Are you on an Admissions Committee or Recruiting New Graduate Students?

Gender bias is widespread and has a major effect on women's academic careers. You can combat gender bias with effective planning.

Leaders at ESF want to overcome gender biases to ensure women's careers have equal opportunity.

Please do your part to support women when planning seminars.

Office of Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity
Endorsed by the SUNY ESF Provost's Office

Did you...?

Set objective criteria before reviewing applications

Much research supports that when the data are ambiguous, both men and women rate men as more competent than women, so setting objective criteria for test scores, grades, or experience can help avoid bias.

Remind the committee that letters can be biased

For equally successful individuals, letters for men are more likely to use words like 'brilliant, creative, outstanding' and letters for women 'careful, conscientious reliable.' Women's letters also more often contain doubt-raisers that may be seen as red flags.

Check your numbers along the way

Be especially aware when choices need to be made between a large number of qualified candidates for a limited number of spots that these are not decided in a manner open to unconscious bias. If the sex ratio in this group starts to look skewed, assess and re-adjust your selection criteria.

Remind interviewers to comment only on potential

When committees get comments with extensive descriptions of personality or other observations, gender schemas can enter decision-making. Research shows that give equally competent performance reviews to consider, those with male names are rated as more likable and those with female names are rated as more hostile. For example, Interviewers may subconsciously be judging female candidates more harshly than males when they appear to be self-confident or arrogant (WISELI: Women in Science and Engineering Leadership Institute, 2012)

If you see something, say something.
Speak up on behalf of women.
You set the tone - make a difference!