Midwest Women's Caucus for Political Science

2007 ROUNDTABLE SUMMARIES

Women Faculty in the Classroom: Strategies for Success (57-101)

Panelists: Leslie Schwindt-Bayer, *University of Mississippi*, Chair; Michelle Dion, *Georgia Institute of Technology*; Julie Dolan, *Macalester College*; Jodi Finkel, *Loyola Marymount University*; Beth Leach, *Rutgers University*

This roundtable discussed obstacles that women faculty face in the classroom and offered a wide range of suggestions on how to deal with them. Each of the panelists offered insights on a different set of issues. Michelle Dion talked about strategies that female faculty can use to offset the negative teaching evaluations that women, more often than men, receive from students. Jodi Finkel and Beth Leach focused on female faculty in the classroom, talking about how to demand respect in the classroom and methods for diffusing hostile situations in the classroom where students sometimes feel compelled to challenge female faculty members. Julie Dolan offered suggestions on how to interact with students outside of the classroom on issues such as grade complaints, grading coursework, email etiquette, and student personal problems. The following are some of the “strategies for success” that emerged from the discussion:

Demanding respect – Female faculty have to make a more concerted effort than male faculty to achieve respect from students. How can we do this?

- Telling students early on that they should refer to all of their professors as “Dr.” or “Professor” (unless you are in a collegiate environment where this is not the norm).
- Set high expectations from day one, explain them clearly, and be consistent in applying them.
- Do not fall into the trap of granting special favors to students. When asked, respond that this would not be fair to the rest of the class and say “no.”

Diffusing hostile classroom situations – A student becomes visibly or audibly agitated and begins challenging you and your authority in the classroom. What to do?

- Address the problem as early as possible – do not wait until the student explodes.
- Remember that the student is not only making you uncomfortable but is making the entire class uncomfortable.
- Respond to hostility without hostility.
- Put the onus back on the student. If the student is incorrect with his challenge, walk through the logic of why that argument is incorrect or unfounded.

- If these strategies do not work, talk to the student after class and tell them their behavior is unacceptable in the classroom and will not be tolerated in the future.

The downside of email – Students often believe that email means they have 24-7 access to faculty and expect faculty to respond immediately. What to do?

- Decide when and how you will respond to student emails and include a statement of your "email policy" in your syllabus. Don't feel you have to be available 24 hours a day.

- Decide what topics you are willing to discuss over email and which need to be discussed in person. Tell students about your "email policy" from the very beginning of the course. For many faculty members, discussing grade disputes in person is better than email because the anonymity of email can encourage students to be more brazen and inappropriate than they would be in person.

- Keep in mind that email is a written record of conversations. This may be useful at times and detrimental at others.

- Keep research and teaching emails separate. If you use websites (such as Blackboard), require students to contact you via Blackboard rather than using your university email account.

- Require students to use formal email etiquette (your name at the top, their name at the bottom) to avoid getting inappropriately addressed emails and emails from unknown students.

Teaching evaluations and P&T – Studies show that female faculty members get worse teaching evaluations than male faculty. How do you overcome this, especially when teaching evaluations can be so important to the promotion and tenure process?

- Supplement teaching evaluations with other types of evaluations – ask a senior faculty member to sit in on a lecture and write an evaluation of your teaching that you can include in your P&T file.

- Ask the P&T committee to review your teaching evaluations against other women's evaluations rather than the entire pool.

- Keep your own records of positive and negative comments you get from students – cards, emails, your own in class evaluations, etc.

Interacting with students outside of the classroom – Students view female and male faculty differently. How should you respond?

- Some students see female faculty as softer and more understanding than male faculty. When students come to you with personal problems, have information on hand about counseling or other services at the University that the student can utilize. Faculty members are not counselors.

- Set your boundaries. Be careful socializing with students such that they do not lose respect for you in the classroom.

Ultimately, these suggestions are not just for female faculty but are suggestions for what makes a good teacher, male or female. In a perfect world, women would not have to do anything differently than men. The reality, however, is that male and female faculty are viewed and treated differently by students. This roundtable was an opportunity to brainstorm ways to deal with this reality.

