

STUDENT OPPORTUNITY LAB

PATHWAYS TO YOUR FUTURE

Wednesday, Oct 2nd, 2013 from 12:30 pm – 4:30 pm

 #GHC13

Empowering Technical Women Through Global Mentoring

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Overview

Mentoring without borders – between cultures and countries, academic and professional areas, levels of expertise - is of particular value to technical women isolated by culture, geography or their historically small number. Specific examples of success can create an awareness of the value of a broad network of mentors and mentees in the technical field.

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a longer-term relationship focused on larger work or life issues. It is a reciprocal relationship by which both parties involved benefit from it in a way depending on the mentoring context. It is a give and take relationship. The mentor is usually much more experienced than the mentee but may or may not be an expert in the same professional area. The important power difference between them is one of wisdom rather than position. Mentor and mentee often work together long-term and become friends. Mentors are usually professional volunteers who get satisfaction from “paying it forward” – that is, providing others with guidance such as that which benefited them during their own development. Mentoring is a personal relationship in a professional setting. Mentors are often part of a group of long-term advisors.

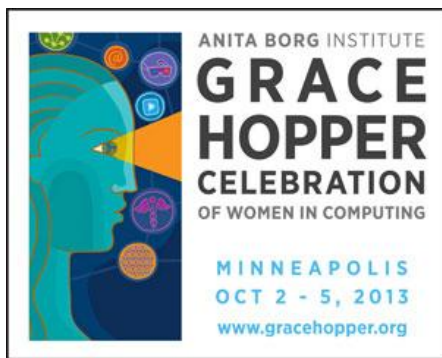
Mentoring is at the top of most lists of effective tools for promoting women’s professional development and advancement. A mentor listens, advises, and may make introductions – but the mentee must do the actual work.

How to Find a Mentor

Finding an appropriate mentor is a challenge. The following guide can be used to find a mentor who can help you in any aspect of your life which you wish to develop:

1. Organize your thoughts before getting a mentor by deciding the type of mentoring you need, finding out how urgent is your need for mentoring and understanding the role(s) of a mentor.
2. Decide what specifics you are looking for in your sought mentor. Write down any problems or specific requirements you might have.
3. Narrow down the list of places where you can find such mentors. This is mainly done by looking for candidate places where you can find mentors according to the category of mentoring you decided in Step 1.
4. Create a list of potential mentors. Organize this list to include your preferences, mentor information and contacts, and your personal comments about each mentor.
5. Start approaching mentors on the list one by one. Do not approach any mentor on the list unless you get a negative response (or no response for a period of time) from the previous mentor.
6. Be patient. If the first attempt fails, don't drop it. Continue trying until you are out of options.

The material of this GHC13 SOL was developed in collaboration with four TechWomen co-presenters from the Middle East who regretfully were unable to attend this SOL in person. Thanks to Sukaina Al-Nasrawi of Lebanon and Maysoun Ibrahim of Palestine (TechWomen Inaugural Class 2011), Adla Chatila of Lebanon and Heba Hosny of Egypt (TechWomen Class 2012) for their welcome support and valuable advice.



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What does a Mentor Do?

Key contributions observed from mentors are:

- **Introductions** to experts or people with practical wisdom who can help the mentee, or formal recommendations for awards or new positions.
- **References** to key resources, training, experiences to expand the mentee's understanding or context.
- **Feedback**, the Mentor acts as a sounding board for the Mentee.

The Mentor may offer specific advice or may only provide sufficient guidance for the Mentee to reflect and figure out her own way. In summary, a mentor:

- Shares knowledge and life experiences.
- Inspires
- Advises on professional development.
- Helps to develop leadership skills.
- Provides insight into corporate culture.
- Provides tips for exposure within one's organization.
- Provides support at the personal and professional levels.

Being a Good Mentee

Three suggestions from Jessica Dickinson Goodman based on a continuing mentoring program started in 2010, at **Carnegie Mellon University**:

- **Show up.** Not just physically, but mentally, to every interaction. Come with goals, come with questions, come with ideas.
- **Follow up.** If your mentor gives you a contact, send the email that day. If someone helps you, send a thank you email
- **Read up.** Constantly researching your field, your colleagues, and your competitors is the name of the game . In addition, keep in mind that *"When you invest your time in being a committed mentee you will be rewarded with accelerated experiences from your mentor."*

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