

The “Gray Zone” of Academic Ethics

Scenario Sorting Activity

Caitlin Casey and Kartik Sheth

Activity Time: 30min - 1 hour

Objective: This is a targeted activity to give researchers in astronomy a good idea of some scenarios that people in our community often face, good and bad. It is intended to enlighten our colleagues in a comfortable, non-confrontational environment and could be used at scientific conferences or institutional retreats, or as a special colloquium, etc. It has been used to draw attention to inequities brought on by stereotypes, bullying, and hostile work environments.

Method Overview: This is a scenario sorting activity. Below are a number of scenarios relevant to astronomers’ lives. In the exercise the scenarios are described as hypothetical and then later revealed to participants to all be real. Each participant in this activity is given one of the scenarios and is asked to judge their level of comfort with the scenario and rank it on a scale from “desired and acceptable behavior” to “undesirable, unacceptable, and possibly illegal behavior.” Once each participant has judged how acceptable/unacceptable their scenario is, they are asked to interactively sort their scenario relative to all other participants’ scenarios. At the end of the sort, the participants should have a ranked list of scenarios from “good” to “bad” which is roughly agreed upon by consensus. The scenarios are then discussed among the entire group.

Requirements: An ideal audience size is 40-50 participants, although modifications can be made for smaller or larger groups. Two copies of the printed scenarios are also required (i.e. one copy for every 20-25 participants) with each scenario cut in a strip away from the others. The audience will be split into two large groups at the start and each participant of each group will be handed one scenario. Ideally one person in each group will have the same scenario. The ‘moderator key’ provides more detailed context/descriptions of each scenario and may be used as a guide for the moderator during the group discussion.

Group size modifications: The directions for this activity are written for the ideal size audience of 40-50 participants. The activity is then conducted in two large groups (of 20-25 participants each) where the entire list of scenarios is distributed to all the members of each group. The scenario sorting is conducted separately in either group so that the groups have two independent sorts. The group discussion which follows then compares the relative ranking of scenarios across the two groups.

Modifying the number of groups

In case of smaller groups, you can modify the exercise by not splitting the audience into two large groups. If you have ~20-25 participants, you will hand

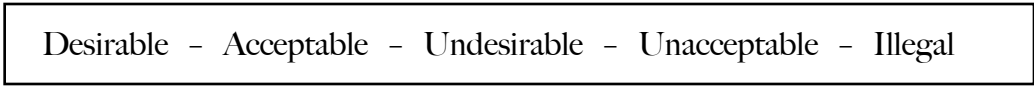
out most or all of the 25 scenarios and execute the activity with only one group. In the case of larger groups, you can further split the audience into three or four groups (roughly in multiples of 20-25 people). In the latter case, make sure you have enough room for the participants to stand up and interact with the other members of their group.

Modifying by removing scenarios

An alternate modification you can make is to reduce the number of scenarios. We suggest you cut scenarios from the bottom of the list if so; the scenarios at the top of the list were judged as particularly important to discuss in our community. While removing scenarios is not as ideal as modifying the number of groups, it might be best if you have groups of odd size (~15 people or ~30-35 people).

Suggested Activity Schedule:

Before the activity starts, draw a continuum on the board/overhead that looks like this:



00:00 – Welcome participants. Split the audience down the middle with even numbers on either side. Ask a helper (or second moderator) to help distribute your scenario strips to one group while you distribute strips to the other group.

00:02 – Ask participants to read their scenarios carefully and judge where it might lie on the continuum from desirable behavior to illegal behavior.

00:03 – After participants have been given a moment to read their own scenarios, explain the premise of the sorting activity. Within each group's area (e.g. say left and right sides of the room) suggest that participants with more desirable scenarios stand near the front of the classroom and participants with less desirable scenarios stand near the back of the classroom. Then ask the participants to read their scenarios to their neighbors and collectively sort each scenario on the continuum relative to one another. This activity should take ~15 minutes. Walk around and facilitate the discussion in both groups.

