Actions Advocates Can Take

I2MTC Women in Instrumentation and Measurement Panel
Pisa, Italy
13 May, 2015
Actions by Advocates

• Use inclusive language
  – Use “he or she” when referring to students, engineers, supervisors
  – Intentionally use “she” instead of “he”
  – Use female references, such as mother or aunt, instead of father or uncle, when talking about a family role model who influenced a student to pursue engineering
Actions by Advocates

• Identify women as supervisors/leaders
  – When your first boss gives you a deadline for a project, “she” will expect you to meet it
  – One of our former students is the President of a leading software company that hires a lot of our graduates. She is looking for students who not only have the necessary technical skills, but also know how to work in teams and can give informative oral presentations
Actions by Advocates

• Tell stories about women “doing” things
  – One of my former students is a fantastic design engineer. She led a team of engineers who developed and produced the first GARMIN biometric watch.
Actions by Advocates

• Mention accomplishments of women
  – Historical contributions to science and engineering:
    Grace Hopper, Hedy Lamar, Mildred Dresselhaus
  – Current leaders:
    Leah Jamison, former IEEE President
    Marissa Mayer, CEO Yahoo
Actions by Advocates

• Validate women colleagues when introducing them to others
  – Highlight credentials/experience
    • Mary is an expert in XXX
    • Jill is a professor at YYY
    • Susan has done research on ZZZ
  – Linda is a “card carrying engineer” and the Director of our bioinstrumentation division
Actions by Advocates

- Recognize and take action when women’s ideas are not properly attributed to them
  - I am very interested in the idea that Jane first expressed that resonated with Joe.
  - Jane, that was a great idea you mentioned. Tell me more.
Actions by Advocates

• Recognize and take action when women are being interrupted or talked over
  – Jill wasn’t allowed to finish what she was trying to say, and I would like to hear more about what she wanted to share.
  – Can we go back and hear what Jane was trying to say. She was interrupted and didn’t get a chance to complete sharing her idea.
Actions by Advocates

• Ask for women to contribute to the discussion if they are being quiet.
  – Ferdi, I would like to hear your thoughts (or ideas or opinions)
  – Not everyone has had the chance to speak. Carol, what do you think?
Actions by Advocates

• Invite women to participate in social events, lunch, or games
  – Alessandra, a bunch of us are going to the baseball game on Saturday. Would you like to go?
  – Kristen, we’re going to lunch around 12:30 today. Are you available to join us?
Actions by Advocates

• Nominate women for awards, committee membership, service on boards
  – I think Jenny would make a great Chair of our Tutorials Committee
  – I am planning to nominate Kristen for the Outstanding Young Engineer Award. Would you serve as reference?
Actions by Advocates

• Be a formal or informal mentor
  – Provide advice on navigating the culture, the politics and the bureaucracy of the company, government organization, or university
  – Suggest women for special or coveted assignments
  – Provide “insider” information that is typically shared in settings where women are not usually present: locker room, golf course, card games
Actions by Advocates

• Read books to better understand issues women face
  – Women Don’t Ask, by Babcock and Laschever
  – Unlocking the Clubhouse, Women in Computing, by Margolis and Fisher
Actions by Advocates

• Take an implicit bias test to better understand inherent stereotypes

An **implicit bias** is a positive or negative mental attitude towards a person, thing, or group that a person holds at an unconscious level.

In contrast, an **explicit bias** is an attitude that somebody is consciously aware of having.

https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/
Actions by Advocates

• Get to know your women colleagues

• Once you get to know them, you can begin to develop empathy and better understand them, their perspectives and their experiences

• The rest becomes straightforward and second nature