Why Advancing Women Requires Networking

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Networking for Women (and Men)

- Networking gets you known
- Networking provides support
- Networking provides information
  - Valuable in negotiating offers, resources
- Interaction process itself is valuable
  - Discussing work helps clarify ideas
- Matters most when the rules are unwritten
- If participation in networks is uneven then playing field may not be level
Norm of Reciprocity/Social Capital

• Networking is “two way” – if someone does something for you then you inherit an obligation ("Norm of Reciprocity" – Alvin Gouldner)
  • Needs Trust
  • Norm implies likelihood of balanced trade
  • Can “give forward”, do not ignore “intangibles”

• Social Exchange builds Social Capital
  • Learn things when you talk to people
  • Gain Tacit Knowledge
Tacit Knowledge

- Definitions “fuzzy” usually suggest that it is information that it is difficult to write down/transfer
  - Boulder is in Colorado
    - *Explicit knowledge, can be written down, transmitted and understood by recipient*
  - Solving a Sudoku problem
    - *Yes – can write down rules to follow – but*
  - Riding a bicycle

- Know what (facts) Know why (science), Know who (networking) Know how (tacit)

- What you use to do something without knowing you are using it
Tacit/Hidden Knowledge

• Evidence is mounting about its importance in enabling people to be successful
  – Every field has its own jargon, unchallenged assumptions (24/7) and common culture
  – How “replicable” is an experiment?
  – Bessemer – steel – people had problems following patented process

• Tends to be something you are more likely to learn by watching/doing than by reading about

• Nonaka – hypothesizes that it is a property of social networks which hold it and communicate it to members by informal means
Mentoring/Sponsors

• Mentors are important
  – Often “Heroic”
    • Goal is for protégé to establish independence and slay monster
    • Usually research supervisors – have specific role
  – Other models include “collective”, “peer” and “composite”
• Current discussion is shifting to consideration of value of sponsors
  – Sponsors take a more pro-active role – nominate, suggest, raise profile
    • Who do we put on committees?
    • Who gets awards? (Japanese study – women on nominating committee increase number of women awardees)
Mentors/Networks

• Networks
  – Include more casual contacts
  – Broader connections (loose/strong links)
  – More responsibility on individual to choose between suggested paths

• At a minimum need multiple mentors
  – Research – advisor, chair, colleagues
  – Teaching – civility, authority
  – Service – how to limit strategically
Issues

• Majority groups just may not experience some of problems facing non majority individuals
  – Assumed expert if fit norms so not challenged
  – Goldfish in fishbowl of privilege
  – Need some special networks
• Current data suggests that men and women use networks differently
  – Probably societal influences
    • Suggestion that women can network more effectively but currently focus on family/friends
    • Need to make sure building career network
    • Changing perspectives can change interactions
Issues

• “Impostor Syndrome” – fear of not belonging
  – Asking for help not a sign of weakness
  – Increased emphasis on need to collaborative efforts to solve problems
• Seen as “using” people by making connections specifically because they are valuable or because exploiting a connection
  – More comfortable if focus on reciprocity
  – Need to be at table to change norms
Local (Institutional) Networking

• Campuses should encourage networking
  – How do you get busy people to attend?
    • *Skill building/Presentations encourage attendance*

• How often do faculty talk to others about their research (quick way to measure isolation)

• How do you connect people in affiliate departments?

• Do people attend colloquia?
  – Are the colloquia accessible (when are they scheduled)?
Remote Networks

• These are growing and can be real assets
  – Good way to
    • *Build Critical Mass*
    • *Overcome Geographical isolation*
      – Mentornet, AWIS…
      – List servers, Blogs…….
• Not an either/or – some networks may focus more on professional opportunities, some more on support, some on long term change initiatives