Tips for facilitation:

- Explain the instructions again if participants do not understand.
- Try not to invoke your own personal judgement of the scenarios at this stage; it is up to the participants to judge.
- Some questions you can ask of participants to get the discussion going if people aren't actively engaging: *"Hi Bob, what's your scenario? Did you guys decide it was a less desired situation than Jane's scenario here?"* or *"What do you think of what's happening in this scenario? What would make your position on the continuum change?"*

- 00:16 – Give a two minute warning; participants should start wrapping up the sorting process in both groups.
- 00:18 – Gather both groups’ attention. Summarize the activity briefly, giving context that some participants’ scenarios might have been very acceptable and others might have been more shocking or surprising. Now you will discuss the scenarios as a group (with participants still standing in place along their sorted continuum lines). Keeping the participants standing is key to having them still engaged, awake, and not opening their laptops.
- 00:19 – Ask the participant at the farthest end (the positive or “desirable behavior” end) of the continuum in the first group to share their scenario aloud and offer any thoughts on it. They might say something like “we all thought this scenario exemplified good behavior so we put it at this end of the spectrum.” That’s fine, there might not be much discussion at this point, so now ask the other group to share. Did the other group put the same scenario at the “desirable” end of the spectrum? If so, that represents good consensus between groups. If not, you can say something to the effect of “ah, that’s interesting, what did your group think was the most desirable behavior scenario?”
- Slowly move down the line back and forth between groups towards the less desirable end of the spectrum. You can generate discussion by asking where the same scenario was placed in the opposite group and if anyone agrees/disagrees with the way that scenario was sorted.
- The discussion during this section of the activity can last from 15 minutes to 45 minutes depending on audience participation level. Under ideal conditions, your participants will willingly discuss each scenario and the discussion can last quite long, but as moderator you should keep track of the time and make sure you have discussed ~2/3 of the scenarios by the time you finish half of the allotted discussion time. We suggest that the last ~1/3 of scenarios take more time since those scenarios are more controversial and might spur more emotional reactions from your participants.
- 00:50 – After you have finished discussing the scenarios in the group, ask the participants, “*Which scenarios do you think were made up and which do you think were real?*” After some discussion, you can then reveal that all of the scenarios are real and all of them have happened in the last few years.

The next few pages give the scenarios which you can print out and cut into strips for the exercise. Following that is the “moderator key” to the scenarios, which provides a description of how this scenario might be perceived by a large fraction of our community. We strongly encourage the moderator to read over this key in detail and absorb his/her own thoughts on the scenarios before hosting the activity.

Please email Caitlin Casey (cmcasey.astro@gmail.com) and Kartik Sheth (astrokartik@gmail.com) for questions or comments about this activity.

Acknowledgements

Caitlin Casey and Kartik Sheth would like to acknowledge the Aspen Center for Physics for hosting the “Obscured Universe” workshop in May-June 2013. This activity was thought up during the workshop as a means of fostering a positive and thriving working environment for our diverse community. The Diversity and Ethics session, of which this scenario sorting activity was an important part, was hugely successful and led to this activity being prepared for wider circulation in this document. We thank all those who were there in Aspen for making the exercise such a resounding success.

Jorge is working on a paper which he thinks is ready for submission. He sends the paper to the collaborators for comments but does not hear back for a few months even after repeated requests for comments. Eventually, he insists on submitting his paper with or without their comments and offers them the option to step off the paper if they would prefer. In response, his senior collaborators threaten to report him to the journal and threaten to tarnish his name to any future employers, claiming that he is unethical because he has submitted a paper without the approval of the co-authors.



Jack, a professor, is flirtatious with Jill, a new postdoc in the department. Jack, the chair of the local TAC appoints Jill as a TAC member. When Jill makes it clear that she does not want a relationship with Jack her proposals for telescope time are less successful than they used to be.

Brian was shortlisted for a faculty job, but the job went to a woman instead. Brian feels that it's unfair, because he thinks he would have gotten the job if he were a woman.

Hugo has a meeting with his supervisor. His supervisor tells him he's not working very hard, and she expects him to put in nights and weekends in addition to working weekdays. Hugo loves research but since he believes he is less productive when working long hours decides to leave the field.

Jane and John are new faculty members in a male-dominated department. Jane is told that she must serve on more faculty committees than John because they need a woman.

Janine doesn't feel comfortable wearing skirts or dresses to work because the older professors always comment on how nice she looks and they sometimes stare at her breasts and whistle at her in the hallway.

Morgan is interviewing for a faculty job at a University. During the more "casual periods" of the interview (dinner, coffee), Morgan is asked several times by different faculty members, "Do you have kids? Are you married? Are you in a relationship?"

