

Conversations About Women in the Workplace

Breakout Group Notes

Session 6: Are You My Mentor?

4/3/2014 in the Laurel Room, California Endowment (1111 Broadway)

Facilitators: Jocelyn Surla Banaria, Mary Croughan, Hanh Quach

Participants at each table were given the following topics for discussion: 1) what do you see as the benefits of participating in a mentoring program; (2) what do you wish had been done more of, better, or differently in your mentoring relationship or the mentoring programs you have participated in; and (3) how did you identify your mentor and how can others identify and find a mentor?

The groups were asked to discuss the topics and to share a few strategies. At the end of the session, Mary Croughan presented additional insights and advice about creating and maintaining mentoring relationships.

Following are some of the points identified in our discussions:

Benefits of mentoring

- A mentor can connect you to career opportunities and sponsor /nominate you for committees.
- The mentor gains something too.
- A mentor can be someone who recognizes your potential and helps you utilize it.
- A mentor can give you advice on day-to-day things.

What would they do more of, better, or differently (what could have been improved?)

- It is important for people to follow-up with their mentors, particularly with regard to activities suggested by mentors.
- You can let the mentoring relationships develop organically / natural friendships– it does not have to be a formal mentoring program.
- Set-up rules and expectations at the beginning of the mentoring relationship, and check in on how things are going.
- Maintain confidentiality.

How they identified a mentor /

If someone in the group has not been mentored, discuss ways to identify and find mentors

- Determine what you need in a mentor and seek out “Who can fill that gap?”.
- ***UCOP Mentorship Program – In May 2014, applications will be available.***
- Formalize your mentorship relationships by asking “Would you mind formalizing this relationship into a mentorship relationship?”
- Knowing what you want in a mentor and for yourself helps you to find the right mentor(s).
- You can identify possible mentors through both formal and informal relationships.
- Look to supervisors and colleagues to serve as potential mentors.
- Mentors may give you an assignment or activity to undertake to help you with professional development, new work opportunities, etc.

- Becoming a member of PACSW (or networking organizations/affinity groups) will help you find a mentor.
- Personal development programs may help you identify a mentor.

Other points on mentoring – Mary Croughan

- Time with a mentor and a trusting relationship will let you know how personal and disclosing you can be in that relationship.
- Mentors can be from a formal mentoring program, formal individualized relationship, informal relationship or peers. Each type of mentor may serve a different need or purpose (e.g., you might want an informal mentor to help you with work-life balance issues or child-raising issues).
- Follow-up with mentors to keep them informed of your activities and accomplishments.
- Informational interviews with colleagues and potential mentors can be helpful:
 - Sample questions:
 - How did you get where you are?
 - Name a difficult decision that you had to make and how you handled it.
 - How were you mentored?
- Pay it forward – be sure to serve as a mentor yourself.
- Trust your gut when you decide on a mentorship relationship. There is a level of trust that has to be there.
- A mentoring relationship can also be a one-time moment.
- Formalize the mentorship relationships if it extends beyond 3-4 meetings.
 - Determine how often to meet.
 - “Can I email you if something comes up and I want to ask you something?”
 - Helps if mentee sets up appointments.
 - Follow-up with a note.
- Ask supervisor for recommendations of potential mentors.
- It’s all about YOU. Be selfish and selective. There is no need to apologize for taking their time.
- Sponsorship: this differs slightly from mentoring in that others are providing you with opportunities for professional growth and experiences:
 - Tell them that you want to be more involved on projects or committees in the department or outside of your department.
 - Think broadly
 - Include requests for activities in your yearly performance review.