



Online Ethics Center
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

Gender Issues: Should You Find a New Supervisor?

Author(s)

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Year

2000

Description

A scenario meant to stimulate discussion about gender issues in the advisor-advisee relationship.

Body

You are nearing the end of your first year of graduate study at Tough Tech and have been working with Professor Grimm's group within the large Laboratory for Better Technology. You are very interested in the subject area of your research. However, whenever you make a significant contribution and start feeling good about yourself and your work, Professor Grimm gives you a lecture about what hard places Tough Tech and the Laboratory for Better Technology are, and how you really have to keep your nose to the grindstone if you expect to make it here. You try to make a joke of Grimm's "anti-pep" talks, but they do demoralize you. It has gotten to the point that whenever you make a contribution to the project, you send him something in writing and avoid talking to him for several days to avoid hearing his pessimistic assessment of your abilities.

On several occasions, Grimm has walked into the men's room while having an

interesting conversation with the group. He seems not to notice that this leaves you asking male students to fill you in on what he said in there.

You are thinking about finding a different supervisor. The trouble is, there is only one other faculty member who works in this area, which you enjoy very much. From the two women in his group you learn that this second faculty member opens his group meetings by addressing everyone as "Gentlemen."

- What should you do and how should you go about it?
- Are there established standards of behavior that are being violated here?
- If so, what could be done to get others to help uphold those standards?

Notes

Caroline Whitbeck introduced methods and modules for discussing numerous issues in responsible conduct of research at a Sigma Xi Forum in 2000. Partial funding for the development of this material came from an NIH grant.

You can find the entire sequence on the OEC at [Scenarios for Ethics Modules in the Responsible Conduct of Research](#). Some information in these historical modules may be out-of-date; for instance, there may be a new edition of the professional society's code that is referred to in an item. If you have suggestions for updates, please contact the OEC.

Contributor(s)

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