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QWIS

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Magazine



The Unspoken
Academic Lessons

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Happy Reading,

the GQM Team

The Unspoken Academic Lessons

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CHAPTER ONE

"when all else fails, teach"

by Dina Navon, GQM co-editor

This sentence tells us that teachers are inherently failures. Teachers are people who tried to "do" something, but couldn't. This adage suggests that teaching is easy, that being a teacher is something you fall back on if all else fails. It not-so-subtly implies that teaching isn't valued or important, and that good teachers are abundant. This pervasive attitude towards educators is frankly disturbing because none of the thoughts expressed so far in this paragraph are true, but they are certainly reflected in the attitudes of many top academics and academic administrators, especially at RI research institutions like UMass. As graduate students here, we are constantly pushed to excel at research. Having an advisor who is able to afford an RA for you for your entire career is like owning a Lamborghini or a Maserati. Many students are only ever supported by TAs, while some are "lucky" enough to RA for approximately half their graduate career. Teaching is reduced to a necessary evil. It pays the bills, but it also gets in the way of our true accomplishments, of our ability to "do" research. This attitude does not exist only in grad school, but persists at higher levels of the academy. Lecturers are paid less than their researching counterparts, despite arguably comparable (if different) workloads. High school biology teachers -- even those with higher-level train-

...the view that teaching is easy and unimportant is damaging, inconsistent with reality, and indicative of a misunderstanding of the purpose and function of academia...

ing -- are paid even less. We are failing to respect and support our teachers, and our education system suffers as result. Effective teaching develops better scientists, fosters diversity, and inspires a new generation of STEM students. Look back across your career, and I guarantee you'll be able to name several key teachers who pulled you towards your current track. This view that teaching is easy and unimportant is damaging, inconsistent with reality, and indicative of a misunderstanding of the purpose and function of academia. It's dangerous. As a graduate student, you cannot allow it to color your own perception of your peers or yourself. After all, academics are not only researchers but also inevitably teachers, even at research-focused schools like UMass. Wanting to be a lecturer, a high school teacher, or a researcher at an education-focused liberal arts school is no more a "cop-out" than wanting to go into industry. These are difficult jobs that are vital to society - and that as a highly educated person, you are uniquely qualified to perform. Teaching is a calling, and it's time we start treating it as such.

