


“Owning Our Career Journey”

Cultivating belonging for Women in Academia

A Success Circles Case Study:

Changing The Future for Women at Penn State 2022



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Program profile

Impact

Components

A Culture of Belonging



Agenda

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Success Circles program profile

Changing the Future for Women at Penn State University(CTF'22)

Population: 45 female faculty, 3rd cohort since '18, 4th ongoing now-March '24

Date: January - June '22

Women are leaving academia, sighting the negative climate. Success Circles are creating belonging for the commitment and advancement of women in academia and industry.

Over 6 months, CTF '22 SuccessCircles redefined what a successful academic career looks like. Then, they forged ahead. The emergent theme of their cohort:
“Owning Our Career Journeys.”

Let's see how they did it.

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CTF '22 Impact

“After 20 years at Penn State...this was the most valuable professional development I have taken part in - hands down.” - Michelle Zieders,
Assist Teaching Prof, Geography

Connected to thrive in academic careers.

“By being seen by others, a sense of community is forged, and a sense of belonging.”

“A great investment in the retention of talented individuals.”

“Created a sense of belonging through shared struggles.”

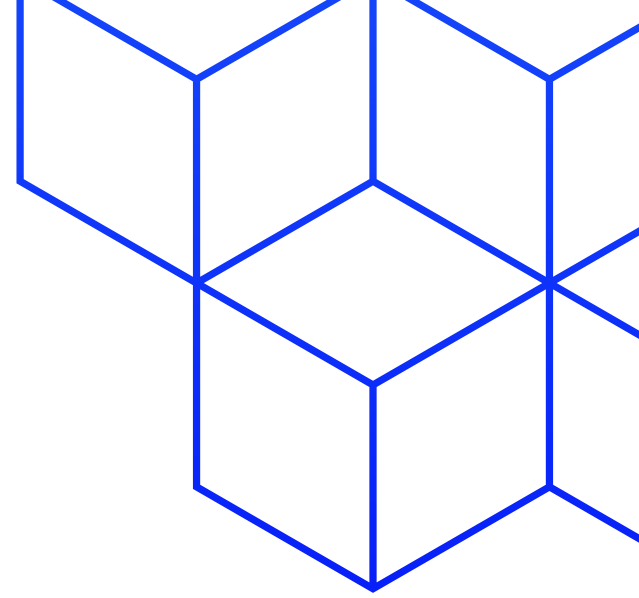
“Women can find support in other environments within the campus if the one they are in doesn't feel safe.”

“This network... is essential not just for women, but for all people at Penn State.”

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CTF '22 Cultivated Belonging



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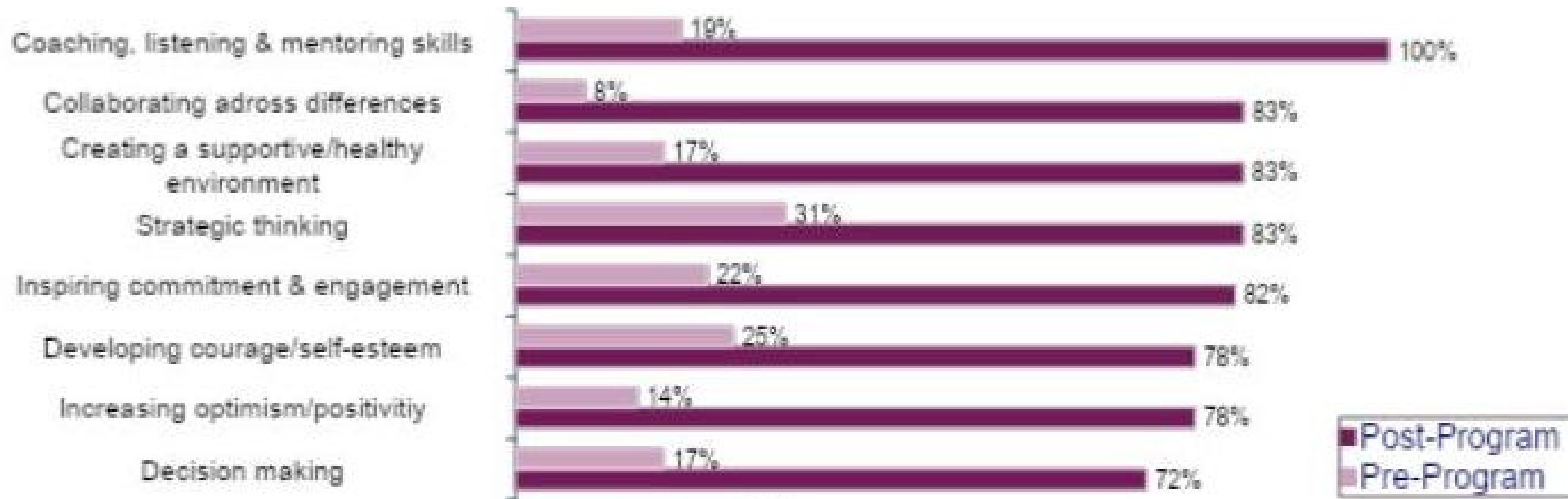


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CTF '22 Progress on Development Goals

