

To: R3 ExCom
Date: 12 May 2014
From: Cathy Freeman, 2014 Region 3 WIE Coordinator

Thanks to Region 3 for supporting my attendance at the recent first WIE International Leadership Conference and the annual WIE Executive Committee In-person meeting.

WIE ILC Report:

The agenda for the conference is available at

<http://ieee-wie-ilc.org/agenda/>

The intended audience for the conference was mid- and upper-level professional women in technical fields, though some students and men attended as well. Nita Patel and her committee organized the event in just a year, and did a fantastic job of soliciting partners to help fund the event, assembling speakers and panels to provide useful content and activities, and recruiting companies to participate in a career fair.

Highlights of my participation included:

Square hosted a welcome reception for all the ILC attendees at their facility. The evening was made even more special since it was graduation night for the Girls Code Camp participants. The company has been providing local girls the opportunity to learn code and work with a Square mentor at their facility for a few years now. The girls were given the opportunity to say a few words, and their stories were very inspiring. Kudos to Square for all they do in the community.

Friday started early with keynote speeches from Nora Denzel (former VP at Intuit) and Seeta Hariharan (GM & Group Head at TATA Consultcy Services).

Nora talked about 5 pieces of advice she received when she started her career and how she would revise them after her experiences at IBM, HP, and Intuit. She was told to:

- 1) Climb the career ladder. This made her believe there was a linear, vertical path to success. Her revised advice: It's more of an obstacle course, and each step should be viewed as a test, rather than a roadblock, to achieving what you want.
- 2) Avoid failure. She now knows that failure is a part of success. Failures are what cause you to grow and you should not be afraid of it. She found that after each failure, she found a better job with more money at companies that appreciated her experience and lessons learned.
- 3) It's who, not what, you know. Actually, it's who knows what you know. Sponsors, as opposed to mentors, are those that have the power to provide you real opportunities, and they must know your abilities AND your aspirations in order to help you move forward.
- 4) Avoid bad bosses. Rather than quit or transfer to a different organization every time you encounter a bad boss, realize that you are your own boss.
- 5) Always tell the truth. Her revised advice did not include telling lies, but rather to withhold some information at times. Many women have a tendency to diminish themselves and their contributions, so it's best to keep that inner, overly humble voice quiet. When someone pays a compliment - don't blurt out that you could have done it better, that you missed some small detail, or share the credit for your work - just say thank you!

She also had some advice for women who must strike a balance between humility and confidence and counter the stereotypes that lessen their effectiveness. One suggestion was to make them give you permission to share a strong opinion. She would state that she had some strong ideas on a particular issue, but that she wasn't sure she should share it with the group. She would suggest she wait or send it in another form, or that perhaps they didn't want any other opinions on the topic. In the end, the group would be begging her to just tell them what she was thinking, and then they could accept it for what it was - not shut it out because she was being too "bossy". She also suggested using humor whenever possible and don't be threatening. This sounds manipulative, but it is also at times the only way to be an effective member of the team.

Seeta was an athlete in school, but her family did not allow her to compete at the national level because of the cultural taboos. Her advice included backing up a few steps when you appear to be hitting a brick wall so that you can find your way around it. She also stressed the importance of coaches and mentors in your career, as well as investing in and developing networks. To have a truly useful network, you should always try to give more than you receive. She also spoke about the power of asking and of selling your request. Her example was that she wanted to go to Northwestern for a graduate business degree. No other school would do. At first she was denied, but finally she wrote a multiple page proposal on the benefits to the company of sending her to Northwestern and paying for her tuition, books, room/board, and travel to visit her family.

There were four parallel tracks both days. I attended talks in the inspiration, enrichment and, empowerment tracks, and skipped the work/life balance track. One thing I did hear from other attendees and in some of the talks was that women have realized that they can't do it all alone. Enlisting family and hired help to care for children and perform other domestic duties is necessary to allow women (and men) to achieve their career goals and maintain quality of life outside of work. Some of the women had grown children and were now able to pursue the leadership roles they wanted.

