

# Make No Mistakes: Creating and Reviewing Portfolios

Minimizing the potential for  
unintentional errors in the portfolio  
preparation and review process

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# Goals of ISU ADVANCE

Institutional Change Through Collaboration:  
Recruiting, Retaining, and Advancing  
Women Faculty in STEM Fields

CALS is one of three focal colleges involved in  
a 5-year, \$3.2M dollar project at ISU



# Overview

- Recognizing “unintentional errors” that might occur
- Avoiding errors in portfolio preparation
  - Keeping the audience in mind
  - Framing the portfolio presentation
- Ensuring excellence and equity in the review process: external evaluators and committee deliberations
  - Soliciting external letters
  - Reading, evaluating, and summarizing external letters
  - Monitoring committee deliberations
- Questions/discussion

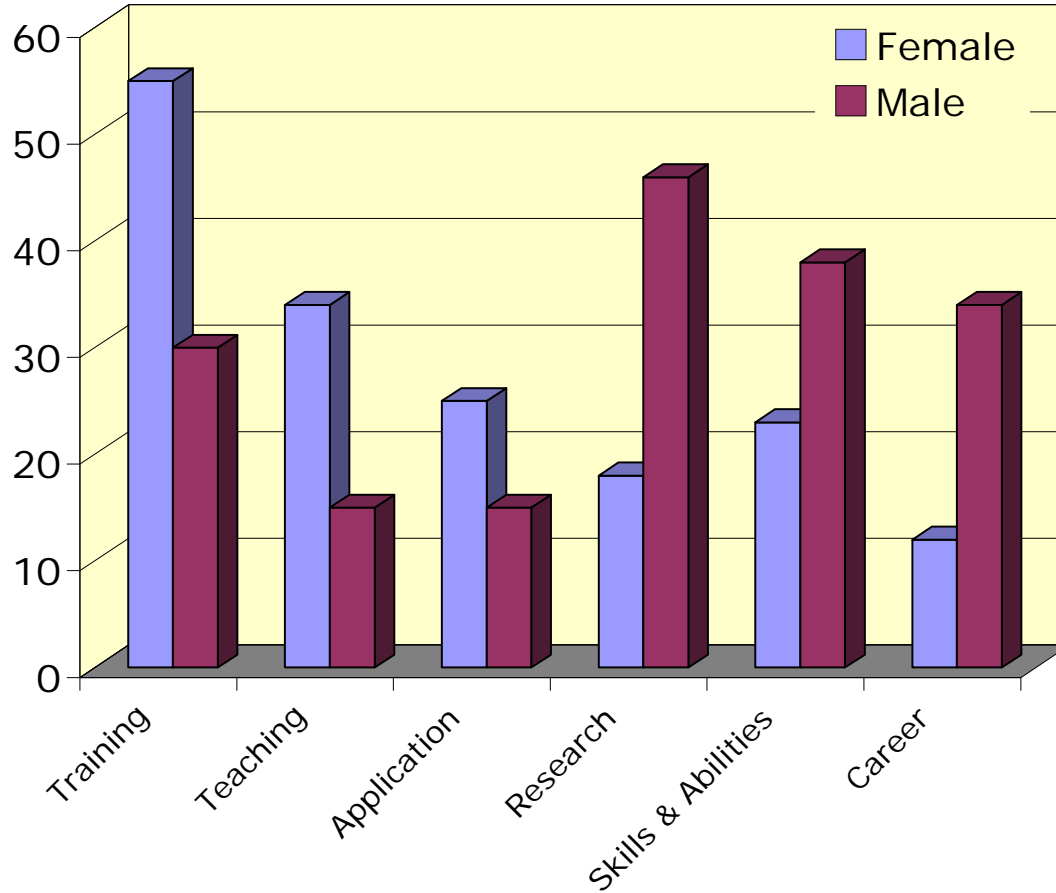
# Unintentional errors that can occur in letters

- Doubt raisers
- Potentially negative language
- Faint praise
- Hedges
- Irrelevancy
- Gender terms/titles\*\*
- Gendered adjectives\*\*
- Grindstone adjectives\*\*

