

Sticky Situations for Improving Gender Diversity

Scenario 1: You teach an introductory course that is required for almost all students majoring in EET. You notice that there is only one woman enrolled in your class. Early on she works with other students in a group, but after a few weeks she stops and instead completes assignments on her own.

Questions:

How might this situation affect this student's performance in the class?

What do you do?

How do you know your actions will help?

What is likely to happen if you do nothing?

Scenario 2: You give your first exam and the only woman in your class gets one of the lowest scores. She comes to your office hours to ask how she can do better. Her attendance has been good, she comes to class on time, completes her assignments on time. She says she studied a lot and doesn't know how to improve her learning. You have noticed that she is not very engaged with lab assignments.

Questions:

What factors might have affected her performance on the exam?

What questions do you want to ask her?

What can you do?

What is likely to happen if you do nothing?

Scenario 3: You overhear a group of students who you know are in your program having a conversation before class about applying for jobs. One of the students, a white male, says he is going to have a much more difficult time getting a job because of affirmative action. Another student, a white female, agrees and says she thinks it is unfair when students are judged on factors other than academic performance and test scores.

Questions:

What assumptions are these students making?

How would you react?

And what would you say?

What would happen if you do nothing?

Scenario 4: You learn from the human resources department, which did a Climate Survey of all instructors and departments across the system, that women instructors, particularly in programs with low female enrollments (<20%), were significantly less likely than their male colleagues to say they were:

- Treated with respect by their colleagues,
- Treated with respect by their students,
- Included in informal networks within their departments
- Included in discussions relevant to their work and advancement
- Evaluated fairly

A similar pattern of results was found with respect to faculty of color compared to majority white faculty.

Questions:

What is your reaction to this information?

What can *you* do to improve the climate in your work group or department?

What do you think will happen if you do nothing?