

**Group Problem-Solving**  
**Case Study: Setting the Context in Review Meetings**

**Instructions:** Assign a recorder and a facilitator for the group problem-solving session. Read the case study below. The recorder's role is to document the specific strategies raised in your discussion so that these strategies may be collated and shared with you and your colleagues after the seminar. Recorder: Use the back of this sheet for your notes. **Your group will have 20 minutes for this case study.**

**Case Study**

In the scenario, the Department Chair (Glen) proceeded immediately into the meeting with faculty members, to review the merit case for Felicity Wu. Here is what he said:

*GLEN: "---So thanks for being here, everyone. I know it's tough timing and a lot of the department are traveling or unavailable. As you know, we have to decide whether to put Felicity Wu up for tenure this fall or prepare her file for Assistant Prof Step V. This shouldn't take long: she joined us last summer straight from Microsoft as Assistant IV and the normative action at this point would be to solicit external letters if we're going to pursue her promotion right away. Should we begin? Let's start looking at Ms. Wu's publications..."*

1. What would you maintain in Glen's approach? What would you do differently?
2. What could Glen do to improve his approach and facilitation of the meeting to set the context for the meeting and to ensure a fair review of Felicity's case? What things might need to be said explicitly?
3. Research suggests that implicit bias is present in situations like this. Assuming that the chair would want to minimize such implicit bias during the review, what agreements could be made among the committee members and what procedures could be in place to reduce unintended consequences of implicit bias? (You may find it useful to refer to the handout, "Tool for Identifying Implicit Bias.")
4. What tools and resources do you think Glen would need to be more effective as chair?

## Group Problem-Solving Case Study: Examining Microaggressions and Their Impact

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### Case Study

In the scenario, there were a number of microaggressions which surfaced. Discuss each of the statements or actions below and answer the following questions (you may want to refer to the handout: "Tool: Recognizing Microaggressions and the Messages they Send"):

- A. What was the message that might have been sent to the recipient?
- B. What impact might this microaggression have on the recipient?
- C. What effect(s) might the microaggression have on others who might view the recipient based on its "message"?
- D. How would you interrupt these microaggressions? What would you ask or say to the individual delivering these messages?

Remember that we are exploring the *impact* these statements and actions have on the recipient, not the *intent* of the sender. (Refer to the Intent and Impact Model in the playbill.)

Each of the quotations below is from the script. Answer the questions above for as many of these excerpts as you have time.

1. Judy to Polloa: *"Oh, I meant to tell you that my friend Sonya from Bioengineering saw your talk at the Faculty Club. She said you were very articulate."*

2. Kyle to Polloa: *"Calm down, Polloa. You don't have to get so angry. We're just having a discussion"* and when Glen said to Polloa after Polloa defended Felicity's research: *"Take it easy, Polloa."*

3. When Judy made a point about research findings of negative student comments on teaching evaluations of female professors, Glen interrupted her and made the same point, when he said *"I just heard on NPR about one of those studies that suggests that women are not regarded as highly as men in student evaluations."*

4. Kyle to Polloa: *"She's spending too much time doing 'diversity work.' She spends more time on 'diversity' than you, Polloa, and she's not even an Excellence Hire!"*

## Group Problem-Solving Case Study: Examining Implicit Bias

**Instructions:** Assign a recorder and a facilitator for the group problem-solving session. Read the case study below. The recorder's role is to document the specific strategies raised in your discussion so that these strategies may be collated and shared with you and your colleagues after the seminar. Recorder: Use the back of this sheet for your notes. **Your group will have 20 minutes for this case study.**

### Case Study

Review potential instances of implicit bias in the scenario (see examples below) and discuss how issues raised in the scenario might have affected the review of Felicity's case. You may find it helpful to refer to the handout, "Tool for Identifying Implicit Bias."

Use the following questions to discuss the excerpts below:

- A. Is this an example of implicit bias? Why or why not?
- B. What were the assumptions underlying some of the comments made by the committee members?
- C. How might you interrupt these instances of implicit bias? What would you say or ask the individual?
- D. Research suggests that implicit bias is present in situations like this. Assuming that the chair would want to minimize such implicit bias during the review, what agreements could be made among the committee members and what procedures could be in place to reduce unintended consequences of implicit bias?

Excerpts from the script:

1. Bill: *"I think it's great that she's got these high-impact journals on here but I would like to see some more focused research."*
2. Kyle: *"She's spending too much time doing 'diversity work.'"*
3. Kyle: *"There's a lot of really advanced math and statistical analysis in this co-authored paper...I'm not sure she did it herself. Come to think of it, I'm not even sure what her contribution is on some of these publications..."*  
Glen: *"Wait, since when is that a concern? (Gesturing at KYLE, to the group) We have never questioned whether Kyle here has established his independence and five of his strongest publications are with his former advisors."*  
Kyle: *"I appreciate your point, Glen, but even the sole-authored paper she has on here...I mean, it's in the exact same area as her advisor's work at Stanford. I don't see her creating anything new and really contributing to the innovation of this department. At least we can say she's dutiful I guess..."*
4. Kyle: *"I'm not saying anything about her being a mother! It's amazing how she juggles everything, I don't know how she does it. I love mothers!"*  
Bill: *"I am concerned about her grad students if she goes on leave so soon after establishing her lab. The burden of her lab will fall on those grad students, and, let's face it, on those of us they see as substitute mentors."*