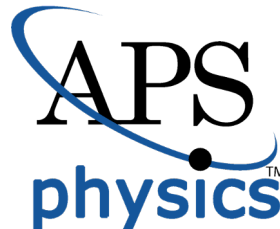


# Professional Skills for Women in Physics

Laura McCullough  
Professor of Physics  
University of Wisconsin-Stout



# Who is here today?

- Say hi, introduce yourself and tell us something you are good at

*I'm Laura and I solve jigsaw puzzles faster than anyone else I know.*

# Topics

- **Negotiation**
- **Communication**
- **CV**
- **Personal statement/narrative**

# Why is negotiating important?

- **Starting salaries uneven for Carnegie Mellon grads**
  - Men \$4000 higher
  - 7% women, 57% men negotiated salary increase
- **\$5,000 difference in starting salary can mean \$500,000 difference by retirement!**

*“Women Don’t Ask” Babcock and Laschever*

# Negotiating is in your best interest!

- **What negotiating might be in your future?**
  - **Have advisor pay for travel to professional development workshop**
  - **Postdoc duties**
  - **Benefits/salary**
  - **Have roommate take out the trash!**

# So you want to negotiate...

- **Imagine you are heading in to do your negotiation: what are you feeling?**

- **Fight or flight**

- Diverts blood from brain to muscles
- Hyper alert
- NOT helpful!

# Preparing for negotiation

- Hydration
  - Breathe deeply
  - Superhero pose (Affects you and others!)
  - Talk to someone calm
  - Give yourself time before and after
  - Self care
- 
- Practice, practice, practice

# What do you *really* want?

- Know what you are really after! What is the problem you are trying to solve?
- Example: your advisor suggested your colleague present some shared work at a conference, and not you. You're upset.
- Why might you be upset?

*That jerk always gets to present at conferences and I never do!*



# What do you want to happen?

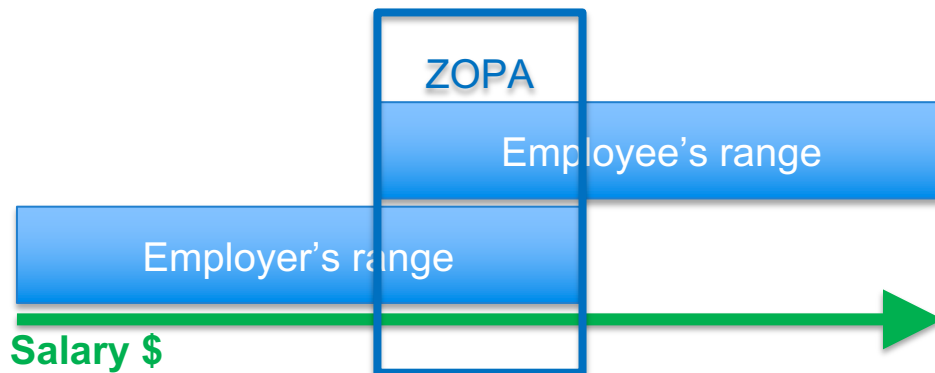
- What are some possible goals?

# What are possible side outcomes of my request?

- **Every decision comes with consequences**
- **Think yours through before you decide what to ask for**
  - Talk it over with a colleague or friend
- **Don't destroy productive relationships for short-term win**

# Negotiations require research & tactics

- Understand the **person** you'll be negotiating with. What are their interests? What is their style? What is your style?
- Understand the full **scope** of what you can negotiate. What do other people get in similar situations? (**ZOPA** - Zone of Possible Agreement)



*ZOPA from "Getting to Yes" by Fisher & Ury*

# How can you prepare for a negotiation?

- **Instead of “I want to survive this conversation/negotiation.”  
How about “I want to find a way to get this person to do this.”**
- **Plan ahead.**
  - What must I have?
  - What can I live without?
  - What can I ask for instead?
  - At what point do I walk away?

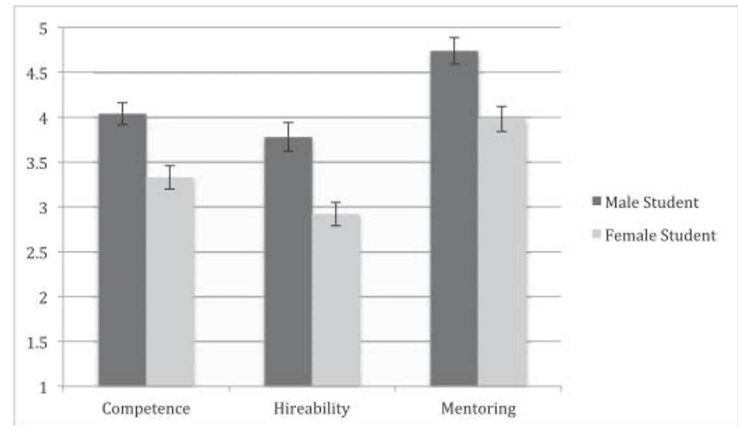
# Don't catastrophize!

- Ask yourself:

- What is the worst thing that will happen if we don't come to an agreement?  
(WATNA—worst alternative to a negotiated agreement)
- What is the best thing that will happen if we don't come to an agreement?  
(BATNA—best alternative to a negotiated agreement)
- What is the most likely thing to happen if we don't come to an agreement?  
(MLATNA—most likely alternative to a negotiated agreement)

# Biases against women in our society

- **Behaviors:** Aggression is viewed positively in men (leadership) and negatively in women (bossy)
- **Reference letters** are different for men and women (What can you do about that?)
- **Unconscious bias:** Men and women judge identical resumes differently as a function of the name at the top (women are judged more harshly)



**Fig. 1.** Competence, hireability, and mentoring by student gender condition (collapsed across faculty gender). All student gender differences are significant ( $P < 0.001$ ). Scales range from 1 to 7, with higher numbers reflecting a greater extent of each variable. Error bars represent SEs.  $n_{\text{male student condition}} = 63$ ,  $n_{\text{female student condition}} = 64$ .

