

## ADVOCATE FORWARD

It is pretty easy to feel a little (or very) overwhelmed on how to be an ally for gender equity. To help new allies get started, we recommend five simple steps:

- 1** Attend an Advocate FORWARD Ally Workshop
- 2** Take a few Implicit Association Tests, such as the Gender-Career or Gender-Science IATs:  
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
- 3** Watch the 10-minute video “5 Ways Men Can Help End Sexism”  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=o1ZctJat4pU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o1ZctJat4pU)
- 4** Read the 14 Advocacy Tips at  
<http://wied.asee.org/AdvTips.html>
- 5** Begin a Personal Action Plan and write down the first action you will take to promote gender equity

Advocates and Allies are men committed to personal action in support of women and gender equity. Advocates and Allies programs equip men with the knowledge, skills and strategies to effect positive personal, unit and organizational change. Advocates and Allies programs emphasize men working with other men while maintaining accountability to women. Allies are trained men who promote gender equity through an emphasis on personal and local action. Advocates are allies with an established record in support of gender equity who dedicate significant time and effort to the Advocates and Allies program. Like Allies, Advocates are committed to personal and local action, but they also lead Ally workshops, organize Advocates and Allies activities, and work with women colleagues to set Advocates and Allies priorities and strategies.

The Advocates and Allies concept was created by North Dakota State University as part of a 2008 NSF ADVANCE Institutional Transformation grant (HRD-0811239). Based on success of the Advocates and Allies program, NDSU helped establish Advocates and Allies programs at Lehigh University, Louisiana Tech University, the University of Maine and West Virginia University. In 2015, NSF awarded NDSU and The Ohio State University, Rochester Institute of Technology, the University of North Texas and the University of Wyoming an ADVANCE PLAN-D grant (HRD-1500604) to refine, expand and systematically study the effectiveness of Advocates and Allies programs.

Department STEM at a medium-sized university has 10 faculty: eight men and two women. The department was recently provided a new tenure-track assistant professor position, and it conducted a national search to fill it. Following a careful review of more than 50 applications, the search committee members, in consultation with the other department faculty, identified three candidates for interview. Each of the three had two years of post-doctoral experience and good scholarly records. Following on-campus interviews, one of the two male candidates was clearly unacceptable to a majority of the faculty, while the other male candidate and the female candidate were both viewed as acceptable.

Discussions about the two remaining candidates – involving all current faculty and the department head – failed to identify any features that clearly distinguished one candidate over the other. In light of the discussion, a junior female faculty member said, “Given that all things are pretty much equal, I would recommend that we bring in the woman. We need more women in the department.” In response to her comment, several of the faculty gave her looks indicating their disapproval, and another faculty member remarked, “We don’t need to bring gender into this discussion – we are trying to identify the best candidate, period.”

As a member of the department and ally of gender equity, what perspectives or contributions can you offer to this department discussion?

Department ENGR is a growing engineering department at a research-intensive university with 14 faculty: 13 men and one woman. For the first faculty meeting of the academic year, the main agenda item is the development of a strategic, five-year departmental research plan. Discussion is lively and includes a variety of innovative ideas for focusing and growing the department's research output and quality. While many faculty interject their opinions throughout the discussion, you notice that, more often than not, your female colleague is interrupted when she speaks.

At one point during the discussion, your female colleague suggests that the department establish a summer research program for female high school seniors. The department's top faculty in research funding cuts off the woman with a frustrated "We really need to focus our discussion on ideas to improve our graduate program, not some outreach program for girls." Unable to respond or get a word in edgewise, you see your female colleague stop participating in the discussion.

As a member of the department and ally of gender equity, what perspectives or contributions can you offer in this situation?