Additional Resources

Boice, Robert. 2000. *Advice for New Faculty Members*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Dion, Michelle. 2007. "All-knowing or All-nurturing? Student Expectations, Gender Roles, and Practical Suggestions for Women in the Classroom" Paper prepared for roundtable discussion at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, April 12-15.

Having It All and Doing It All: Achieving a Work-Life Balance (57-102)

Panelists: Christina Wolbrecht, *University of Notre Dame*, Chair; Lisa Baldez, *Dartmouth College*; Michael Brintnall, *American Political Science Association*; Lynne E. Ford, *College of Charleston*; Trudy Steuernagel, *Kent State University*

This roundtable brought together scholars with different personal and professional experiences and situations to discuss approaches to maintaining a successful and satisfying balance between work and life. Panelists recounted personal experiences, models for institutional policies, and ideas for future reform and improvement.

Background

- Work-life balance is not only about work-*family* balance. The goal is to find a way to accomplish your professional goals while still enjoying the many other aspects of life, including family, relationships, non-academic interests, and so on.

- The original academic model was imported from monastic tradition where the expectation was a life given over completely to scholarship and study. Through most of the 20th century, the dominant model was a (male) scholar who devotes himself to work while his (female) spouse, who could move anywhere for any length of time, assumed nearly-full responsibility for the household and children. Few of us—male or female—live our lives that way any more.

- Studies suggest that women with small children have a harder time making it through the tenure track successfully. We want to avoid casting off the important contributions those women might make over the course of their decades-long careers simply because they birth and have responsibility for small children for a relatively small portion of their academic lives.

- Everyone—not just women—faces pressing personal issues (e.g., children, ill or aging parents, personal illness) throughout their career so addressing these demands is an issue for all members of the profession, not just women. Different experiences (e.g., special needs children) require different accommodations.

- Different members of the profession face different challenges, usually complicated by serious power imbalances. For example, while faculty (esp. tenured) may be able to schedule their classes around family commitments, graduate students often have no choice but to take evening classes during prime family time. Non-tenure track faculty (e.g., adjuncts) have very little control over course planning and few opportunities for leaves.

- Family-friendly policies include a range of concerns, including health care policies (e.g., coverage for special needs children), scheduling of conferences, and so on.

Recommendations

- If your institution has family-friendly policies on the book (e.g., time off the tenure clock and/or teaching relief for birth or adoption), take advantage of them! These policies were often hard-fought and represent reasonable accommodations.

- Make children and families public and visible so that the reality of family commitments is seen as normal, accepted, and even encouraged. Chairs and tenured members of a department should take the lead, so as to set a positive example about acceptance of family commitments.

- You can’t actually do it all. Both professionally and personally, you must prioritize—identify the most important tasks and make time for them. Let other things go. When you choose a task, do it well, but don’t obsess or give it more time than it merits.

- Every different career stage has pros and cons in terms of having and raising children; there is no one “best” time.

- Say yes when you can so you can say no when you have to. To the extent possible, take on tasks that afford the greatest flexibility (e.g., committees with few meetings or hard deadlines where most work done is conducted via e-mail or on your own time).

- Cultivate a support system of colleagues and friends facing (and overcoming) similar constraints and challenges.

- Be upfront about your constraints, while making good faith efforts to be flexible. If you can't meet at a certain time because of a personal or family commitment, simply say, I'm not available to meet at time Y, but I am available at times A, B, and C. Volunteer to teleconference or write-up your comments in an extensive memo if actual attendance at a meeting is simply impossible for you.

- Chairs around the country express great interest in retaining women, but may not always know what policies and resources can be helpful. Be upfront with your chair, framing your needs in terms of your desire to be successful professionally, which advantages both you and your department/university.

- Senior faculty should take leadership roles in advocating for family friendly policies at their universities and within the discipline. Many succeeded under unsupportive conditions, but letting those conditions remain will likely result in a very small number of female colleagues.

