

ADVANCE

EXCELLENCE | EQUITY | DIVERSITY

CLIMATE: A NUMBERS GAME

1. *Token Status — Few of a Particular Social Category*
 - a. Said to be present when the social group has less than 15% representation of the whole (Kanter 1976, 1977)
 - b. Impact of token status is that the tokens tend to be treated as extremes – either isolated and ignored or overly visible (Kanter 1976, 1977; Wright et al., 2003; Xie & Shauman, 2003)
2. *Solo Status – One of a Particular Social Category*
 - a. People take on or are attributed with labels and identities when individuals are the only members of their social category (e.g. gender or race) (Kanter, 1977; Niemann & Dovidio, 1998)
 - i. female scientist rather than scientist
 - b. Studies show that individuals with solo status have more negative experiences than whites and males (Kanter, 1977; Niemann & Dovidio, 1998)
3. *Critical Mass – Numbers Matter*
 - a. Sensing or feeling stereotype threat enhances perceptions of barriers and may impair performance (Steele 1997; Steele *et al.*, 2002) and increase situational anxiety which may lead to underperformance (Wheeler & Petty, 2002)
 - b. African American men who believed they were being compared with Caucasian men on “sports intelligence” performed more poorly than those who believed the test was measuring “natural athletic ability.” The opposite results were reported for Caucasian men (Stone et al., 1999).
4. *What do you do about it?*
 - a. Confront the implications of solo or token status in your department
 - b. Achieve and retain a critical mass of women and minority faculty
 - c. Promote equitable service and advising for all faculty regardless of social category