Analyzing and Correcting
Visible Gender-Equity Problems

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Preliminaries to analyzing and correcting visible gender-equity problems

1. Accept that there are no one-time fixes; gender equity requires consistent and constant effort.

2. Develop accountability from top to bottom.

3. Take an experimental approach: if one strategy doesn't work, change the variables or variable values and try another strategy.

4. There are two strategies for achieving gender equity. One is to try to meet the national average on a range of measures. The other is to try to be the best. The latter strategy is more likely to achieve gender equity because it is more likely to spark a thorough examination of current practices and policies.

5. Consider gender equity to be a discipline: there is a subject matter; there are concepts; there is a theoretical framework to develop; there are data to gather in order to understand what gives rise to inequity and what conditions yield a stably equitable environment.

In-depth example of accountability up and down the ladder (for academia but modifiable for business, law, and industry)

Create monitoring system
- annual review of equity benchmarks (via Institutional Research)
  - see examples of visible and hidden problems
  - maintain adequate data base

Rate departments
- current status of gender equity
- improvement in gender equity

Use equity status as a criterion
- for allocating space
- for permission to search
- for appointment to leadership position

Reward departments and department heads that demonstrate equity in practice

Give negative consequences to departments and department heads where there is credible evidence of
- bias
- discrimination
- harassment
- insufficient attention to gender equity

Provide release time or other benefits to faculty working on improvement of equity

Consider creation of position of Vice President for Diversity and Innovation

Ensure that leaders *lead*
- leaders have power and must be taught how to use it
- leaders create other leaders by vouching for them and must be taught how to endorse others

In-depth example of reviewing and improving search procedures (for academia but modifiable for business, law, and industry)

Search for couples

Search for talented women and minorities at non-elite institutions
- use the knowledge that location creates productivity as much as or more than the reverse: identify women who are publishing more than is typical for their location; they are likely to do well at your institution

Search for non-traditional candidates for senior positions
- women and minorities are less likely than white men to fit the traditional profile of experience because they are less likely to have been chosen for leadership positions
- search for women who are likely to succeed in leadership role by examining other leadership roles that they have already performed (even if those roles are non-canonical); groom internal women by giving them a range of responsibilities

Instruct search committees in where they are likely to go wrong
- too narrow a job description based on replacing what already exists
- too little power over appointment in hands of women who have minority status with respect to a field of inquiry
- insufficient recognition of need for extra effort to attract women and minorities
- insufficient welcoming of women and minorities at interview
- insufficient start-up packages and unattractive teaching loads for women and minorities

Examples of Problem Types and Solutions

Problem Type
- sex disparities in attrition among students from undergraduate to graduate study, especially in traditionally male- or female-dominated fields (e.g., few women in certain science fields; few men in certain health fields)
- sex disparities in attrition among students from graduate study to post-doctoral work or academic employment, especially in traditionally male- or female-dominated fields

Possible Solutions
- questionnaires to determine male and female perceptions of graduate work and academia, followed if necessary by intervention program to alter perceptions
- survey of faculty efforts to attract students to independent study and research, followed if necessary by intervention program to reward faculty with diverse group of students
- improvement of gender ratios in faculty
- review for possible change those policies female students find alienating

Problem Type
- sex disparities in graduates' post-doctoral fellowship and employment opportunities

Possible Solutions
- train faculty and employers in writing letters of recommendation
- review letters of recommendation for over-praise of men and under-praise of women

Problem Type
- lack of systematic information to students and faculty about role of gender schemas in evaluations of others and their consequent advancement or lack thereof

Possible Solutions
- annual seminars to students and faculty
- orientation seminars for new majors, new graduate students, and new faculty

Problem Type
- few women in leadership positions as heads of departments, sections, or important committees

Possible Solutions
- make leadership positions attractive to women and underrepresented minorities
- appoint women to leadership positions
- ensure that men and women in leadership positions receive equal support staff and resources

Problem Type
- sex disparities in tasks and roles (e.g., more women than men in time-intensive, low-reward tasks: undergraduate advisor; student disciplinary and grade committee assignments)

Possible Solutions
- appoint men to low-reward tasks at same rate as women

Problem Type
- sex disparities in teaching assignments (e.g., time-intensive courses; range of courses; service courses; courses in specialty)

Possible Solutions
- department heads to review course assignments semester-by-semester and correct disparities

Problem Type
- sex disparities in recruitment for post-doctoral, faculty, and other positions (e.g., short lists of candidates do not represent candidate pool; candidate pool does not represent potential candidate pool)

Possible Solutions
- ensure that job descriptions do not inadvertently exclude women or men by type of expertise advertised for, level of position, and so on
- identify talented women regardless of area
- require chairs and search committees to justify pattern of disparities in hiring
- reward chairs and search committees who succeed at gender equity
- provide job-hunting assistance to partner

Problem Type
- sex disparities in salary

Possible Solutions
- develop appropriate statistical models for assessing outliers
- use scatterplots
- examine salaries for outliers and "inliers" (outstanding women may be at the mean instead of above it)
- require departments to justify outliers and "inliers"
- examine criteria determining "merit" for unintended negative impact on women
- ensure that face time is not rewarded more than efficiency and quality of product
- correct disparities

Problem Type
- sex disparities in time in assistant and associate ranks

Possible Solutions
- develop appropriate statistical models for assessing time in rank
- evaluate all men and women for possible promotion at least every two years
- establish yearly evaluations at which criteria for promotion are communicated and candidates' qualifications are clearly and thoroughly assessed
- examine ranks for outliers and "inliers"
- query department heads about anyone in rank for six years or more
- require heads to justify time in rank
- examine criteria determining promotion for unintended negative impact on women
- ensure that face time is not rewarded more than efficiency and quality of product
- correct disparities

Problem Type
- sex disparities in retention rates

Possible solution
- conduct exit interviews with individual and individual's supervisor, chair, division head
- use anonymous questionnaires on routine basis to assess employee satisfaction

Problem Type
- sex disparities in tenure rates in academia

Possible Solutions
- establish yearly evaluations at which criteria for tenure are communicated and candidates' qualifications are clearly and thoroughly assessed
- examine criteria on which tenure decisions are made to ensure quality as well as quantity
- ensure that quantity is not rewarded more than quality
- require chairs to justify disparities in time to tenure
- correct disparities