Lucas is a new foreign student in the department and the chair has gone out of her way to pair him with a mentor from his own country. She has also organized a special welcome for Lucas where various traditions of the country were recognized and celebrated.

Leslie, a pre-tenure astronomer, takes a parental leave after having a baby. Leslie's colleagues think parental leave is a free ride, and Leslie should be more productive at research during this time because of the lack of teaching commitment.

Bob and Jason are teammates in a big collaboration. Jason plans to submit a proposal for telescope time and circulates it to the team 2 days before the deadline on the wiki. Bob sends an email to Jason a few hours before the deadline saying that he will use the text and figures from Jason's proposal to submit his own proposal and asks Jason to withdrawal his proposal. He argues that he is justified because he as added Jason as a co-I on his proposal.

Beth is attending her first AAS meeting and has a difficult time with a critical colleague reviewing her poster. Her advisor, Pam, takes her aside and reassures her about her abilities and tells her to forget about the incident and move forwards.

Mason gives a talk at a conference on some unpublished, new work. A senior scientist in the audience is skeptical of the work and tries convincing Mason it is a waste of time. Mason tries to engage this senior scientist in a dialogue about the work over email but doesn't hear back; later that month, the senior scientist posts a submitted paper on the arXiv based on Mason's idea but does not credit nor acknowledge Mason.

Linda is organizing a meeting and is thinking of who the invited speakers should be. She thinks that it would be good to invite more women and junior researchers but thinks the more senior male researchers will give better more provocative talks so she invites them.

Amanda plans on supervising some undergrads, Joe and Michelle, over the summer. She thinks that men and women typically have different working and learning styles so she plans on spending more time talking with Michelle than Joe. She doesn't think Michelle is any less bright than Joe, but she knows from her own experience, how much it helped her to have one-on-one discussions and she wants to make sure that Michelle stays in the field.

Mark is hiring a new postdoc this year and is deciding between Melinda and Aaron who are both well qualified. Mark has noticed that Melinda has asked many interesting questions during conference talks and seems to be more vocal, so he is leaning towards hiring her rather than Aaron.

Nathaniel and Lucia are in the same department. Nathaniel, a tenured professor, wants to date Lucia even though she is his colleague's graduate student. He decides it is ok because he is not her employer.

Cynthia, a postdoctoral fellow, receives an email from a senior scientist after her paper is posted to arXiv. The senior scientists' work is cited in Cynthia's paper. The email is a one-liner, which reads, "For someone who knows nothing about SMGs, you have a very negative opinion of my work."

Jin thinks it is important to spend some of his time working on outreach and diversity issues but he is told by his advisor to not do so because its a waste of time.

An astronomy department is dominated by males (70%) but since the ratio of female to male is slightly above the average for other departments the senior male scientists conclude that the department has more than enough females and there should be no further effort to proactively diversify the department.

Gale is telling a joke about homosexuals over coffee with colleagues. Gerry, who identifies as homosexual, overhears and is offended. Gerry privately lets Gale know that the statement was offensive, but Gale continues to joke at work about homosexuals since Gale wants to continue to have the same friendship with the other colleagues.

Kwan notices that the young “stars” in his field are assertive, loud and vocal during meetings – they interrupt the speakers seemingly having no respect for them. He is not comfortable interrupting speakers or arguing in front of a crowd and decides to leave the field.

Jim is a postdoc. He finds out that his work is being plagiarized by a former postdoctoral fellow from the same group. When he tells his supervisor about the incident, she tells him that if people are copying his work he should view that as a sign of doing interesting research. That he should not worry about the competitors and instead focus on doing a solid job and publish the results.

Blair, a student, feels very uncomfortable in the astronomy department because there are problems with senior faculty bullying, taunting, and harassing other students. Blair would tell the department chair how uncomfortable and hostile the environment has become, but decides not to because Blair fears that as a result, the chair (and the faculty responsible) would no longer take Blair seriously as a researcher.

Robin is invited to a conference. Robin replies to the organizer, Ricardo (who he has never met), that he is happy to attend, but he is wondering if it is possible to travel with his family, including a newborn. In response, Ricardo says, “yes of course, feel free to bring your husband and children!”

As one of only two women in the department, Amy continuously threatens to sue the department for gender discrimination whenever something does not go her way. She is constantly throwing her colleagues under the bus and constantly saying that no one seems to appreciate her. Recently when her colleague Simon got a lucrative endowed chair offer at another University, she marched into the chair's office and screamed at him threatening to leave if Simon was offered tenure for retention even though Simon's advancement / position and work has no impact on her tenure case or work situation.