Mentoring Roundtable on Publishing with Colleagues and Publishers (57-103)

Panelists: Brigid C. Harrison, *Montclair State University*, Chair; Joan Catapano, *University of Illinois Press*; Monica Eckman, *McGraw-Hill Publishers*; Susan Gluck Mezey, *Loyola University, Chicago*; Chuck Myers, *Princeton University Press*

Contracting with a Publisher (by Brigid Callahan Harrison)

Getting Started in Publishing

- Talk to colleagues and your department chair to determine what kinds of publications "count" in tenure and promotion decisions, and how much weight is given to each type of publication (i.e., Do trade publications count? How many articles equal a book?)

- Look at your bookshelves to determine who publishes the type of book you'd like to write. Talk to series editors and find out their criteria for adding books to their series.

- Use the Internet to research the publishers you've identified as potentials. Find out the name of the Acquisitions Editor, and email a query to him or her asking if they'd be interested in receiving a prospectus.

- Your prospectus package should include a current curriculum vita, a prospectus that explains your project (your research question, data collection methods, or pedagogy) and identifies potential markets, and at least a sample chapter. Academic/scholarly presses are more likely to require a completed manuscript. Trade presses are less likely to want this. If you submit your manuscript to multiple academic/scholarly publishers, disclose that fact to the acquisitions editors.

- If feasible, arrange to meet with acquisitions editors at national or regional meetings after you have submitted your prospectus package in advance, and they have had time to review it.

- If you are trying to test the waters with publishers at national or regional meetings, go to the publisher's booth and ask to speak with the acquisitions editor. Give the editors a very short (under two minute description) of your project. If they express interest, follow up with a prospectus package upon returning home (or bring it with you). Understand that publishers are extremely busy at these meetings.

Articles versus Books: Choosing a Publisher for Each (by Susan Gluck Mezey)

- Because research activity is crucial to academic success, it is important to try to find the right kind of publisher for our work. Although there are obvious advantages to publishing articles, if your work does not fit into the type of research that the mainstream political science journals are likely to publish, you should think about a book-length manuscript.

- The advantages of seeking a book publisher for your work are that you can more readily control the process and you are not as dependent upon the vagaries of journal reviews. It is especially beneficial as you are able to secure a book contract based on a prospectus because this commits you to a deadline for finishing the project.

- Even if you have a contract, the publisher will almost certainly send the completed manuscript out for review, but the existence of the contract indicates the publisher's interest in the topic and, at least, preliminary approval of you. In my experience, it is permissible to send out multiple copies of a manuscript as long as you disclose that fact to each publisher and make sure it is acceptable to all involved.

- When submitting a prospectus, it is always desirable to familiarize yourself generally with the type of books on the publisher's list. It is very helpful if the timing is such that you are able to visit the book exhibit area at a national or regional meeting and talk to an editor to see whether there is a fit between you and the publisher. If so, ask if you can submit the prospectus (and a CV) at that time; bring copies with you. Even if you have to send it after the meeting, at least you will have a contact name and he or she will have a face to connect with the submission. It is even more preferable if you can identify several potential publishers and send them each a prospectus well in advance of the meeting, followed by a call or an email setting up an appointment at the meeting to discuss the project.

Contract Negotiations (by Chuck Myers, Princeton University Press)

- Use contract negotiations as a way to learn about the publishing process and to understand the strategy that the publisher will pursue in publishing your book. Ask questions, seek information, and negotiate courteously with the editor. If you don't have a meeting of the minds about the audience or style of publication for your book, you might be better off trying another press. Or you and the editor might, in the course of negotiations, change your ideas about how the book should be published. Remember that the editor is answerable to a management who place limits on the terms that an editor is able to offer.

- Contracts normally provide for the assignment of copyright or, if the author retains copyright, the right to publish the book, to the press; the length of the manuscript (including number of tables, figures, photos, maps, and other illustrations); the date for delivery of the manuscript; royalties; advances (or an advance payment on royalties that will be earned out as the book sells); who bears the cost of indexing the book; permissions (authors normally must pay permissions fees for any material including cover images used in the book); the number of free copies given to the author; and any special conditions placed on the acceptance by the editorial board such as additional reviews of the revised manuscript.

- Contracts normally do not cover issues of jacket design, publicity, and marketing. These issues are normally handled outside the contract though they can be discussed during the negotiations. It is important that the press and the author have a common understanding about the way the book will be marketed.

