CISCO NETWORKING ACADEMY PROGRAM

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
- Utilize Penny Packet, http://www.cisco.com/warp/public/779/edu/peterpacket2/deliverables/default.htm.

  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.

For more information on the Cisco Systems/Cisco Learning Institute Gender Initiative, visit http://gender.ciscolearning.org.

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.

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