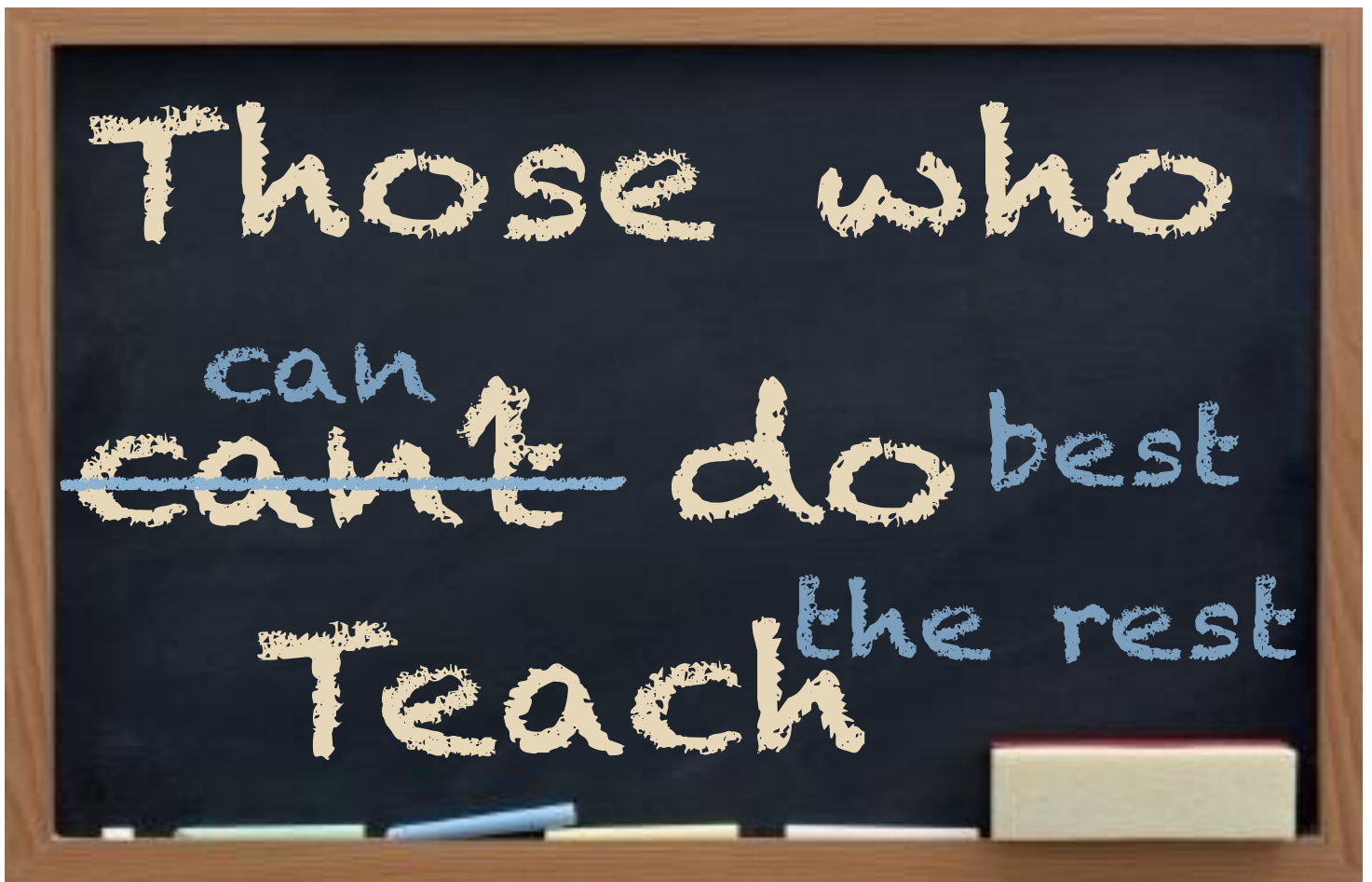
I truly believe that as an academic, teaching will be possibly the most important component of my job. I will never fully

accomplish everything that I set out to do as a researcher because science is never finished. The scientific world is just too complex, too intricate, for me to ever answer all of the questions I am equipped to ask or passionate about answering. And with every answer, of course, comes more questions to ask - it's too much for any one person to ever "complete". Academia must rely on the passion of many to drive it forward, and it is skillful educators who spur such passion. My students will be the ones who continue my line of work, who ensure that my research doesn't simply end when I retire. It is my responsibility to find, recruit, inspire, and engage those students. And in a more general sense, it is the responsibility of all of us currently working in scientific fields to inspire a new generation to ask questions, to probe beyond what is known, to discover and specialize and integrate and synthe-

...Academia must rely on the passion of many to drive it forward, and it is skillful educators who spur such passion....

size. Failure to do so has had and will continue to have calamitous results for scientific progress and for society as a whole. Effective teaching reaches across socioeconomic, racial, cultural, and gender-based divides. A truly outstanding teacher can impart information effectively to people of many different backgrounds. Different people learn differently, and a skillful educator recognizes this fact and actively strives to engage various types of learners. Good teachers actually have the ability to change the way we associate ourselves with subjects. Many women and other folks with marginalized social identities don't enter scientific or mathematical fields because they don't think they're good at those subjects. Good teachers can make difficult material engaging and help them see their strengths. The ability to engage with a diverse group of students requires creativity, flexibility, mindfulness and a multidimensional understanding of what you're teaching, which is more than you need to simply accomplish a task. A skillful educator needs to be aware of her audience's attention and retention. She needs to see when and where communication breaks down. She then needs to do something about this by adapting her teaching style to suit her student's needs. This is no easy feat! The educators who are able to accomplish it - particularly the ones who are teaching within the US higher education system - are the ones who put in the extra effort to learn and hone their crafts. They should be rewarded. They should be praised. They should definitely not be framed as failures by the majority of the society that they work so hard to develop. They should be given the necessary respect and resources to do their jobs well, but we don't give them these things because we don't think they're important.

