Building a Community that
Nurtures Innovative and Entrepreneurial Women
Community builds courage, confidence, and inspires leadership

Who We Are

We are the Barriers Subcommittee, a part of the AUTM Task Force on Women Inventors. Our role is to educate ourselves about issues surrounding impediments and barriers that women faculty members face when attempting to become inventors and entrepreneurs and to suggest action steps for our institutions to further the goal of having more women scientists and engineers be part of successful technology transfer and business creation. We start with the understanding that many of these barriers are the result of unconscious bias by all involved in the system, including the women faculty members themselves, and we seek to educate ourselves and our institutions to address these goals.

Raising Awareness

Our research has led us to conclude that a positive response to this issue must first involve raising awareness in three ways:

1. Raise awareness of the university community of women inventors inside tech transfer office:
   - Understand who are the current women inventors, their technologies, their successful licenses and start-ups.
   - Track and present metrics on gender.
   - Put together PR, patents, success story resources & make accessible to all

2. Raise awareness of the university community of women inventors outside of the office:
   - Inclusion of women inventors in all outreach marketing and event panels
   - Purposeful inclusion of women inventors when requests made for speakers
   - Engage women inventor/entrepreneurs to speak in business/tech classes & at university women orgs outside of tech realm
   - Put together PR, patents, success story resources & make accessible
(3) Raise awareness of broader community of women inventors outside of University

- Listings of community women orgs, meet-ups, and entrepreneurship resources
- Inclusion of community, alumni, & peer tech/entrepreneurship women in all TT outreach marketing and event panels
- Listing of nationwide women tech/entrepreneurship orgs, business programs, apps (Glassbreakers)

Activities and Resources That a TTO May Consider

We have divided our suggestions into five general topics:

1. Leadership and Management Training
   a. Offer video/Webinar showings
      - Show relevant video (see content suggestions below)
      - Moderated sessions for framing of topic and discussion after video showing
        - Moderator could be a TTO member, a local successful entrepreneur, etc
      - After showing moderator conducts a discussion with audience
      - Discussion could involve open audience discussion
      - Discussion format could involve a panel of commentators w/audience commentary and Q/A

Some resources:

- MAKERS – PBS show and video collection of famous women and their stories
- TED Talks – see Amy Cuddy, Susan Cain
- Confidence Code website – authors on video clips
- LeanIn.com – see the power of peer support
- Women 2.0 website – features women in technology
- Catalyst.com – see webinars
- GiveandTake.com

   b. Conduct events featuring dynamic speakers that inspire
      - Choose a relevant topic
      - Identify the qualifications for an appropriate speaker (see guidelines)
      - Identify relevant resources on campus, i.e., faculty, organizers, activists, organizations that can serve as/provide an excellent speaker
      - Identify outside resources (see content suggestions below)
      - Consider holding inter-institutional events that can be video conferenced
Guidelines – identify speakers that have/are:

- Interesting stories
- Inspirational
- Professionals that are at early as well as mid and late stages in their career
- Professionals of various ages
- Men as well as well as women
- Dedicated and proven mentors (see "Lean In" on mentoring)
- Engaging

Suggestions for outside speakers:

See: Catalyst.com – speakers bureau
Websites of authors listed above

2. Confidence Building

Conduct Workshops/Webinars/Person-to-Person Meetings on Confidence Building, Leadership and Management Training and Effective Communication

Possible Topics:

- Public speaking
- Assertiveness
- Effective business communication
- Body Language – how it matters (e.g., see A. Cuddy’s Power Pose TED Talk)
- What makes a great leader?
- Managing, facilitating, leading
- Team building
- Coaching and inspiring groups
- Balancing work and personal life

The Center for Creative Leadership conducted a study in 2002 to ask these questions. An online survey of women managers in Western Europe was responded to by 78 women. A control sample of 80 women in the United States was also polled. The results, as reported in the July/August 2003 issue of Leadership in Action, a CCL publication, indicated a fairly high congruence between the responses of women in the States and women overseas. (For a complete report, see Leadership in Action, volume 23, number 3 not available online.) In sum, the top leadership challenges for both groups of women were:

- Gender issues.

Other issues mentioned included building an administrative/executive team, being accepted as a leader by both men and women, handling organizational turbulence, and gender issues.
Some sources of content/ideas for above:

Why Saying is Believing – The Science of Self-Talk, Laura Starecheski, National Public Radio, October 7, 2014


Power Pose - see Amy Cuddy’s TED Talk and New York Times 9/21/14 article); “Power Posing, Brief Nonverbal Displays Affect Neuroendocrine Levels and Risk Tolerance, Psychological Science, DR Carney, JC Cuddy, AJ Yap

Book: “The Confidence Code”, see Chapter 6: “Failing Fast and Other Confidence Boosting Habits”.

Book: “Lean In”, see Chapter 6: “Seek and Speak Your Truth”.


Book: “Give and Take”, Adam Grant, 2013 (also see reference above to series on women in NYT)

Book: What Works for Women at Work, by Joan C. Williams  & Rachel Dempsey

See study on leadership: http://www.nais.org/Articles/Pages/Ways-Women-Lead.aspx


3. Guidance and Training on Effective Communication

Organize and run informal “get-togethers”, e.g. “Circles” (see: "Lean In" website)

- Face-to-Face
- create a trusting environment
- nurture
- support
- social activities
- Online and Social-media
- Keeping interested parties connected
- Inventors/creators/innovators/entrepreneurs
- Create a blog
- A way to keep members informed of on-campus and off-campus activities
- Way to connect university-based women with like-minded women in the outside community
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Catalyst.com – community

4. Developing a Network/Community of Women
   - Successful inventors
   - Successful entrepreneurs
   - Mentors
   - Impressive Leaders and Managers

5. Developing a Network/Community of Successful Professionals
   - Women and men
   - Individuals who can also serve as mentors on a number of levels
   - Excellent communicators who are willing to share their stories and experiences