On Friday, October 12, 2012, 25 women gathered in the Mazurek Education Commons to plan initial activities to coalesce and develop women faculty at the School of Medicine. Participants included junior and senior women faculty members from across the SOM, including Dean Valerie Parisi. Several senior women in academic medicine at the national level were visiting the SOM that day, and each provided insights from her own experiences.

Dr. Roberta Sonnino, Vice Dean for Faculty Affairs, welcomed the participants and led the discussion. Several SOM women faculty members who had attended national leadership and career development programs for women in academic medicine described the benefits they found in such seminars. Those who had experienced women’s programs at other institutions shared their recommendations based on that experience. All participants expressed their suggestions and hopes for a program here at WSU SOM.

Most commonly, women seek to have opportunities to meet together as colleagues, to “feel part of a group,” to know that “I am not alone,” to “see images of myself, people like me,” and to share stories of both successes and failures. Given the excellent representation of women as leaders at the highest level of medical school leadership, women would like an opportunity to engage with SOM women leaders.

Numerous suggestions for developmental offerings were made, including:

- **Skills/Sessions/Training:**
  - How to establish a leadership/career path; developing a career plan and goals
    - Establishing professional and personal milestones, timeline (e.g., 10 years)
  - Increasing visibility
    - Be on the “list” of whom people at the school/institution “know” (especially important for introverts)
  - Understanding oneself and others, e.g., Myers Briggs Type Indicator
  - Negotiation, consensus building
  - How to work within the hierarchy of academic medicine, from the bottom up and the top down
  - Networking/collegiality
  - Leadership skills
  - Teamwork skills
  - Curriculum development
  - How to “juggle” personal life and academic life

- **Mentoring:**
  - Encourage women to develop a mentorship “quilt” or “constellation” of people to whom they can turn for a variety of mentoring needs
  - Consider developing a peer mentoring program as an adjunct to traditional mentoring
Additional suggestions:
- Have a champion for women in every department
- Have a safe “ombudsperson” in each department for confidential concerns
- Develop a series of small groups, or “pods”, of diverse faculty who meet together regularly
  - 8 – 10 people, take turns leading, have a theme
  - Senior people rotate through pods
  - Be sure to include junior faculty
- Create opportunities for faculty to practice presentations in front of one another and receive feedback
- Have small exercises on work issues or conflicts to promote discussion
- Have discussions on difficult conversations
- Offer book club discussions on career topics

Logistics:
- Start slowly, choose topics carefully
- Make sure that MDs have a chance to attend
- Offer a variety of experiences
  - Didactics
  - Workshops
  - Discussion groups
- Lunchtime, noon to 1:00 p.m. appears to be a good time for brief programs/gatherings
- Bring in external speakers, perhaps 3 – 4 times per year

Summary Comments:
At the close of the session, participants were asked to provide written feedback. There was enthusiastic agreement that this initial discussion was worthwhile, e.g., “This was a great session, thank you for initiating it,” “I’m not sure what I think is needed, but some forum for SOM women to interact, learn from each other, help each other will be wonderful.” “Keep in mind that whatever gets started may need to be “tweaked” – it’s just important that we start. Then we can optimize it to fit what is needed.”

Follow Up:
We were delighted with the excellent response we received among those faculty who were able to attend our October 12 session, as well as from several faculty who were unable to attend but asked to be kept informed about progress on the development of women’s programming at the SOM. Initially, to follow up on session, we will provide monthly lunch sessions during January through April, 2012.

Winter “Women in Medicine and Science @ the SOM” Luncheon Dates:

Luncheons will take place in the Margherio Conference Center, Mazurek Education Commons
*~* 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. *~* (RSVP FAEmail@med.wayne.edu)

** Tuesday, January 22, 2012:** How to Help Women Faculty Members Advance in Academic Rank

** Wednesday, February 20, 2012:** Topic TBD

** Wednesday, March 19, 2012:** Topic TBD

** Tuesday, April 16, 2012:** Fiscal Awareness for Women