"those who can't do, teach"- anonymous



Teaching well isn't easy. How many teachers have you personally studied probably lost track along the way, but you know there have been several dozen people contributing to your formal education. Now consider how many of them truly influenced your thought processes in a positive and fundamental way. I seriously doubt that every single one of them had such a profound impact on you as to be truly memorable. Even the ones who did break through the myriad of distractions provided by the internet age and managed to captivate your attention and imagination probably only did so a handful of times throughout their prolonged tenure as your academic mentor. My high school US history teacher, for example, taught me a lesson about liberty that I will never forget. On the first day of class, he stood at the front of the classroom and instructed all of us to stand up and wave our arms around. We did so, many of us moving to stand in such a way that our arms would not hit our neighbor. "That's liberty!" Mr. Flanagan proclaimed proudly. "You know what isn't liberty?" He paused, looking around, and deliberately walked up to a student and slow-motion karate-chopped that student. "That's not liberty. You are free to do whatever you want *provided it does not impinge upon the rights and liberty of another person.*" There's a lot about that class I've forgotten - I couldn't tell you the start and end dates of any major wars. I can't name every US President. But I'll always be able to perfectly recount Mr. Flanagan's definition of liberty. I'll always remember the time he had us unwittingly demonstrate the perils of laissez-faire policy. I never had a strong desire to excel in history class. I just wasn't passionate about it. But Mr. Flanagan was able to break through those barriers to my excitement and understanding to the extent that I can perfectly recite those stories today, almost a decade later. I've adopted some of his views about the

world as my own, and they've guided me throughout my life, long after I moved away from his direct sphere of influence. That is the power of truly outstanding teaching, and it is rare. There are entire graduate programs dedicated to understanding and perfecting this ability - yet our future college

...if we went into the hiring process saying "if you can't do it, you have no business trying to teach it..."

and graduate level educators are never required to take a single formal education course throughout the entirety of their training to become educators. Why? Because academia and society as a whole values their performance as researchers - as those who "do" things - over their performance as educators. Education is no longer the focus of academia, particularly at schools like UMass. That's misguided, it's destructive, and it's contributing to the problems that GWIS is attempting to fix. To say that "those who can't do, teach" is to dismiss the impact and importance of teachers at all levels of education. It also lowers the standards for the teachers that we hire. If we went into the hiring process saying "if you can't do it, you have no business trying to teach it", we'd be a lot better off. I refuse to accept that I will be a failure if I pursue my dream of becoming an excellent teacher. I refuse to accept that I should be looked down on for striving to accomplish something difficult and valuable. I challenge you to stand with your colleagues who share my passion for teaching, to support them even when the system and society won't. I ask that you reprioritize teaching for yourself and that you look into best practices for supporting diverse classrooms. I hope that you will be an inspiration to everyone you interact with as an academic who values every part of their job, especially their responsibility to education.

CHAPTER TWO

"Bad Science"

by Lola Fatunmbi, Ph.D.

...the Foundations...

Let's start with biased observations
Creating uneducated postulations
Leading to poorly executed experimental implementations
Concluding paragraphs based on inconclusive calculations
Creating very narrow declarations
And overly simplified specifications
The result? A static representation
That disregards the dynamics and fluctuations
Separate entities and not the combination

**All this missing information
But it still passed review
And still ended up in a pretty little publication**

...the applications...

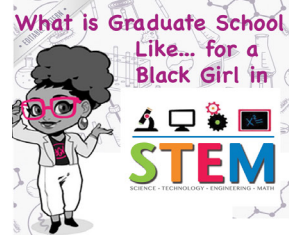
Let's start with apples and oranges comparisons
we try to pretend we aren't aware of them
The international students vs the Americans
Who makes the department look good?
what about the token black but not so African-American
Are we basing this on genetics or simply aesthetics?
Are we basing this on potentials or is it their kinetics?
Is this basis naturally occurring or is it synthetic?

**All this missing information
That still passed review
And made it into a pretty little publication**

...my Frustrations...

