

25 April 2007

Departmental Governance: Ensuring a Voice for Women and Minorities

Gender Equity Project: Sponsorship Program Workshop 6
25 April 2007

Activities and Discussion

Read Power, politics and survival in academia (Capaldi, 2004)
Managing the department chair and navigating the department power structure (Penner, Dovidio, & Schroeder, 2004)
Differential access to opportunity and power (Kanter, 1979)
Ensuring a voice for women and minorities (Mazhar & Martinez, 2007)
Power, effectiveness, and gender (Valian, 2006)

Pre-workshop Activity Academic life is full of challenges that extend beyond teaching and research. Bureaucratic and political problems can consume a lot of your time and energy and may affect your work. Consider the following problems that you may encounter in department life.

- A staff member does not respond equally often, respectfully, or well to faculty requests. You believe that gender or race or both are an issue
- There is an unequal distribution of committee work within your department, such that more time-consuming and less influential tasks are assigned to women and faculty of color. As a result, you and other women are spending too much time on committee work, leaving too little time for research.
- Class loads are not assigned equitably in your department. Some people are able to teach upper level courses related to their research, but you are always given introductory courses.

Think about how you would approach these problems were you to face them. What strategies would you use? If you were to talk to someone about it, who would it be? What role would your chair play? How could you get other members of your department involved? Would you consider notifying the college administration?

Be prepared to discuss your strategies during the discussion section at the workshop.

Handout Ensuring a voice for women and minorities (Mazhar & Martinez, 2007)

Presentations Haydee Salmun, Geography, Hunter College
William Sweeney, Chemistry, Hunter College

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Discussion Question and answer based on presentations and pre-workshop activity

References

- Capaldi, E. (2004). Power, politics, and survival in academia. In J.M. Darley, M.P. Zanna, & H.L. Roediger III (Eds.) *The compleat academic: A career guide* (2nd ed., pp. 245-257). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Caplan, P. J. (1994). Unwritten rules and impossible proofs. In *Lifting a ton of feathers: A women's guide to surviving in the academic world* (pp. 34-46). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Kanter, R. M. (1979). Differential access to opportunity and power. In R. Alvarez & K. G. Lutterman (Eds.), *Discrimination in organizations* (pp. 52-68). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mazhar, S. & Martinez, T.N. (2007). Ensuring a voice for women and minorities. Unpublished manuscript. Gender Equity Project, Hunter College.
- Penner, L. A., Dovidio, J. F., Schroeder, D. A. (2004). Managing the department chair and navigating the department power structure. In J. M. Darley, M.P. Zanna., & H. L. Roediger, III (Eds.), *The compleat academic A career guide* (2nd ed., pp.259-276). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Valian, V. (2006). Power, effectiveness, and gender. Unpublished manuscript. Gender Equity Project, Hunter College.