

Dear Colleagues and Mentors,

As you might know, the International Sol-Gel Society has introduced a new PhD-Student Fellowship for women which is named after the internationally renowned sol-gel scientist Renata Reisfeld. The [deadline for applications](#) for the “[2021 ISGS Call for ISGS Renata Reisfeld PhD Student Fellowship for Women in Sol-Gel Science and Technology](#)” has now been extended until March 26, 2021.

This e-mail is addressed particularly to those mentors who encourage and support women to pursue research towards their PhD in the field of Sol-Gel Science and Technology. As mentioned in one of my previous e-mails, our transformative work as mentors is an impactful, rewarding and lifelong commitment. Now, I once again ask for your help to empower the women who you support by nominating them for this new Fellowship. The need for such Fellowships is now more important than ever. In spite of the fact that progress is being made in promoting women in science, the proportion of women scientists is still low. There are countries where studying science is still considered a luxury, particularly for women. Such inequities must continue to be addressed and the ISGS is well placed to play a role in this important endeavor. This Fellowship is directed particularly to women from “[Least Developed Countries](#)”, who are strongly encouraged to apply. However, all applications which nominate women currently undertaking their PhDs are welcome. Please consider the compelling opportunities which you are offering to your students, to be recognized by an international society such as the [ISGS](#), with membership spanning over 60 countries. The successful completion of a PhD by your students is not only their success, but your success as well.

The life of Professor Reisfeld is replete with personal and professional achievements and a wealth of interesting stories, but her resilience and spirit are illustrated by the following anecdote from the early years of her career as a scientist. As you might have read in our [June, 2020 Newsletter](#), in 1976, she accepted an invitation to speak at her first significant luminescent-materials conference in Paris, France. However, during a stopover in Athens, Greece on her journey from Tel Aviv to Paris, her flight was hijacked by commandos demanding the release of prisoners held in Israel and other countries on terrorism charges. She was among the 100 passengers and crew members held captive for a week in Entebbe, Uganda. Never one to miss an opportunity, she asked the Ugandan dictator, Idi Amin, who visited the hijacked passengers every day before their rescue, if he would arrange a tour of Uganda - a request to which he apparently agreed. Imagine just for a moment that the next scientist who will challenge an injustice might be your former student; that she might travel (safely); that she might have other opportunities which you never had (or which we take for granted). I cannot think of a more meaningful or rewarding return for a mentor/scientific “parent” than this. With your support, we can provide the foundations upon which to support future generations of women in science.

Again, my fellow mentors, I urge you [to nominate your mentees to apply](#) for the “[2021 ISGS Call for ISGS Renata Reisfeld PhD Student Fellowship for Women in Sol-Gel Science and Technology](#)”.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your help in the promotion of women in science.

Sincerely,

Andrei Jitianu
Chair of the 2021 ISGS Call for ISGS Renata Reisfeld
PhD Student Fellowship for Women in
Sol-Gel Science and Technology