

Accountability

Principles and actions for chairs and unit heads

Virginia Valian

Hunter College – CUNY; CUNY Graduate Center

- Motivate change within department: develop compelling rationales for change, focusing on benefits to department
 - increase grant possibilities
 - increase opportunities for women and minority students
 - use gender as window on departmental effectiveness
 - everyone benefits: continuous thread linking students, post-docs, faculty
 - attract more women as faculty
 - improve morale

- Know where recruitment, retention, and the environment can go wrong (see handout: Valian, Addressing Gender Equity)

- Develop junior and mid-level faculty within their disciplines
 - establish hallmarks of success for individual faculty members
 - specify short-term and intermediate goals
 - work with faculty on plan to achieve those goals
 - determine chair's role (e.g., provide release time, provide travel funds, make course assignments that dovetail with faculty's research, suggest conferences to attend; introduce faculty to senior people in field)

- Develop faculty for leadership positions within institution
 - establish paths toward leadership
 - place women and minorities on important committees
 - provide guidelines on how to run committees
 - have periodic meetings with interested faculty to explain how decisions are made within institution

- Use equity surveys (see handout: Valian, Guide to Creation of Department Equity Survey)

- Develop procedures to counteract unintended bias – for every problem there is a solution
 - teach undergraduate students how to evaluate teaching assistants and faculty
 - have faculty vouch for teaching assistants in classes
 - review colloquium speaker roster so that it reflects proportion of women in field or proportion of women graduate students in field
 - run faculty meetings so that everyone's voice is attended to

- review letters of recommendation for graduate students to determine whether male and female students are described to equally good advantage
- review workload assignments (teaching and service) with an eye to equity
 - importance of assignment
 - labor-intensiveness of assignment
 - visibility
 - scope for innovation
- ensure that departmental-internal staff respond equally promptly and fully to males and females, non-minority and minority
- ensure that women and minorities have a voice in hiring
- Provide release time or other benefits (postdocs, research assistants, administrative assistants, equipment, space) to faculty working on improvement of equity
- Develop a diverse circle of advisors
 - determine what you need and who can fulfill those needs
 - include people who will provide constructive criticism and reasoned objections
 - chairs are at risk of isolation from and lack of knowledge of hidden problems – everyone tends to assume that unit is working well unless there are major overt signs to the contrary