Let's start with my success characterized as UNFAIR affirmations
Let's end with my failures declared FAIR ramifications
Telling me that things aren't really as hard as they seem
Telling me that if I work hard I will always reach my dreams
You say my ethnic background gives me a financial advantage
But disregard how it comes with being micromanaged
When you have an opinion it's without a doubt ingenuity
But I when I have an opinion I left too much ambiguity
How about you check your math because it impacts your words
Stating we are half, but we're only one third
Stop drawing straight lines through sigmoidal curves!
It will have you denying the recognition I truly deserve

**I am your missing information
But I don't pass review
And I'll never end up in your pretty little publication**



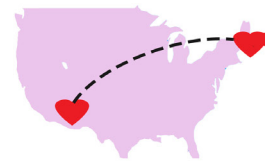
Some professors may look like a complete inverse of you but they are more than happy to mentor you to a polished scientist.



While some are just excited about what type of minority scholarship money you can bring to the university...



...and this makes your typical classmate pretty upset (typical classmate = the privileged white male who doesn't even have a concept of what it means to be considered incompetent just because of the way you look).



Then people that actually look like you are hundreds of miles away...



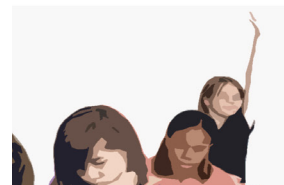
...While your classmates sitting right next to you have previous exams and homework but they are unwilling to share...



Yet, ironically, the international students are more helpful and relatable then you can ever imagine...



And so what if you have to teach yourself how to do things on your own... you have funding so your life must be easierright?



But even the little things like being afraid to answer a question in class because you don't want to be the dumb, wrong minority make things a little hard...



Even the little things like people being surprised when you actually answer the question correctly make things a little hard....

**But what is the hardest?
Finally meeting that community of kind, wonderful, and diverse friends just months before you are about to graduate....**



CHAPTER THREE

THERE WILL BE BLOOD

The poster decorating the professor's door bore the image of Daniel Day-Lewis in gangster mode, looking mean and low-down. The title of the movie, There Will Be Blood, was blazoned across the top of the poster. At the bottom, where one would normally expect the names of the director, producer, and principal actors, the professor had affixed a strip of paper on which were printed in large font the words, Ask me about my advising.

As I waited in the hallway for him to finish his previous appointment, I pondered the character of a man who would choose to greet everyone entering his office with a threatening message. Even accounting for cultural differences -- the professor was born and raised in southern Europe -- I felt this hostility was uncalled for in an educational institution. Could I be the only person in the department who considered his machismo out of line? It certainly would not be the first time I felt as though I had been socialized on a different planet from those around me.

I never asked him about the poster or his intention in displaying it. I did not want to risk damaging a good working relationship. He allowed me to audit his class, and was more generous with his time than many other professors might have been towards a grad student from another lab. I asked him to look over a very early draft of my thesis proposal. He accepted without hesitation and took the request seriously. His wit was as sharp as a razor; I feared he might slice my document to shreds. To my relief, he did not dismiss my ideas but rather gave me many perceptive comments. He agreed to serve on my Ph.D. committee.

I debated whether to address the issue of the poster indirectly, by asking one of the tenured women faculty members to raise his consciousness about communicating with students. But I was on better terms with the owner of the offensive poster than with the senior women professors. I did not feel comfortable sharing my personal reflections with any faculty member, male or female, including the Graduate Program Director. So I said nothing. The problem solved itself a few years later when the professor moved to another university. Did he put up the poster on the door of his new office?

by Eve Talmidah, Ph.D.

CHAPTER FOUR

"only losers play by the rules"

by Joelle A. Labastide, Ph.D., GQM co-editor

It's our strict position here at GQM that education should be inclusive and not competitive, and that all points of view- being collectively diverse, valid, and valuable- should be welcomed and represented. However, since I've been forced to concede that such an academic environment is not likely to materialize in any immediate future, and since we are apparently driven by superlatives, let's accept that (for now!) competition is going to be an integral part of every educational experience we're likely to have. Many of us resent this, and we could have a whole other discussion about the driving forces for the competitive academic atmosphere, and the associated merits and menaces. Many of us have been led to believe that competition drives greatness: that the cream will rise to the top, pressure makes diamonds, and fire forges steel... or some nonsense like that. Let's just go with it. There is a standing expectation within the academy that the smartest and strongest will rise on their merits and intellect, and the rest are unworthy. The academic ladder narrows sharply as we we climb; there are a few spots at the top, and a few of us will eventually earn the privilege of being inducted into the academic elite. Most of us can't think of a more sexy prospect. My intent is not to contest the worthiness of such a goal, but rather the desperation with which most of us pursue it. The "at all costs" model of pursuit is more than a little dangerous to the individual and the system, in my experience. So in this grand competition, this desperate pursuit of greatness- hell, let's go there- this war of wills and minds, what role does honor play? The question I'm asking is, if you knew for sure that you were given an advantage that was unfair and unethically obtained, would you still want it? Would you give it back? I wholeheartedly expect that most of us would immediately respond with a resounding and indignant yes (!!), but if we're being honestly honest, we have to admit we'd have a hard time

