

Proposal for funding a pilot project to establish a mentoring network for young women faculty
Requested funding \$10,000 total (\$5000.00/year for 2 years)

Submitting organization:

Inter-American Network of Academies of Sciences; Women for Science (WfS) working group

Statement of the Problem and its Solution. A mentoring deficit is impeding the progress of young women faculty members in the Americas. We propose to initiate development of a person-to-person mentoring network to overcome this deficit.

Pilot project. Using a small initial group of approximately 100 participants, our pilot project will develop and implement the basic mentoring platform. Based on feedback from participants, we will refine our platforms and also concentrate our resources in the highest priority areas identified by participants.

a. Target audience: Our pilot group will be women faculty in the five countries to most recently establish an Academy of Science (Bolivia, Honduras, Ecuador, the Caribbean, and Uruguay), as we feel that these countries are likely to have the most fragile scientific establishments and are in the greatest need of additional mentoring resources. Our initial target group will be young women faculty.

b. Mentoring needs. We identified the following discrete needs:

- i. Advice on proposal writing/ critiquing proposals
 - ii. Advice on proposed lines of research; discussion of ideas.
 - III. Proofreading manuscripts
 - iv. Access to scientific articles
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- v. Strategies for success as a faculty member
 - vi. How to present yourself to selection panels
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- vii. Workplace harassment/gender discrimination
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- viii. English language conversation
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- ix. Short term visit to a laboratory for specific research
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c. Choice of participants. Participants will be chosen by the WfS IANAS representative from each country in consultation with a subcommittee of their National Academy of Science. These women will be invited to fill out a questionnaire designed by the Mentoring subgroup of the WfS. This questionnaire will explain the program, query the faculty as to their specific fields and mentoring needs (pulldown menu), and ask for a 2-year commitment to help guide this program from pilot phase to full implementation.

d. Choice of mentors. The IANAS Wfs representative from each country, in consultation with a subcommittee of their National Academy of Science, will develop a list of mentors in various fields represented by the mentees for research mentoring, who will be willing to perform scientific mentoring in the field of the mentee (Items i-iv). The same panel will identify a list of scientists willing to provide career development advice (items v-vi). Frances Henry has volunteered to provide advice on workplace harassment/gender discrimination but we will also need additional experts in the various countries. Carol Gross will ask undergraduate and graduate student in local SACNAS (Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science).chapters at US universities to be English conversation partners. Short term visits to other laboratories are beyond the scope of this effort.

e. Implementation. The database will be overseen by Dr. Marcia Barbosa, WfS representative from Brazil. Marcia is director of the Physics Institute at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS),

and the 2013 L'Oreal-UNESCO for Women in Science Awards Laureate for Latin America. She is accustomed to setting up and directing databases for various projects .

The database will be developed by Cognitiva Brasil, which is a private equity company consisting of graduates the incubator of the Entrepreneurship Center of the UFRGS. Cognitiva Brasil specializes in educational technologies, and works with the National Network of Education and Research (RNP), with the Ministry of Education and with CAPES within Cataloging and searching for learning objects. Their work system follows the precepts of Agile Software Methodology. They continuously deliver a product starting with the first viable product. This reduces the requirements analysis and project review.

Details of the database.

a. Cognitiva Brasil will develop a platform using open access code with the ability to expand, both in the numbers of people who register, and in the functionalities it displays. This framework will be an open system and will not belong to Cognitiva Brasil.

b. Initial database will match mentors and mentees with both Spanish and English capabilities. Volunteer mentors and mentees will each register and fill out a form, which becomes a CV. A web master (Marcia) will accept the applications. The mentee will be able to contact potential mentors, who will then decide whether or not to accept the mentee. The mentors and mentees will then be able to establish contact via skype, email or cell phone. The platform will be constructed so that it can be expanded to many people. This portal will also be available through the browser in cellphones.

c. Additional capabilities of the platform can be added as funding becomes available. These capabilities include: an inside messenger so people can talk, google talk, and serve as a portal for cell phones. The cell phone capability is probably most important as cell phone access is more widespread than internet. For this, the group would develop a specific app for cellphones.

Details of the system are in Appendix #1

f. Cost estimate:

Activity	Amount
Preparing the environment	US\$ 1.000,00
Database and Logical Part	US\$ 1.900,00
Interfaces	US\$ 3.200,00
Installation	US\$ 400,00

TOTAL US\$ 6.500,00

We will also add 500.00 for revisions to the system

Note: adding Cell phone capability will cost \$5000.00

g. Evaluation. An appropriate social scientist, knowledgeable in program evaluation will be identified by the focal points of the WfS. Among these candidates, we will select one willing to devise a pre- and post-program evaluation survey. The surveys will be administered to both mentors and mentees and will assess both satisfaction, knowledge gain and assessment of positive and negative features of the program.

h. Follow-up. If feasible, mentees in each country will meet yearly (or have a call-in meeting) to discuss their experience in the program, and suggestions going forward.

i. Expansion. If the program is well received, we will expand to additional countries, and capabilities seeking funding from various agencies, National Academies of Science, and donors.