

# NEWS

e-mail: [news@weizmann.ac.il](mailto:news@weizmann.ac.il)  
<http://wis-wander.weizmann.ac.il>



מכון ויצמן למדע  
WEIZMANN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE

Publications and Media Relations Department P.O.Box 26, Rehovot 76100, Israel  
Tel: 972 8 934 3852 / 56 Fax: 972 8 934 4132 / 04

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**CONTACT:** Yivsam Azgad, Tel: 972-8-934-3856/2  
**EMAIL:** [Yivsam.azgad@weizmann.ac.il](mailto:Yivsam.azgad@weizmann.ac.il) / [news@weizmann.ac.il](mailto:news@weizmann.ac.il)

## **WEIZMANN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE GRANTS TO PROMOTE CAREERS FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE**

The Weizmann Institute of Science has instituted a new program aimed at assisting highly talented young women to work toward a career in the natural or exact sciences. The goal of the program is to begin closing the gap between male and female scientists in the highest ranks of academia.

The numbers of women and men completing graduate degrees (M.Sc. and Ph.D.) in the sciences are close to even. But in Israel, as in the rest of the world, relatively few women end up on the track to academic advancement, and their representation on the higher levels of academic faculties is abysmally low.

A new, nationwide initiative put forward by the Weizmann Institute to help fill the ranks of outstanding women scientists has been established with the support of the Clore Foundation and S. Donald Sussman. This year, as part of this Weizmann Institute of Science Women in Science Program, ten young women will receive Sara Lee Schupf Postdoctoral Awards. Any young woman who has completed a Ph.D. in an Israeli academic institution in one of the natural or exact sciences, and who has been accepted to postdoctoral studies abroad, is eligible to apply. The awards will average about \$20,000 a year and are meant to supplement scholarships received from foundations or host institutions, to assist women, particularly those with families, in coping with the added financial burden.

### **Bottleneck**

The two or so years a scientist spends abroad conducting postdoctoral research is considered a critical step to career success, in which the up-and-coming scientist gains independence and is exposed to the international scientific community in which she must prove herself. Yet this stage can be a bottleneck for women, especially as many have spouses and young children by this stage. Personal, financial and family considerations may all conspire to keep these women from being able to spend several years abroad, and the result is a relatively small number of women entering the academic track.

The Sara Lee Schupf Postdoctoral Awards, conferred within the framework of the Weizmann Institute of Science Women in Science Program funded by the Clore Foundation and S. Donald Sussman, aims to change that situation. The grants will give women incentives – financial, but also social, personal and professional – to engage in postdoctoral research in leading labs around the world.

The long-term goal of the program is to invest resources in women who plan to develop their scientific careers in Israel, and to create a feminine leadership within the Israeli research community.

The Weizmann Institute is now calling for women who have completed a Ph.D. in science in an Israeli university to submit their candidacy for one of these awards. A special selection committee at the Institute, headed by the President's Advisor for the Advancement of Women in Science, Prof. Hadassa Degani, will evaluate the applications and choose ten outstanding women, who will receive their awards in October, 2007.

For more information on the awards, please go to:  
<http://www.weizmann.ac.il/feinberg/WomenInScience/>

The Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel, is one of the world's top-ranking multidisciplinary research institutions. Noted for its wide-ranging exploration of the natural and exact sciences, the Institute is home to 2,600 scientists, students, technicians and supporting staff. Institute research efforts include the search for new ways of fighting disease and hunger, examining leading questions in mathematics and computer science, probing the physics of matter and the universe, creating novel materials and developing new strategies for protecting the environment.

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