Ann Ulrich gave a talk about her program called the BOLD factor. She told us that confidence is really up to us - it's an inside job. It takes mindfulness, watching our words, knowing when good enough is smarter. Don't follow the advice to fake it until you make it. Instead be the success that you are. Be real and let others be real. Make a friend of your fear. Find the gift in your challenge. Widen your peripheral vision and help others around you. Know your job - it is not about being nice, but about getting results. She also suggested we create some room for serendipity and called it white space. And to bolster your confidence heading into your next challenge, make a list of what you brought to your last success and read it to remind yourself. A change of perspective is what is required. She left us with the goal of doing one bold thing each day - to stretch ourselves and grow.

The luncheon speakers were Naomi Kelly from the City of San Francisco and Diane Bryant, Senior Vice President at Intel. Both related some of the statistics about women in the workplace and women in technology. Diane Bryant also shared how she entered the field and on how we can do a better job of motivating women to enter STEM fields and stay there. She shared a quote from Madeleine Albright, whom Hilary Clinton advocated for the Secretary of State appointment to then President Bill Clinton: "There is a special place in hell for women who don't help other women."

The International Leadership Panel was led by Takako Hashimoto from Japan. She is a member of the WIEC and the Region 10 WIE Coordinator. This panel consisted of four women who lead global teams that have the extra difficulty of being separated by physical distance, time zones, language, and social and cultural differences. Eylem Ozekin (GE Lead Software Engineer), Lillian Rincon

(Microsoft Skype Group Program Manager), Meen Kaul-Basa (Oracle Director of Engineering), and Rosalinda Zepeda (Compelling Conversations CEO) all shared their views of how to lead a global team successfully. Some comments included making sure to capitalize on strategic relationships - by getting to know the people on the team and people inside the company to find out how things get done in local offices. One chart of the overlap hours of business day the world over showed that there is only perhaps an hour or two where all could participate. Employees must be empowered to make progress on their own since there is minimal time for group discussions. The quality, and not the quantity of actual face to face meetings was stressed. Promoting video, audio, IM, and then e-mail as a last resort enhances communication. They encouraged understanding the team and building credibility and setting a direction for the team. One panelist recommended talking to shy team members in a non-threatening environment - over a meal or at least outside the office in order to build some rapport and encourage them to participate in team communications and work. It was also suggested that one gets a reviewer for an e-mail before they send it, and never send an e-mail when you are angry. They answered a few questions from the audience that was very engaged in the topic, many of whom have been working on international teams for quite some time. Another point that was brought up is that the leader of the call must keep the energy up on the call. When someone at a certain locale says the dreaded words "We don't do it that way here", a suggested response is "I appreciate that and..." Each person must be acknowledged and listened to, and encouraged to share their information with the team.

The first day was then capped off by three speakers: Brett Shockley CTO of Avaya Networks, Kumud Srinivasan, President Intel India, and Sondra Barbour EVP Lockheed Martin.

Saturday began with an interview style discussion between Kelly Hoey (President of Women Innovate Mobile) and Krithika Yetchina (age 14 and experienced hackathon participant.)

I attended the session on 'Challenges that women and women of color face in the tech community' with a panel from Mother Jones magazine and Kimberley Bryant who runs the Black Girls Code nonprofit, and then Miwako Doi, the first woman engineer at Toshiba (now Chief Fellow). I also attended the session by Kelly Simmons of Millenium Edge, (www.millenium-edge.com) and Kim Weifling of Weifling Consulting.

Kelly does training for leaders to learn a systemic perspective. She used strings that we tied together to form networks of two, four, and up to ten people. Then she handed each network a balloon.

Obviously, some of the networks were not tight meshes that would support the balloon. She shared 4 basic principles of the 'web' (or network or team or organization):

1. See the Web.
2. Speak to the Web (What do WE need now?)
3. The Web is creative, resourceful, intelligent, and able.
4. Things that "happen" are "signals of the system".

and 3 disciplines:

1. Presence - stay present with your feeling, thoughts, and perceptions without judgment. The act of mindfulness, consciousness. Access the "alpha" waves.
2. Openness - The act of deep listening. Willing to be influenced by others. Ability to be wrong.
3. Create from WE - Hear all the voices, even the silent ones. Triangulate. Act while remaining open. Systems continuously iterate.

We did an exercise to understand the second discipline - we listened to the person nearest us tell us about something that happened recently. We were told to listen and come up with 3 or 4 characteristics of that person that we heard from their story. It was really difficult to stay focussed on the characteristics, instead of trying to simply understand the situation or facts, and possibly come up with a solution.

