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It is not Rocket Science – Keeping the Talented in Physics¹

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We have made slow progress over the past several decades towards increasing the representation of women in Physics. In fact, we are now seeing the percentage of women undergraduates in Physics decrease (from a peak of around 22% in 2002 to about 19% in 2015). At the same time, the complexity of the problems that Physicists need to solve has grown. Finding robust solutions to problems such as the changing climate and the dwindling reserves of fossil fuels will require us to become more effective at working in teams and more able at encouraging diverse perspectives and approaches. Hiring women as automobile engineers led to improved survivability for women involved in automobile accidents. We can expect that retaining more women and members of under-represented groups in Physics will also have beneficial results. We cannot afford to lose talented people from our field. Looking back at what worked or did not work in the past provides us with a much improved understanding of the barriers women face and how to minimize the impacts of those barriers. We can make our future efforts evidence based and, therefore, more effective. This presentation draws material from the updating of the Committee on the Status of Women's "Best Practice" documents. It will provide a mix of practical suggestions for recruiting and retaining women in Physics at a variety of career stages as well as providing an overview of the research supporting the adoption of these suggestions. Let us ensure that Physics moves into the next century with fresh perspectives and new energy.