

SPONSORSHIP AS A STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING ACADEMIC SUCCESS AMONG STEM AND SBS WOMEN FACULTY

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The present article focuses on a program to increase retention and promotion of women in Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) and Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS) departments within a research university. The institution sought increased recruitment, retention and promotion of women in these departments. The program examined in the present article connected women with a sponsor in their field, usually outside their university. Sponsors advocate on behalf of protégés and connect them to people or activities in their field. We discuss the perceived benefits of having a sponsor and the effectiveness of these sponsors. Survey data and focus groups' transcripts were used from 21 faculty members engaged in the program over three years. The sponsors played several key roles, which strengthened their protégé's research programs. The success of the sponsorship program can be attributed to its encouragement of meaningful, long-term relationships, adequate funding, written proposals and reports, and development of formal plans.