Strategies for Human-Human Interaction

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Our Plan for the next 70 minutes

- **Introduce** ourselves
  - **Policies/Resources** designed to protect us
- **Identify** our most challenging human-human interactions
- **Listen** to your experiences and **share** strategies for managing these relationships
- **Discuss** final thoughts

About Amanda Stent

Director, Davis Institute for AI, Colby College (and Professor, CS)

- PhD U of Rochester 2001
- Post-doc AT&T Research
- Academia: Stony Brook University (02-09), Colby (2021-)
- Industry Research: AT&T (07-13); Yahoo Labs (13-16)
- Industry Not Research: Bloomberg (16-21)
- Have not (yet!) worked at a startup, a government lab or agency, a nonprofit
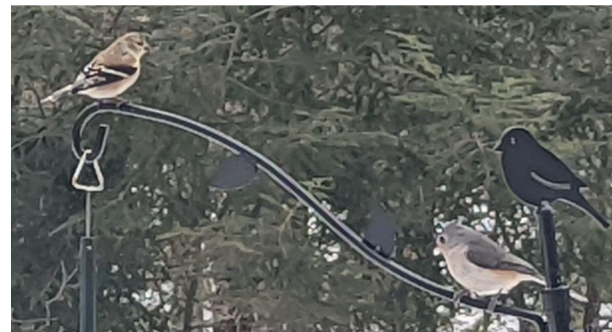
Research in NLP, with divergences into speech, video, assistive technology

Service

- CRA-WP, ABET, ACL

For Fun

- EMT, walking, music, bird watching

About Lori Pollock

Alumni Distinguished Professor, University of Delaware
- PhD U of Pittsburgh 1986
- Rice U 1986-1989
- U of Delaware 1990-present
- Sabbaticals: ABB Inc & Army Research Lab

Research in Software Engineering, CS Education

Service
- CRA-WP, CRA-E
- Partner4CS K-12 Teacher professional development
- Computational Thinking in University Gen Ed

For Fun
- Outdoor activities, handcrafts, traveling

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About Kyla McMullen

Assistant Professor, University of Florida

- Washington, DC - Native
- Bachelor of Science - *Computer Science* - University of Maryland, Baltimore County
- Master of Science - *Computer Science and Engineering* - University of Michigan
- PhD - *Computer Science and Engineering* - University of Michigan (2012)
  - First (only) WOC

Research - *Immersive Sound Perception, Applications, and Development in VR, AR, XR*

- Podcast Co-Host -*Modern Figures Podcast* (shameless plug)
- PI - Generation NEXT Scholarship Program
- NSF CAREER Awardee

Fun

Dance, Karaoke, Musicals
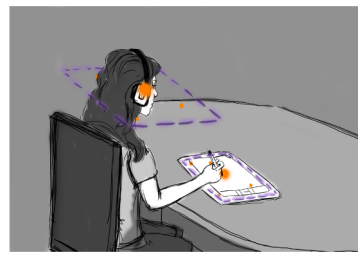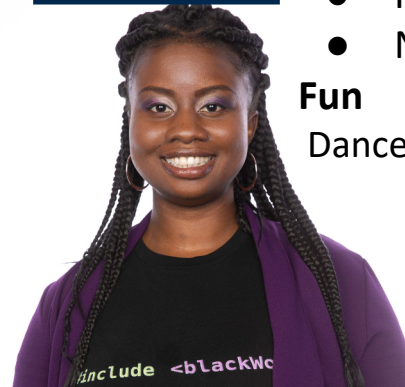
It's Okay to Talk About Harassment

- The #MeToo movement has broadened conversations around harassment

- We wanted to raise these topics here, with specific focus on resources and strategies

Harassment is Common :(

Well recognized
Sexual coercion
Unwanted sexual attention

Less recognized
Gender harassment

Severe or frequent *gender harassment* can result in the same level of negative professional and psychological outcomes as isolated instances of sexual coercion.

Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine," National Academies, 2018.

USA Title IX Protects Students Against Sexual Discrimination/Harassment

- If you are a student at a US university, you can report incidents of harassment to your Title IX office
  - They must research and write a report
  - You can report to Title IX **whether the incident happens on campus or elsewhere**
- IMPORTANT! If the incident involves a professor from another US university e.g., at conferences, you can report it to *their* Title IX office as well

Title IX Is Not Enough

- Organizations and events increasingly have their own codes of conduct, which covers a range of behaviors including discrimination and harassment

- Example: ACM: ACM Policy Against Harassment

  - "Harassment does not require intent to offend. Thus, inappropriate conduct or language meant as a joke, a prank, or even a compliment can lead or contribute to harassment."

