

Feminist Researcher: STEM Classes Should Be Made 'Less Competitive' to Attract Women

Sometimes the paradoxes of PC are richly entertaining.

One of my favorite journalists, Katherine Timpf, has called my attention to a peer-reviewed [paper](#) recently published by Laura Parson “suggesting that we should make Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) courses more ‘inclusive’ of women by making the[m] ‘less competitive.’”

Savor that thought for a moment. The way to get more women into difficult fields where they are under-represented is to make studying such fields easier for everybody. Just like the way to get more women into the combat roles some of them crave is to [lower the physical standards](#) for the infantry. Because—well, fairness.

One actual line from Parson’s paper reads:

“There is an opportunity for STEM courses to reduce the perception of courses as difficult and unfriendly through language use in the syllabi, and also as a guide for how to use less competitive teaching methods and grading profiles that could improve the experience of female students.”

About that, Timpf is right to observe:

“In other words, women are so fragile that a syllabus with ‘unfriendly’ language would be enough to scare them out of pursuing the careers they would otherwise want to pursue. Men can handle taking a course even if a syllabus makes it sound ‘difficult,’ but women cannot because they are weaker and less confident.”

The paper contains other howlers, which Timpf sums up by saying that the paper “is about the most sexist thing I’ve ever heard.” It is sexist indeed. Hence the paradox.

Of course there’s nothing new or risible about the sort of feminism that calls for women to have the same *opportunities* as men. Most Americans would agree that they should. But there is something new and deeply ironic about the sort of feminism that strives to secure such opportunities by easing prevailing standards of performance.

And it’s not just STEM courses or women in combat. The codes of speech and behavior at many colleges and universities have reached the point where any expression or behavior at odds with PC orthodoxy is now considered “threatening” enough to call for “safe spaces” where students can be shielded from such “microaggressions.” College used to be places where we were challenged to grow by exposure to ideas different from our own. Apparently that’s now politically incorrect.

If we have any interest in curtailing such jokes as sexist “feminism” and homogeneous “diversity,” we need to cultivate a more ironic sense of humor.