How to Foment a Revolution on Your Own Campus
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Change, especially transformational change, is extraordinarily difficult to accomplish in higher education[1]. We know this from experience on our individual campuses. And we know from the literature what some of the characteristics of higher education are that facilitate or hinder change efforts, and how higher education differs from the corporate sector, or even other non-profit institutions and organizations. One of the points that Adrianna Kezar makes in her chapter summarizing some of these salient characteristics is that universities are ***highly interdependent organizations[2]***. They don't stand alone or act in a vacuum. And change is most likely to occur when a variety of these interdependent organizations share a sense of urgency and commitment to an agenda for action. Indeed this conference is a perfect example of interdependency – in this room we have campus-based physicists, representatives of national laboratories and federal agencies supporting research, the American Physical Society -- the major national disciplinary association, and a variety of scholars and activists whose work and research has been supported by a variety of private foundations. This coalescence around a shared agenda for change can be a powerful force, creating an opportunity to make a real difference on issues of worklife for faculty members. A simple, but concrete outcome of this meeting might be a commitment to work on childcare for conference travel – something that federal granting agencies and national disciplinary associations might work together on with their campus partners. I challenge you to take this issue on as a positive step that would make a difference.

Given that previous speakers have already addressed the range of worklife policies and programs being adopted by a variety of Advance (and non-Advance) institutions, I want to reshape my remarks to focus on what YOU can do to foment the revolution on your own campuses when you return later this week…steps that you can take to move this national agenda forward on your campus.

I think of myself as a "tempered radical" – a term coined by Debra Myerson[3], who studied a variety of people who were different in some important ways from the

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[1] Two readily accessible and easy to read monographs on institutional transformation from the American Council on Education:

      Eckel, P., Green, M., Hill, B., & Mallon, W. (1999*). On change III. Taking charge of change: A primer for colleges and universities.* Washington D.C.: American Council on Education. Document available in pdf at http://www.acenet.edu/bookstore/pdf/on-change/on-changeIII.pdf.

      Eckel, P., Green, M. & Hill, B. (2001). *On change V. Riding the Waves of change: Insights from transforming institutions.* Washington D.C.: American Council on Education. Document available in pdf at http://www.acenet.edu/bookstore/pdf/on-change/on-changeV.pdf.

[2] Kezar, A. (2001). *Organizational change in the 21st century: Recent research and conceptualizations.* ASHE/ERIC Higher Education Report, vol. 28, no. 4, 62-63.

[3] See Meyerson, D.E. (October 2001). Radical change, the quiet way. Harvard Business Review, 92-100.

  Meyerson, D.E., & Fletcher, J.K. (January-February 2000). A modest manifesto for shattering the glass ceiling. Harvard Business Review, 127-136.

  Meyerson, D.E. (2001). Tempered Radicals: How People Use Differences to Inspire Change at Work. Harvard Business Press.

mainstream culture of their corporate or institutional homes. These are people of color in white-dominant organizations, women in male-dominated organizations, gays and lesbians in organizations dominated by heterosexuals in traditional families, and so on. Her research subjects found ways to remain true to their identities and to help their organizations change. They learned to rock the boat without falling out of it. They were committed to their organization, while working relentlessly and effectively to change its culture. The advice I want to give adopts this stance of a tempered radical. It comes from my personal conviction that incremental change, pushed carefully and incessantly, will be more effective in changing our institutional cultures than a protest movement, anger and accusations.

So what might a newly converted physicist do when he or she returns to campus, ready to help move forward an agenda around gender equity and improving faculty worklife? I am assuming that most of you have spent your time paying attention to the world of physics and living busy lives within your own departments, and you may not have spent much time analyzing campus politics or policies. Here are six steps you might try to step out of your comfort zone and embark on culture change for your university:

1.   ***Identify likely allies and invite them to lunch***
So who might be the likely allies on your campus? Some of the places to look are your Faculty Senate (or equivalent), the Provost's Office (find someone like me), Office of Multicultural Affairs or Diversity, a Commission on Women if it exists, a key dean or associate dean, key women leaders with credibility and insight as to how campus works, possibly Women's Studies faculty members, and there may easily be other key players on your campus.
Find out what are your points of mutual interest, who seems to know their way around the institutional power structure – how are decisions made, who knows the formal governance structure (how are policies actually initiated and passed?). Build coalitions; you cannot possibly do this on your own from the department chair role. Can you commit to doing at least three such lunches to get the ball rolling?

