Background

- ADVANCE grant to study the impacts of gender related beliefs and expectations on the recruitment and retention of women in STEM and SBES at a rural regional public university.
- Well-developed networks are important to career success, associated with more positive workplace perceptions, linked to employee satisfaction, retention, and persistence in STEM/SBES fields.
- Female scientists experience more difficulties than men in initiating collegial contacts and report more exclusion from informal networks that can be important to research programs and advancement.
- Female scientists working in regional institutions, especially those in rural locations may find additional challenges when it comes to networking and building social capital.
- Mentoring can provide important connections and support and may especially help female STEM/SBES faculty reduce social isolation and develop essential networks.

Goals

- Improve campus climate by establishing a sustainable mentoring program
- Address the shortage of traditional senior-level female mentors through peer mentoring circles.
- Utilize the circles as a platform for bringing issues and concerns to the attention of university administrators and thereby as a catalyst for change at the institutional level.

Outcomes

End of year survey: 75%/77% (2017/2018) of respondents attended 6 or more of circle meetings

- Greatest general benefit of participation
  - Knowing I’m not alone/we share similar challenges (47%/38%)
  - Camaraderie/support/networking (41%)
- Most useful topics
  - Making connections/networking (81%/62%)
  - Imposter Syndrome (50%/69%)
  - Time/alternate routes to success (56%)
  - Work-life balance (54%)

Impact

Benefits of Participation

- I personally benefited
  - % Agree/Strongly Agree
- I professionally benefited
  - % Agree/Strongly Agree
- Enlarged my social network
  - % Agree/Strongly Agree
- Enlarged my professional network
  - % Agree/Strongly Agree
- Developed strategies to navigate HSU
  - % Agree/Strongly Agree
- Stronger sense of HSU as supportive community
  - % Agree/Strongly Agree
- Increased likelihood I will stay at HSU
  - % Agree/Strongly Agree
- Valuable use of my time
  - % Agree/Strongly Agree

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