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Administration

Enhancing the Learning and Engagement of Women and Underrepresented Minority Students

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Need: There has been significant effort taken by the government, universities, companies, and other organizations to reduce the chilly environment, reduce the leaky pipeline, and increase the involvement of women and underrepresented minorities (URMs) in STEM disciplines. Despite these efforts, the number of women and URM in STEM disciplines remains low. Female and URM students often find the class and workplace climate "uninviting, unaccommodating, and unappealing". Other research suggests factors of social isolation, uninviting environments, chilly climates, bias, hostility, and the subtle differences that accumulate and make it more difficult for women and URMs to succeed in STEM fields.

Overview: Researchers have found that the feeling of isolation can be partially addressed in part by having seniors in the field to whom such individuals can look up to and consider mentors. These mentors can provide guidance on individual's journey in their career, work life balance and best practices for success in current and future workplaces. These role models and mentors from the STEM field can reinforce belongingness among peers. This study addressed the gap of providing a collegial climate to women and URMs to help them understand their field of study by organizing presentations by technology professionals, panel discussions, and industry visits. Such activities help reinforce students about the choice of work they intend to pursue. Furthermore, such activities increases students participation, retention and at various incidents recruitment of women and URMs.

Major Points:
• Perceptions of seminars, panel discussion and industry tours by students
• Ways of actively involving women and minorities.
• Role of mentoring in the retention of women and minorities
• Benefits and challenges of providing role models and mentoring services to women and minorities
• Challenges faced while organizing various activities to increase student mentoring

Summary: The audience will learn about a mentoring program used in retaining female and other underrepresented minorities in the field of technology. Challenges faced by women and URMs in STEM field at workplace will also be shared. Ways to successfully overcoming such challenges and identify ways to become successful in career of their choice will conclude the presentation.