



Synopsis of Interactive Theater Scenario: Ready to Vote?

Characters in order of appearance:

- Blair:** A professor of color who was heavily recruited straight out of graduate school
- Polloa:** A recently tenured African American associate professor who was a fellow in the President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program and whose hire was, in part, supported by the UC hiring initiative
- Glen:** A white senior professor in his third year as chair of the department
- Kyle:** A white professor who is one of the most prominent scholars in the department
- Bill:** A white senior professor
- Judy:** A white senior professor who has been the only woman in the department for all but one of her 20 years at the University

Synopsis:

As the scene opens, two faculty of color in the Computer Science Department, Polloa and Blair, are conversing with each other before an ad-hoc review committee meeting is to begin. Blair is apologizing to Polloa for missing his public lecture because a student came to see him, complaining about another professor in the department. In fact, Blair complains that it's becoming a problem with so many students coming to see him about similar issues that he's having trouble getting his lab work done.

Polloa reports that his talk "AI and its Use in the Classroom" went well, but was disappointed that no one from the department came to hear him, despite repeated efforts to invite them individually. He told Blair of an incident where a woman came up to him later and asked if she could order a glass of sauvignon blanc. Blair was incredulous.

At this point, the other faculty members, Department Chair Glen, Kyle, and Bill arrive. Judy comes in last to join the others as the chair begins the meeting. Judy sits next to Polloa and mentions that her colleague from Bioengineering went to Polloa's talk and commented that he was very articulate.

Glen calls the meeting to order and the task for this ad-hoc committee is to decide whether they should put Felicity Wu up for tenure this fall or prepare her file for Assistant Prof Step V. They first review Felicity's publications. She has two in top journals. However, Kyle questions her contribution on these co-authored publications, and remarks that all of her diversity publications seem to be the same. The conclusion is that while she published in two top journals, one of the articles is not hard science. Terms like "ambitious girl" and "young girl" are used in the discussion. In the meantime, Judy is trying to make comments, but she is interrupted several times by her colleagues and she is visibly frustrated.

They move next to Felicity's teaching. Evaluations came in at 85% and 70% with several negative student comments. Some of the faculty of color advocate for her and acknowledge that she had some tough lower-division courses. Glen suggests to the group, "if one of you gentlemen stopped by her class and give her some pointers..." Judy reminds the group that "studies have shown that women are not regarded as highly as men in the classroom" at which point Glen interrupts her to say the same thing. Glen also keeps referring to Felicia as a "young girl" and finally, Judy calls him on it.

The discussion moves on to Felicia's self-assessment on her diversity contribution, where she writes that not having enough diversity "erodes our excellence." Kyle takes issue with this comment since it seems to be an attack on the department. The question of how to assess the diversity contribution in a review is not clear among the members. Discussion focuses on how diversity may be valued or not in the department, with members disagreeing and getting sidetracked in the discussion. Polloa offers an example of who appears on the departmental website—saying "It's all old white men" and he mentions that one of his students, Alfred Martinez, who just won a prestigious national award, should be featured. Kyle responds, "You're being too sensitive."

Kyle wants to hold off on Felicity's promotion until it's more of a "slam dunk. Glen talks about how diversity matters and that he is getting pressure from the top to advance people through the pipeline. Kyle then brings up a conversation he had with Felicity's husband, where he learns that Felicity is planning to have another child. Glen quickly interrupts to say "we can't talk about it here, and later adds, "but we can think about it. The scene ends when one of the committee members says, "I think we're ready to vote."