

2019 Women's Leadership Conference - Faculty Session 3 Scenarios for Discussion

Allow ~15-20 minutes per discussion topic.

Family Planning

Dr. Liu Chen is a new Assistant Professor at an Academic Medical Center in General Surgery. She completed a five-year residency and a one-year fellowship and is 32 years old. She has been married for six years, and she and her husband both want to have children. Should she have kids right away before her clinical practice gets busy, or should she wait and become more established? What will happen to her salary if she takes 3 months of maternity leave? How will her partners view her if she has children right away? Does she have to make up call for the time she is out? When she becomes pregnant, when should she tell her Chair and her section partners?

Dr. Jessica Smith and her partner, Dr. Leticia Thomas, are both faculty at the same Academic Medical Center. Dr. Smith is a funded, non-tenured Associate Professor in Public Health Sciences, and Dr. Thomas is an Associate Professor in Internal Medicine. They have been interested in adoption for the past several years, and they finally received the news that they have been approved to be parents. They are both required to fly out of the country to meet with their new child and to complete the extensive administrative work associated with the adoption process. They estimate that they will need to be out of work for a month, and then they will need additional time to bond with their child. How do they start? What happens to Dr. Smith's grant during her absence? What happens with Dr. Thomas' practice while she is out? They both have faculty in their departments that disapprove of their relationship; how do they deal with their colleagues if they refuse to help during their time away?

Questions:

Have you or a colleague experienced a similar situation? Were there any key takeaways that you can share?

Collegiality

Dr. Evalina Andrews is a well-known Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at a large Academic Medical Center. She has been the only woman in her department for the past eight years. Dr. Mariah Williams has recently joined the Department as a newly appointed Associate Professor. She was heavily recruited not only due to her specific clinical area of expertise but also due to her NIH funding. As part of her onboarding, the Department Chair has assigned Dr. Andrews to mentor Dr. Williams. During their first mentoring session, Dr. Andrews tells Dr. Williams, "You may have fooled everyone else in the Department, but I know what you're trying to do here, and it's not going to work. This is going to be my department, and you're not going to get in my way." Discuss the issues and possible motivations behind this statement as well as potential avenues and actions that Dr. Williams could take.

Tom Reynolds is a graduate student in a prominent basic science department at an Academic Medical Center. His effort is equally supported by two grants that have two different PI's, one by Dr. Megan Brown and one by Dr. Alejandro Vasquez. Dr. Brown has noticed that, over the past six months, Tom has been late on his deliverables and has neglected certain experiments all together, stating that he does not have enough time to complete all of the work that Dr. Brown has assigned to him. In the weekly lab meetings, she hears Tom report out results of the work that he is doing with Dr. Vasquez as well as preparations that they are doing for their next grant. Dr. Brown asks to meet with Dr. Vasquez to discuss the effort distribution of Tom, and Dr. Vasquez says to Dr. Brown,

“Stop complaining so much, Megan. The work that Tom and I are doing is showing promising results, whereas your lab has stalled in its progress. It’s not his fault that your study hasn’t worked.” Discuss the issues and possible motivations behind this statement as well as potential avenues and actions that Dr. Brown could take.

Dr. Matthew Bone is a prominent Orthopaedic Surgeon and section head of Joint Replacement at a large Academic Medical Center. He has three junior partners, one of whom is a woman, Dr. Jacqueline Villegas. Dr. Bone is known for being volatile, friendly one minute but yelling the next if something does not go as planned. The staff in the office and the operating room frequently come to Dr. Villegas to share how much they love their jobs and most of the surgeons, but working with Dr. Bone is going to drive them away. They are afraid to talk with HR as they worry about losing their jobs. Dr. Villegas has personally seen these outbursts from Dr. Bone, but she has not spoken directly with Dr. Bone about it because he is her supervisor. What are some options for Dr. Villegas to address these concerns without compromising the trust of her staff?

Questions:

Have you or a colleague experienced a similar situation? Were there any key takeaways that you can share?

The New York Times

How Amy Klobuchar Treats Her Staff



Senator Amy Klobuchar talked with aides at the Capitol in December. For years, she has had among the highest rates of staff turnover in the Senate. Erin Schaff for The New York Times

In February 2019, the NYT published an article about the “female leadership style” of Amy Klobuchar, the Senator from Minnesota, who is running for president. An excerpt of the opening paragraph is included below:

“Senator Amy Klobuchar was hungry, forkless and losing patience.

An aide, joining her on a trip to South Carolina in 2008, had procured a salad for his boss while hauling their bags through an airport terminal. But once onboard, he delivered the grim news: He had fumbled the plastic eating utensils before reaching the gate, and the crew did not have any forks on

such a short flight.

What happened next was typical: Ms. Klobuchar berated her aide instantly for the slip-up. What happened after that was not: She pulled a comb from her bag and began eating the salad with it, according to four people familiar with the episode. Then she handed the comb to her staff member with a directive: Clean it.”

Questions:

How might the same behaviors be perceived differently for male compared to female leaders? How do women leaders tend to be perceived when they display some of the behaviors described in this article? Why might that be?