

Twin Cities CSB Alumnae

Business Listening Session

April 15, 2015

1. What factors facilitate or inhibit women's leadership in the workplace?

- Women don't always land in leadership roles because they don't proactively seek them.
- Confidence – we have it but do not apply it often enough (or don't assert it). Women need to recognize they have it and learn to assert it. We need to teach them how to develop and assert confidence.
- Women are effective at building relationships, which facilitates leadership.
- Hard to find examples of women who lead demanding career lives and finding balance for families. We need to talk about how to integrate family and professional lives. Need to mindfully make decisions to find balance in life.
- Women are very good at being gracious, kind, and understanding – which helps build leaders. But, being gracious and kind sometimes works against “leaning in” – need to find a balance in both. Can be confident and “lean in” and remain gracious, kind, and understanding. The more we can foster mentoring connections the more we can discover our authentic selves.
- Having some help in understanding personal value and worth. We sometimes find ourselves in situations where we give away our skills and insights, which undervalues our worth. “My time, etc. is worth something.”
- Most students don't land in the Career Center, and they should. It's a valuable place to start. Every student should be connected to at least one mentor in the field of their interest.
- We need a strategy. Need to approach opportunity through the lens of strategy – need to have a sense of vision and purpose. From the vantage point of CSB, need to have an integrated and holistic strategy preparing students for professional life. Help them develop a personal strategy.
- Women sometimes take themselves out of contention for positions or opportunities because they don't have well-developed personal strategies.
- As a student, I didn't think much about career. I had an advisor who helped get me through, who pushed me to consider opportunities and expand horizons. Mentoring is invaluable. **Advising, mentoring, personal strategy** all add up to something.
- Should try to make Career Services more accessible to current students and those who recently graduated. Its physical location is difficult – not prominent enough. Website should be more user friendly and useful – and to make connections accessible (alum/career services portal and interface, currently on alum website (Bennies Connect)).
- CSB offers terrific opportunities for leadership on campus. Could do that post-graduation: defining leadership and teaching people how to lead. Leadership is about more than managing people. It's also about taking ownership for your work.
- Women tend to be more collaborative. But at the end of the day, need to make decisions. Women need to understand that leadership is about taking risks and making decisions (beyond collaboration). Need to be OK with the idea that not all decisions can be based on consensus.

- Women can be very humble – they often don't want to assert how good they are (which can help and hurt). That is coachable.
- Need career services staff who are professionally active, engaged, and up to date on current career and professional trends.
- Confidence is about being prepared and practicing – a teachable and coachable skill.

2. What professional or career opportunities should we be attentive to as a college for women?

- Need to prepare women for on-boarding and off-boarding – something unique to women when they have children. We need approach these choices through a contemporary lens and honestly.
- Focus on tactical solutions (keeping it real). You can have and achieve ambitions and live a balanced life – but you can't do it all. Need to have tactical solutions to help navigate.
- Conversation: not the choice between family and career, but how to do both (even though you can't do it all). It means focusing on values (what you value). Choosing a path – and help thinking about that path – is important.
- Part of the solution must also include men: they need to be aware of these issues.

Communication is important. Telling stories about their journey. People can relate to that. Could put this on website.

Would love to provide feedback to CSB about resumes and professional observations. Need to know who to contact.

Professors need to think more about appropriate professional development and recommendations for students.