...I think it's high time we all thought hard about whether we truly value fair competition, or if we're all just cheating to win...

answering this question truthfully. It causes us to examine the subjective nature of our relationship with ethics, education, and the not-so-obvious ways in which competition changes our value system. What does it mean to be on the wrong side of an unfair competition? What does it mean if we win? The paths become blurry rather quickly when there are threats lurking in the shadows. I think it's high time we all thought hard about whether we truly value fair competition, or if we're all just cheating to win.

While it's conceivable that competition can be healthy, we do not often work hard enough to create the framework required to make it so [how to create the framework for fair competition

is worth a serious conversation, but is above my current pay grade]. And further, when the stakes are life-changingly, self-worth definingly, win-or-let-everyone-down kinds of high, healthy competition gives way to all out war. The rules of war are very different, and the academic atmosphere can feel a lot like a war zone for people in this position. Tell me I'm exaggerating, and then tell yourself that you don't feel this way on some level about your graduate education. Sometimes it's as if we're playing the Game of Thrones, where "you win or you die". Metaphorically, of course, but still, the similarities are unnerving. The rules of the competition determine the characteristics of

...if you knew for sure that you were given an advantage that was unfair and unethically obtained, would you still want it? Would you give it back?

the champions. Einstein said a great many remarkable things, but one of my favorite of his musings was this: "everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid." In the academy, this concept is the same, but much more subtly manifested. We ought to think about the characteristics we promote with the competitive aspects of our academic environment. If we judge dedication in hours worked, then only the physically fit will be deemed worthy, and if we mistake volume and self-importance for intellectual merit it stands to reason that the arrogant and self-aggrandizing will thrive. Does this sound familiar? In a war zone, the trusting, helpful, and well-meaning get stepped on and used up, while the opportunistic, manipulative, and self-interested survive. All is fair, which means nothing is.

But this isn't as simple as we'd like to believe it to be. It's not just the people who already have those tendencies who end up cutting throats and putting knives in backs. We're all fighting for survival here, and we adapt to what's required of us. So, we choose allies who we can trust, we decide who to take down, we hide old test papers, we form secret study groups, and we fight to be best and to be first. In all of my engineering classes, "beating the curve" consistently meant that doing my best was only good enough if it was better than roughly 80% of my classmates, perpetuating the philosophy that "it's not enough to succeed, others must fail". Some subset of the other 20% can hopefully be counted on as allies to ensure that no one deletes my homework from the computer lab while I'm in the bathroom (true story...), in exchange for the answer to problem 3b, of course. "Play the game until you can change the game" is a bit of a misguided concept, leaving many of us no choice but to temporarily (if we're lucky) compromise our personal philosophies in order to succeed.

"it is not enough to succeed, others must fail"- Gore Vidal

There are people who get to the top without turning into entities they can't respect, and they are extraordinary, but there are very few of them. You should go find them; they will tell you that this was not easy. In all of this I find myself asking every day, how much can I adapt before I've actually changed? How long can I maintain this suspicious outlook in the name of self-preservation before I forget how to trust altogether?

No one wants to be on the losing end of a rigged outcome, but there are always two sides to a match. What's the price of winning an inequitable competition? Paranoia, impostor syndrome, a general lack of satisfaction with the results. There is nothing quite like the feeling of accomplishment that comes with winning something fair and square. The truth is that seeking and maintaining unfair advantages is a self-propagating and self-defeating behaviour. Inciting envy, breeding secrecy, making competitors out of would-be collaborators. When we cheat and win, we subconsciously convince ourselves that we're not worthy, and that we won't win without cheating. The attitude that "if I attempt this honestly, I don't stand a chance, so I have to find a way around the rules" is pervasive in competitive academic endeavours, and particularly among underrepresented groups, who can often feel that they're living by casino rules.

