

## A perfect fit...almost

- JMU a balanced (teaching/research) school
- Creating, teaching, and managing interpersonal skills course
- Reasonable research expectations
- Great place to raise kids
- 3-year renewable term appointment (non tenure-track)

## "No more tenure track positions..."

- Enables JMU to remain flexible
- However, two **men** hired into tenure-track positions same year
- All new Ph.D. assistant professor positions were now tenure-track
- Received top performance ratings, raises
- Told "can't convert your position... but you can apply"

## Opportunity knocks...

- "This ought to make you happy..."
  - Two new tenure-track positions (2000)
  - Teaching primarily interpersonal skills
  - Colleagues (many hired after me, for more money and in tenure-track positions) saw me as a shoe-in
- One of three candidates interviewed
  - Only internal candidate
  - Only female candidate

## A triple shock!

- Didn't get the job
  - No explanation offered
- Department colleague informed me I'd been discriminated against; criticized ("assertive," "aggressive," "overly confident") and scrutinized (held to a higher standard)
  - Colleague was hired to teach employment law
  - Publicly and privately warned dept. of legal implications of their problematic process
- Informant is fired

## Dealing with the aftermath...

- The more I learned, the more incredulous I was over the outcome, process
  - Emotional wreck
  - Difficulty sleeping, concentrating
  - Began suffering chest pains
- Back in the office...
  - I felt isolated (anyone seen talking with me could be fired!)
  - Maintained professionalism, high performance standards
  - Some secret supporters
- Took almost 6 months to file EEOC claim

## Victorious! (Or so I thought...)

- EEOC completed its investigation
  - Found JMU violated my civil rights
  - Attempted to conciliate with JMU
- JMU denied any wrongdoing, and refused to conciliate
- Case went to DOJ, then back to me with a "Right to Sue" letter

## Attempted to avoid litigation

- Retained attorney (AAUW referral)
- Sent settlement proposal
  - Primary request: job I should have gotten
  - Didn't want \$\$\$ or to leave, just be treated fairly
- JMU (through state attorney general's office) said no!

## Meanwhile, back at the ranch...

- Dealing with retaliation in multiple forms
  - Told I "lost nothing" so had no recourse
  - Verbally abused
  - Humiliated
  - Prevented from applying for new tenure-track positions
  - Scrutinized
- I (and others) witness more gender discrimination

## A long and costly battle

- I was deposed first
- Next, we planned to take depositions of all in department
- Each day of depositions racked up in excess of \$2000 in fees, costs
- Completed majority of depositions, then agreed to mediation hearing
- Settlement reached

## Lessons learned

- Be careful whom you trust
- Educate yourself; the laws are complex!
- EEOC has no teeth against another state agency!
- Assess costs of fighting v. not fighting
- Be prepared for retaliation
- Take good notes, tape conversations
- Open up and share (selectively)
  - You'll find others who've been there and/or will support you