Kim also does training or speaking to organizations to help them succeed. Her talk was entitled

"Leading from any chair: Inspiration for People Who must make the impossible happen".

www.wiefling.com She had a couple books for sale with tips for "scrappy project management". She shared the top reasons global teams fail to achieve their goals:

1 Fail to Build Trust

2 Fail to Overcome Communication Barriers

3 Goals of Individuals and Team not Aligned

4 Unclear Goals, Unclear Priorities

She said that there are three essential partners for growth: thinking partner, coach, and mentor. A thinking partner is someone who can evaluate ideas and strategies with you, a coach will help you improve your 'game', be it technical or soft skills, and a mentor will help guide you through the obstacles of your career path.

The final speaker was Elena Gerstman, Senior Director of IEEE Enterprise Strategy & Governance. She talked about how women don't enter the tech pipeline, and how many of the ones who do drop out. All of the attendees participated in generating bold ideas and actions for tripling the number of women in the tech industry in the next three years. We worked in groups and wrote our ideas on large post-its that were shared, and then traded personal actions that we would take with each other. One of the more interesting, and less obvious (to me), ideas were to work with HR departments to make sure that job descriptions are written to be more women friendly.

Nita Patel interviewed Walmart Labs Vice President of Engineering, Jaya Kolhatkar during the luncheon. Her company was acquired by Walmart Labs, and she shared the experience of that transition.

Jen Geist, from the Atlanta WIE AG, attended at their expense, and she shared her notes with me.

Deborah Campbell of Catalyst gave a talk engaging men as champions to advance women. The presentation found at

<http://linniecarter.com/files/2012/02/Fostering-Sponsorship-Success-Among-High-Performers-Leaders.pdf>

describes the difference between mentors and sponsors very well and points out that many women are over-mentored, and under-sponsored. Advice for those in high level leadership positions is also provided to encourage sponsors to take action to identify talented individuals unlike themselves and to promote them or speak up for them in order to increase the diversity leadership in an organization.

<http://www.catalyst.org/issues/men-matter>

As an aside, I have heard many times that men were hesitant to attend a WIE-hosted event because they "didn't want to be the only man there". Some of the men at the ILC seemed a little uncomfortable at times as well. That's exactly what many women or minorities in technology feel every day they go to work or every time they walk into an engineering staff meeting. So attending the ILC with over 300 technically-minded women was absolutely exhilarating.

Finally, while this conference was geared towards mid- to upper-level professional women, and the mission of WIE is to encourage women to enter and remain in the technical workforce, almost all of the advice and the approach to accomplishing that mission help men and other minorities and businesses to be more successful and productive in countless ways.

Notes from In-Person Meeting, 4/5 May 2014,

The in-person meeting of the WIE Executive Committee is held once a year in different cities. This year it was held immediately following the WIE ILC to save on travel costs for all members. There were about 38 attendees including the WIE Executive Committee, Region Coordinators, Society Liaisons, and IEEE staff.

Since 2014 is the 20th anniversary of the formation of the Women In Engineering Standing Committee of IEEE, WIEC is planning several special events and activities. They will be sending out cards to all the Affinity Groups and asking them to take a photo with the card and send it to women@ieee.org. The photos will be collected into a book to commemorate the anniversary. WIEC would also like a short video in your native language:

To celebrate our 20th anniversary, we are compiling a video montage to be shown at Sections Congress. Please send a short video (15-30 seconds) in your native language (English, Spanish, French, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Chinese...) with a message about IEEE Women in Engineering. Please submit videos by May 31, 2014 to women@ieee.org.

Recommended message: Hi. My name is... I am a student/professional/professor at...I love IEEE Women in Engineering because...

Example message: My name is Nita Patel. I am the WIE international chair. I love IEEE Women in Engineering because it's such a vibrant collection of passionate individuals making a difference in their communities.

Discussion of the ILC:

Numbers - Inaugural ILC broke even!

- 364 attendees

- 150 career fair attendees

- 85 great speakers

- 23 partners

- 14 international student travel grants

IEEE WIE is second to Society of Women Engineers in the US, but first internationally since SWE does not operate globally yet.

IEEE WIE represents 0.08% of the total IEEE budget

Multiple ideas were presented to grow the organization and increase WIE funding and activities and reduce or eliminate the dues.