Over 6 month program

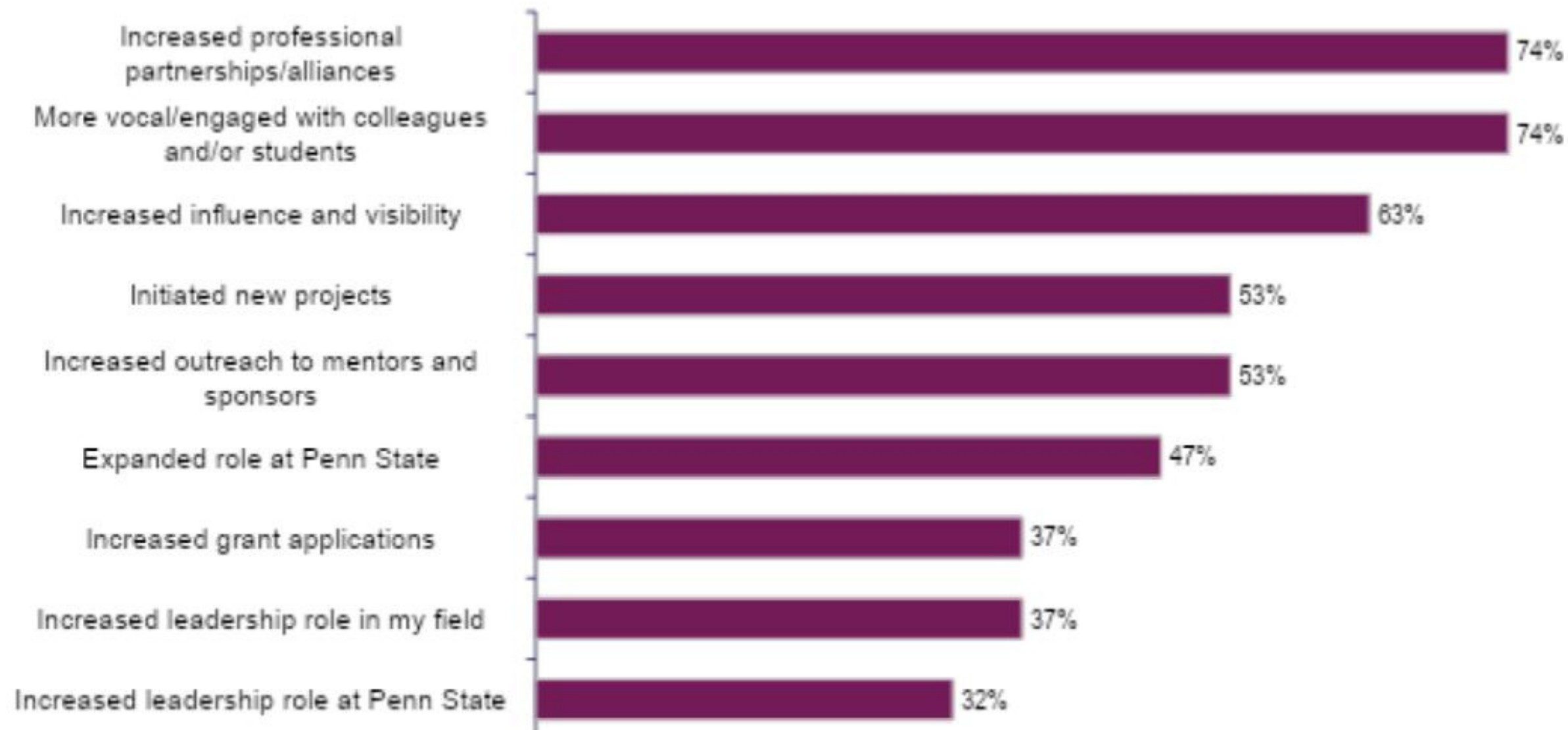


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CTF '22 Expanded Contribution

Over 6 month program



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CTF '22 Tackling Top 5 Barriers to Women's Advancement

“I grew into my new role as a director and can wear the ‘coat’ feeling more powerful.”

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Barriers at Launch by % rated #1	Results at Graduation
28%: Double Burden of Work/Life: women still take on great majority of home and family responsibilities	67% improved work/life integration & self care
25% Women Don't Ask: responding rather than initiating, hoping work will speak for them rather than speaking for work, impacts gender pay gap	53% initiated new projects 47% expanded role
25% Being Seen as a Leader: navigating bias about gender roles and leadership	83% improved collaboration across differences 63% increased influence & visibility
13% Confidence Gap: less healthy risk-taking, lack of female role models	78% developed courage & self esteem 73% more vocal/ engaged
10% Chilly Climate for Contribution: isolation, "otherness," lack of encouragement/ safety	83% more supportive & healthy environment 73% increased professional relationships

Coaching & Mentoring

100% improved coaching and mentoring skills.

“Improved active listening”

“More carefully matching projects to people.”

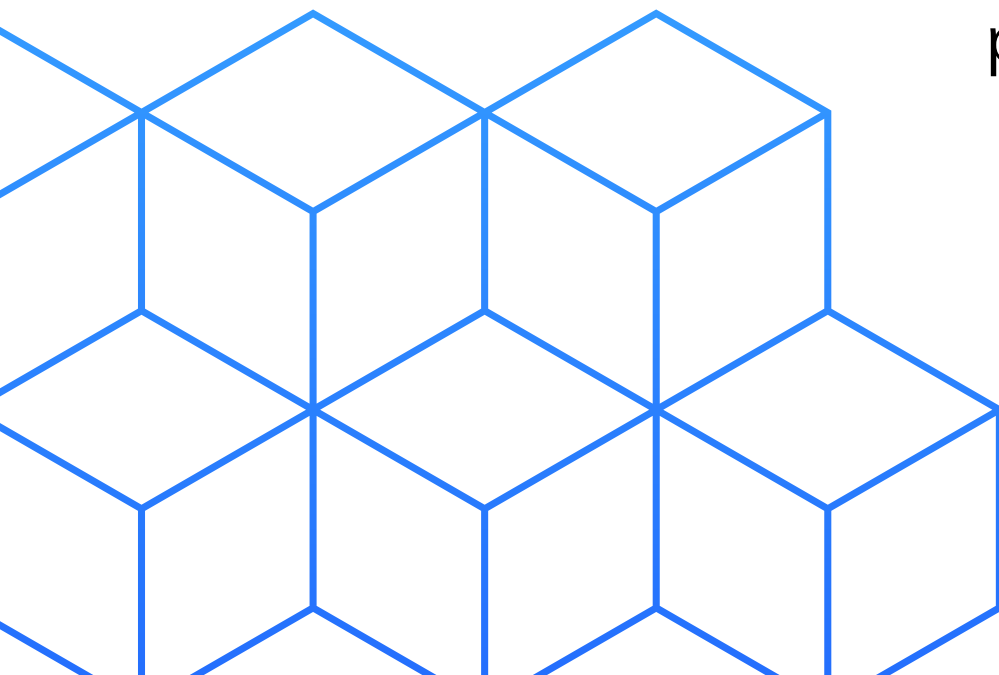
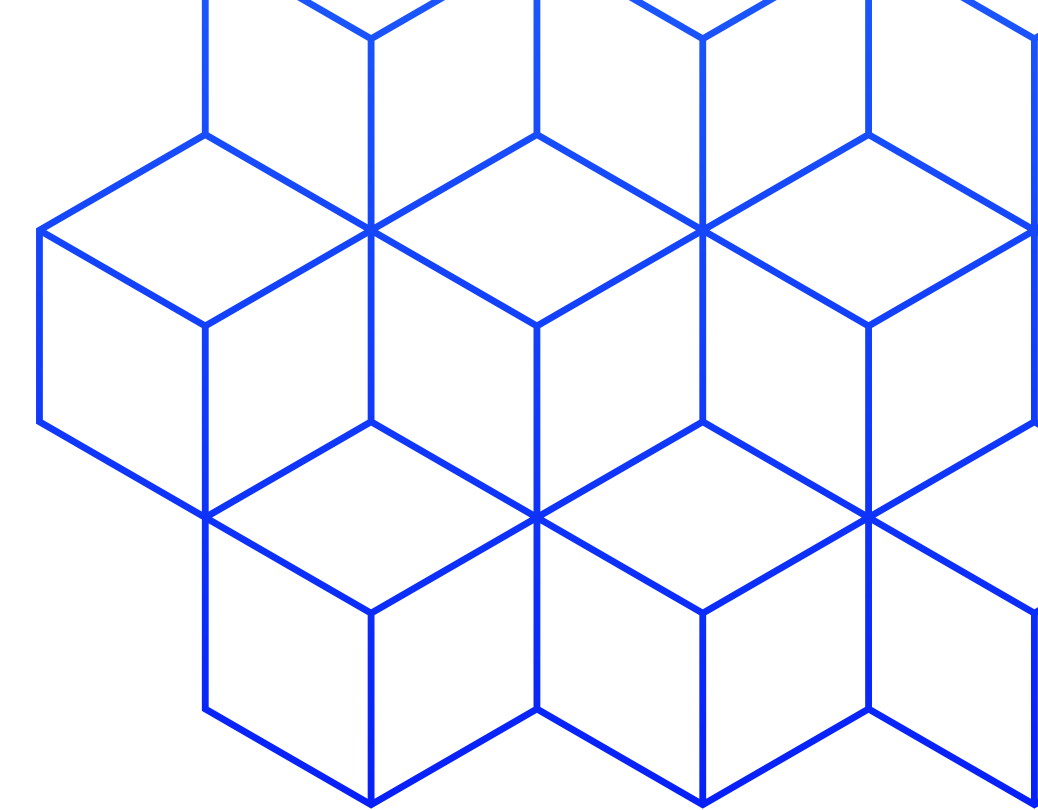
“Beneficial to learn about other people's struggles, strategies to address them, and feeling connected to other women leaders at Penn State.”

