There is no doubt that gender and diversity are hot topics in contemporary organizational life, with many occupations continuing to be heavily male or female-dominated. In his talk, Dr. McDonald will discuss how one organization—the National Center for Women and Information Technology (NCWIT)—seeks to increase the representation of women in computing and I.T. through a campaign that brands this field as highly desirable for women. Although one of the campaign’s key messages is that women are valued in computing and I.T., Dr. McDonald’s ethnographic research shows that many women working in this field do not feel valued. After exposing this contradiction between branding discourse and everyday discourse, he proposes ways through which practitioners can avoid such contradictions as they work to increase occupational diversity.

Dr. Jamie McDonald is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Texas at San Antonio. His research examines topics such as feminist and queer approaches to organizing, the gender identity negotiation of nursing students, the underrepresentation of women in computing and information technology work, the experiences of international faculty in U.S. academia, and researcher reflexivity in qualitative research. The research presented at this colloquium will also be presented at the 101st conference of the National Communication Association with co-author Dr. Tim Kuhn from the University of Colorado Boulder.