Casino Rules: You're encouraged to play but not actually allowed to win. Anything that you do to stack the odds in your favor garners huge consequences.

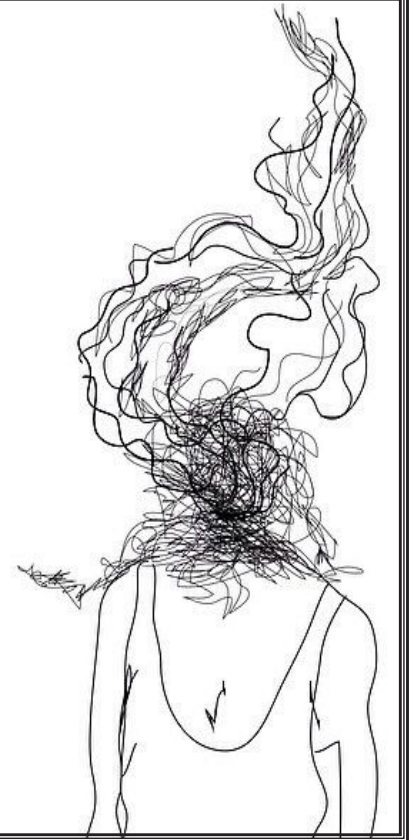
Manifestations of this problem peek through in many ways, such as statements like "it's a good time to be a woman", and "I'm a heterosexual white male, so no one is doing me any favors". Distrust and distaste for people based on perceived advantages, even though those same people suffer from perpetual disadvantage, is just some of the nasty backlash from this problem. And how do those people feel, suffering from the same insecurities? "I'm only here because I'm black, they need to fill a quota, and I'll never really know if I deserve to be here". Diversity cannot be sustained in an environment that inspires a lack of trust between people because of their differences. The numbers may be changing, but the environment remains hostile as ever.

Losing a competition because it was truly unfair is one of the most demoralizing experiences, particularly if we're all operating under the guise of equity. Such experiences teach us not to try, not to trust, and that merits are subjective and success can't be earned. They degrade our self respect, our confidence, and result in the miscalibration of the internal metrics that guide our decision making processes. I sincerely doubt that this is the academy's intention, but we can no longer deny that it is a pervasive result. It's hard to win a game if you don't really know the rules, or worse yet, if they keep changing. Ironically, the intended result of competition- to identify the best academics- is not only attainable, but inevitable within an equitable environment. Winning fairly cultivates genuine pride and provides positive reinforcement of desirable qualities within the competitor, and losing fairly breeds motivation, free of resentment, and fuels self-betterment. What more could we ask from our educational environment? Why don't we stop fighting each other and work harder for this result?

So what's my point? Competition can be healthy, and if we insist on its continued existence within the academy, it must be. The presence and, as importantly, the perception of fairness are essential for healthy competi-

what terrifies
me most is
how we foam
at the mouth
with envy
when others
succeed
but
sigh in relief
when they
are failing
our struggle
to celebrate
each other
is what's proven
most difficult in
being human

- rupi kaur



tion to exist. Arbitrary or subjective superlatives take the focus away from personal excellence; killing community, and in my opinion seriously holding academia back at a time when we as a society are in desperate need of our academics. Some of the best, most creative, most insightful thinkers are out there right now saying "I want no part of that war", and valuable talent (in the form of mostly women and minorities) is walking out the door. There is just as much raw brainpower tending bar at the local pub as there is in the classroom. What we do with what we've got is guided by personal interests and motivations and choices, certainly, but it depends a lot more on our circumstances than we'd like to admit. Contest-driven environments select for a certain type of personality, and the fact that we erroneously deduce that the "best man will win" is preventing us from fixing the problems. If we want the best academic, we need to construct a true meritocracy, and we need to precisely structure our description of merit to select for qualities that we're trying to promote. I realize that what I'm asking for sounds like

...the academic path forward feels a lot like a Vegas game of chance, and more and more of us are choosing not to play..

utopia, but we need a utopian academy in this way; one where hard work, talent, insight, intellectual prowess, and creativity are required for success, but insufficient without empathy, a deep passion for fairness, and respect for the phrase "with great knowledge comes great responsibility". Something has to change, and we'd better get a move on, because the academic path forward feels a lot like a Vegas game of chance, and more and more of us are choosing not to play. This shouldn't come as too much of a surprise, because smart, well educated people don't gamble away their futures. Don't you want to know what it's like to be rewarded for your merits and to learn from your shortcomings? The only way to find out is to start playing fair.