MODERATOR SCENARIO KEY

Use for group discussion but not for wide distribution.

Jorge is working on a paper which he thinks is ready for submission. He sends the paper to the collaborators for comments but does not hear back for a few months even after repeated requests for comments. Eventually, he insists on submitting his paper with or without their comments and offers them the option to step off the paper if they would prefer. In response, his senior collaborators threaten to report him to the journal and threaten to tarnish his name to any future employers, claiming that he is unethical because he has submitted a paper without the approval of the co-authors.

This is bullying and threat of slander. Jorge's senior collaborators have been given ample time to offer comments and criticisms on Jorge's paper, and they have been given the opportunity to remove themselves from the paper, but instead they decide to respond by threatening Jorge, perhaps with the intention of delaying Jorge from submitting. Nevertheless, the threats to report him to the journal and contact future employers is slander if it has the intention of tarnishing Jorge's reputation as a scientist without recounting the truth (or entire truth) about the scenario. Some things to consider here are what agreement Jorge and his collaborators had when he started to write this paper; was there a verbal agreement? Was there a written agreement? Could they have avoided this conflict by being more clear in the beginning about both parties' expectations?

Jack, a professor, is flirtatious with Jill, a new postdoc in the department. Jack, the chair of the local TAC appoints Jill as a TAC member. When Jill makes it clear that she does not want a relationship with Jack her proposals for telescope time are less successful than they used to be.

This falls under standard "quid pro quo" sexual harassment where Jill perceives Jack to want an 'exchange' of a romantic relationship for favors at work. Jill's reluctance for a relationship might or might not have impacted the ratings of her proposals on the local TAC (since there are many considerations which go into a TAC grade) but Jill's perception that it might have -- as a result of personal decisions -- qualifies this as sexual harassment.

Brian was shortlisted for a faculty job, but the job went to a woman instead. Brian feels that it's unfair, because he thinks he would have gotten the job if he were a woman.

Brian is free to be unhappy with this outcome. The situation is acceptable. Brian might be upset since he is feeling discriminated against for the first time; what Brian possibly hasn't thought about are the ways Brian's female (and minority) colleagues have faced discrimination like what he is feeling now. He might not

also be considering the importance of diversification at the institute where the faculty job was offered. One thing we would recommend for Brian is to try and educate himself on diversity and equity efforts in our field and become an active advocate. The next time Brian is shortlisted for a faculty job the department considering him might be encouraged that Brian wants to be an active advocate for equity and his chances of getting the job might substantially improve.

Hugo has a meeting with his supervisor. His supervisor tells him he's not working very hard, and she expects him to put in nights and weekends in addition to working weekdays. Hugo loves research but since he believes he is less productive when working long hours decides to leave the field.

While it is sometimes standard for graduate students/postdocs to put in long hours, Hugo's supervisor most likely cannot dictate that he work overtime on a project (since it is probably prohibited by the University/research institute which employs Hugo). Nevertheless, many supervisors might have high expectations for their students, but instead of phrasing their expectations in terms of hours worked (nights and weekends), it might be more appropriate for the supervisor to speak in terms of research goals (i.e. finish a paper by next week, proposal deadline, etc). If the students have difficulty managing their time wisely, the supervisor might offer up tips for optimizing their time.

Jane and John are new faculty members in a male-dominated department. Jane is told that she must serve on more faculty committees than John because they need a woman.

Jane might perceive this requirement as unfair since she has more duties than John, even though they were both hired at the same level. One suggestion we have for Jane is to agree to serve on the extra committees, but she should request that other departmental duties of hers be relieved so she isn't spread too thin (i.e. teaching, etc).

Janine doesn't feel comfortable wearing skirts or dresses to work because the older professors always comment on how nice she looks and they sometimes stare at her breasts and whistle at her in the hallway.

Janine has a hostile workplace environment which is aggravated by regular sexual harassment by these older professors. Janine can bring her complaints to the institute director or head of department or a Human Resources officer who will assume the responsibility of making sure this sexual harassment no longer happens. If Janine is unable to find an adequate solution with HR or the director/department head on an appropriate timescale, Janine should consult the country and state law on sexual harassment in the workplace (in the USA, this is covered by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) or consult a local Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) representative outside of the Institute/University.