“Made me realize that usually I lead with criticism (of myself OR others) and shifted my perspective on student and professional interactions toward positive stances prior to examining areas to improve.”

“Definitely impacts how I engage with direct reports and students.”

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Community

83% agree CTF helped create a more supportive & healthy environment

“Transformative not only professionally but personally as well. I learned how to better listen to others and myself and how to stand strong in what I believe. I also connected with so many amazing women around campus and that greatly encouraged me.”

- Stephanie Velegol, Teaching Professor

“Prior to this program I felt very isolated and unsupported at Penn State... Helped me to realize that I am not alone in many of the professional challenges that I have faced at Penn State and in my research field”

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Encouragement

78% developed courage & self esteem

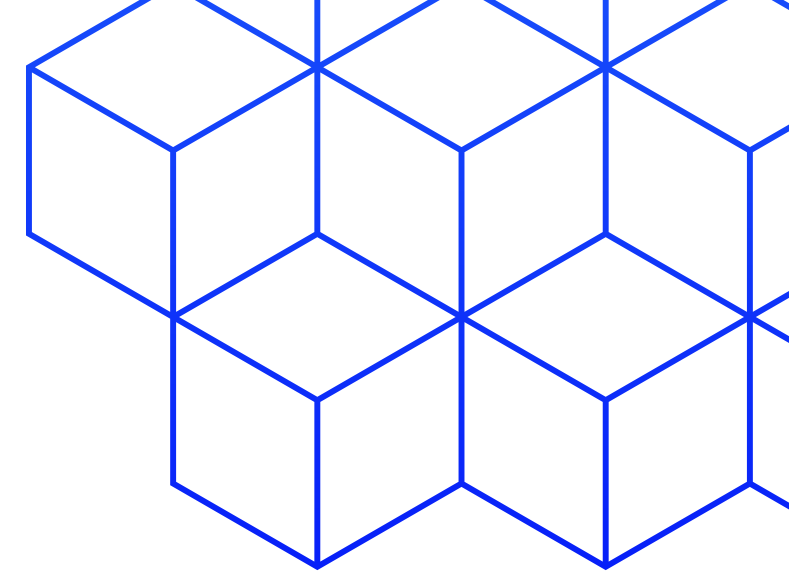
“The program is extremely well developed to increase a sense of empowerment.... it coaches one to become more present, aware, and confident in one's emergent voice.”

“My confidence was seriously lacking before this program. Since beginning the program, I’ve asked for and received equity salary adjustment, became involved in a virtual student exchange program, and gained some trusted new friends.”

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Resilience



67% improved work/ life integration & self care

“I’m taking better care of myself, which I neglected while trying to achieve tenure.”

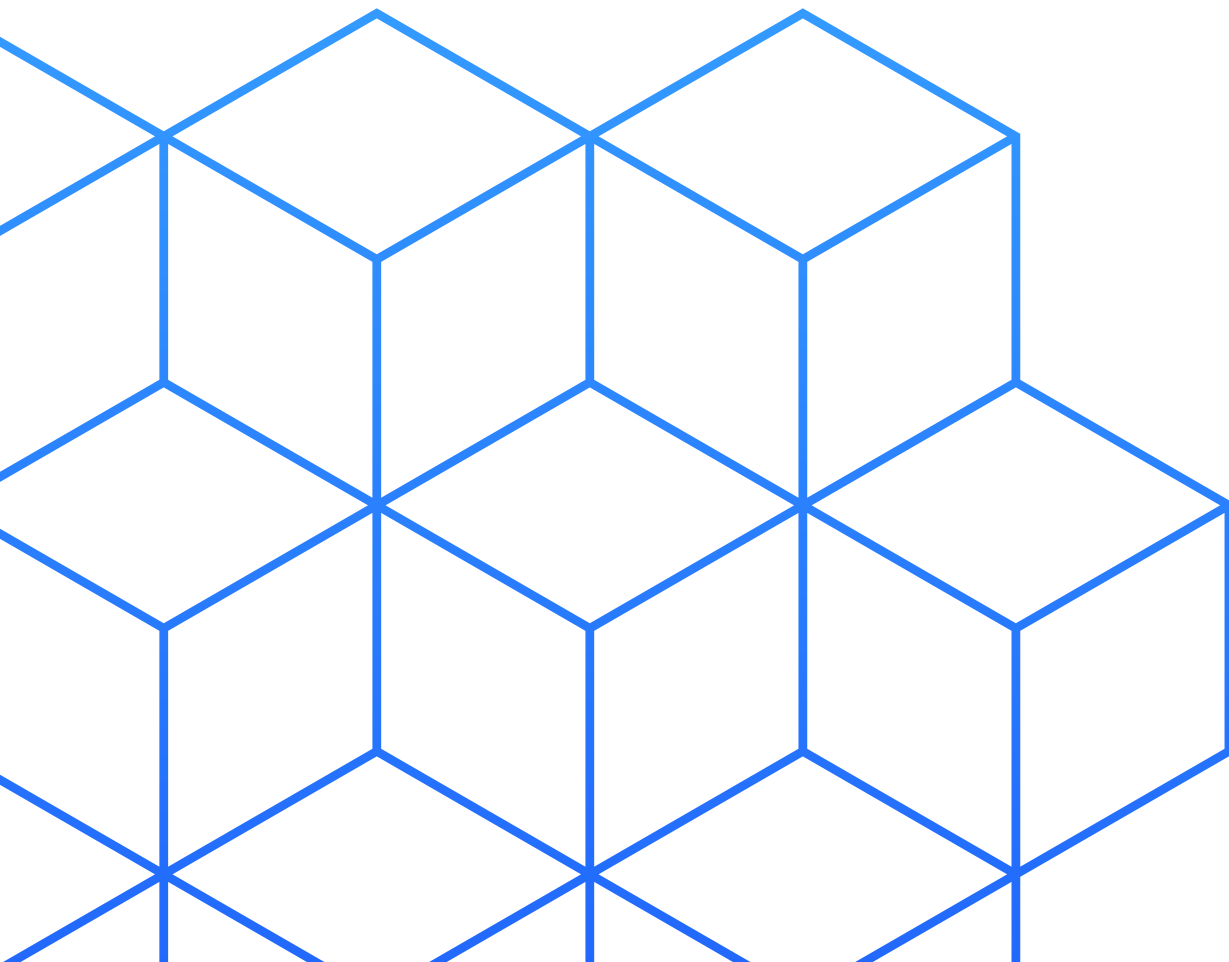
“Realization of small changes adding up to impactful result over time”

“A journey filled with reflection, compassion, growth, strength and new friendships... all necessary ingredients for a successful leader!”