CHAPTER FIVE

"my time is worth less than yours"

by Christie Laurel Cutting, GQM deputy editor

I'm angry. I am so freaking angry. I am not a hot-tempered person. When I get angry, it's because something has been tugging at my mind for a long, long time. So don't take my anger lightly. It is not a product of my delicate feminine nature. It's not a result of PMS. I'm not being moody. My anger is the direct result of an endemic problem that I am sick to death of experiencing: nearly everyone in my graduate school environment is disrespecting me.

What do you mean, disrespecting me? I'm so glad you finally asked. I've got a list a mile long. Now that it's really eating at me, I can recognize that this has been going on more or less subtly for my entire life, but it's really blown up as a genuinely troubling issue since I got to graduate school. That was a year and a half ago, to give you an idea of just how long it's taken me to go from annoyance to genuine anger. It has to do with the people I work with everyday wasting my single most valuable resource without a second thought - my time. So Christie - I ask myself - why did it take you 1.5 years to

...Time is the most important currency in academic relationships...

say something about this? Ummmmmmmm, well, because it requires me to burn my straight-cis-white-male™ alias and expose myself as a person with emotions, at risk of being labeled as an "irrational, overly sensitive woman". I almost talked myself out of publishing this altogether. Then I almost talked myself out of publishing it under my name. And then I looked in the mirror and I called myself a hypocrite because I'm about to ask you to stand up for yourself despite the possible consequences while I hide behind a pseudonym. I realized that I shouldn't ask you to do something without being willing to do it, too. And this is too important for all of us to sit back and do nothing. So what exactly am I getting us all into by bringing this up? Best case scenario, the people who have been disrespecting our time read this, recognize that it is a genuine issue, and approach us to have productive conversations about it. Worst case? I and anyone else who speak up are placed in the "emotional" stereotype box, dismissed, our protective camouflage is destroyed, and our time is STILL being disrespected. I'm putting my faith in you, the audience, to pursue the first outcome. I'm still afraid of the second. But I need to start setting a precedent of standing up for myself, and you should, too.

Think I'm exaggerating about how valuable time is? That I'm being overly dramatic by being this upset about mine being wasted? Think about what you can do in a really productive hour. Time is the most important currency in academic relationships. You're on the clock from the moment you get to graduate school - trying to publish before you get scooped, trying to communicate with collaborators enough to fuel progress, trying to get experiments done in even a semi-regular

work-day, trying to graduate in a reasonable number of years. Division of time is closely tied to which projects are most important to you. Time is also the one resource which we all have an equal amount of, at least to start out with. But people who are already at a disadvantage are the ones who end up on the losing side of the time disrespect issue. Unconscious biases make it so that those who are already privileged (by nature of being white, straight, male, cis, etc.) are more likely to have incidences of time mismanagement overlooked or attributed to situational factors than those who are burdened by negative unconscious biases (do I really need to list them?). These same biases also make it so that those who already have the advantage are viewed positively when they stand up to someone who is disrespecting their time - they are confident and taking charge of the situation! - while when someone like me (feminine and "cute" and "nice") tries to stand up for my time - people dismiss me as a whiny bitch and don't take my concerns seriously. I'm stuck in a situation where I am being repeatedly taken advantage of, and I'm just as bad off if I keep my mouth shut or if I try to stand up for myself. I shouldn't have to put on my straight-cis-white-male™ face to convince you that I and my time are worthy of respect. I am already at a disadvantage from so many other situational factors as a woman in a STEM graduate program (see: every other issue of GQM), and when people treat my time as less valuable than those who are already at an advantage, it is a direct blow to my ability to achieve both professional and personal success.