- Example: CRA: CRA Code of Conduct

  - "All CRA activity participants are required to treat each other with respect in all their behavior, e.g., speech, actions, and on-line communications"

Codes of Conduct Must Be Enforced

- Enforcement includes:
  - A clear, documented process for reporting
  - An equitable and timely process for investigation
  - Consequences when reports are substantiated

- Example: ACM Process: [Reporting Unacceptable Behavior](#)
  - Report to the conference chair or the ACM President or the ACM CEO

- Example: CRA Process: [CRA Complaint Procedure](#)
  - Report to designated on-site person or online

Sometimes You Just Want Support

- Tell a friend or trusted mentor
- CARES: Any ACM SIG can form a committee for on-the-ground support of people who experience harassment/discrimination at SIG events
  - The individual still reports directly to ACM, but the CARES representatives support and help people in the immediate aftermath of an event
  - First CARES committee: Joint SIGARCH/SIGMICRO https://www.sigarch.org/benefit/cares/

What You Should Do *If You Experience* Harassment or Discrimination

- **Believe** your lived experience
- Immediately **write down** what happened
  - Who, when, where, what
  - Who witnessed it
- **Get support**
- **Consider reporting**

- If your harassment *feels* different, it probably is
  - Intersectionality compounds harassment experiences

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What You Can Do *If You Observe* Harassment or Discrimination

- Intervene! Use one of these techniques:
  - **Distract** - distract either the harasser or the target
    - *Hi, I've been looking for you! There's someone I want you to meet!*
  - **Delegate** - bring in someone to help
  - **Direct** - respond directly, with confidence and calmness
    - *Hey, it's not ok to call someone a $!#*
  - **Delay** - immediately write down what you observe, then check in with the target after and offer support and help
- Take care of yourself first

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A Good Professional Culture Leads to Great Human-Human Interactions

- Meet new people in your field
- Share your research/expertise and learn new things
- Form new collaborations and strengthen long-standing relationships
- Recognize the contributions of others and thank them
- Deeply discuss the biggest challenges in your research area

Encouraging Positive Human-Human Interactions in the University

- Diversity statements required of candidates
- Diverse hiring committees (including students, staff, faculty)
- Good work-life balance modeled by senior staff

What Are _Your_ Human-Human Interaction Experiences?

FAMILY

Course Professors

Research Team

Acquaintances

New Contacts

Student Colleagues

Advisor

Professional Colleagues

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Some Topics We Can Talk About

- Micro-aggressions and Hostility
- Conflict resolution
- Discrimination
- Harassment
- Being the "only" one/ Feeling isolated
- Intersectionality
- Giving good compliments

- Imposter syndrome
- Prove it again
- Walking the tightrope
- Dual-career
- Family-(un)friendly policies
- Implicit bias
- Stereotype threat
- Setting clear boundaries

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What Are Your Stories and Thoughts?

Some Scenarios to Consider

Scenario 1

At meetings, Peter and Sunil are increasingly disrespectful towards you and Jenny: they ignore you, interrupt you, and/or poach your ideas. Your advisor doesn't seem to notice and in fact credits your and Jenny's ideas to Peter and Sunil.

Scenario 2

Prof. Hat asks you to help out with the Graduate Recruiting Committee because 'they need a woman'. You end up doing a lot of this kind of department service and are wondering if it's worth the time and effort. But, should you/how can you say no?

Scenario 3

You are attending a conference and don't know anyone well. There are few women in the conference.

- What should you do about lunch that is part of the conference?

- What should you do about dinner?

Scenario 4

In your weekly research lab meetings with your research group and advisor,

- you are constantly interrupted when you are talking.
- your ideas discussed earlier in the week are being presented by a peer, who is taking credit for your ideas.

Scenario 5

You are starting a research project with a new advisor, and you want to communicate that you must leave by 5 each day to pick up your child from daycare.

Scenario 6

The lab coordinator keeps "jokingly" pulling off your labmate's head covering.

You Can Do This!

- Good human-human interaction is a daily exercise
  - You will continue to learn and improve!

- Don't ignore your experiences
  - Learn from them, and know that you have everything inside to succeed!

Resources

- [Sexual Harassment - CRA-WP](#)
- Ms. Mentor's Impeccable Advice for Women in Academia, by Emily Toth

- Kidding Ourselves: Breadwinning, Babies, and Bargaining Power, by Rhona Mahoney

- Getting to Yes, by Roger Fisher and William Ury

- Nice Girls Don't Get the Corner Office, by Lois Frankel

- Ask For It, by Linda Babcock and Sara Laschever

- People Tactics, by Patrick King

Let's End on a High Note

Turn to the person next to you

- Tell them about a great human-human interaction you had in a professional setting
    - A time someone complimented your work
    - A time someone thanked you for a job well done
    - A time someone stood up for you

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