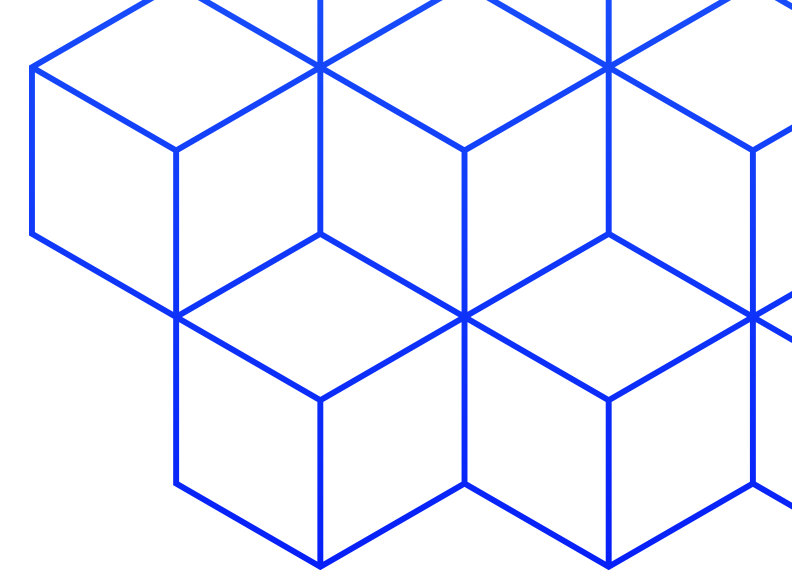
“It is energizing to be part of this amazing group.”

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Resourcefulness



78% developed optimism & a positivity outlook.

Confidence...

“Clarification of my own strengths and values”

“ Identifying my strengths and how those strengths can serve my career.”

“Opportunity to reflect on my career path”

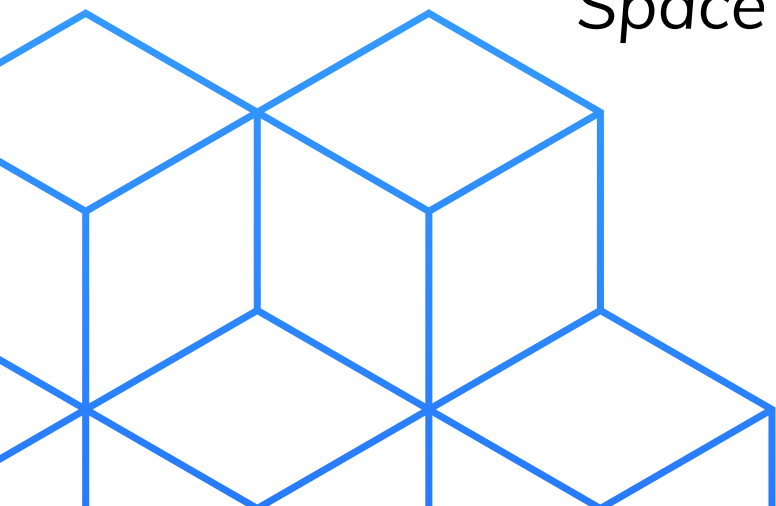
To chart success

“An extended period of refining what areas I prefer to focus on in my career”

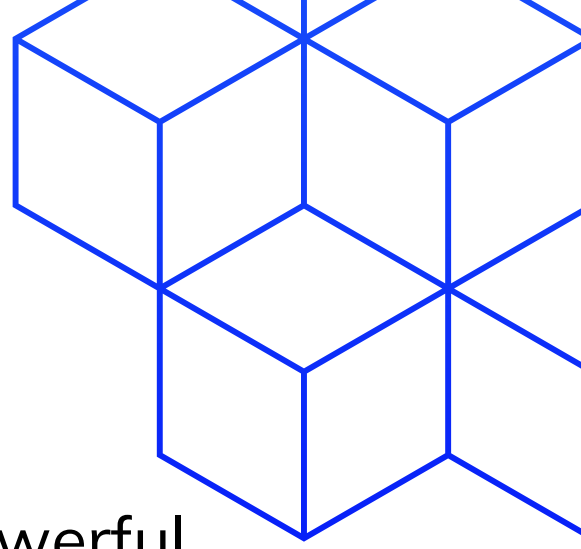
“Space and time to reflect on what leadership means to me and how I can implement changes to achieve the things I want in my career.”

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Empowered Development



“CTF taught me how to align my career with my own strengths and values. It helped me build a powerful network at Penn State beyond my department and find both small nuts-and-bolts and big change-of-heart ways to address immediate and long-standing challenges.”

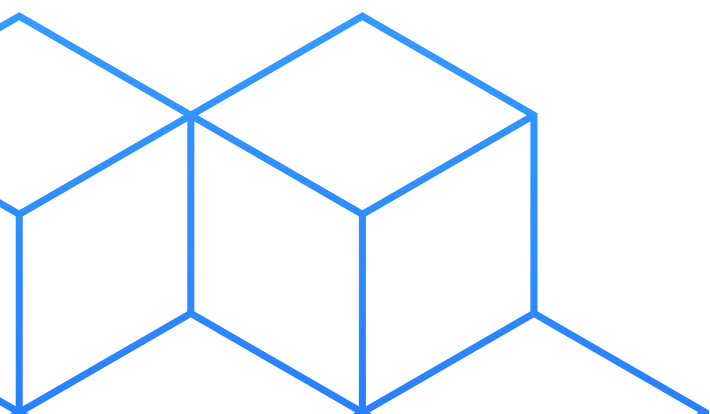
- Rebekah Dawson, Associate Professor

“(I appreciated) hearing all the ways people have arrived at this point, where they want to go, and understanding where I see myself in this ecosystem.”

“Practical plans and general approaches to challenging parts of my career... soliciting feedback and establishing accountability”

“Articulating goals in new admin position- from vision to tangibles I can make progress on”

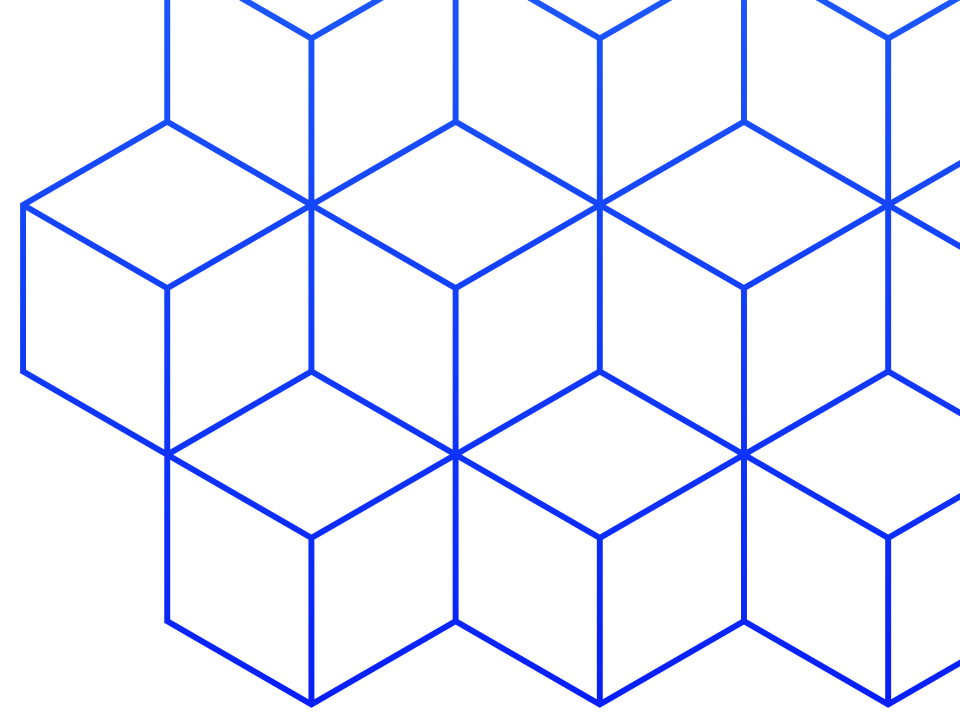
“From developing a personal brand to... programmatic changes that will stay long after I am done here”



