

## Hostile Behavior

### *Scenario One*

You have been chair of the Civil Engineering department for 2 years. Professor Jarlow, an Associate Professor, has always been a difficult personality. She has had a long-standing feud with another colleague to whom she has not spoken in over 4 years. Other colleagues complain that she is rude and condescending and staff members who work with her tend to leave the department within a year. When she makes a rare appearance at faculty meetings, she sits there sullenly and later, sends choleric emails to the whole department, complaining about the issues discussed at the meeting and making personal attacks on her colleagues.

However, Professor Jarlow is very successful bringing in large grants and creating outreach opportunities. At conferences, you have witnessed how charming and ingratiating she is with others. Two years ago she received a National Science Foundation CAREER Award. Ever since receiving this recognition, she has had an increasing number of speaking engagements that are beginning to interfere with her teaching and advising commitments. One of her advisees recently quit the program and one of the remaining two has come to you complaining of little contact with her in the past year. She missed a deadline on a recommendation, making an advisee ineligible for a fellowship. She apologized to the student, but the student came to you very disappointed. Her teaching evaluations have also taken a nose dive. Additionally, a staff member has filed a grievance against Professor Jarlow and you are now in talks with the union about her behavior. In anticipation of her two year performance review, which will have a great impact on promotion decisions, you have communicated with Professor Jarlow, suggesting she limit her outside commitments and refocus her energies on her teaching and graduate students. This conversation went very poorly, with Professor Jarlow stating with a sneer: "If I am not appreciated here, maybe I will accept that job at MIT and take my money with me."

Since then, the situation has continued to escalate. At the last faculty meeting, Professor Jarlow bragged about her accomplishments and accused other colleagues of failing to be as successful as she is. Faculty members are asking that you get this situation under control. The colleague who is no longer on speaking terms with her has evidence she has been bad-mouthing him to his collaborators in industry. Compounding the issue however that is the Dean has made it clear that retaining female faculty is a high priority and wants faculty with large grants to be well-supported and recognized.

### Questions to Consider

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1. Write a list of as many concerns or questions you have about this situation and prioritize them.
2. What don't you know and need to find out?
3. What are some of the themes you will include in Professor Jarlow's performance review?
4. What ideas do you have for successfully resolving these issues?

## Hostile Behavior

### *Scenario Two*

You are an Associate Professor in a Civil Engineering department at a public university. You specialize in Structural Engineering and Mechanics and are the only woman in your sub-discipline. There are three other women total in a department of 35 faculty members. You were recruited here six years ago by a friend of your graduate school advisor who has since left. Though you supposedly filled a needed niche in the department, you found the climate uninviting. You were not introduced around; your office was not even ready when you arrived; and you were generally ignored by the rest of the faculty members. A few years ago, you were collaborating with a male colleague on a project predicting the behavior of structural systems. Together, you had made a major breakthrough in the research. However, in the panel presentation on the work at a yearly conference, your colleague introduced you as the new kid on the block without whose assistance he could never have achieved this accomplishment. Since then, you have severed all ties with this person and decided to only work alone.

Faculty meetings are discouraging as well. It seems that whoever can appear most disinterested in the meeting, busy with their Blackberry and or side conversations with each other, wins some kind of unspoken competition. When you do contribute to discussions, you often get blank stares and the meeting moves on like you had not even spoken. Instead of complaining, you have thrown yourself into your research and collaboration with industry. You have received several large grants and two years ago received the National Science Foundation CAREER Award. The person who originally recruited you is now at MIT and asked you to consider making the move to Boston next year to head up a new lab as a research professor. This move appeals to you not only because it offers you an opportunity for a better environment, but also because it would relieve you of the more time intensive teaching duties you have been assigned in comparison with male colleagues. Over the past five years, you have had more new course preps than the rest of the faculty. Moreover, only one of your graduate students is pursuing interests you share. She works closely with you on your grant and is proactive about getting on your calendar when she needs to touch base. Your second-year PhD student didn't like any of your suggestions for her research project and doesn't trouble herself to set-up meetings with you. Working with those whose work is not relevant to your research interests is draining.

The department's latest chair came to speak to you recently about your responsibilities as an advisor and your poor teaching evaluations. You told him about the offer at MIT and reminded him that all of your grant money will leave with you. He is too busy micro-managing the "problem" woman in the department, he can't even see what a lousy place this department is. You have too much else to do than help him with his job.

### Questions

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1. Write a list of as many concerns or questions you have about this faculty member's situation and prioritize them.
2. What do you not know?
3. If you were Professor Jarlow, knowing you have an upcoming two-year review, what would you like to see happen in the meeting with the chair?
4. As an external observer, what would you recommend the chair do?