

**PRACTICE EXERCISES for use in the CCAS session “Nudging Colleagues to Rise Above Cognitive Shortcuts and Biases: Some Practical Steps for Deans” Sat. Nov. 3, 2012, Seattle, WA**

Workshop run by JoAnn Moody, PhD, JD National Consultant on Faculty Development and Diversity  
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Let’s assume that each of you attendees has vowed to yourself to frequently question and at times push back on colleagues’ statements that seem to be relying on gender bias as well as other cognitive shortcuts and errors—all of which contaminate academic evaluations and decision-making.

- 1. How would you respond, in words or deeds or both, to the following statements? Think about what you might do in the short term and the long term.**
- 2. How might you encourage/prompt *other* colleagues to become more pro-active in pushing back against such statements and in moving beyond their passive by-standing?**

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- a) A member of a newly formed faculty search committee says to you as well as to other members of the committee: *We should try very hard to replace Marvin. Gosh, that guy has been gone for two whole years. Now there was an exemplary scholar, educator, and colleague. It would behoove us to find someone who undeniably resembles Marvin. Don’t all of you agree with me?*
- b) A college trustee says in conversation with you and to the provost: *Honestly, I suspect that single women—whether majority or minority or whatever—would feel very uncomfortable living in this town. We’re so intently oriented here towards soccer moms and tight-knit family life. I mean, single women just wouldn’t be happy at all here, as either new faculty or administrators. I don’t see how we can get around that barrier.*
- c) During a faculty meeting, one professor observes: *We have to admit—sadly—that our retention of both women faculty and U.S. minority faculty has been very poor. Right now, our school and especially my department is just not ready. It seems premature for us to try again to diversify. Perhaps in a few years, we should try again.*
- d) A member of a faculty search committee shares this observation: *We need to feel comfortable with whomever we hire. Isn’t that so? Collegiality is at the heart of who we are. We need somebody who will fit in with our culture and our school.*
- e) A search committee chair explains: *My conceptual framing looks like this. We need women faculty in our chemistry department, according to our provost and*

*president. So here's how we proceed. Our first few hires of women should be done strategically: they should be notably superior to male job applicants whom we are considering. We want the women hired to be spectacular so that our students and our faculty colleagues stand in awe of them. If the women are spectacular, then they are very likely to have a welcoming, rewarding reception here. They are likely to inspire our students, especially our women students. And they are likely to build truly impressive careers for themselves.*

- f) A senior professor observes: *Well, let me put it this way. My first impression of Torrey has been repeatedly reinforced over the past few years: she seems to be a lightweight. I can pretty much predict that she'll fail in three more years to meet our criteria for tenure and promotion. She just doesn't belong here, though that pains me to say. And may I add that I endeavor, as all of you know, to be color-blind and gender-blind. My painful prediction has nothing to do with Torrey's African-American background or any of that.*
- g) In your role as dean, you review choices for national speakers to be brought to campus. You notice that very few women are included in the proposed list of speakers for the next two years. The campus person in charge of the speakers' bureau defends the proposed list: *Well, some years we do indeed choose almost all men. And some years almost all women speakers. I don't think we need to worry obsessively, year in and year out, about the gender count, do we? Why would we?*
- h) An executive assistant observes to you: *Well, I just want to congratulate you and the school on hiring Tony. His PhD from Stanford is golden, isn't it? I think our school's reputation has been significantly ratcheted up. I'm really proud.*
- i) The campus's vice president for development asks you: *Say, I have a question. It would be wonderful if Lucia, the brand-new minority hire in history, could accompany me on visits to two or three prospective donors in the state. They would be so impressed with her and with our efforts to diversify our faculty. Do I have your permission to seek Lucia's assistance?*