Sound Familiar?

- Lab mates who I do experiments with run late - I mean REALLY late - consistently
- Turning my attempt at a productive conversation about this into a running joke
- What's the point of booking instrument time if you don't stick to it?
- Calling spur of the moment meetings and expecting me to drop everything to be there
- No one but me showing up to scheduled meetings
- Poorly organized meetings running well over time
- Frequent apologies with no accompanying changes in behavior
- Events outside graduate school are automatically deprioritized and expected to be cancelled last minute in favor of avoidable delays

Other people being careless with your time is more than just a minor annoyance for the students it affects. This flippant attitude is affecting your whole life. It creates longer work hours which are less productive than if things were running on a schedule. To be clear, no one is complaining about the long hours required to pursue the scientific process, but rather days made artificially long by unnecessary delays. Longer, less productive work hours are exactly what leads to tipping the work-life balance scales in the wrong direction. It leaves less time for necessary things to maintain even baseline levels of health and wellness and HAPPINESS (yes, you should be happy while in grad school; reinforcing the idea that it's normal to be stressed and miserable is a terrible culture to have) - from everything as basic as grocery shopping or sleeping to actually spending time on your hobbies and friends. Your time is extremely limited and therefore extremely valuable, and, in reality, no one is going to advocate for your time except you. Really, it would benefit everyone if we created a culture which encouraged organization and time management and actually had consequences for disregard of other people's time, but cultures don't change overnight. You have a right to be angry when people disrespect your time. It's not inconvenient. IT'S DISRESPECTFUL. It's a direct hit to your ability to live your life productively and happily, especially when it becomes a pattern with a particular person or situation. I could tell a million stories of how this happens to me, because it occurs almost daily on some level, but let's just hit some of the highlights. Any of the things on my list sound familiar? Worse, I think, than all of these individual incidents, is the attitude towards this stuff. Academics KNOW that this is how academia generally runs. They joke about it. They expect you to be "easy going" with your time to fit in with the culture, and the burden of staying flexible is disproportionately placed on women. Sticking to a schedule is actually discouraged; it's viewed as laziness or lack of dedication if you don't drop everything for a last minute meeting, or stay late into the night if experiments get delayed. It seems obvious to me, but let me state it anyway - this is terrible for everyone's productivity. Professors are always talking about wanting their students to produce results quickly and efficiently, and yet they perpetuate a culture that selects against efficient and organized work. They discourage learning effective time management and long time-scale planning, a crucial skill for LITERALLY ANY

JOB YOU WILL HAVE AFTER THIS. Their graduate students' time is a professor's most valuable resource, and while they are willing to go above and beyond to save money, they suck at managing time. Professors ought to care about fixing this.

When you get down to it, all of us are both victims and perpetrators in this disrespect for others' time. I felt guilty even writing this article, because I know that there are times when I am disrespectful of others' time, even if it is usually in small ways. There are times when you need to stand up to those who are disrespecting your time. There are times when you need to change your own behavior. There are times when you can't stand up for your time because of the possible repercussions, or when

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the situation is so temporary that it seems like it's not worth it. I don't have the answer to every situation because this topic has so much grey area, but I'll be clear about my take home point: mindfulness. If you feel guilty over your own small indiscretions against other people's time and actively work to avoid these instances, then congrats! You are being respectful of other people! (What a novel concept). To you, I'd say to be more mindful of your own time. Do not waste your emotional energy on guilt over being 5 minutes late to something while allowing others to waste your time. Stand up for your time, if it's at all possible and even sometimes when you feel it's not. You're likely to be shot down or ignored. Keep doing it. Your time, and everything attached to that, is worth standing up for. If you think it's funny when you're regularly late, don't feel this guilt, don't bother to examine your actions when you do feel guilty, or don't bother to change your behavior in response to self-reflection or stated concerns - you need to start being more mindful of yourself. You are being disrespectful. You are impeding productivity, and you need to take this more seriously. Check your privilege. Take a close look at whose time you respect and whose time you are wasting. What is the difference in these groups of people? Regardless of what you thought were your intentions, chances are you are reinforcing some deeply ingrained stereotypes of who deserves respect and who doesn't.