- If this is your first book and is a scholarly monograph do not try to drive a hard bargain on royalties and advances. Increasingly presses are cutting back on royalties on all but a few books. Textbooks, books by senior scholars, and a few “hot” first books are more likely to get higher royalties or to receive advances. The point of the book is to advance your career and to disseminate your scholarly research, not to pay for your child’s private school. Presses often lose money on first books. And, if you are fortunate enough to have presses competing for your book, just because a press offers more money to you than another press does not mean that the press offering the higher royalties or advance is the best place to publish your book. You need to look at the whole publishing picture such as the strategy the press proposes to publish the book, the disciplines in which the press is active (important if you see your book as having an appeal to several disciplines), what the books physically look like, if you like the other books the press publishes (and would be proud to have your book associated with), and what kind of attention you will get from the editor and press staff.

- If presses have agreed to simultaneously review a manuscript and make competing offers then you should conduct real negotiations. Too many authors simply pick the “best” first offer without discussing with the other presses the issues that are important to them in evaluating offers. Not only does this mean the presses are often wasting their time and making offers into a vacuum, but the author might find, upon discussion, that the “best” offer is not really that good. Or the competing presses might be able to improve their offer. If you have set up a competitive situation, let the presses compete. One caution, if a press discovers it is competing only at the time the offer is made, be prepared for the press to withdraw its offer. Full disclosure of simultaneous submission at the beginning is the norm.

- Some authors want to retain copyright. As a practical matter the press will want the exclusive right to publish the manuscript and to handle the various sub-rights and permissions matters (granting permission for use of material in the book) so retaining copyright does not make a real difference for scholarly books. Most contracts provide for reversion of the copyright to the author if a book is taken out of print and if the author requests a reversion. Presses generally want world rights to publish a book.

- Translation rights are normally handled by the press and marketed through such events as the Frankfurt book fair and agents. You can negotiate to retain rights in specific languages but getting works translated and published abroad is not easy. With the widespread use of English there is little demand for the translation of some kinds of scholarly works. Also demand varies from country to country. Often the press, with a professional staff devoted to promoting books to foreign publishers, has the contacts necessary to give your book the best chance for translation and co-publication abroad. Remember that having a scholar tell you that they would translate your book is not enough to go on; there must be interest and support from a publisher in the country for the translation to become a reality. Presses also generally try to market the English language version of the book directly to the retail trade in many countries so even if the book is not translated or co-published abroad it might well be available for sale abroad, especially now with so many internet sellers.

Navigating Professional Service: When to Say "Yes" and How to Say "No" (57-104)

Panelists: Karen Kaufmann, *University of Maryland*, Chair; Elsa Chen, *Santa Clara University*; Georgia Duerst-Lahti, *Beloit College*; Claudine Gay, *Harvard University*; Laurie Rhodebeck, *University of Louisville*

The discussion began with an acknowledgement that women faculty and faculty of color are often tapped to do disproportionate amounts of professional service. For untenured faculty, too much service can endanger research productivity leading to disastrous consequences. Even for tenured faculty members, onerous service obligations can negatively impact teaching and research output.

As Professor Rhodebeck correctly noted, the reward for service well done is more service requests. Given this, it is important to understand the kind of service that your college or university values, and make choices that yield the maximum institutional benefit. If your institution is indifferent to what kind of service you perform, it is wise to choose service activities that dovetail with your research agendas. In particular, if you have a choice, service to the profession provides excellent networking opportunities and external visibility that can enhance access to resources and other research-related benefits. Service to the profession can alert you to new datasets and grant opportunities and can be helpful when trying to place graduate students. If your college values external visibility, you may want to consider media interviews, writing opinion pieces for local or national newspapers, etc.

It is particularly important for junior faculty to protect themselves. Some of the strategies recommended include the following:

- Close your door when office hours are over.

- Don't accept invitations to sponsor student clubs unless the requirements of your sponsorship are minimal.

- Don’t volunteer for service because you’ll be asked to serve on things anyway.

- Never say yes to a service request on the phone or in person without giving yourself a day to find out more about the proposed request. This way, if you decline, you’ll be able to give informed reasons.

- Assume that you’ll be as busy in 6 months as you are today. Don’t make future service obligations under the assumption that you’ll “have more time”.

