Creating more welcoming and inclusive communities: A focus on gender

Science of Learning & Art of Communication
Wednesday, January 15, 2020
Presented by
Kathleen Holgerson
Women’s Center
Student Union Room 421
www.womenscenter.uconn.edu
Introductions

- Name
- Area of study
- What is your family's cure for the common cold?
- What is the origin of your name? (Who gave you your name? Why? What is the meaning of your name? Nicknames?)
- What is your typical family meal?
Hopes

- Developing cultural competency and empathy
- Understanding diverse perspectives
- Achieve compassionately constructive conversations and behavior choices
What might challenge our ability to be a welcoming and inclusive environment?
Goal

To work together to build our toolbox to explore how gender matters in our scholarship, practice, and engagement with students and colleagues.
Our Mission

The mission of the Center is to advocate, educate, and provide support services for the achievement of women's equity at the University and within the community at large.

Special attention is focused on women who face additional challenges due to their race, nationality, class, sexual identity, religion, age, and physical or mental ability.
Our Herstory

- Established in 1972
- Grew out of the activism of students, staff, and faculty
- Provided education and resources, and served as a gathering place
Overview of Frameworks

- Community of Practice
- Birdcage/Intersectionality
- Levels of Oppression
Community of Practice

A group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

~ Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger
Community of Practice

Requires 3 elements:

Identity

✓ Shared domain of interest (gender equity)
✓ Implied commitment (no one HAS to be here)
✓ Value collective competence and learn from each other

Community

✓ Engage in joint activities and discussions
✓ Build relationships that enable learning from each other
✓ Mutual engagement binds individuals together into a social entity

Practice

✓ Requires commitment, time and sustained interaction
✓ Creates a shared repertoire of communal resources (routines, vocabulary, sensibilities, etc.)
Mainstream thinking tends to assume that learning is:
- Something individuals do (what is in your head)
- Has a beginning and an end
- Is formal and the result of “teaching”

Collective learning:
- Involvement in relationships within a community which develops around issues that matter to participants.
Tenets of Consciousness-Raising

- Go around in a circle
- Always speak personally, specifically and from your own experience
- Don’t interrupt
- Never challenge anyone else’s experience
- Try not to give advice
- Sum up – find the common element and see what conclusions can be drawn
Consciousness-Raising

Gender roles

- When was I first aware of the differences in the roles of men and women?

- How were these roles played out by my parents/family?

- Have my expectations of gender roles changed?
Consciousness-Raising

Education

- What were my parents’/family’s attitudes towards education?
- What were my teachers’/guidance counselors’ expectations of me?
- Did they have different expectations of the students based on their gender? On their gender expression?
- What were my aspirations?
- What are my educational successes?
Consciousness-Raising

Other topics to explore:

- Role models
- Firsts
- Hopes
- Power
- Anger
“Revolutionary feminist consciousness-raising emphasized the importance of learning about patriarchy as a system of domination, how it became institutionalized and how it is perpetuated and maintained.”

hooks, Feminism is for EVERYBODY, p. 7
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In my environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My co-workers are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teachers were mostly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of my close friends are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentors are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The people I mentor are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My neighbors are</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from *A Booklet of Interactive Exercises to Explore Our Differences*. Created by the University Committee for Diversity, Equity and Affirmative Action, October 14, 2011.
“In its earliest inception feminist theory had as its primary goal explaining to women and men how sexist thinking worked and how we could challenge and change it.”

hooks, Feminism is for EVERYBODY, p. 19
# Levels of Oppression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Indicators/Manifestations</th>
<th>Response/Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Bias &amp; Prejudice</td>
<td>Education &amp; Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Stereotyping &amp; Discrimination</td>
<td>Laws, Policies &amp; Regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Power + Prejudice = “ism”</td>
<td>Social Change /Structural Change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Comparing Individual & Institutional Oppression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Institutional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One on One</td>
<td>Group on Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overt</td>
<td>Covert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observable</td>
<td>Subtle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causes Injury or Harm to Individual or Property</td>
<td>“Business as Usual”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicly Condemned</td>
<td>Publicly Sanctioned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Birdcage
“...feminist theory which included both an analysis of sexism, strategies for challenging patriarchy, and new models of social interaction.”

hooks, Feminism is for EVERYBODY, p. 19
Sexual Harassment of Women
Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine
SEXUAL HARASSMENT
Recognizing All Types

SEXUAL COERCION
- promising professional rewards in return for sexual favors
- threatening professional consequences unless sexual demands are met

PUBLIC AWARENESS
- relentless pressure for sex
- unwanted sexual discussions
- relentless pressure for dates
- offensive sexual teasing
- sexist insults (e.g., “women don’t belong in science”)
- obscene gestures
- vulgar name calling (e.g., “slut” “bitch”)
- gender slurs (e.g., “pu**y”)

UNWANTED SEXUAL ATTENTION
- sexual assault
- rape
- unwanted groping or stroking
- nude images posted at work
- sexually humiliating acts
- sexual insults (e.g., “for a good time call...” “calling someone a whore”)
- offensive remarks about bodies
- sabotage of women’s equipment
- insults to working mothers (e.g., “you can’t do this job with small kids at home”)

#ScienceBox
www.nationalacademies.org/sexualharassment
Copyright 2018 by the National Academy of Sciences
Things to consider

- How does gender harassment show up in your experience?
- Is your field/department tolerant of and/or perceived to be tolerant of some or all forms of sexual harassment?
- How do you and your colleagues actively address gender harassment?
- How is work to create more diverse, inclusive, and respectful environments embedded into the systems and structures in which you operate?
- Is gender harassment considered as important as research misconduct?
- How are power and dependencies diffused in relationships between trainees and faculty/advisors?
Wrap-up

- I learned …
- I figured out …
- I feel …
- I felt challenged …
- I’m wondering …
- I’m clearer about …
- I’ve discovered …
- I’m taking with me …