

Network News

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Iowa Network for

Women in Higher Education

IOWAWHE
www.iowawhe.org

From the President

Practicing Authentic Leadership

Women leaders today are changing old concepts of leadership and redefining future leadership. The characteristics that have traditionally ascribed to women, such as a tendency for caring and collaborative practices, shared decision making, and flattened hierarchies, are increasingly being seen as essential to effective leadership. Because of their innate skills and abilities, women are move into authentic leadership roles and discovering their own enlightened voices.

Authentic leadership revolves around being genuine in one's leadership style and relationships with others. Women leaders often use consensus management and caring processes to obtain group goals. This makes them great authentic leaders at a time when most organizations are requiring types of leaders that focus on serving others and motivating employees to their highest level of achievement.

The Iowa Network for Women in Higher Education (IOWAWHE) is committed to helping women find their enlightened voice in their journey to authentic leadership. The primary goal of our organization is to facilitate the development of women leaders in higher education, through conversations, collaborations, and mentoring across the state of Iowa.

The Board of Directors for IOWAWHE is working diligently to provide growth opportunities for members of our organization. We are planning various activities such as providing a session on personal and professional advancement at the Way Up Conference in West Des Moines on November 3 and planning a leadership conference at Iowa State University on April 27. Please plan to join us in these professional development opportunities and invite your friends to become members of IOWAWHE. By working together, we can make a difference in the lives of women leaders in higher education across Iowa.

Rhonda Pennings
IOWAWHE President
www.iowawhe.org



Rhonda Pennings

Highlights

The Way Up Conference	Pg. 2
Spring Leadership Conference	Pg. 2
IOWAWHE Book Review	Pg. 2
As Iron Sharpens Iron	Pg. 3
Why a Mentor?	Pg. 4
Featured Biography	Pg. 5

Calendar of Events

- November 3-4:
The Way Up Conference ~
West Des Moines, IA
 - April 27: IWHE Spring
Leadership Conference ~
Iowa State University
 - Dec. 7-9: 78th National
Leadership Forum~
Washington, DC
 - April 4-6: California Regional
Leadership Forum ~
Sacramento, CA
- You may apply to attend meetings outside our region, and if there is room, you may be accepted. Contact the office of OWHE or Rhonda Penning, our Iowa liaison to the National Network.

Iowa Network for Women in Higher Education

The Way Up XXV “Celebrating 25 Years of Empowering Women: How Far Have We Come?”

The Way Up Conference is November 3-4th at the West Des Moines Marriot Hotel & Conference Center.

A panel of women deans from the Regent universities, private colleges and community colleges will discuss their personal and professional development that aided them in their career advancement. They will also describe their leadership experiences while in the role of Dean and offer advice and guidance to women who aspire to become deans in the future. This session is sponsored by IOWAWHE (Iowa Network for Women in Higher Education). The mission of the IOWAWHE is to facilitate the development of women leaders in higher education through conversations, collaboration and mentoring across the state.

Women at the Academic Center: The Dean's Experience

Lisa Nolan, Dean of Veterinary Medicine, Iowa State University

Sandy Cassady, Dean of Education and Health Sciences, St. Ambrose College

*Kathleen Van Steenhuyse, Dean of Social Sciences and Career Option Programs, Kirkwood
Community College*

To register or for conference details, go to: http://www.wayup-iowa.org/2011_conference/index.html

Save the Date: IWHE Spring Leadership Conference

Iowa Network for Women in Higher Education Leadership Conference

Iowa State University

Reiman Gardens

April 27, 2012

IOWAWHE Book Review

In the book entitled *Enlightened Power: How Women are Transforming the Practice of Leadership* edited by Linda COUNGLIN, Ellen Wingard, and Keith Hollihan, the stories and life journeys of over 30 women are recorded. Each story provides a unique perspective concerning how women are transforming leadership in business, the media, education, politics, and culture across the nation and around the world. Through these stories, the authors revealed their enlightened power and provide inspiration and wisdom for women leaders who want to tap into their own enlightened power. One of the main themes of this book is for women leaders to bring an authentic voice to power. By doing so, women will change the nature of power, rather than allowing power to change the nature of women. Speaking with enlightened power will allow women to look beyond themselves, to focus on their power on positive changes for their organizations, for their communities, and for their world.

Rhonda Pennings

Dean of Arts & Sciences/Business & Health Division

Northwest Iowa Community College

As Iron Sharpens Iron

Is there a formula for picking “the right mentor”? is a question I am asked regularly. Most of us struggle with who to reach out to or seek guidance from, especially when it comes to making career decisions. Selecting a mentor is a significant step in acknowledging our need for support as we grow personally and professionally. Unfortunately, there is no one formula to selecting the right mentor. Who you select as your mentor depends entirely on what you are looking for and what you need. Do you know what you need?

Before approaching a prospective mentor, look internally first. What issues are you facing? What kind of guidance are you seeking? What type of mentoring relationship are you looking for... a life coach to help you find work/life balance, someone who will challenge your way of thinking, someone whose career choices are interesting to you? If you don't know, that is okay too. At certain times in our lives, the most important mentors are those who help us discover what we really need and guide us in a new direction.

Getting recommendations from others is a great place to start. Don't stop there. Observing individuals as prospective mentors takes a lot of time... ask questions about who they are and what they believe, watch them in meetings, ask their direct reports how they supervise, talk to other individuals who they have mentored. Go beyond the “first date” before you commit to a mentoring relationship. One important piece of advice, don't get caught up in a mentor's status or position.

All great mentors are lifelong learners. As lifelong learners, mentors understand that sometimes the message we want to hear and the message we need to hear are two very different things. They also mentor us through to “our margins” - the places we don't want to go, the work we need to do, the ideas and beliefs we don't want challenged, and the questions we would gladly let someone else answer for us.

