

Festival of Excellence Roundtable  
The History of SUUWN

The **Southern Utah University Women's Network (SUUWN)**, an affiliate of the Utah Women in Higher Education Network (UWHEN), was established in the Fall of 2014 as a mechanism of professional support for women across campus. In the Spring of 2015, SUUWN welcomed members from the Southwest Applied Technology College (now Southwest Technical College) to join their colleagues within SUUWN. The objectives of SUUWN include offering aid to new employees of Southern Utah University and Southwest Technical College as they transition to our community; providing opportunities for professional support among all women on our campuses; celebrating success; perpetuating laudable campus traditions; and advocating for the institutions' female employees concerning issues relevant to their campus experience, professional development and satisfaction as a members of this community.

Conversations began early in January of 2013 about the creation of a SUU Women's Network inviting a handful of participants to begin brainstorming. These pioneering women included: Donna Eddleman, Barbara Rodriguez, Jana Lunt, Danielle Dubrasky, Keri Mecham, Deb Hill, Heather Ogden, Lynne Brown, Jennifer Ellsworth and Jen Burt, among others.

The starting point of this conversation led to the creation of the following mission statement to direct and guide the organization:

*The Southern Utah University Women's Network  
A Forum for engagement, enlightenment and entertainment in support of women across campus. The Network aids new members of Southern Utah University as they transition to our community; provides opportunities for socialization and support among women on campus; celebrates successes; perpetuates laudable campus traditions; and advocates for the University's female employees concerning issues relevant to their campus experience, professional development and satisfaction as a member of the SUU Community. The Network is open to all full and part-time faculty, staff and administrators employed at SUU.*

Many initial members worked very hard and had many discussions to create the governing Mission & Bylaws, grow membership and develop the SUUWN initiative. The first Inaugural Meeting was held on February 12, 2015 adopting the Mission & Bylaws, electing officers, and planning upcoming panels and events. Thanks to the ingenuity and hard work of these pioneering women, the SUUWN organization is now flourishing with over 160 members.

Since its inception, SUUWN has expanded and is now an affiliate of the Utah Women in Higher Education Network (UWHEN), to which it is currently seeking to become a formal UWHEN chapter. In that light, the mission, goals and governance of SUUWN has greatly expanded.

The Mission of SUUWN is currently to, "work to create an educational, professional, and political climate in which women's voices and values, *in all their diversity and richness*, are heard and included in efforts to shape the institutional and public agenda of higher education, as well as leadership roles for women at SUU."

In addition, SUUWN has identified primary objectives which are represented by the IDEAL acronym:

- Identifying the leadership value in each of us
- Developing women's leadership abilities
- Encouraging the use of those abilities
- Advancing women's careers
- Linking women to other women, mentors and resources

The SUUWN is governed by an elected Executive Board comprised of both men and women holding the following officer positions:

- Past President
- President
- President-Elect
- Historian
- Treasurer

As well as standing committee chairs overseeing the areas of:

- Education and Professional Development
- Constitution and Bylaws
- Social and Welcoming
- Outreach

The Board also includes broad campus representation with 1) one faculty representative, 2) one staff representative; and 3) one student representative.

### **Challenges (Past, Present & Future)**

The overall platform for the various events, panels and forums began with the theme of "Helping You to Help Yourself". In that spirit, several different discussions have occurred throughout the years that SUUWN has been active on campus. Some of the main topics of conversation and challenges facing women (many of which still continue today) that the SUUWN Organization continues to address include:

- How to have conversations with men in leadership roles
- How to create a "safe" social aspect for women on campus
- Imposter syndrome/women threatened by other women
- Agree to Disagree - Code of Ethics
- How to be a leadership trailblazer and be excited about it
- Personal Development issues including:
  - Combatting Lack of Confidence and Self-Doubt with Courage
  - Insecurity in taking on/applying for leadership roles
  - Advocate for self and Salary negotiation
  - How to take emotion out of crucial conversations

Events and Initiatives:

- High Five Award
- Fall and Spring Panels
- UWHEN Annual Conference Opportunities
- Monthly "Critical Conversations" Forums
- Collaborative Opportunities for Leadership and Professional Development
- Social and Networking Events

Everyone is an advocate. Everyone has a voice. Everyone is welcome to join and get involved!

<https://www.suu.edu/suuwn/>