Professional Skills for Women in Science

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Introductions
Why we teach “professional skills”
Negotiation
Communication

**Take-aways for today:**
- Know your goals
- Use effective tactics
- Understand and control your attitude
Why do we have workshops like this?

Women Don't Ask
by Babcock & Laschever

Experiment 1

23% 2.5%

Men

Experiment 2

54% 17%

Women

The cumulative effects of “not asking” over a career are substantial
Effects on the bottom line (salary) are substantial

What can you do?
- Understand the behavior and actions of others
- Use strategies and tactics to optimize your success

Fig. 2. Salary conferral by student gender condition (collapsed across faculty gender). The student gender difference is significant ($P < 0.01$). The scale ranges from $15,000$ to $50,000$. Error bars represent SEs. $n_{\text{male student condition}} = 63$, $n_{\text{female student condition}} = 64$.

Reference: “Science faculty’s subtle gender biases favor male students”
Moss-Racusin et al., PNAS, 2012
Biases against women in our society

- Behaviors: Aggression is viewed positively in men (leadership) and negatively in women (bossy)
- Reference letters are different for men and women (What can you do about that?)
- Unconscious bias: Men and women judge identical resumes differently as a function of the name at the top (women are judged more harshly)

What are some simple tactics to alleviate these issues?

Fig. 1. Competence, hireability, and mentoring by student gender condition (collapsed across faculty gender). All student gender differences are significant ($P < 0.001$). Scales range from 1 to 7, with higher numbers reflecting a greater extent of each variable. Error bars represent SEs. $n_{\text{male student condition}} = 63$, $n_{\text{female student condition}} = 64$. 
What are your goals?

• Short-term goals:
  – Finish the semester
  – Get a summer job
  – Get an internship

• Long-term goals:
  – Get a degree
  – Get into graduate school
  – Get a job

Brainstorm: What are some things you can ask for?
Be mindful of your goal during the journey.

- Always keep your goal in mind.
- Don’t get distracted by
  - bad behavior
  - anger
  - insults
  - arguments
- Choose your battles
- Find common ground
- Figure out the obstacles and work around them

Don’t let the obstacles get you down.
Negotiations require research & tactics

- Understand the **person** you’ll be negotiating with. What are their interests? What is their style? What is your style?
- Understand the full **scope** of what you can negotiate. What do other people get in similar situations? (**ZOPA**-Zone of Possible Agreement)

“Getting to Yes” by Fisher & Ury is the reference for ZOPA
What kind of tactics can you use in a negotiation?

• Instead of “I want to survive this conversation/negotiation.”
• How about “I want to find a way to get this person to do this.”

• Have a best and worst alternative and know their BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement).
  – What must I have?
  – What can I live without?
  – What can I ask for instead?
  – At what point do I walk away?

*Brainstorm: Tactics that you can use in a conversation or negotiation*
Some gender-specific negotiation and tactics issues

- Connect to the organization or person’s goals, needs, or interests.
  - To be successful for the department, we will need...
- Use relationship language
  - I’ve talked with several people who..
  - [Person] suggested that I talk with you...
- Don’t take it personally! (Defensive Driving)
  - Know your purpose/goal
  - It’s not about you, but about you in a role
  - Go around, over, under bad behavior
  - Try to view it as a game
Allies are tactically & strategically valuable

- Allies agree with you on a particular issue or goal
- Allies need not be friends or confidants
- Meet with allies BEFORE a big meeting
  - Allies should back you up on that issue
Now that you’ve developed tactics and lined up allies, how can you control your own attitude?

- Maintain focus on goals
- Use body language and presence
  - Posture
  - Take deep breaths
  - Keep expression neutral
Communication skills leave a big impression

- One-on-one, in a meeting, or for a seminar. People will remember very little of what you say and a lot about how you say it!
  - Stick to a few take-aways (1-2 for a meeting, no more than 3 for a seminar)
  - Speak clearly
  - Make eye contact
  - No upspeak
  - Don’t touch your hair or face
  - Rehearse to see if you have any verbal tics (ahs, ums, likes)

BREATHE!

- Shorten your sentences
- Land your points
- Articulate your words
- Use silence
- Eliminate qualifiers
Three things to remember

• Goals
  – Define your goals
  – Do your research ahead of time

• Tactics
  – Use your full arsenal of tactics, adjust as needed
  – Recognize tactics that are being used on you

• Attitude
  – Don’t take it personally
  – Rehearse for focus and communication skills