Morgan is interviewing for a faculty job at a University. During the more “casual periods” of the interview (dinner, coffee), Morgan is asked several times by different faculty members, “Do you have kids? Are you married? Are you in a relationship?”

This is illegal in the United States. Each country is likely to have very different viewpoints on whether or not this is appropriate. While it can easily be perceived as helpful in some situations (i.e. the committee is wondering if the candidate will have to find a school for their children or a job for their spouse), it is largely regarded as inappropriate if asked prior to the job offer stage. Search committees should judge candidates on their capabilities and professional skills, not their personal situation; asking probing questions like these might be very threatening to the candidate if they fear the answers will impact the search committee’s decisions. The best time for a search committee member to bring this up is after an offer is made. Alternatively, the candidate is welcome to volunteer this information during an interview if it happens to come up. Would your opinions of this situation alter if you had assumed Morgan were a man / were a woman?

Lucas is a new foreign student in the department and the chair has gone out of her way to pair him with a mentor from his own country. She has also organized a special welcome for Lucas where various traditions of the country were recognized and celebrated.

Some might perceive this as uncomfortable or demeaning to Lucas and his ability to adapt to a new culture, whereas others might see this as welcoming. Whether or not this is appropriate would depend on Lucas’ level of comfort with the welcome celebration.

Leslie, a pre-tenure astronomer, takes a parental leave after having a baby. Leslie’s colleagues think parental leave is a free ride, and Leslie should be more productive at research during this time because of the lack of teaching commitment.

Leslie’s colleagues think he will spend the majority of his time writing papers while on parental leave rather than looking after his newborn. Although Leslie will be free from teaching during his parental leave, the primary objective of parental leave is to look after a newborn -- not to advance in research. Would you feel differently about this scenario if Leslie were a woman? Would you think Leslie is more or less likely to be more productive at research during parental leave if she were a woman and not a man?

Bob and Jason are teammates in a big collaboration. Jason plans to submit a proposal for telescope time and circulates it to the team 2 days before the deadline on the wiki. Bob sends an email to Jason a few hours before the

deadline saying that he will use the text and figures from Jason's proposal to submit his own proposal and asks Jason to withdrawal his proposal. He argues that he is justified because he as added Jason as a co-I on his proposal.

This is a standard case of plagiarism. Despite the fact that Jason and Bob are in the same collaboration, Bob has not received Jason's permission for using his text and figures. Bob's insistence that Jason withdrawal his proposal could also be categorized as bullying or intimidation (depending on Bob's wording and how much time was left before the deadline for Jason to make an informed decision). If this happened and Jason did withdrawal his proposal but later regretted it, he could bring his argument to the director of the telescope/facility to which he applied describing the situation and submitting evidence (e.g. emails, timestamped copies of the proposals). Whether or not there is an avenue of recourse for plagiarism beyond withdrawal of Bob's proposal is dependent on the situation.

Beth is attending her first AAS meeting and has a difficult time with a critical colleague reviewing her poster. Her advisor, Pam, takes her aside and reassures her about her abilities and tells her to forget about the incident and move forwards.

Pam is being supportive of Beth and teaching her techniques for coping with skeptical, or critically-minded scientists. We categorize this scenario as positive since Pam is passing on vital skills to Beth which she will undoubtedly use later in her career.

Mason gives a talk at a conference on some unpublished, new work. A senior scientist in the audience is skeptical of the work and tries convincing Mason it is a waste of time. Mason tries to engage this senior scientist in a dialogue about the work over email but doesn't hear back; later that month, the senior scientist posts a submitted paper on the arXiv based on Mason's idea but does not credit nor acknowledge Mason.

This is plagiarism. Mason might like to complain to the journal or the senior scientist's home institution, he/she might find it difficult if there isn't a clear body of evidence that the idea was first presented to the senior scientist during Mason's conference talk (although the talk was perhaps videotaped, the emails recorded, etc). This is less straightforward if the senior scientist had the idea prior to Mason's talk; in that case, it is not plagiarism, but it still qualifies as undesired behavior, especially since Mason made an effort to contact the senior scientist to engage in a dialogue. The senior scientist could have acted in a more positive way, by not trying to dissuade Mason from working on the topic and responding to Mason's emails.

Linda is organizing a meeting and is thinking of who the invited speakers should be. She thinks that it would be good to invite more women and junior

researchers but thinks the more senior male researchers will give better more provocative talks so she invites them.