2.   ***Use the leverage YOU have to help OTHERS make the case.***
At Virginia Tech, we have struggled with child care for more than 25 years. Despite numerous studies and screaming need, we simply could not get institutional leaders in key gatekeeping positions to let this move forward. Several things happened that finally helped us get started on childcare. Two of our gate-keeping financial administrators retired, and we hired a new Dean of Engineering. The dean looked at his salary budget and the availability of start-up money and decided that he had to have something else to offer talented new recruits or we were never going to get them to come to Blacksburg. He decided that he needed to pitch quality of life, and childcare was a big piece of that for young families. If the university would not take on this issue, he would. Although he quickly discovered that he could not afford to take on this issue with limited unrestricted private funds, he used his funds to buy some preferential slots at our best local daycare center, AND he changed the conversation and the institutional attention given to this initiative. It was extremely helpful for those of us who wanted to move the childcare issue ahead to have the dean of our dominant college speaking forcefully about the need to do so.
The lesson here is that those of you who hold some prestige in the institution because you have strong faculty, get large grants, work in a science field which may hold a higher status at a research university, or because many of you are men -- you

have an opportunity to lend a mainstream, respected voice to these issues. On many campuses we find that diversity and worklife issues move forward best when white men help carry the water on those issues. After all, the formal and informal power structures of nearly every research university in the country are controlled by white men. They can – and you can – be powerful agents of change when you lend your voice and prestige to these issues.

3.   ***Find the language and rationale that works on your campus.***
        The language of "social equity and justice" – as compelling as it is for me and many others -- no longer appears to capture attention or commitment on many of our campuses, or in society as a whole. What we see as a rationale that appears to have more traction is the necessity of recruiting and retaining a talented workforce. If you have spent a quarter or half a million dollars or more on a start-up package for a young female physicist and she leaves in two years, you have wasted very precious institutional resources, both time and money. Find out if you have the data for your campus that reflects the trends we see everywhere else – women leave tenure-track positions at a higher rate than men.   Since women are nearly half of all newly awarded doctorates, we can no longer afford to recruit and lose such a large percentage of the doctoral workforce.
        If this rationale does not work for your campus, find one that does. The rationale needs to be compelling to a wide variety of faculty and administrators -- something that motivates them with some sense of urgency and does not alienate them by using a language of blame.
        I also urge you to share stories of recruitments lost, difficulties finding quality child care, individual faculty members who have left because they could not manage the load, and so on. These personal stories bring these abstract issues home to others.

4.   ***Help pull together what your campus is already doing.***
        Create a website with relevant policies so that they are gathered in one place to bring visibility to the issue and the campus response. Create a brochure or list of programs that are available. Such policies cannot be a recruiting tool for your campus unless candidates know about them. And such policies will not be used by faculty unless they are highly visible, well documented, and well supported by department heads and deans.

5.   ***Borrow liberally from others.***
        Compare what you have with what is being recommended at other leading institutions. It is so much easier to sell the importance of worklife policies and practices when you can point to what Berkeley is doing (see http://ucfamilyedge.berkeley.edu/ for a wonderful collection of policies and reports). It is so much easier to develop new policies if you have some models to work from (see a brand new national clearinghouse on academic worklife policies http://www.academicworklife.org/). Those of us with Advance grants are trying to make our work accessible to others and we are borrowing constantly from each other (http://research.cs.vt.edu/advance/index.htm).

6.   ***But adapt / Make it your own.***
        There is no way to short circuit the process even if you borrow a great policy from Virginia Tech or from some other institution and try to put it into place on your own campus without substantial discussion. You must have those difficult conversations on your own campus. They have to be repeated over and over again until there is local comfort, and input has been gathered from key constituencies. You must move

deliberately, but carefully, through formal and informal governance structures, and you must allow people to chew on new ideas and new ways of doing things. You must engage enough faculty members, and the RIGHT faculty members, to successfully support a change effort.

This is about a culture change, and culture change is a process, not simply a set of policies. Policies are useless if faculty members are afraid to use them because of possible negative consequences and colleagues dismiss them as a denigration of what it means to be a successful faculty member. The attitudes and behaviors need to move along with the policies.

You may not see yourself as the lead person on campus for these change initiatives but you can make a powerful difference in your own departments by adopting proactive policies and practices. And you can lend your voice, stories you know of, and your prestige to the initiative, becoming an ally for others. These are important contributions in any culture change.