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Inclusion & Belonging



A sense of belonging

“I no longer feel so alone or misunderstood.”

“Great to find that things I struggle with are commonly struggled with... validation in shared problems.”

Inclusive leadership

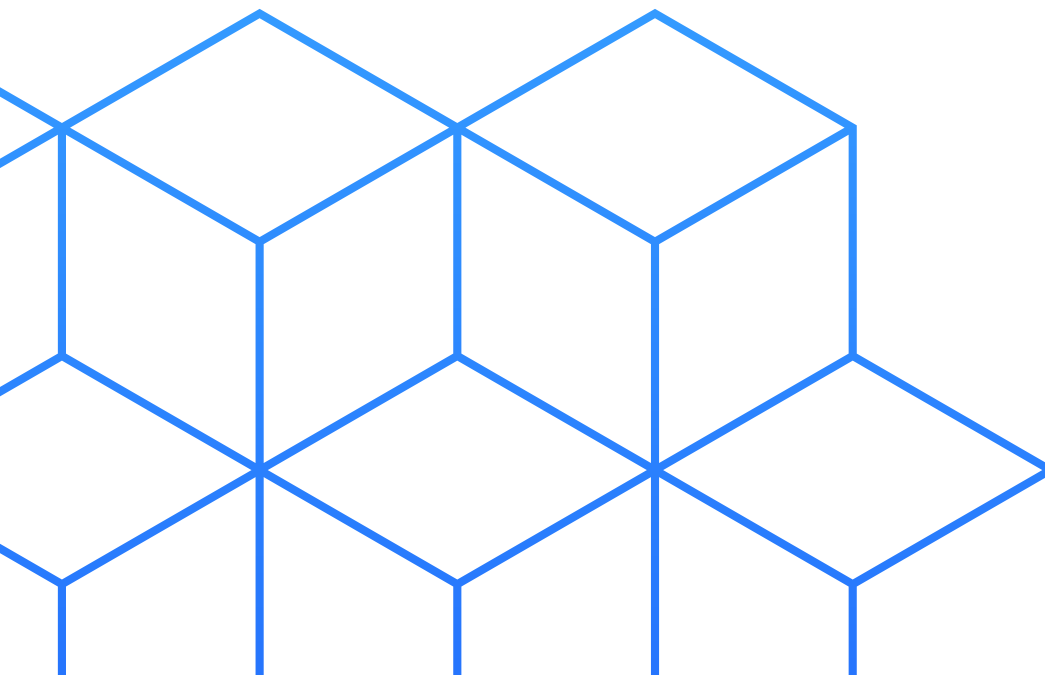
“Patience with those that have a different focus and style than me.”

“I was inspired by the differences in our fields to expand my thinking.”

Connecting with allies

“Meeting a large number of like-minded women”

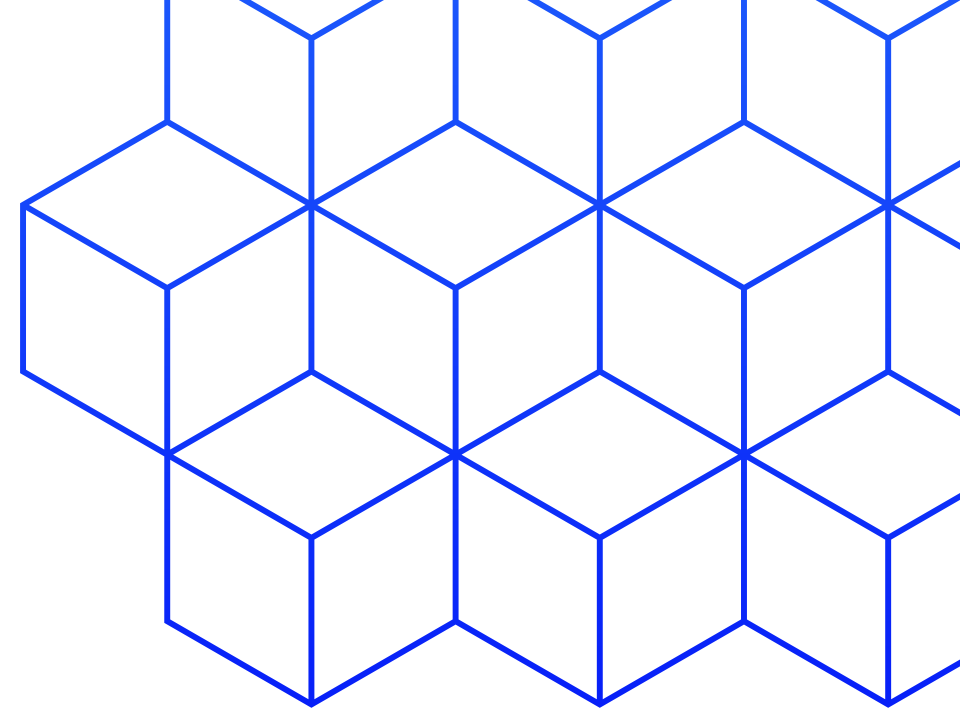
“Provided hope that a different leadership is possible.”



