Changing Faculty Gender Bias

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Faculty as Gatekeepers

Faculty provide students
- Formal and informal advising
- Access to opportunities
- Feedback on their abilities
- A vision of a professional path
Faculty as Gatekeepers

• Do we want to be fair?
• Why should we be fair?
• Are we fair?
• Can we change?
Is academic science a meritocracy?

% of Awards to Women (end of 2010)
Our claim of objectivity

“We’re scientists – we evaluate the data dispassionately

“We only hire the best”

“I know it when I see it”

“We’re trained to be objective, so the bias studies don’t apply to us”
Our study of scientists

- 127 biologists, chemists, and physicists
- Six top research universities
- Sent participants a student description
- Randomly assigned name “Jennifer” or “John”
- Questions about student
  - Hire as lab manager?
  - Competent?
  - Provide mentoring?
  - Salary?
Results: Would Jennifer or John Be Hired?

\[ t(125) = 4.22, \ p = .001, \ d = .70 \]
How much would Jennifer or John be paid?

$t(125) = 2.94, p < .01, d = .51$
Would Jennifer or John receive mentoring?

![Bar chart showing mentoring levels for Male Target and Female Target.](image)

\[ t(125) = 3.43, p < .01, d = .60 \]
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Did faculty gender matter in their evaluation of Jennifer or John?

- Condition: \( f(1,126) = 13.43, p < .001 \)
- Gender: \( f(1,126) = .12, \text{ ns} \)
- Condition X Gender: \( f(1,126) = .03, \text{ ns} \)
What can we do to minimize the impact of bias?
Examples of Actions

- **WAGES board game**
- **Blind reviews** – especially for two-tiered review (Science, Nature, PNAS, Cell)
- **Evidence-based training** of faculty and students supported by federal funds
- **Images** of famous women and minorities
- **Artistic interventions?**
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