RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGIES

CISCO SYSTEMS/CISCO LEARNING INSTITUTE GENDER INITIATIVE

This list includes a variety of ways to increase female recruitment and retention at your institution. Select those which are most appropriate for your situation.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Ensure the Cisco Networking Academy® Program is taught in a safe, accessible location and at a time that is convenient for both women and men.
- Ensure female instructors take leadership roles at your Academy.
- Ensure both female and male students assume a variety of roles when doing group work, and that female students take on leadership roles.
- On recruitment materials, include messages that specifically target females. Example: “Women/girls are encouraged to apply/enroll.”

FEMALES WORKING TOGETHER

- Establish a girls’ computing club.
- Provide a female-only open house or tour of the lab.
- Establish all-female Academies and all-female classes where appropriate.
- Assign female students to work together in pairs as appropriate
- Recruit from female-only programs or clubs, or those with high percentage of females.

ROLE MODELS AND MENTORS

- Encourage a current female student to serve as an “ambassador” of the program and promote her accomplishments. Develop a superstar and send her to conferences and meetings.
- Schedule a pizza lunch in the Academy classroom and invite IT professionals and female students.
- Invite female IT professionals to serve as mentors and recruit female instructors.
- Work with local chapters of women’s organizations such as Women in Technology International (WITI) & Society for Women Engineers (SWE).
- Display information about computer pioneers such as Grace Hopper and Ada Lovelace in the classroom.
- Inform female students about organizations that promote women and IT.
• Ask students to interview female relatives/friends who work in IT & invite them to make a presentation in the lab.

AWARENESS
• Ask current female students to write an article for the school newspaper or website highlighting their experiences in the Academy program.
• Schedule a Bring a Friend Day and encourage students to bring a female friend to their Academy program class.
• During orientations and promotional sessions for prospective students, include female students and graduates as guest speakers.
• Encourage female Academy students at the high school level to make presentations at K-8 feeder schools. Such projects often provide credit towards service projects required of high school seniors.
• Schedule a school assembly about computing careers highlighting the social relevance and opportunities for females.
• Hold open houses for parents and guidance counselors, highlighting academic and career opportunities.
• Make your lab open & accessible. One instructor played “fun” music to attract students to her lab.

WORKING WITHIN YOUR INSTITUTION
• Request computer science, math and science teachers to encourage female students to enroll in the Academy program.
• Ask guidance counselors to promote the Academy program, especially among female students.
• Offer the Academy program in academic departments where there is already high female enrollment, such as information technology, business, or women’s studies.

CAREER EVENTS
• Schedule a human resources/recruiter event where you invite local employers. Invite local chapters of women’s organizations to the event and ask them to help identify prospective students.
• Provide information regarding salary levels. One option is to have female students do research on different career opportunities and compare starting salaries.

TOOLS AND RESOURCES
  o Create a postcard or flyer encouraging parents to play Penny Packet with their children.
  o Have prospective students play Penny Packet as part of an open hour or guest event.
• Visit http://cisco.netacad-currdev.net/gender for more information regarding recruitment and retention strategies.

Additional information regarding recruitment and retention strategies is available in the gender module, accessible in the Academy Start Guide and at http://cisco.netacad-currdev.net/gender.

For more information on the Cisco Networking Academy Program, visit http://www.cisco.com/go/netacad.