This is a problem often faced by conference organizers, however, we would tell Linda that she probably should make more of an effort to get to know young women/minority researchers in her area who can give good, provocative talks. Most invited conference speakers are usually senior males since conference invitations are often based on who the SOC knows personally, and senior males tend to have more contacts in the field than junior researchers. How acceptable/unacceptable would this be if all of the speakers at Linda's conference ended up being senior males?

Amanda plans on supervising some undergrads, Joe and Michelle, over the summer. She thinks that men and women typically have different working and learning styles so she plans on spending more time talking with Michelle than Joe. She doesn't think Michelle is any less bright than Joe, but she knows from her own experience, how much it helped her to have one-on-one discussions and she wants to make sure that Michelle stays in the field.

Assuming that Amanda hasn't yet met Joe or Michelle, it's inappropriate for Amanda to assume Joe will work one way and Michelle a different way based on their genders. This falls under enforced stereotype, and if Amanda treats Joe and Michelle differently due to gender, Joe and Michelle might both start to feel gender stereotype threat. Amanda might realize after working with them for a week or so that they have different learning styles, but those learning styles are associated with them as individuals rather than as members of their gender group. How would you have reacted to this scenario differently if Joe and Michelle were switched?

Mark is hiring a new postdoc this year and is deciding between Melinda and Aaron who are both well qualified. Mark has noticed that Melinda has asked many interesting questions during conference talks and seems to be more vocal, so he is leaning towards hiring her rather than Aaron.

Mark is free to decide on qualified candidates as he sees fit, and therefore we judged this scenario as acceptable. However, would you have reacted differently if Melinda and Aaron were switched, i.e. Aaron was the more vocal candidate? Did gender play a role in your assessment of the acceptability of this scenario? If so, why?

Many readers might judge the reverse gender scenario to be somehow unfair, while this scenario as presented is arguably fair. We speculate that the discrepancy is caused by the perception that women are far less vocal than men at conferences (anecdotally this is measured to be true, where men speak up 10 times for every time a woman speaks up). If this is true, what is causing it? Is there a gender stereotype threat for women that makes them less vocal during conferences? We would recommend that Mark be aware of issues like this which

might play a role in how vocal Aaron and Melinda are at meetings. The situation is potentially negative for diversification efforts in the field if Mark judges his candidates solely on how vocal they are at meetings given the evidence that women are 10 times less vocal.

Nathaniel and Lucia are in the same department. Nathaniel, a tenured professor, wants to date Lucia even though she is his colleague's graduate student. He decides it is ok because he is not her employer.

This scenario lacks some critical information on the rules and regulations at Nathaniel and Lucia's institutes and information about what Lucia desires. Some institutes have regulations forbidding romantic relationships between co-workers when there is a power differential (i.e. tenured professor to student) while others only forbid relationships along direct employer-employee lines, and others allow all variety of workplace consensual relationships. If Lucia regards Nathaniel's interest in her as unwelcome, the situation becomes more problematic and can be called sexual harassment, creating a hostile work environment for Lucia.

Cynthia, a postdoctoral fellow, receives an email from a senior scientist after her paper is posted to arXiv. The senior scientists' work is cited in Cynthia's paper. The email is a one-liner, which reads, "For someone who knows nothing about SMGs, you have a very negative opinion of my work."

This is a rude email and could be perceived as bullying. If the senior scientist believes Cynthia is quoting his/her paper incorrectly, there are many appropriate ways of writing to Cynthia in a more polite, constructive tone. Do you think the senior scientist would have hesitated to write Cynthia this way if (a) she were a man? or (b) she were a more senior scientist herself?

Jin thinks it is important to spend some of his time working on outreach and diversity issues but he is told by his advisor to not do so because its a waste of time.

Jin and his supervisor should have a discussion about Jin's goals in his research and outreach efforts. While his advisor might not value his interest in outreach, Jin might be engaging in those activities because he is planning on pursuing an outreach or teaching-based career post-PhD. His advisor should be aware of his intentions, but also be clear about the expectations for Jin's research and timeline for completion. If Jin and his advisor cannot reach resolution on how to balance his time, Jin and/or the advisor should seek the advise of other professors in the department (i.e. graduate chair, Jin's second advisor, etc).

