Women In Technology Leadership Round Table

Event Summary

EVENT

Women in Technology Leadership Round Table
November 6th, 2015
UC Berkeley
wit.berkeley.edu

ORGANIZERS

Sheila Humphreys
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OVERVIEW

Accomplished professionals in the field of technology convened Friday, November 6th for the inaugural Women in Technology Leadership Round Table at UC Berkeley. Their aim was to develop sustainable solutions that will reduce the attrition of women in the technical workforce. Participants included industry executives, professors, and leaders at non-profit organizations, as well as co-sponsors UCOP Vice Provost Susan Carlson, UC Berkeley Vice Chancellor Gibor Basri, and UC Berkeley Dean of Engineering Shankar Sastry. The event was unique in creating a coalition of influential leaders intent on making a multilateral effort to eliminate barriers to the advancement of women.
The round table began with participants sharing experiences and best practices for raising awareness of the gender gap and for increasing diversity. Both effective measures and ineffective measures were described, as well as implications of pursuing ‘diversity’ vs. ‘inclusion’.

Ideas for actionable solutions were then brainstormed. Suggestions included bias training at all levels within an organization, with participants noting the importance of ‘bias busting’ in addition to bias awareness. There were also recommendations on how to make diversity a priority, both by making diversity a habit and by making leaders accountable for diversity metrics. Many noted that in order to have real impact, it is critical for everyone, including men and people at all levels of management, to be involved in the conversation and to be committed to establishing and executing diversity measures.

The participants then voted (by placing dots in the charts below) on the most impactful proposed solutions, which emerged to be (1) gathering and confronting diversity data, and (2) encouraging women to be bold.
Sharing and Brainstorming Session
2 SOLUTION BUILDING SESSION

1) Gathering and confronting diversity data: Metrics were agreed to be essential for both revealing diversity-related issues within an organization and for tracking the effectiveness of solutions implemented to remedy them. Benchmarking and publicizing diversity data can also motivate organizations to set and reach diversity goals. However, it was noted that current publicly available numbers do not provide sufficiently detailed information or are lacking key metrics, and as a result do not accurately reflect the severity of the gender gap. Therefore, the group defined the following concrete steps:

1. develop a set of metrics for measuring diversity within an organization (with each organization developing their own “diagnostic” or adapting according to size);

2. advocate for organizations to adopt and to commit to these metrics;

3. establish a venue to publish company data using these metrics.

2) Encouraging women to be bold: The importance of giving women the freedom to take risks and make mistakes was discussed at length. Actions proposed for developing this capacity included training, mentorship, and sponsorship programs, as well as sharing stories of successful women (role models) and diverse teams. Participants noted that the biggest rewards often result from risks taken.

“What you can measure, you can change”

“Statistics compel attention”

“What think big and bold”
3 CALL TO ACTION: NEXT STEPS

The participants each committed to taking at least one concrete action that emerged from the meeting (ref. Appendix), and to report on their progress at the next round table in approximately 6 months (May/June 2016). To ensure progress in developing a set of metrics for measuring diversity, a working group was established. Separately, a steering committee was formed to help plan and facilitate the next event.

Working group members:
- Lesley Slaton Brown, HP Inc.
- Andrea Goldsmith, Stanford University
- Catherine Li, Wells Fargo & Co.
- Gitanjali Swamy, IoTask

Steering committee members:
- Janet George, SanDisk Corp.
- Tsu-Jae King Liu, UC Berkeley
- Belle Wei, San José State University