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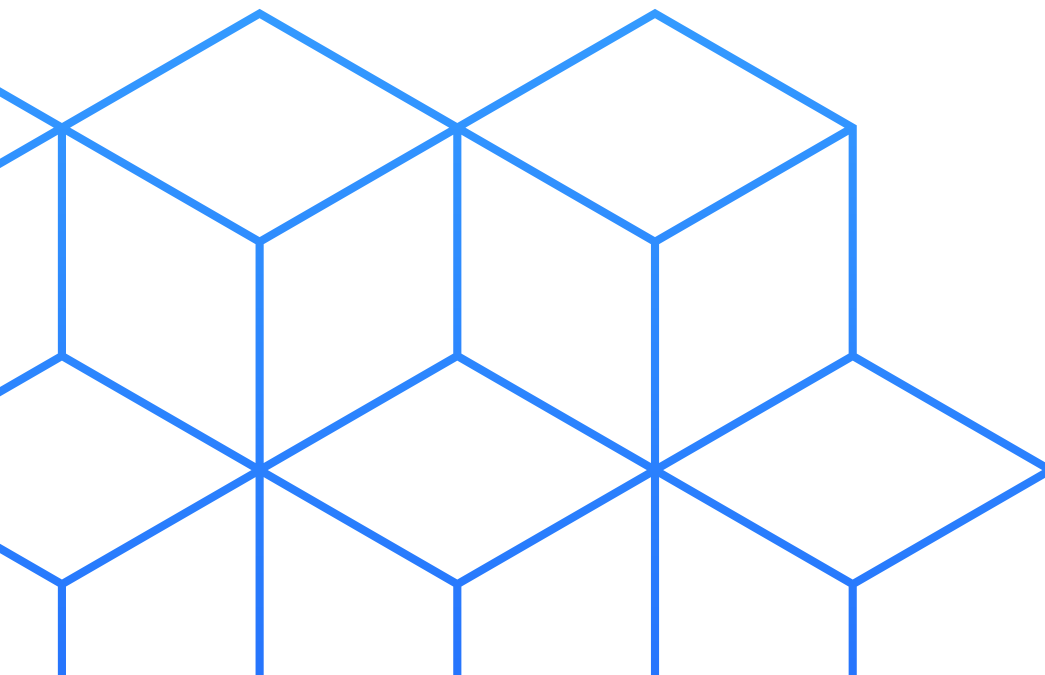
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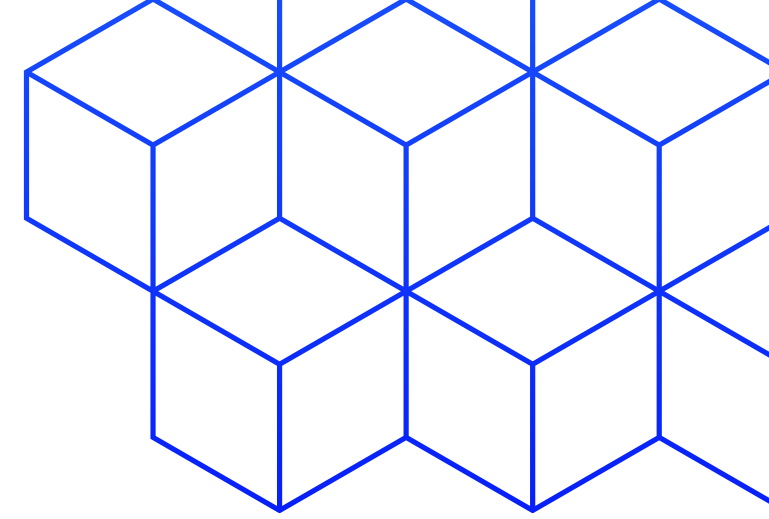
“Provided hope that a different leadership is possible.”



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Expanded Perspective



On Penn State

“Expands understanding of how the university works (or doesn't work)”

“Connecting with folks whose fields and disciplinary expertise were so different than mine was very valuable.”

On challenges

“Increased awareness of what others are experiencing (similarities and differences) both professionally and personally.”

“Listening to how they successfully navigated hurdles.”

On thriving

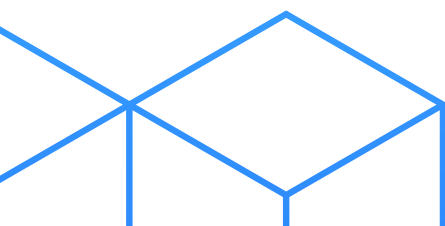
“Nice to connect with other Penn State women who are ambitious and seeking career development.”

“Inspired by what other female faculty are doing outside my College to contribute to a positive working environment”

“Very impressive women who have full lives... fortunate to hear how they navigate their worlds.”

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Program Components

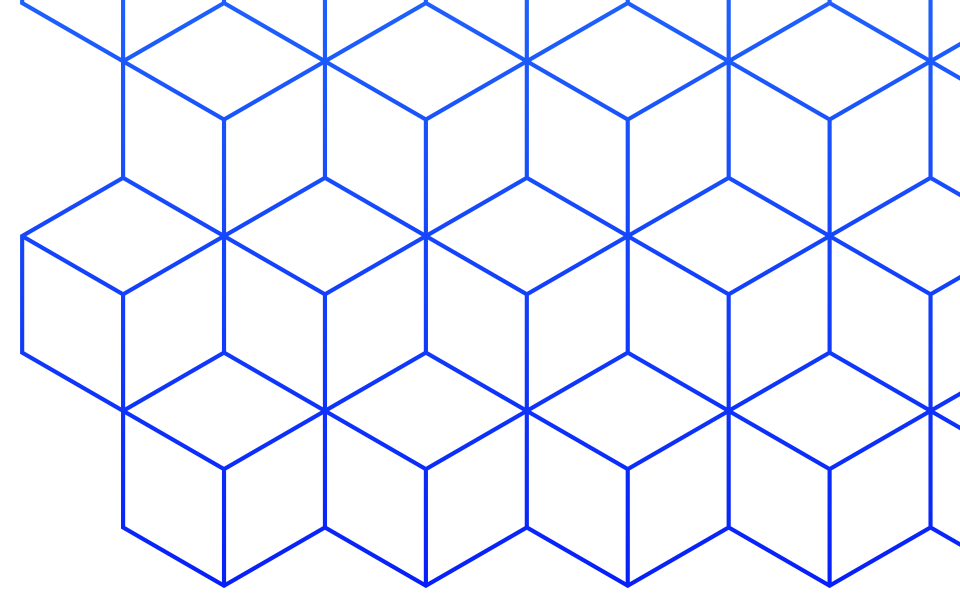
“I owned my passion. I met many new people around campus. I created a 3 minute narrative that inspires me and I thought more about my networking web.”

- **Success Circles® Peer Coaching (SC)**
 - Triads meet monthly
- **Executive Coaching**
 - Bookending one-on-ones
- **Group Trainings**
 - Monthly cohort sessions
- **Storytelling Graduation**
 - Celebrating CTF'22 leaders

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Success Circles® Peer Coaching (SC)



