

Office for Women's Careers Panel Discussion
"Becoming a Leader: Tips from MGH Faculty"

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A key goal of the MGH Office for Women's Careers is to advocate for and educate women faculty seeking leadership positions in academic medicine. To support this goal, the OWC held a panel discussion on May 29, 2015, aimed at early- and mid-career women faculty. The panel brought together three distinguished leaders at the MGH who offered stories and tips on the topic of "Becoming a Leader."

Our panelists were: **Merit Cudkowicz, MD**, the Chief of the MGH Neurology Service and the Julieanne Dorn Professor of Neurology at HMS; **Anne Klibanski, MD**, the Laurie Carrol Guthart Professor of Medicine and Chief Academic Officer at Partners HealthCare, Director of the Center for Faculty Development and Chief, Neuroendocrine Unit at the MGH; and **Elizabeth Mort, MD, MPH**, Senior Vice President of Quality and Safety at the MGH and the MGPO and Senior Medical Director at Partners HealthCare, Inc (PHS).

To start the discussion each panelist gave a brief introduction and discussed some of the things they have done to prepare themselves as leaders. The panelists shared personal anecdotes and memories from their early careers that illustrated how they developed their own individual leadership style.

Dr. Cudkowicz shared getting advice from mentors to overcome her own early belief that she wasn't a leader. She found the MGPO "Chiefs" course to be extremely helpful and learned from her mentors and her first experiences as a leader that *everyone needs to have a voice*. As the leader of the department of Neurology she strives to give a voice to everyone in her department, while also acknowledging that *you cannot always make everyone happy*.

Dr. Mort was *taught to be fearless* from a very young age, when she routinely took a taxi to nursery school on her own. Early in her career she found that observing leaders whom she admired was the best way to build her own leadership profile. Watching Dr. James Mongan, she learned the art of listening, negotiating and keeping things moving during a meeting. She advised the audience that they shouldn't hesitate to ask for advice, something she still does even though she has achieved significant leadership positions.

Dr. Klibanski was also shaped by her early experience as the only child of a lawyer and a neurologist/psychiatrist, who taught her that *it's not so much what happens to you, it's how you deal with it*. From her parents' advice she learned the value of trying to change things in a group from within, and the need to build a community within the group that you are leading. She emphasized that people will rarely follow a leader because they are told to. Rather, an effective leader needs to listen in order to *build an effective community*.

A final piece of advice from Dr. Klibanski was that it's okay to let people who work with you take credit. She emphasized that *as a leader, your success will be measured by the accomplishments of the people under you*.

When asked what challenges in their own personality they overcame to improve as leaders, their answers resonated with many women in the room. Dr. Klibanski noted that she has a tendency to be an observer. She had to train herself to be more outgoing in professional networking settings. Dr. Mort likewise had to overcome some introvert tendencies, and from her childhood experience with four siblings had to be coached to not "take the bait." Dr. Cudkowicz's tendency to avoid conflict was something she worked on changing. She also had to learn how to advocate for individuals in her department while also balancing the overall needs of the department.

The panelists encouraged the audience members to not wait to be chosen for a leadership opportunity, but to make it clear to others that you want such a position.

Resources recommended by our panelists (Most of these books are available to borrow from the CFD library, Bulfinch 370):

Women Don't Ask: Negotiation and the Gender Divide (2009)

Linda Babcock and Sara Leschever

Ask For It: How Women Can Use the Power of Negotiation to Get What They Really Want (2009)

Linda Babcock and Sara Leschever

Getting It Done: How to Lead When You're Not in Charge (1998)

Roger Fisher and Alan Sharp

Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In (1981)

Roger Fisher and William Ury

Primal Leadership: Unleashing the Power of Emotional Intelligence (2002)

Daniel Goleman and Richard Boyatzis

Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead (2013)

Sheryl Sanders

Reach for the Summit (1998)

Pat Summit