Pam Jones submitted a report about her Capitol Hill 2014 visit representing IEEE WIE.

The committee received an initial proposal for hosting 2014 or 2015 WIE ILC in Dubai by Eng. Maryam Ali Al Thani. The committee will be setting up a procedure for soliciting and receiving proposals for hosting future ILCs. There was some discussion of alternating the location between North America and the rest of the world. Perhaps Atlanta would be a good location for a future ILC

The committee voted on and selected the Affinity Group of the Year, Student Branch Affinity Group of the Year, and the Inspiring Member of the Year. There will be further announcements on the winners.

IEEE WIE has 460 Affinity Groups

The WIE roster shows 6 Student Branch Affinity Groups in Region 3:

Alabama A&M in Huntsville, AL- welcome!
Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, GA
University of Central Florida in Orlando, FL
University of Florida in Gainesville, FL
University of North Carolina at Charlotte in Charlotte, NC
Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, NC

and 8 (soon to be 7) Affinity Groups:

Atlanta
Charlotte
Eastern North Carolina (VACANT)
Florida West Coast
Jacksonville (DISSOLVED)
Memphis
Northwest Florida (VACANT, to be dissolved?)
Orlando
Richmond

I participated in the working group for member development and we came up with several recommendations:

1. Ask technical societies and sections to include a 'What is WIE' or 'Join WIE' link on their webpage.

My response: Will all sections please add a link on their webpage to the WIE webpage:

http://www.ieee.org/membership_services/membership/women/index.html

2. Have region coordinator ask section chairs to form new WIE AGs.

My response: I have looked at the database and see that the Huntsville, Alabama, East Tennessee, Miami, Hampton, Gainesville, and Melbourne sections all have more than six members. The Western North Carolina, Tallahassee, and Central Virginia sections have exactly 6.

Formation requires 6 members and the Section's approval.. See page at

http://www.ieee.org/membership_services/membership/women/Affinity/resources.html

for more information, including the startup funding and annual rebate available to sections with active affinity groups.

Also, I would point out that WIE is not a women only organization. We need men volunteers to participate. While it is important to have women role models to enable young girls to consider STEM careers, and it is beneficial to provide women networking opportunities, men can contribute in significant ways by organizing events, acting as mentors and sponsors, and generally actively supporting WIE's mission. Because there are still so few women WIE members, the volunteer base is small and the few women who have stepped up to serve as AG officers are in danger of getting burned out.

I heard from more than one person at the conference that the southeast US is the least friendly environment for women in technical fields. I know the southeast has many unwelcome stereotypes associated with it. Let's show the rest of the country, if not the world, that things can and do change. Let's make more new AGs than any other US region this year! There are 10 sections that could possibly form new AGs. Can we form 5 new ones? And keep the ones we have, of course!

3. Budget request to Region Directors and Section Chairs

My response: The region supported my attendance at SoutheastCon and the ILC this year. I have not initiated any plan that would require more budget. We can discuss that further off-line. I learned that other Region coordinators have a budget for travel, support of activities, and other items. Section chairs can aid the existing WIE AGs by ensuring that they are included in the budget cycle and that their activities are supported to the maximum extent possible. Section chairs and AG chairs should be communicating to develop all possible sources of funding, such as PACE, K-12, co-hosting meetings with technical societies or other AGs, etc. I will contact the AG chairs to encourage them to request budgets from the sections and other sources.

4. Promotion of ILC 2015 - this event for women should bring in more women to IEEE as they learn more about the organization. A substantial conference registration discount will be given to WIE members, thereby making membership financially attractive.

5. Other

Work with AG chairs to use tools. This was my recommendation as I know that the AGs in R3 are having events and meetings, but that they are not reporting them via vtools or to me. Are Section chairs getting the rebates due them for WIE AG activity? I did a search on Women in Engineering for the whole year and only found Atlanta meetings. This makes my job harder, too, as I cannot make reports to the WIEC on Region 3 activities.

Regional coordinators promote joint activities WIE/LM or WIE/YP events.

My response: Good idea. I will enlist Jennifer's help (as MELC chair) with this item. I suggest adding a WIE/YP/LM event at the next SoutheastCon to promote the AG activities to potential members.

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Women in Engineering:

ieee.org/women

<https://www.facebook.com/ieeewomeninengineering>