*What are some simple tactics to alleviate these issues?*

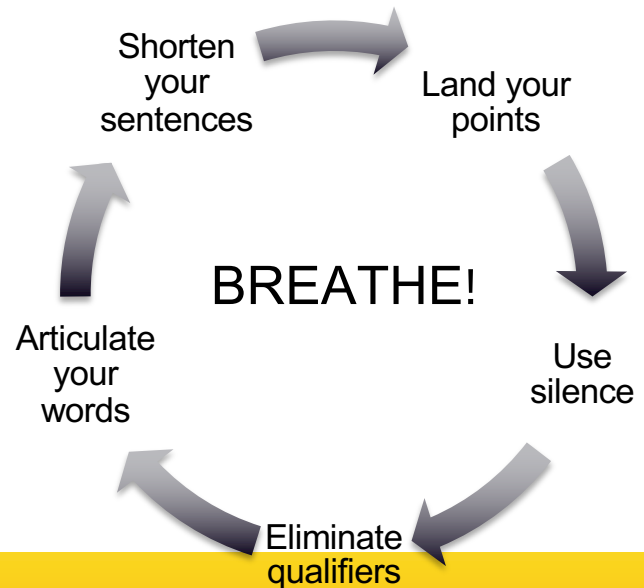
*Moss-Racusin et al., PNAS, 2012*

# Some gender-specific negotiation tactics

- **Connect to the organization or person's goals, needs, or interests.**
  - To be successful for the department, we will need...
- **Use relationship language**
  - I've talked with several people who..
  - [Person] suggested that I talk with you...
- **Don't take it personally!**
  - Know your purpose/goal
  - It's not about you, but about you in a role
  - Go around, over, under bad behavior
  - Try to view it as a game

# Communication skills leave a big impression

- **One-on-one, in a meeting, or for a seminar: People will remember very little of what you say and a lot about how you say it!**
  - Stick to a few take-aways (1-2 for a meeting, no more than 3 for a seminar)
  - Speak clearly
  - Make eye contact
  - No upspeak
  - Don't touch your hair or face
  - Rehearse to see if you have any verbal tics (ahs, ums, likes)
  - Practice on video if interaction will be on video



***Practice, practice, practice!***



# When things get ugly...

- Sometimes people don't behave well.
  - You can't change them; you can only control your response.
- 
- Come up with a situation where someone didn't behave professionally or appropriately. No names, please!

# Empathy

- People are typically rational and reasonable.
- “Why would a reasonable, rational, and decent person do this?”

# Empathy in negotiating

- **Your negotiating partner is probably feeling stress too!**
- **Understand their situation, roles, and needs**
- **Negotiation won't succeed in fight-or-flight mode**
- **Your partner is a rational, reasonable, and decent person; remember this!**

# Negotiation: the basics

- Know your goals
- Empathize
- Strategize
- Communicate
- Practice

# Applying for jobs—the CV

- **No length limit**
- **Beginning is standard**
  - Contact info
  - Degrees with dates
  - Positions held with dates
- **What are you applying for? Research, teaching, national lab?**
- **Teaching:**
  - Courses taught
  - Mentoring of undergraduates
  - Denote undergrads in publications
  - Publications, presentations (\*peer-review if necessary)
  - Grant awards
  - Awards and recognition
    - Ask department chair to nominate yourself or a colleague for awards

# The CV

- **Research**

- Skills
- Publications & presentations
- Grant awards
- Awards and recognitions

- **Include:**

- Service work
- Volunteering
- Professional organizations

- **Avoid:**

- Personal interests, hobbies
- Pictures

# The CV

- Consider:

- Removing known bias triggers (WiBiPan)—very personal decision
- Tailoring to the institution
- Including LinkedIn or other profiles
  - Clean them up first!
- Including reference names at end of CV

# Personal statement/narrative

- **Chance to fill in the details**
  - Why this institution/lab/etc. interests you
  - Why physics?
  - Why this career path?
  - Address each job duty (if no cover letter)
- **Succinct, not wordy**
  - Leave white space
  - Important words in bold
- **Give short examples when possible**
- **Soft skills**
  - Oral/written communication
  - Team building/collaboration/
  - Problem solving/analysis/big picture
  - Words others have used to describe you



# Personal statement

- **Get someone else to read it!**
  - Knows you well
  - Can remind you of things you forgot or better examples
  - Won't have cultural inhibition about bragging
  
- **Connect to department's mission/goals**
  - Do your homework
  
- **Remove qualifiers**
  
- **Do not admit deficiencies**
  - 60/100 rule

# Red flags to avoid

- **Gap in jobs that is not explained**
  - “Personal leave”
- **Not having advisor on reference list**
- **All service/volunteering off-campus**
- **No service/volunteering**

# Be Confident!

- **Going into a situation believing in yourself increases chances of success**
- **Get a friend to send you a “You Got This!” text right before negotiation or interview**
- **Process of writing CV can be morale booster—look at what you’ve done/learned/changed!**

# Reflection

- Come up with three points that will stick with you from this presentation.

# Thank you!

- Presentation posted online at [LauraMcCPhD.com](http://LauraMcCPhD.com)