CTF developed connected leadership for cultures of belonging via SCs

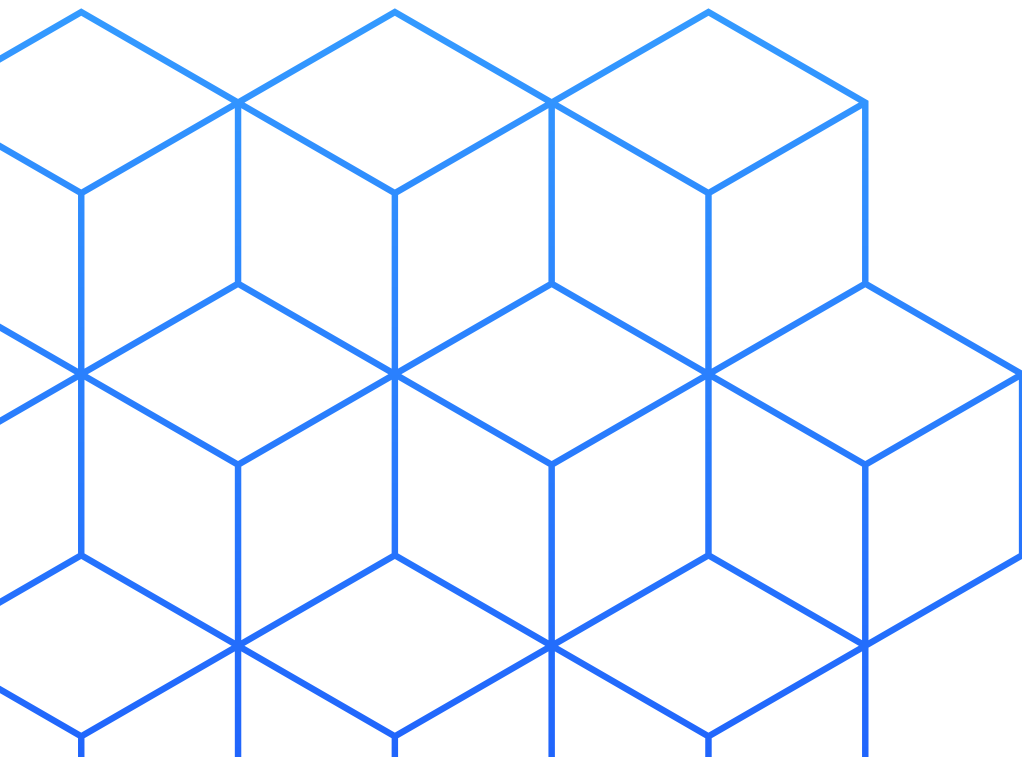
As triads meet monthly to coach and be coached with NLL's patented peer coaching methodology, they connected to thrive:

- Meeting immediate challenges
- Sharing tools and strategies
- Enabling emergent genius
- Continuing to meet beyond program (some for decades)

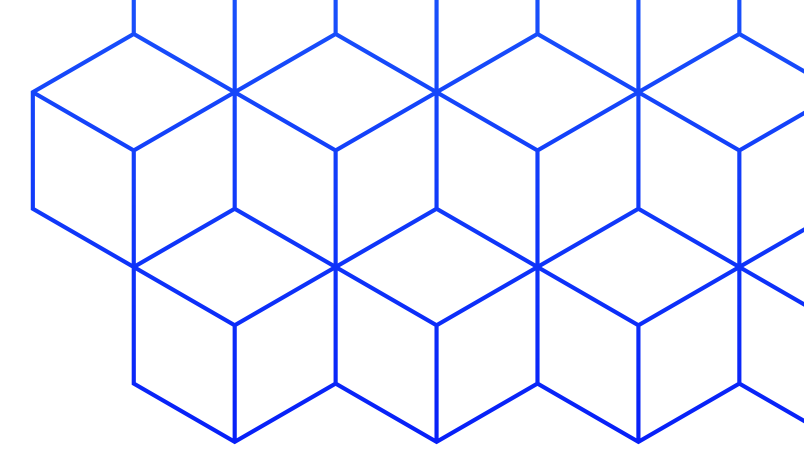
“Many inspiring moments when someone in my success circle came with what seemed at first like very practical/nuts-and-bolts challenge but -- with great honest, openness, and self-knowledge -- recognized it was something larger and was willing to "go there" to make real change.”

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Executive Coaching



CTFers worked with NLL executive coaches for bookending one-on-one session, defining goals and designing ongoing development plans.

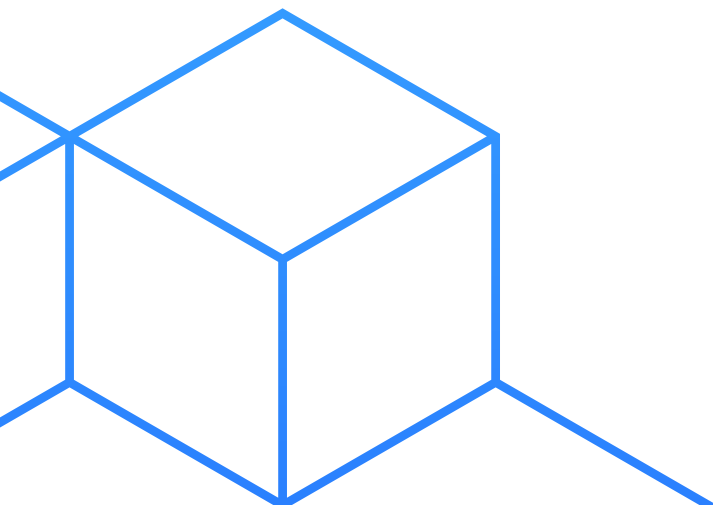
“The one-on-one coaching helped me to identify my struggles and provided me with strategies to address them. It also gave me and will give me more confidence when speaking up.”

“Having discussions with Lucia were some of my biggest aha! moments. Her expert questions really made me dig deep and find ways to express in a cohesive way what my goals and desires are.”

“Lucia is a very talented coach....able to challenge me to make positive change in a gentle yet assertive manner.”

“A great mirror to who I am. Lucia did a great job reflecting back what I was saying - life changing!”

“Very helpful because it was personalized... helped to unify the experience”



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Group Trainings

Resilience Training: A holistic, habit based approach to work and life sustainability

“Helped me achieve more balance in my multiple work spheres and homelife.”

“Often women... wear many hats... a network of women who have achieved success... managing these expectations is invaluable. Sharing their experiences and strategies has been so helpful to me.”

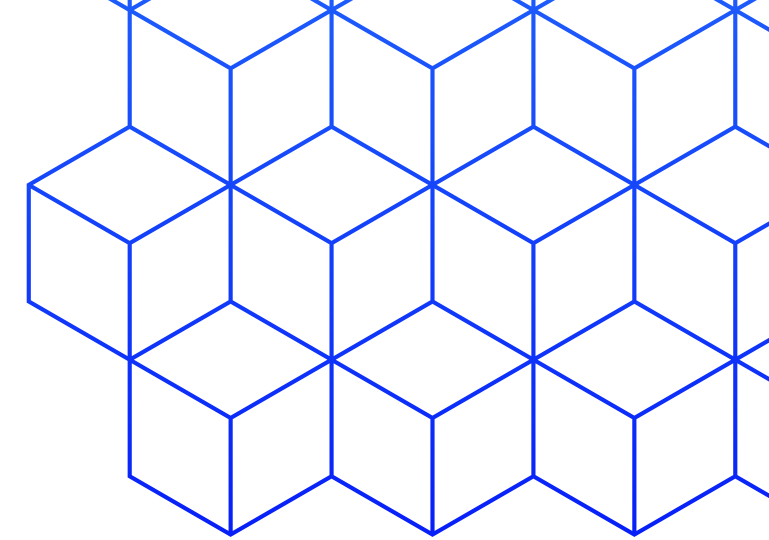
Leadership Stand: Defining strengths, values, and impact to embody individual leadership presence

“I’d started to lose sight of my value.... I was seriously convinced I was leaving my current position for multiple reasons including salary discrimination. My success circle helped me stand up for myself and offered strategies to move forward... The value is in hearing what you are communicating repeated back to you along with insightful feedback and support to hold you up and push you forward. Powerful.”

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Group Trainings



Strategic Webbing: Leading from the center of a web with NLL's radical approach to networking.

“Removed the ‘ick’ factor from networking”

Alumni Panel: A candid dialog on owning career journeys with celebrated CTF alumni

“Amazed at the stories of career changes... resonates and inspires.”

