

Abstract # L-16-1110

Author/Institution: Barbara Ruel, R.P.I.

Other Authors/Institutions:

Gear: FirstGear SecondGearType: PanelDiscussion Length: OneHour

Abstract: Developing Peer Mentor Programs That Build Community and Increase Retention

The Women's Experiences in College Engineering (WECE) project, funded by the National Science Foundation and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and recently completed by Goodman Research Group, Inc. (GRG), found that women undergraduates who participate in support activities and feel part of a larger community in engineering are more likely to complete their degree programs in engineering. Mentoring, tutoring, skills workshops, career exploration, professional networking, and other social opportunities were all found to be critical to the retention of women.

In this session, a panel of WIE directors from several universities and colleges will share their experiences and knowledge about peer mentor programs. Some of the topics to be covered are: recruiting mentors and mentees; developing activities that build community; program benefits for student mentors and mentees; strategies for sustaining mentoring relationships; measuring program success; and sources of program funding.

Barbara Ruel, Director for Women in Engineering Programs at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, directs a peer mentor program for over 400 women undergraduates that invites and attracts over 65% of all first-year women annually. Barbara will be the session leader and contact for this session.