

ADVICE from the TOP

With a Little Help From Her Friends

As a young anthropologist at California State Polytechnic University in Pomona, Yolanda Moses felt that her field, women's and ethnic studies, deserved its own department. But as "a social scientist in a techie environment," she faced a big challenge winning other faculty over. So Moses called in her troops: leaders in the American Anthropological Association (AAA) as well as other groups concerned with ethnic and women's affairs, who wrote the dean and president at Moses's behest. This lobbying helped "mute the opposition from more traditional quarters," recalls Moses.

By 1980, 4 years after her arrival, she chaired the new Department of Ethnic and Women's studies, one of only two in the country.

That's just one example of how Moses, now president of the City College of New York (CCNY), has used her network to advance her causes. "I'm a joiner," she says. Throughout her career she has cultivated connections at all levels, ranging from the "Free Angela Davis" committee in college to professional anthropology groups; this year, she's reached the pinnacle of her field as AAA president. And although she's benefited from minority programs, Moses says she's drawn her real strength from her innumerable contacts.

Moses was born in Los Angeles 50 years ago, and her high school counselor urged her to become a legal secretary. But her mother, who worked as a domestic, got her a scholarship to San Bernardino Valley College through the local Parent Teacher



Yolanda Moses

Organization; members of her church chipped in too. After college, Moses was about to join the federal Teacher Corps when Mom came through again: She clipped out a notice from the Ford Foundation advertising one of its earliest minority doctoral fellowships.

That opportunity, combined with a personal encounter with Margaret Mead after a lecture—during which the famous anthropologist sparked Moses's interest by praising the Black Power movement—sent Moses into anthropology. She got her Ph.D. in 1976 from the University of California, Riverside, where she was the first in the depart-

ment to do a thesis on gender issues. All her affiliations helped her to "dare to be different," says Moses. She honed her leadership skills by heading a variety of AAA subgroups and moved steadily up the administrative ladder, becoming vice president for academic affairs at California State University, Dominguez Hills, in 1988, and president of CCNY in 1993.

Because support from others has been so crucial in her own career, Moses tries to shape every institution she leads to become more "helping" and inclusive of "different voices." At CCNY she meets regularly with student leaders and student media. And she also meets regularly with her latest support group, the five other women presidents in the CUNY system. In her view, "You are setting yourself up for failure if you do not have the right support systems."

—Constance Holden

For more on diversity in science, see the on-line forum on *Science's Next Wave* on the World Wide Web at <<http://sci.aaas.org/nextwave/public.html>>

Even some subfields show a distinct pattern. Economist Rebecca Blank of Northwestern University thinks gender differences in her field are best explained along an "applied" versus "theoretical" axis. For example, women are attracted more to areas such as labor economics than to macroeconomic theory.

As women have been taking over some branches of social science, professional organizations have grown concerned that they may be moving into fields where prestige, salaries, and job opportunities are declining. Roos has studied the phenomenon in a variety of occupations, such as pharmacy, where, she says, the percentage of women getting Doctor of Pharmacy degrees more than doubled, from 26% to 56.5%, between 1970 and 1985. At the same time, the profession itself was demanding fewer skills and offered fewer opportunities as independent pharmacies became scarcer. The result: "Male flight," says Roos. In some social sciences, a similar phenomenon has occurred, where feminization seems to be happening just as funding and prestige are dropping, says Roos.

Psychologists have been particularly concerned. They've noted a decline in the status of their field—manifested in a decline in academic jobs and research training programs—while the numbers of women have skyrocketed, according to an APA report. The lower status "applied" fields—counseling, clinical, and school psychology—changed from one-quarter to two-thirds female between 1971 and 1991, while men still predominate in hot research areas such as cognitive psychology.

The APA was so concerned by these trends that it set up a task force to assess the situation. Its report, called the "Changing Gender Composition of Psychol-

ogy," issued last October, concluded that women weren't driving down salaries, but that the "declining status or prestige of the occupation" made it less attractive to men. Indeed, work by Roos and others suggests that feminization may occur when men start moving out of a field that's losing its luster.

In sociology, likewise, Roos and Katharine W. Jones of Rutgers have noted that women's increased representation grew "in the context of a notable decline" in the total number of sociology doctorates. As the academic job market slowed, many men were diverted to more profitable or cutting-edge fields. Men are quicker than women to follow "more lucrative and prestigious" new lines of work, says Ohio State University sociologist Barbara Reskin.

And tomorrow's crop of new Ph.D.s in psychology, sociology, and anthropology may include even more women, if today's undergraduate enrollments are any guide. Psychology majors, for example, are now more than 70% female. But in other fields, patterns are different. In political science, women have stabilized at about half the class. And in economics, says Shulamit Kahn of the Boston University School of Management, female majors have dropped to 30%, down from 35% a few years ago.

It seems that in the few pockets of "chilly climates" remaining for women in the social sciences, the chill is provided in large part by the contents of the disciplines themselves. For men, on the other hand, low prestige seems to be the biggest turnoff. All this suggests that even in fields that on the surface appear to be a model of equality between the sexes, issues of gender aren't likely to go away soon.

—Constance Holden