were so scarce that many PhDs were considering changing fields. The authors had no idea that the book would help launch a whole new degree. PhD students interviewed for the book repeatedly expressed regret about lacking skills in business fundamentals, computer science and writing. Tobias realized that the gap could be met by a new master’s-level curriculum. Further research found career options after a B.S. in science or mathematics to be “limited” and that professors in graduate programs tended to steer their students toward research careers, despite a death of faculty positions. Meanwhile, the business leaders she interviewed said that the STEM graduates they wanted to hire didn't have the interpersonal skills necessary for success in industry.

Tobias and her colleagues decided that if a new M.S. could be tailored to offer more professional skills along with science training, the M.S. might become a competitive degree in science and mathematics instead of a consolation prize for a “failed PhD” that was usually assumed to be the case. 15 years and $23 million (Sloan Foundation funding) later, the PSM Professional Science (mathematics) Masters is just welcoming its 300th affiliate on one of the 127 university campuses involved. 6,000 students are currently enrolled in this year’s entering classes of whom approximately 50% are female. Jobs are easy to find (Tobias and her team track graduates using social media) and, according to the Council of Graduate Schools, they are earning average salaries of $60,000.

For women, the professional science master’s provides many advantages: a “terminal” degree at age 24 (a career up and running by age 30); portability; variation in work opportunities; and a “differentiator” when competing for positions in science/math based industries. A new thrust is to increase PSM graduates’ penetration into the public sector for which the government’s esteemed Management Training Fellowships have just added a separate and distinct “STEM competition.”


The Clearinghouse on Women’s Issues sponsors monthly public forums to address the social and political issues of diverse groups of women in today’s society -- locally, nationally and internationally. These Washington, DC, brown bag lunches provide information to raise awareness for individuals and organizations to act as a catalyst for networking and advocacy.

[www.womensclearinghouse.org](http://www.womensclearinghouse.org)