TIPS AND TACTICS FOR WOMEN FACULTY

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TIPS AND TACTICS

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Each of us, no matter how successful we have become professionally, must always reach back to help other women advance as far as we have.  Anna Pratt
WOMEN FACULTY WANT TIPS!

"We need practical tips about how to handle academic sexism," beginning faculty told members of the Task Force at the June meeting of the National Women's Studies Association in Saratoga Springs, New York. "Get us in touch with other women academics for mutual support and advice," they asked us on a survey we circulated last fall.

Here's a Typical Problem:
"What do I do about backlash against women faculty who complain of sexist behavior from colleagues and superiors? What constitutes 'proof,' when they band together, cover up for one another, and say, "You have no proof: only hearsay or craziness!"

Our Reply:

- Avoid situations in which it is your word against his or theirs. If at all possible, try not to be alone with such faculty members: talk to them in the presence of witnesses.
- Don't do your own complaining: find a tenured mentor to do it for you. Take her/him to meetings with superiors to discuss your career moves.
- Maintain a paper trail: after each such meeting, write a memo to the person you met with, politely summarizing what you understood. Conclude with "If I hear to the contrary, I will assume this to be our understanding."
- Keep a log, with dates and times of all sexist episodes, and ask others to keep logs of similar behaviors.
HELP! MALE STUDENTS IN MY CLASS ARE ACTING UP!

Help is on the way from Bernice Sandler, our Feminist Hero who fought for Title IX, which amended the Civil Rights Act to cover discrimination by educational institutions receiving federal funds. Bernice dared to stand up for herself when the University of Maryland refused to let her move from part- to full-time employment because "You come on too strong for a woman."

Working with the Women's Equity Action League (WEAL) she organized a huge class action suit on behalf of women against 250 institutions. Since June 23, 1972 when Title IX was passed, Bernice has addressed problems women encounter in academe. With Lisa A. Silverberg and Roberta M. Hall, she wrote The Chilly Classroom Climate: A Guide to Improve the Education of Women. In this issue, we bring you her suggestions for how to handle male students when they create a hostile environment for women (page 2). She is now Senior Scholar in Residence at the National Association for Women in Education.

For more tips and strategies, subscribe to About Women on Campus, ed Bernice Sandler, $20/year, 35 two years NAWE; About Women on Campus 1325 18th St. NW Suite 210 Washington DC 20036-5511.
The following is excerpted from *The Chilly Classroom Climate: A Guide to Improve the Education of Women* by Bernice Resnick Sandler, Lisa A. Silverberg, and Roberta M. Hall. Published by the National Association for Women in Education, the book explores the chilly classroom and provides over 270 recommendations for administrators, faculty members, and students.

**INTERVENING WHEN MALE STUDENTS ENGAGE IN NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS TOWARD WOMEN**

Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, institutions have an obligation to provide an environment that is free of discrimination, including sexual harassment. Faculty or student behaviors which create a hostile learning environment for women can in some instances be considered violations of Title IX. Apart from any legal reasons, however, faculty should intervene when negative behaviors occur, because they can interfere with the learning process. Here are some suggestions:

- **Intervene when male students show disrespect to women students (or the reverse) through overt comments or negative body language.**

- **Respond swiftly and firmly when students show verbal hostility or negative body language in response to women students or their contributions.** Ignoring such behaviors gives the implicit message that you approve of the behavior or are unable to stop it.

- **When students engage in negative body language or facial expressions in response to another student’s contribution, one way to confront it openly is to say something like, “I’m noticing you are frowning (looking upset, etc.). Can you tell me why?” or “I see you look skeptical. Let’s talk about what you are thinking.” The aim is to convert negative behavior into an intellectual response.**

- **If the negative behavior persists and a student is unresponsive to your efforts in and out of the classroom, where appropriate, invoke student disciplinary procedures.**

- **If you are reluctant to reprimand a student publicly, tell the student in front of the class that you would like to see him (or her) after class. This gives the class the message that you are not willing to tolerate the behavior. Some ways to indicate you displeasure follow.**

If you decide not to respond overtly, stare hard and frown at the person.

- **Indicate your displeasure openly, stating that you find the comment or behavior offensive, or you can say in a shocked tone, “I beg your pardon!” You can pretend to take the comment literally or not to understand, and ask the person to repeat the comment once or twice. Then ask for an explanation from that person and/or the class. Asking for an explanation of a sexist remark or joke sometimes embarrasses the offending person and highlights the prejudice contained within the remark.**

- **Do not allow students to interrupt each other. Intervene and interrupt students who interrupt others. Early in the semester, perhaps at the first session, articulate the class rule that students do not interrupt each other.**

- **Do not allow men to squeeze women out of laboratory demonstrations. Mention at the beginning of the class or demonstration that students should arrange themselves so that all can see, and that they should allow the shorter persons in the front.**

- **Do not allow jokes or stories which make women or racial or other groups the object of laughter or ridicule. Most of these jokes are offensive to these groups, although individuals may not openly complain.**

- **If an insulting remark has been made, do not call on the insulted person to tell how he or she feels about the remark unless he or she volunteers to do so.**

Copies of *The Chilly Classroom Climate* can be obtained for $20 ($15 for NAWE members) from the National Association for Women in Education, 1325 18th Street NW, Suite 210, Washington, DC 20036-6511.
HOW TO GET PUBLISHED

Now that you have learned to say NO! to excessive committee assignments so that you can get your work published (see our last issue), here are some suggestions for writing Your All-Important FIRST BOOK

• Never write a dissertation that is "just a dissertation." Tell your director that you intend it as a book and ask her to gear the whole project toward publication. She should put you in touch with editors of presses on her contact list. If you are hired by a college that will tenure with articles rather than a book, you can divide it up later into articles, if you wish. Remember! If you move on to a research university they will probably prefer a book.

• Take advantage of any fellowships your school offers to take time off from teaching to write. Failing that, eat beans and rice during summers rather than teach when writing a book.

• Widen your professional network: by now you should have met senior women's studies scholars at conferences as well as men of good will to your work who will bring you into their networks. Most faculty read for university presses, which query them for good manuscripts. You should also survey the kinds of books university presses publish and find out who in your network publishes with which. Write senior faculty members in your net and ask them if they would read a chapter and make suggestions about content and style and where you might want to submit your manuscript.

• It is unprofessional to submit your book manuscript to more than one press at a time. You can terminate your publishing career by falling afoul of this norm! You can, however, send a covering letter, table of contents, abstract and one chapter to several presses and then submit to the press that gives you the best answer.

• Your ms will usually be read by two readers at a university press. These are likely to be published scholars you have quoted, so avoid nasty criticism of such writers!

• If the press accepts your ms with suggested revisions, do them promptly without fuss. If two readers make contradictory suggestions ask the editor to mediate.

• In all of your correspondence be professional, polite, and self-confident about your scholarship. No whining!

* Some fields accept articles for tenure. See next issue of The Strategist for How to Get Articles Published.