An astronomy department is dominated by males (70%) but since the ratio of female to male is slightly above the average for other departments the senior male scientists conclude that the department has more than enough females and

there should be no further effort to proactively diversify the department.

Achieving a 70-30 male-female ratio should not be regarded as the end goal of diversification efforts, since it does not reflect the population at large, which is 50-50. While this department is doing well to have a gender ratio slightly above the average, it needs to continue its diversification efforts until the ratio has reached parity (similarly, they should strive for a 32-68 minority-non-minority ratio which is reflective of the overall population of ethnic minorities in the United States).

Gale is telling a joke about homosexuals over coffee with colleagues. Gerry, who identifies as homosexual, overhears and is offended. Gerry privately lets Gale know that the statement was offensive, but Gale continues to joke at work about homosexuals since Gale wants to continue to have the same friendship with the other colleagues.

Gale's joke was clearly offensive to Gerry, and Gale's reluctance to stop joking about homosexuals after Gerry's request is unacceptable. Gerry can report Gale to any authority figure or Human Resources advocate in the department/institute since Gale has created a hostile work environment for Gerry.

Kwan notices that the young "stars" in his field are assertive, loud and vocal during meetings – they interrupt the speakers seemingly having no respect for them. He is not comfortable interrupting speakers or arguing in front of a crowd and decides to leave the field.

This is undesired, since we would hope people decide to stay or go based on their interest in the science rather than more human limitations. While Kwan's decision is totally his own, and is acceptable, the community might want to recognize that it is losing good people and should strive to be a more inviting, inclusive environment for multiple personality types, not just those who are naturally assertive and loud.

Jim is a postdoc. He finds out that his work is being plagiarized by a former postdoctoral fellow from the same group. When he tells his supervisor about the incident, she tells him that if people are copying his work he should view that as a sign of doing interesting research. That he should not worry about the competitors and instead focus on doing a solid job and publish the results.

If we assume that Jim confirms plagiarism has taken place (which is an unacceptable behavior), we consider here the behavior of Jim's supervisor. Is the advice she gave him good? Should he have pursued a complaint against the plagiarizer? We think that Jim's supervisor's point of view is probably a common one, given the lack of success plagiarism cases have in academic review panels (at this level) and that she probably sees it as a waste Jim's time to focus on the offense rather than the research. However, Jim should make sure he is

comfortable with how the situation is handled -- either through a formal complaint, informal complaint or direct correspondence with the offender, or ignoring the incident.

Blair, a student, feels very uncomfortable in the astronomy department because there are problems with senior faculty bullying, taunting, and harassing other students. Blair would tell the department chair how uncomfortable and hostile the environment has become, but decides not to because Blair fears that as a result, the chair (and the faculty responsible) would no longer take Blair seriously as a researcher.

Blair feels threatened by his/her environment so much so that he/she doesn't feel comfortable talking to the chair about it. This constitutes a hostile work environment, not just for the other students who are experiencing the bullying, taunting and harassing, but also for Blair. Blair could take the complaints to the department HR officer instead, and the HR officer should make it clear that students can come to him/her with complaints. It is the responsibility of the faculty and primarily, the faculty chair, that the workplace environment is healthy, and that the students feel comfortable discussing their problems openly or otherwise have clear resources for resolving problems.

Robin is invited to a conference. Robin replies to the organizer, Ricardo (who he has never met), that he is happy to attend, but he is wondering if it is possible to travel with his family, including a newborn. In response, Ricardo says, "yes of course, feel free to bring your husband and children!"

Ricardo has assumed Robin is a female, possibly because Robin enquired if it is possible to travel with his family. This is an undesired reaction to Robin's email, as it is a gender-based assumption that male researchers would not want (or have to) travel to conferences with their families.

As one of only two women in the department, Amy continuously threatens to sue the department for gender discrimination whenever something does not go her way. She is constantly throwing her colleagues under the bus and constantly saying that no one seems to appreciate her. Recently when her colleague Simon got a lucrative endowed chair offer at another University, she marched into the chair's office and screamed at him threatening to leave if Simon was offered tenure for retention even though Simon's advancement / position and work has no impact on her tenure case or work situation.

This is bullying. In this scenario, Amy is using her gender as an excuse to improve her status in the department or prevent against demotion or possible lack of promotion. By screaming at the department chair, Amy is also engaging in irrational physical behavior which can be categorized as unwelcome workplace violence.