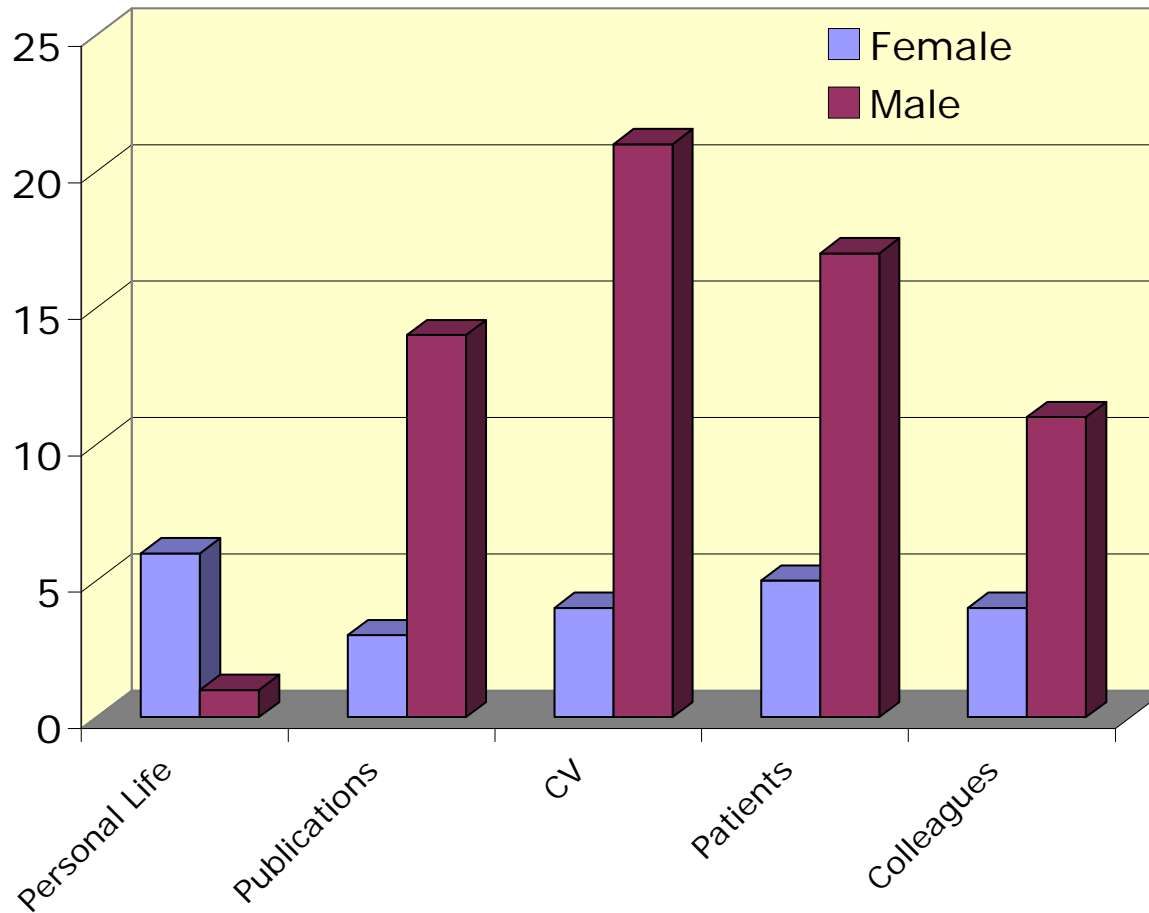
# Unintentional errors that can occur in discussions (i.e. P & T committees)

- Stereotyping - positive and negative
  - Gender, race, ethnicity, age
- Raising the bar\*\*
- Elitism
- Good fit/bad fit
- Provincialism
- Seizing a pretext\*\*
- Character over content/context
- Momentum of the group\*\*

# Differential impact of errors: a cautionary note



# Differential impact of errors



# Avoiding errors in portfolio preparation

Keeping the audience in mind:

“Situating your work” for understanding by

- Disciplinary peers (external letter writers)
- Department- and college-level colleagues
- University administrators

Be direct and complete – don’t leave questions unanswered

# Avoiding errors in portfolio preparation

## Framing the presentation

Provide context for and clarity about your scholarship:

How does your scholarly work come together as a ***program*** in your area(s) of responsibility, and what *impact* will that program produce?

Work with your mentor(s), find examples from others close to your discipline, give drafts to others (both within and not so close to your discipline) to solicit feedback

***Speak positively*** about how your work has or will make the world a better place

# That thing called “impact”



“The Creation of Adam”, Ceiling fresco, Capella Sistina, Vatican  
Michelangelo Buonarroti, 1512

# Ensuring excellence and equity in the review process: external evaluators

## Soliciting external letters:

- Identify potential letter writers - include diverse scholars
- Create context for scholar's work – PRS, other institution- and discipline- (or interdisciplinary-) specific information
- Provide a structure for letter writers: articulate a list of what a writer should address that focuses on scholarly accomplishments
- Use same structure and language in solicitation letters for majority and non-majority candidates – there should be no difference in “setting the tone” for external reviewers

# Ensuring excellence and equity in the review process

Reading, evaluating, and summarizing external letters:

- Ascertain that letters focus on the candidate's scholarship
- Ensure that summaries (in P & T committees, in letters that go forward from department) of external letters focus on the evaluation provided of the candidate's scholarship
- Watch for common unintentional errors in external letters and note them in cover materials for future reviewers as the dossier moves forward

# Ensuring excellence and equity in the review process

## Monitoring committee interactions:

- Remind participants of potential for errors and be watchful
- Establish clear ground rules and require adherence
- Keep discussion focused on candidate's scholarship
- Hold all discussants accountable
- Don't rush the process – allow time for deliberation

# Minimizing unintentional errors...

Review processes are evaluative, and involve original expressions of that evaluation. Being aware of points during the process where particular attention needs to be paid to avoid errors can help to ensure equitable and positive outcomes.

Questions or comments?