



Grant Helps Promote Leadership in Women

Grant Helps Promote Leadership in Women

Medical school and rigorous surgical training traditionally do not include advanced instruction in leadership skills, yet they are integral to achieving career success.

Ruth L. Bush, MD, JD, MPH, knew that despite increases in the number of women entering science and medicine, “few women exist in academic leadership positions.” And though her institution at the time— Baylor Scott & White Medical Center in Temple, Texas — had an executive leadership program, there was nothing specifically for women to navigate leadership in the clinical or academic environment, she said.

In 2012, Dr. Bush, then Associate Dean for Medical Education with oversight of Temple’s residency programs, received one of three annual SVS Women’s Leadership Training Grants (see story above). It led to creating an institutional Women’s Leadership Advisory Council to foster and promote leadership training and mentoring of junior women leaders.

She worked with a research leader and member of the Institutional Review Board to design a survey focused on leadership topics which was sent to women leaders around the country: Had they had formal mentorship and when? What type of mentors? Had they ever had a professional career coach? Had they been a mentor themselves?

Her results showed that though mentorship was available to nearly all of the 19 respondents (of 20 contacted), less than half currently had a mentor and were themselves mentoring junior faculty and postgraduate trainees.

And while leadership training was available to nearly all of them, 84.2 percent acknowledged that specific career advising and long-term mentorship would be valuable. The survey pointed to networking, professional career planning and strong female role models as being most valuable to professional development.

The advisory council was then designed around the identified needs for junior staff, including mentoring.

When Dr. Bush received her SVS grant, it was at the senior level, for those 10 years or more out of training. Leadership development opportunities seem to be plentiful early in a surgeon’s career, she pointed out. “But even if you’re expected to become a mentor yourself, you still need guidance and professional development. This is a life-long process,” she said.

Without the grant, she said, “I don’t know that I would have recognized that institutional programs really need to be specifically developed targeting women. Now, eight years later, I think we still need these programs. They will increase diversity among leaders both among women and men. It’s a chance to foster and promote leadership among people who may not have thought they could BE a leader.”

Grant Helps Promote Leadership in Women

Published on Society for Vascular Surgery (<https://vascular.org>)

Now Associate Dean for Medical Education at the University of Houston College of Medicine (under development), she is mentoring and advising undergraduate students. She finds it gratifying and empowering to help others succeed, she said. "It's not about you sometimes. It's about watching trainees excel and move past you and feel proud that you were a part of their success."

Article Date: Tuesday, January 22, 2019

Author: Re-posted from the January 2019 issue of Vascular Specialist

Tags: Vascular Specialist

Article Type: Article