Quite simply, male privilege is the undue advantage that benefits men in male-dominated organizations and societies. In academia, male privilege examples include:

- Never having to be the first male faculty member or department chair in your department.
- Never having to be the first male full professor in your department, or be an associate professor who has to wonder: will this department ever promote a man to full professor?
- Never having somebody raise the question: was he hired because of his gender?
- Never having somebody wonder: did his gender give him an edge in that grant competition?
- Never having to wonder: would the department accept a man as a chair or head? Would the college accept a man as the dean?
- Always having role models or mentors of your same gender in your department or college.
- Seldom feeling out of place at departmental, college or university meetings because of your gender.
- Never having to feel like you stand out in a room full of men.
- You can deviate from group ground rules, expectations and “appropriate” group behavior (e.g., sitting outside a circle, coming late to a meeting, turning down a committee assignment, etc.) and not have it be attributed to your gender.
- Feeling confident that your gender won’t be used to determine whether or not you fit in your department.
- Knowing that you can go to a meeting with an administrator and be fairly confident that you will meet with someone of your same gender.
- Knowing that your evaluations for tenure will be reviewed by faculty of your same gender.
- Being able to disagree with a colleague or administrator or hold strong opinions and not having to worry about being evaluated negatively because you are breaking gender role stereotypes.
- Being able to address a family issue and not have it reflect negatively on your reputation or commitment to your career.



**STAND UP:** Tell colleagues, especially other men, about your commitment to gender equity and your role as an ally. Have the courage to take corrective action when you notice gender inequities and bias. Men can more easily raise gender issues because they are less likely to be perceived as acting in their own self-interest.

**LEARN AND SHARE:** Read about gender bias and discrimination in academia (see References and Recommended Reading handout). Educate yourself about male privilege and advantage (see Recognizing Male Privilege handout). Share what you learn with your male colleagues to improve their awareness of gender issues.

**LISTEN ATTENTIVELY:** Give women your full attention (eye contact, nod in agreement) when they are speaking to you. Make sure that women faculty members have equal space to speak in departmental meetings. Work hard not to interrupt women when they speak and encourage others to do the same. Men are more likely to interrupt women speakers than men speakers. If you notice that someone is being interrupted, redirect the conversation to the original speaker.

**IMPROVE THE CLIMATE:** Ask women faculty about their experience with departmental climate and listen to their responses. Then, take concrete steps to improve your departmental climate. Poor climate is a primary predictor of attrition among female (and male) faculty.

**PROMOTE BALANCE:** Support a healthy work/life balance. Do not schedule meetings early in the morning or late in the afternoon. Recognize that women often have disproportionate responsibilities for such things as child and elderly parent care.

**BE INCLUSIVE:** Actively include women faculty members in all departmental business. Invite female colleagues to informal gatherings (e.g., lunches, coffee, golf and other social activities) where work-related discussions are likely. Share information equally with female and male colleagues. Men often receive information key to success in academia through informal mechanisms. Conduct business in locations and at times available to all faculty.

**VALUE RESEARCH:** Talk with women faculty about their research and attend their research presentations. Men are less likely to ask women faculty than men faculty about their research activities. Look for opportunities to collaborate in research with your female colleagues.

**RECOGNIZE EXCELLENCE:** Nominate women for important awards, prizes and leadership positions. Promote the achievements and excellence of your female colleagues.

**RECRUIT AND RETAIN:** Volunteer to serve on departmental and university committees (e.g. search committees, promotion and tenure evaluation, faculty senate, etc.) with the specific purpose of being an ally for gender equity. Seek ways to recruit and retain women.

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**LEAD:** Hold faculty colleagues accountable and ensure that workload and resources are distributed equitably. Include diversity efforts as a component of appraisals. Insist on diverse applicant pools in faculty searches. Financially support diversity efforts such as invited lectures. Ensure that service obligations, large-section lecture classes and other time-consuming assignments are not given disproportionately to women.



**TOP PICKS** ● Allyship ● Implicit Bias, Stereotypes, and Privilege ● Gender Inequity in Academia  
 ● In-depth ● Quick Read

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**TOP PICKS** ● Allyship ● Implicit Bias, Stereotypes, and Privilege ● Gender Inequity in Academia  
 ● In-depth ● Quick Read

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