



American Medical Women's Association
The Vision and Voice of Women in Medicine since 1915

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The American Medical Women's Association (AMWA) abhors the comments of Indiana University Professor Eric Rasmusen who tweeted the article "Are Women Destroying Academia? Probably" and appreciates the rebuttal from IU Executive Vice President and Provost Lauren Robel.

AMWA has its roots in a Chicago meeting with Drs. Bertha Van Hoosen and Marion Craig Potter who came together with a group of other women in November 1915. The Victorian era had only recently ended and its history of keeping women in a domestic sphere made it so that occupying a space as a woman in medicine, particularly in a position of leadership, was incredibly challenging. Over the last 104 years, with the ratification of the 19th Amendment, the women's liberation movement, and the resilience and tenacity of many women, there has been profound advancement in the kind of education and professional roles that are available to women.

Therefore, when people in positions of power put down this progression and suggest that the presence of women somehow diminishes academic spaces, it is imperative for organizations like AMWA to speak out. Universities and colleges are places where both the educators and students are challenged to think and grow both personally and professionally. They are where individuals come together to explore new ways of thinking and doing. How can this happen if we exclude certain groups of people (based on sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity, etc.) from existing in these spaces? This is particularly important in medicine and science with the constant need of novel approaches to treating and preventing diseases.

In addition, the idea that "genius" is somehow inherently connected to maleness/masculinity is just simply wrong. Dr. Gertrude B. Elion was responsible for the development of several drugs such as allopurinol, azathioprine, acyclovir, and AZT (the first drug used in the treatment of AIDS). Dr. Patricia Bath was a pioneer in the field of ophthalmology and with her invention of the Laserphaco Probe to treat cataracts, became the first African-American female physician to receive a medical patent. Dr. Helen Brooke Taussig (who was not allowed to speak to her male classmates in histology class because of fears of "contamination") founded the field of pediatric cardiology and was instrumental to the development of a procedure for babies born with congenital heart disease.

AMWA looks forward to another century of innovation, collaboration, and growth for women in medicine and beyond.

