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Campus Women Hear of Taking Risks

You want your work life to change, but you do not know where to start. According to Deirdre Ling, vice chancellor for University Relations and Development, you start by taking a risk. "Calculated risk taking that allows you to take a leap rather than baby steps," is the way to get where you want Ling told approximately 180 women at a recent luncheon meeting of the University Women's Professional Network (UWPN).

When she was interviewed for her first job in admissions at a school in the West, Ling was asked if she could lift boxes and audio-visual equipment, and whether she would be able to handle eating alone at a truck stop while on business trips. "Eating alone was a small risk," she said. There were more risks to take later, such as applying for a job in New York that she was not completely qualified for, and accepting the offer.

"A woman," said Ling, "may feel she lacks 10 percent" of the job qualifications when looking at a possible new job, while a "man sees he has 60 percent" and assumes that he can pick up the rest on the job.

Should I Stay or Should I Go Now? Knowing when to stay and when to move on is of the utmost importance in making career goal decisions, Ling declared. After directing the Admissions Office here for a few years, Ling was offered a vice presidency of Student Affairs at another school. But she chose to stay in the Amherst area and eventually landed in the new, "exciting and uncharted territory" as the vice chancellor of University Relations and Development.

"I try to see the next five to 10 to 15 years ahead," she said. "Go for long term gains. Compromise, but not too much," was her advice to the audience of women who work in classified and professional positions on campus.

Learning from her grandmother that if you want a job done well, you have to do it yourself, Ling saw as a child that women can be as confident as men. She said of her mother and grandmother, "I believed them, and I believed that women could be as confident as men." Her mother now owns her own business, is president of the chamber of commerce in Lynbrook, New York, and



Deirdre Ling

was elected "woman of the year" on Long Island a few years ago.

Leading and Participating Vice Chancellor Ling cited Michael Maccoby's three types of leadership: the independent crafts person or the Jeffersonian vision; the empire builders or the turn-of-the-century robber barons; and the gamesman who loves challenge, adventure, and has ambition, such as John F. Kennedy. But, she asserted, there is a new kind of leader today—one who is skeptical yet affirmative, a self-realizer who "participates with those she leads."

Power today, she said, is "the capacity to act, to get things done and to open the lines of communication. We can empower ourselves by participating with others." She mentioned innovation and brainstorming as a means to identifying a problem and transforming it into an opportunity. The problem of cleaning the University library, she pointed out, led to the innovative, brainstorming opportunity of Mass Transformation.

A bad boss is no excuse for not succeeding, the vice chancellor said, because doing something well reflects well on you and enhances your resume. "It is exciting to see problems resolve, and you will get visibility. People will be able to see what you did." If you lack ideas on how to go about solving a problem, she suggested asking for proposals from all organizational leaders. "If you don't have people to brainstorm, build them," she said.

The UWPN
Building a network of people to brain-

storm is just what the UWPN is all about. Ling was one of the original organizers of the potluck suppers that led to the formation of UWPN. In 1981, 12 people held the first official meeting and set dues at \$7 a year; five years later dues are still \$7 a year (or less for those who find the \$7 for dues out of their reach). The group meets for about two hours every month, usually at a luncheon meeting with a featured speaker.

The UWPN was designed to promote understanding of the University through formal and informal communication among members, and "to share information and provide support among members through professional development, employment leads, resources, work-related referrals, informal information exchange, and sharing of personal experiences that women often have in the workplace."

The next luncheon speaker is Barbara Love, who will speak on the "Decade of Women," in December. For information call Pat Graves at 5-0284, Sally Ives at 5-0577 mornings and 5-2438 afternoons or Rosmarie Strother at 549-2671, ext. 260.

— JH