The mentors who had the greatest impact on my life:

- Were honest and candid, never afraid to call me on my “junk” or my “stuff”
- Reminded me how much I had grown, especially when I needed the encouragement
- Expected me to be the best that I could be and do the best that I could do
- Saw my potential and challenged me not to waste an ounce of it
- Shared wisdom from their own experiences, forced me to make my own decisions, celebrated with me when I soared, and helped me stand when I fell.

We might wish there was a formula for selecting “the right mentor.” In truth, there shouldn't be one.

Mary Jo Gonzales
Associate Dean of Students
Iowa State University



Why a Mentor?

We hear lots of people talking these days about the need to have a mentor. All of us recognize that these are difficult economic times, and we realize that having the best opportunity to keep and hold a position is very important. And here is where having a mentor can help.

What does a mentor do for us? First of all, having a mentor gives us a safe place to discuss plans for the future and concerns and issues in the present. Having a mentor allows us to ‘drop defenses’ and allows us to be open to listening to someone who can be more objective about ourselves than we can be for ourselves.

What should I look for in a mentor? Ideally, a mentor is a person who possesses characteristics and traits we admire and whose values demonstrate significant similarity to our own. For instance, if I am a person who needs time to process things aloud in order to gain clarity, I should not choose a person who has little patience with that time that would take. But if I’m someone who is direct and gets to the point quickly, such an individual might serve quite well as a mentor. It’s never a matter of ‘right or wrong’ in such cases; it’s a matter of ‘style’ and temperament. I should look for someone who would have some reason to WANT to assist me. It might be a person who is in a senior position already and who is known for developing talent in newer and/or younger individuals. Or it might be someone who has already retired and would have both the time and the interest in assisting me. Obviously, it would not be useful to choose someone who might be in competition with me for positions or promotions.

How do I ask the prospective mentor to serve in this capacity? Just ask. Be prepared to explain why you are asking, what you expect to gain from the relationship, and for how long you might be seeking that assistance. Prospective mentors are more likely to agree if there is an ‘end time’ to the request, rather than agreeing to something which potentially could last for a long period of time.

What should I expect from the relationship? This would depend on what you are hoping to achieve. In my own career I have had several mentors, each one serving a slightly different purpose. One was an individual in the position I hoped someday to hold. She gave me invaluable advice about what to expect if I attained such a position (which I did); she also gave me quite explicit coaching about certain behaviors that I would need to develop more if I hoped to be successful in such a position. She taught me a great deal about how to listen, and when to move a discussion to conclusion. Prior to her coaching, I would typically have short-circuited such discussions and moved to conclusions too quickly. Another mentor was a real ‘coach’ about such practical issues as wardrobe, hairstyle and accessories. These things might seem more ‘trivial,’ but they can often mark the difference between successful and unsuccessful aspirants for promotions or new positions. Still another was a longer-term coach who assisted me through several career moves and still offers assistance today. But the point is that, in each case, I was able to articulate for the mentor what I hoped for in the relationship.

What if it doesn’t work out? That, too, can happen. In such a case, if the relationship is not working, the best and most respectful thing to do is to discuss that openly with the mentor and move to ending the relationship. Nothing is to be gained from dragging out a non-productive mentor/mentee relationship after it has ceased to be productive.

How do I say ‘thank you’ to my mentor? That’s a question I put to one of the mentors. Her answer is something that has stayed with me. She simply said: “Go, and do likewise.” If you have had, or have in the future, a productive relationship with a mentor, then learn all you can from that so that you, too, can assist someone else. That idea of ‘paying it forward’ really does work.



Dr. Joan Lescinski

Sister Joan Lescinski, CSJ, PhD, is the 13th President of St. Ambrose University

SELECTED BIOGRAPHY

Sister Joan Lescinski, CSJ, PhD

Sister Joan Lescinski, CSJ, PhD, became the 13th President of St. Ambrose University in August 2007. In the Quad Cities she is currently a member of the Quad Cities First economic development board, the Putnam Museum Board of Trustees and a commissioner for the Davenport Airport Commission. In March 2011 she received the Athena Award for leadership given by the Women's Connection of the Quad Cities.

From 1998 to 2007, Lescinski served as President of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, the oldest Catholic liberal arts women's college in the country. During those years she led the college to record gains in enrollment, facilitated the development of institutional strategic and master plans, and introduced several undergraduate and two new graduate academic programs.

Among the positions Lescinski held prior to assuming the SMWC presidency were Vice President for academic affairs and Dean at Fontbonne University, St. Louis, Mo., from 1993 to 1998; Associate Dean of academic affairs at Avila University, Kansas City, Mo., from 1991 to 1993; and a professor of English at the College of St. Rose, Albany, NY from 1972 to 1991.

A native of Albany, N.Y., Lescinski earned a doctorate in English literature from Brown University in 1981. She received her master's and bachelor's degrees in English literature from the College of Saint Rose in 1974 and 1970. Lescinski holds certificates in Fund Raising Management and Educational Management from Indiana and Harvard universities, respectively. She has been a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Louis, Mo., since 1965.

Lescinski is a member of numerous professional organizations, including the Council of Independent Colleges Presidents' Association, the Midwest Modern Language Association, and the Association for Religion and Intellectual Life. She has presented and published numerous papers and articles; has been an invited participant at the Oxford Roundtable and engaged in several consultations sponsored by the PEW Charitable Trusts; and currently serves on the board of trustees of the College of Saint Rose in Albany, New York, and Marymount College in Los Angeles. She was elected in June 2011 to be a trustee for the Board of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Among her personal pursuits Sister Lescinski enjoys organic gardening and art appreciation. She is currently pursuing a private pilot's license and recently flew with the Navy's Blue Angels.

From the Editor

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