

It's All in What You Ask: Questions for Search Committees

By Bernice R. Sandler, Jean O'Gorman Hughes, and Mary DeMouy

- Research shows that women in science often have lower aspirations than their male colleagues. Have you encountered this trend in your classes or your lab? What do you do about it?
- How have you encouraged women students to enter traditionally male fields?
- In most classes women students don't participate as much as men. What do you do to encourage women to participate in your classes? Has it worked?
- What differences have you perceived between men and women in the laboratory? In many fields, there is a tendency toward single-sex labs or teams. Is this the case in your discipline, labs, or courses? What do you think is the reason?
- What is your experience with faculty (and/or student) resistance to women and the issues they face in the academy that are different from men? Have you heard people deny the existence of these challenges, in effect, saying "I don't want to hear about it"? How do you deal with this denial or even hostility toward issues of diversity?
- Have any students ever complained to you about sexual harassment or discrimination in any work with professors, staff, or other students? If so, how did you respond? If not, how would you respond?
- How many teaching or research assistants have you hired in the last two years? How many were women?
- Approximately how many men have you nominated for fellowships, awards, and prizes? How many women?
- How do you feel about teaching students older than yourself?