- If the service request is particularly onerous (e.g., search committees), try to negotiate for course releases, teaching assistants, or other resources that may help you to achieve your other goals.

- Keep meticulous records of all service activities and all students that you advise, even if you’re not their formal advisor.

- Self promote. Let others know of the many forms of unofficial service you perform over the course of the year.

Survive and Thrive: Successful Strategies for Tenure (57-105)

Panelists: Elizabeth Bennion, *Indiana University South Bend*, Chair; Kathy Dolan, *University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*; Ann Linn, *University of Michigan, Ann Arbor*; Joanna Scott, *Eastern Michigan University;* Staci Rhine, *Wittenberg College*

Panelists began by discussing the institutional context in which they sought tenure. Some institutions clearly value research above teaching and service when evaluating cases for tenure and promotion. Others valued teaching most highly, while other institutions allow faculty to determine their own areas of excellence. In addition, some institutions almost never reverse the decision of the department, while others do so more frequently. Junior faculty must understand the culture, committees and institutions that determine tenure decisions on their own campus.

Key pieces of advice the panelists stressed included:

Deciphering Institutional Culture and Guidelines

- Know the culture of the institution – know what is valued.

- Seek out advice – both within and outside of the department.

- Seek annual feedback – both formal (written) and informal.

- Seek written guidelines from your department, college/division, and campus.

- It is usually unwise to accelerate the tenure clock. Things you did “off the clock” or at other institutions may not count. This is also true if you stop the clock. Be sure that you understand what time periods and activities count toward tenure.

Dossier Basics

- Think broadly and creatively about preparing the dossier.

- Obtain previous samples of successful dossiers.

- Talk to colleagues who have been through the process.

- Move beyond listing activities (i.e. publications) to demonstrate impact (i.e. publication rates, institutions adopting your book, syllabi assigning your articles, etc.).

- Save colleague and community thank you letters, written student compliments, and other evidence of gratitude for the work you’ve done. Include them (as appropriate) in your dossier.

Collecting and Preparing Materials

- Start preparing your materials as early as possible.

- Think strategically as you plan your research, teaching, and service activities. Think about how these activities will fit into your larger case for tenure.

- Whenever possible, seek awards, grants, publications, and other types of external recognition of excellence.

- Document your teaching, research, and service activities as you complete them.

- Keep an updated “kitchen sink” vitae on your computer at all times.

- Use a box or file folder to store useful documentation of your work, awards, and accolades.

Making Your Case

- If you are coming up for tenure, you are smart enough and accomplished enough to get it!

- When writing your personal statements, avoid adjectives that are ingratiating, defensive, or arrogant.

- Focus on your impact and productivity, not on your natural ability or talent.

- Give clear guidelines for people who want to tenure you about how to make a case for you.

- Explain what you do and why it has an important impact.

Explaining Progress and Accomplishments

- Provide a roadmap to your research and teaching.

- When describing your research, explain what is at stake and why your contribution is important. Discuss the fundamental question your work addresses or the tradition it builds on. Explain the trajectory of your work and why it matters.

- Research means different things (books, local government reports, articles, research-based public presentations). Find out what your department and university value.

- Explain how your research will continue to create more publications, presentations, etc., but do not focus too much on the future. Your promotion depends on what you have already accomplished.

- When describing your teaching, explain how it connects to gaps in student knowledge or interest. Explain why students need to know what you are teaching and how you inspire student learning.

- If it is valued at your institution, consider publishing in the scholarship of teaching and learning. This can be a good type of scholarship at institutions that value teaching more than traditional disciplinary research.

- Whenever possible, blend your teaching, service and scholarship. A single project (i.e. voter mobilization field experiment using student fieldworkers) may result in line items for your teaching, service, and research sections of your dossier.

Leveraging Service Work into Tenure Success

- Seek rank-appropriate service – know and meet requirements.

- Do not dramatically exceed service requirements.

- Seek service that allows you to meet key people inside and outside of your institution – these people can provide advice and write letters of support.

- Beware of accepting substantial service requirements unless you can leverage them into teaching awards, research projects, course releases, or important contacts that will advance your career as a whole.

- Know what kind of service (campus, national, or community) is most valued at your institution.