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

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 online 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
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
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
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
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
  o You will continue to learn and improve!

• Don’t ignore your experiences
  o 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