

Gender, Power, and Influence

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Background

- gender schemas
- accumulation of advantage
- "just world" beliefs
- attributions: ability, effort, task difficulty, luck

Evaluations of the self

- women and men differ in how entitled they feel and behave
 - women perform equal or better work for less pay
- women have negative attitudes toward affirmative action for themselves
 - women chosen on the basis of their sex have more negative self-evaluations than do men chosen on the basis of their sex
- women and men may differ in attributions for success and failure
- women deny personal disadvantage

Negotiation

- at least moderate feelings of entitlement are necessary to negotiate effectively
 - understand how entitlement works
- learn how to negotiate
 - demonstrate how department, school, or institution will benefit from what you want
 - example: you want a course release; show that you will use that release to apply for a grant in a new area or embark on some other new activity that will benefit the institution
 - example: you want an assistant; show how that assistant will make you or your section more productive and allow you to add a needed function or improve an existing function
 - women who are perceived as self-aggrandizing are viewed particularly negatively
 - example: you want a considerable salary increase; justify it by a) what the going rate seems to be, b) the extra responsibilities you have assumed, c) the benefits you have recently brought to the institution, or d) the initiatives that you are planning on undertaking

- example: balance a request for something that appears to benefit only you (e.g., salary) with something that clearly benefits others (e.g., an upgraded facility for students)
 - if feasible, offer to share the expenses for an item you are requesting
- understand that everything can be negotiated
 - resources
 - teaching
 - number of courses
 - level of course
 - labor-intensiveness of course
 - teaching assistance
 - ability to teach in one's area
 - extra compensation for performing extra institutional work
 - research assistants
 - summer salary
 - course reduction
 - support for post-doc
 - support for graduate student
 - needed equipment
 - extra term off
 - early sabbatical
- role-play before an important negotiation

Power and influence: the individual

- perform jobs which are
 - out of the ordinary
 - visible
 - relevant to current institutional problems
- eschew routine, invisible, "housekeeping" tasks
- build reciprocal relationships
 - solve problems for other people
 - make clear that you expect a return (e.g., "you owe me one")
 - ask others to help you solve problems
- make alliances with both men and women
- become successful outside the institution
- seek information about criteria for success; hard to be successful by accident
 - men receive much information informally
 - learn what resources are available
 - build reciprocal relationships: provide other people with information; ask others for information
- adopt impersonal, friendly, and respectful style

Effectiveness in influencing decisions

- be prepared
 - even minimal preparation is better than none: sometimes only a few minutes of preparation are required (most other people will have done no preparation)
 - read the relevant materials – knowledge is power
 - develop your point of view
 - articulate to yourself the most important rationale(s) behind your view
 - be prepared with comprehensive and even-handed arguments
 - comprehensiveness can help preempt certain objections
 - even-handedness will help you be perceived as neutral
 - but put your favored action in the best possible light
 - practice presenting your view and the rationale(s) for it succinctly
- lay a groundwork of alliances
- marshal support before important decisions are made
 - identify and speak with likely allies, especially those who are highly respected
 - ask allies for advice about how to proceed
 - ask allies to do some of the work
 - determine what resistance there might be
 - evaluate objective merits of resistance
 - evaluate reasons for subjective resistance

Power and influence: improving the status of women and other groups

- examine successful programs from elsewhere
- identify problem areas for women and other social groups that lack power
- identify and work with institutional allies at all levels
- make specific proposals
 - demonstrate need and show how institution will benefit
 - provide supporting documentation for action
 - best practices
 - scientific literature
 - provide timeline
 - indicate what outcome measures will be used
- identify reasons for institution to commit to change
 - better serve women students in science and engineering
 - attract more women as faculty
 - attract more recruiters to campus
 - improve morale
 - see associated handout
- obtain institutional commitment to and resources for change
 - do not labor for love
- take experimental approach
- recognize necessity for on-going action