



Women On Track



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BACKGROUND

Purpose of Program: Women make up roughly half of medical house staff and graduate students, but fewer women choose tenure-track academic positions. In 2005, the AAMC's "Early Career Women Faculty Professional Development Seminar" inspired five attendees, all junior women faculty, to initiate a program to reverse these trends at Vanderbilt University.

With administrative and financial support from the Offices of the Dean and Faculty Affairs, the "Women On Track" (WOT) Program was founded with the following goals:

- To promote the retention and advancement of tenure-track women faculty in medical science
- To provide mentorship, support and career education for junior faculty women
- To construct a framework from which to attract and retain talented women from the house staff and post-doctoral levels of our organization

DESIGN & METHODS

Design:

- Enlisted support of senior leaders, particularly senior women faculty, ELAM members, etc., who periodically attend and provide feedback
- Monthly noon lunch meetings, held 8 times annually
- Website with contact information, upcoming events, links to resources (e.g., recently presented material)
- Annual reception or retreat to welcome new faculty, special events
- Event-specific exit surveys for immediate, topic-related feedback since 2008, annual online surveys began in 2010



Quality Assessment/Statistical Analysis:

- 58 Online surveys: combination of multiple-choice, Likert-scale, and write-in responses (45 questions)
- Standard summary statistics, Chi-square or Fisher's exact, or Student's t-test/Rank-sum tests to compare groups (STATA statistical software, v.10.0)

Topics Covered in 2008-2009

Date	Title	Speaker
Sept. 2008	It Takes Talent and Perseverance	Dr. Christine Konradi
Oct. 2008	Publication Strategies	Dr. Vivian Siegel
Nov. 2008	Reception	Dean Jeffrey Balsler
Dec. 2008	Checking Off Your Tenure "To-Do" List	Dr. Maureen Gannon
Feb. 2009	Recruiting / Mentoring Post-Docs	Dr. Ann Richmond
Mar. 2009	Publication Strategies II	Dr. Vivian Siegel
Apr. 2009	Work/Life Balance	Panel
May 2009	Exploring the Gender Gap	Dr. Nancy Brown

Topics Covered in 2009-2010

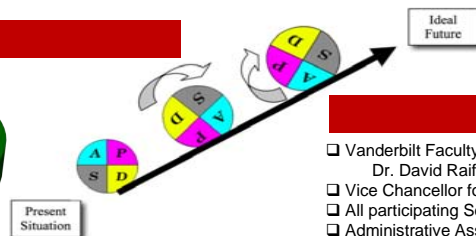
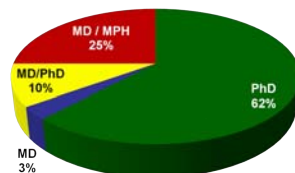
Date	Title	Speaker
Sept. 2009	Reception	Dean Jeffrey Balsler
Oct. 2009	How to Find the Right Mentor	Panel
Nov. 2009	Short- and Long-term Financial Management of Your Research Group	Panel
Dec. 2009	Navigating the NIH	Panel
Feb. 2010	Tenure and Promotions: Networking	Dr. Alyssa Hasty
Mar. 2010	Rolling with the Punches	Panel
Apr. 2010	Negotiating a Salary and Start-Up Package	Dr. Jonathan Gitlin
July 2010	The Ins and Outs of NIH Peer Review	Dr. Wagenaar-Miller

Website: <https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/women-on-track/>

DEMOGRAPHICS

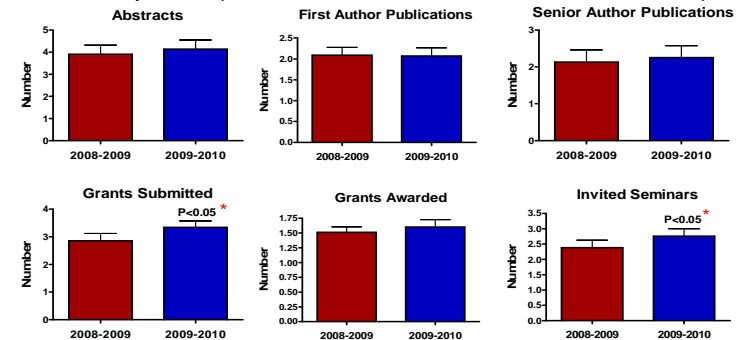
Since its inception in 2006, average confirmed attendance at each WOT event has increased from 28 to 50 women, an 81% increase.

Our original email list of 75 women has expanded to include 320 self-selected women, who request reminders of upcoming events.



SURVEY RESULTS

- No significant differences in objective measures by academic rank or type of position (Postdoctoral Fellow, Instructor, or Assistant Professor), but data are preliminary, N is still small
- Data from 44 faculty-level respondents are summarized below; tables show write-in responses only



- Spontaneous write-in responses below reflect Action Steps taken and Academic Skills gained due to WOT:

Action Steps to Enhance Career

Action Step	Number
Planning for Tenure & Promotion	9
Networking	7
Sought Speaking Engagements	5
Initiated Communication with NIH	4
Enhance writing skills / More Grants	3
Improved Prioritization	3
Improved Financial Management of Lab	1
Improved Mentoring Skills	1
Formed Mentoring Committee	1

Academic Skills Gained

Academic Skills	Number
Networking	10
Improved Writing Skills	6
Seeking / Utilizing Mentors	5
Negotiation Skills	4
Knowledge of Expectations	4
Managing Budgets	4
Dealing with Grant / Manuscript Reviews	2
Time Management	1
Value of Invited Seminars	1
Communication Skills	1

- Unsolicited comments like: "I was able to negotiate a great start-up package because of WOT!"

CONCLUSIONS

- "Women On Track", initiated by junior women faculty at Vanderbilt, is now in its 5th year.
- Our increasing membership base, escalating attendance, and documented program quality attest to the value of this novel career-development program.
- There was an increase in grants submitted and invited seminars among women faculty between the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 academic years.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Fostering mentoring relationships between WOT members and women trainees
- Track our program's success in achievement of promotion and tenure among women faculty at Vanderbilt, using online surveys with trackable identifiers (in progress) and serial **Plan-Do-Study-Act** (PDSA) quality improvement cycles

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & SUPPORT

- Vanderbilt Faculty Affairs & Career Development Office: Dr. David Raiford and Dr. John Penn, and Staff
- Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs and Dean of VUSM, Dr. Jeffrey Balsler
- All participating Senior Women Faculty at Vanderbilt Medical Center
- Administrative Assistance: Auda Hutto
- Website Assistance: Ingrid Verhamme and Kim Day
- Nashville Veterans Administration Medical Center (AK, MKF, PK)
- Clinical Translational Scientist Award (CTSA) to Vanderbilt: **1 UL1 RR024975 from NCR/NIH** (electronic survey)
- The study was IRB-approved.
- VU Photo by Mary Donaldson