

Q= audience questions

Q: How do you face the stress in academia being one of the few women in the times of your graduate studies?

- For the past 20 years, I was part of a professional problem-solving group that has empowered me by providing practical and emotional support between the members. In our bimonthly meetings, the 'Group' would focus on cooperation in a competitive world. One of the members wrote a book about these meetings in [Every other Thursday - Ellen Danrell](#). I recommend scientists - men and women alike - to seek out a support group that can provide constructive no-nonsense feedback.

Q: I went back to read my letter of recommendation for students, and realized that I would subconsciously using leader-like adjectives "take charge" "lead" for males and cooperator-like adjectives "support" "nurturing" for females. How do you combat conscious/unconscious categorization of gender biased qualities?

- I don't give specific favor. Read and rereading the content of the letters conscientiously would be key. It hasn't always been easy being the a woman. Story: In my Duke grad years, the girl:guy ratio was 4 to 30. By the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, Mimi was the only girl left. During a late night work, a colleague complained to Mimi: "Damn there aren't good woman around here to date". Mimi was a competent scholar to the colleague whose work deemed gender rather invisible!

Q: From the star to tenure to now, how has your strategy recruiting students and postdoc changed?

- Initially I'd choose the high score, high GRE, high GPA students. Pretty soon I found out some, but not all, have personalities that are hard to work with. So I will make a point to meet with student and learn to read between the lines to get a sense of the student. Calling the reference of the student became very important.

Q: How was your job interview as a women when you were looking for tenure-track jobs?

- Similar to nowadays, it's a series of scheduled half hour meetings intersped with lunch with professor and/or students. At the end, I realized I had a good time and become less nervous. The interview was fun! As much as the school was interviewing me, I was interviewing the school as well. You have to evaluate whether you will be happy in the place, with the people, and the department and school overall. I advice coming with a list of questions for the professors (such as, teaching load, student mentorship, and ask about the professors research).

Q: Could you tell us more about the NSF panel about Women in Science that you recently served in?

- [WEBS NSF Women Evolving Biological Science Meeting at NESCent, Durham, NC](#)

- The goal of the meeting was to address where the leaky pipeline of academia is for women, and what can be done about it. The targets were senior postdoctorate women and early female professors. The meeting was a four day panel with an array of tenured professors and professionals.

- Time management tips: Evaluate your "Roles" in your life, list what is important in each role, and sort it in a quadrant of important:unimportant vs urgent:non-urgent tasks.

More info on Academia and Communication of Science in the upcoming years:

IB304 - Communicating Science

IB305 - Academic Survivorship