Leadership Storytelling: Crafting personal leadership stories on the why behind their leadership mission

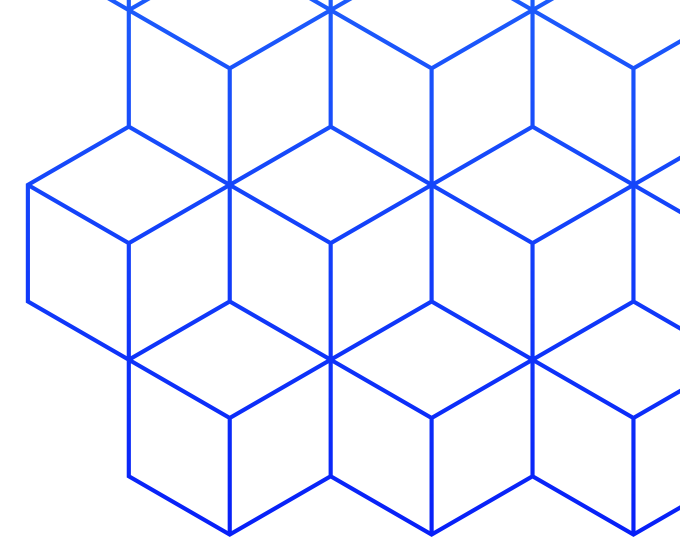
71% report the most inspiring moment was leadership storytelling



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Storytelling Graduation

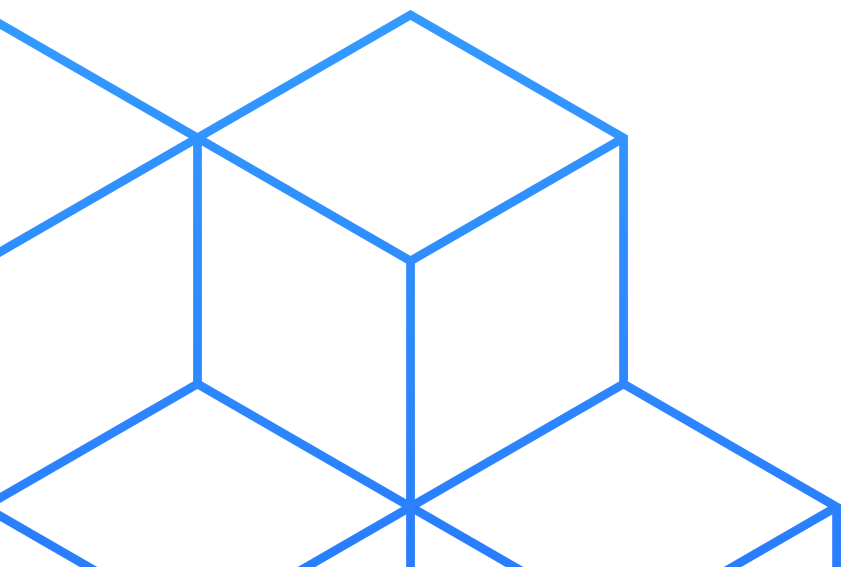


CTF shared leadership stories in celebration of their ongoing development in community with alumni and supporters.

“When a space is developed to bring different kinds of people together to share stories of their lives– value becomes visible.”

“We will achieve much greater success personally and professionally if we connect to and collaborate with our network of women across Penn State...
let's not forget to share our stories!”

“I will remember these women... the struggles and dreams each brings into a room... women in this program will
"see" each other... that builds confidence and resilience.”

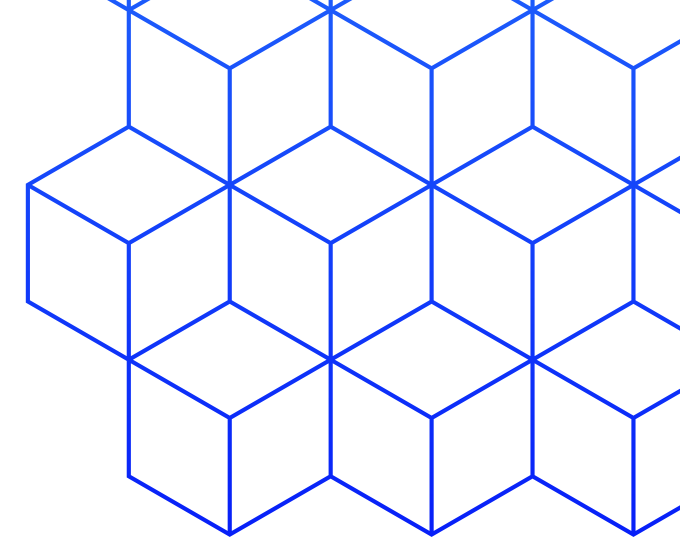


[Watch their stories](#)

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A Culture of Belonging at PSU



CTFers are committed to action for ongoing change

Encouragement

“Help women build their confidence”

"Decrease isolation of women at PSU; help others to shine”

“Mentoring of more female and under-represented groups”

Equity

“A more equitable work environment that is supportive of women no matter their choice in career path.”

“Fair and equitable pay. Equitable consideration. Equitable opportunity.”

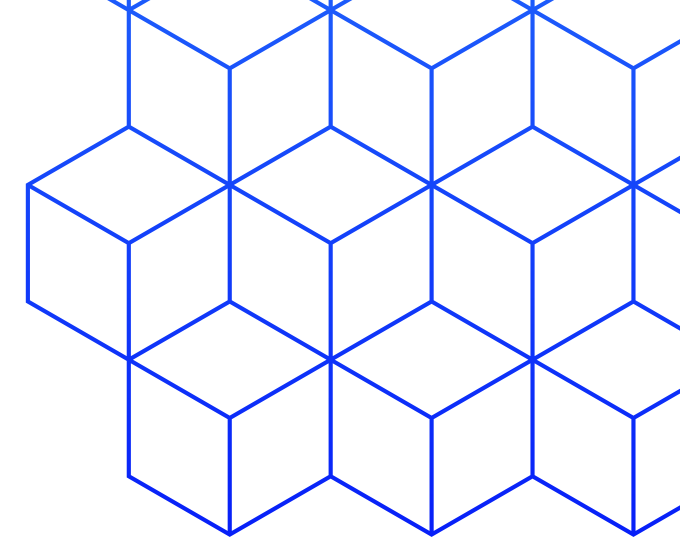
“Inclusion at the leadership table in all the organizations that could not run without the contributions of women.”

“Connected me with other amazing women who are showing up...
making a difference for the students, staff, faculty, and community at large.”

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A Culture of Belonging at PSU



CTFers are committed to action for ongoing change

Empowerment

“Allow women to be themselves and successes.”

“Reduce the pressure to fit the mold rather than thrive.”

“Building a more cohesive and stronger leadership community”

Inclusion

“Being valued community members respected for the gifts we bring”

“Greater connection and community among all people at PSU.”

“When future hires.... consider coming to PSU, they see an institution committed to DEI”

“Keep in contact. Keep pushing. Keep shining back. Keep dreaming.”

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**Here's to the fourth class of CTF,
'24 & beyond!**

Connected to thrive.

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