

# **Leadership Development**

## **PROPOSAL SUMMARY**

Consolidate leadership training at Smith under the aegis of the Phoebe Reese Lewis Leadership Program. Involve alumnae as mentors, speakers and role models.

## **OVERVIEW**

The Phoebe Reese Lewis Leadership Program is designed to provide undergraduate women with hands-on learning experiences and training in practical leadership skills.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of Smith women is that they want to make a real difference in their communities -- professionally, politically and socially. While the entire Smith experience provides the opportunity to develop many of the essential skills for doing that -- the ability to think clearly about complex issues, to see several sides to an issue, to reason analytically, to find solutions for complex problems -- the Leadership Program enhances the intellectual abilities and technical skills Smith women will need for successful leadership in college and long afterward.

## **ASSESSMENT**

While students who have completed the PRL Leadership Program demonstrate confidence and skill and assess the experience as valuable, just a small number (roughly 20) complete the Program each year. Participants note in particular the value of collaboration and significant experiential learning about teamwork.

## **SAMPLE OF SMITH'S VARIED LEADERSHIP TRAINING**

- PRL Leadership Program (academic curriculum)
- Pre-orientation leadership program (co-curriculum)
- Student leader training by Residential Life throughout the year
- Presentation skills offered on ad hoc basis by Merylyn Lewis (i.e. to Senior Design Clinic engineering students, architecture students)
- Leadership seminars offered on ad hoc basis by Nancy Harvin (i.e. through Admission Office and CDO; to classes such as ESS grad students in leadership training)

## **ASSESSMENT**

We are providing some leadership training to hundreds of students each year without the benefit of coordination among administrators or synergy between the academic curriculum and the co-curriculum. Consistency is limited to that provided by "expert" participants in more than one program. Recruitment of "experts" is haphazard and challenging to program administrators who know only a few regulars.

## **PERTINENT ALUMNAE VIEWS**

- Alumnae who have participated in Smith's strategic planning work to date have noted that in the first few years after graduation, they felt inadequately prepared by Smith to lead in the workplace or their communities.
- At more than 50 events in the last 15 months, alumnae have offered – with great enthusiasm – to connect to students as mentors.
- Alumnae who have graduated since the early '70s feel somewhat disconnected to Smith as it is today, and find that the programs Smith offers to alums do not always provide the flexibility or the meaningful connection they are seeking.

## **PROPOSAL**

Bring together leadership training and skill development in co-curriculum and academic curriculum to deploy resources more effectively and consistently. Programming could include the in-depth two-J-term program currently called the Phoebe Reese Lewis Leadership Program; the pre-orientation program; training for students in leadership roles both during orientation and throughout the year; single-focus seminars; and classroom instruction as appropriate, including preparing students for team-based projects and "capstone" presentations.

The program director would oversee programming (including the signature J-term program) and build a "speaker's bureau" of sorts, composed of on-campus experts, alumnae experts and consultants. The director would be responsible for innovation, staying abreast of trends in leadership, and meeting campus requests. A large component of the initiative is outreach to alumnae, assessing ways each alumna could make a connection while effectively meeting a need at Smith. Alumnae could serve as one-time speakers or panelists on campus, hosts for shadowing exercises, and individual mentors to student leaders via email and telephone.

## **PLANNING DIRECTIONS ADDRESSED**

Strengthen Essential Student Capacities  
Encourage Purposeful Engagement with Society's Challenges  
Prepare Women for Rewarding Lives in a Rapidly Changing World  
Extend Smith's Reach and Impact on the World

## **RESOURCE ALLOTMENT**

Staffing resources include the program director and an administrative assistant. Existing funding in the Phoebe Reese Lewis Leadership Program would provide some support; in the current set-up the director has traditionally been appointed from the faculty, and the administrator in the enhanced program would include those responsibilities.

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