

Civil Service ConnectionS

Civil Service ConnectionS is a professional development networking group in which small groups of civil service women can share ideas, explore problem solving perspectives, and use a small-group process to establish professional bonds. At least five strategy groups of ten civil service employees meet every month, at lunch or after work. Civil Service workers trained in small group dynamics co-facilitate the groups, which are assembled by building location, job classification, and number of years of service at the University. Discussions cover topics of professional interest selected by the group members.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of Civil Service ConnectionS is to share ideas with each other, explore different problem solving perspectives, and establish bonds between civil service employees using a small group process. Personal job satisfaction comes from an awareness of resources and obtaining information that could enhance job knowledge. This knowledge leads to self-confidence, which is a necessary component of a productive employee. Civil Service ConnectionS is designed to encourage personal growth and professional development of civil service women at SIUC, maximizing self-confidence and career satisfaction. Building a network of departments in which they work, individuals are given the opportunity to explore new areas of interest, increase their "working knowledge" of the campus, and create a mechanism for interaction with others.

Guidelines for Civil Service ConnectionS Groups

1. Respect the Mission of the Group--Become acquainted with the purpose and desired outcomes of the group. Working together toward a common goal benefits each group member. Your input in determining common goals is an important part of your participation.
2. Confidentiality--To have open and honest discussion, it is essential that group discussion remains within the group. Feel free to discuss your own experience with others, but be extremely careful NOT to discuss anyone else's participation, with or without her name. Her story belongs only to her and must not be repeated outside of the group.
3. Topics of Discussion--Topics will focus on career or job related subjects and be decided within the group by focusing on overall outcomes. Topics may include increasing personal job satisfaction, cultivating contacts within the University community, and increasing knowledge of University resources. Due to time constraints, it is important to stay on topic.
4. Commitment--If the group is to have good discussions, and if people are to benefit from your ideas, you need to be committed to attend each session. Please arrive on time and be sure to call either facilitator if you will be late or absent.
5. Participation--The advantage to small groups is that you can gain from other people's experiences and ideas. We are learning from each other, regardless of age, experience, academic degree, or job position. The groups needs your input and your participation. Although you are

encouraged to participate, you may choose to take more time to think about a discussion topic and "pass" your turn to talk for the moment.

6. Feedback--Be willing to respond to others. Tell each other what you think about their comments but be specific and helpful, not critical or disrespectful. Suspending value judgements allow each to truly listen to the other, validating self-worth. By being open and honest with your comments, groups members will benefit from your insight and your clear communication.

7. Mutual Respect--In order for each member to feel comfortable in the group, it is important you respect others as unique, with worthwhile ideas. Mutual respect involves listening to others without interruption.

8. The Guidelines are open for further discussion and modification at any time.

Co-facilitators

Group	Name	Department	Mailcode	Phone	E-mail
1	Cyndie Kessler-Criswell	Rehabilitation Institute	6703	536-2462	criswell@siu.edu
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3	Nancy Hartman	Emerita			nancyhartman@juno.com
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6	Brenda Hellmer	Workforce Educ. & Dev.	4318	453-1967	bhellmer@siu.edu
6	Tammy Pugh	Intercollegiate Athletics	6620	453-2321	tampugh@siu.edu

What members have to say about CSC

"It means so much to have a friend on campus who is also Civil Service; who understands the

problems that can occur, and is there to listen and provide helpful suggestions. Joining that Civil Service ConnectionS group is the best thing I've done for myself in the nine years I've been at SIUC. Both you and the entire group are really special to me; I love you ALL."

"Joining a ConnectionS group has enhanced my SIU career in significant ways. First, a group of strangers became coworkers reaching towards the common cause of upgrading the SIU working environment. Second, these strangers became counselors and advisors as they shared their experiences and knowledge and also listened to my experiences. Third, we traveled through an agenda that included improving job skills, building interpersonal relationships, learning new health concepts, and even fun activities like planting wildflowers or baking holiday gifts for coworkers. Finally, after only a year of this adventure, I realized that these strangers had become my close friends. Meeting them on campus or in the community always brightens my day."

"Joining ConnectionS was the best thing I did for myself. As a woman and new Civil Service employee on this campus it is extremely important to connect with other people who work in similar circumstances and for the same 'company.' The experiences my group members have shared with me, and the advice given have helped make my first year at SIU a positive one. Each meeting I learn something new, receive support and feedback, or just build by network of ConnectionS. What a wonderful concept...woman helping woman!"

"With the support and encouragement of my ConnectionS group, I pursued and obtained a promotion."

"I enjoy the support and advice of other group members. It is helpful to have other people's views who are objective and to share experiences with each other. Before, I basically only had contact with my department and college."

For additional information, please contact University Women's Professional Advancement, Davies 150, Mail Code 4331, telephone 453-1366, or e-mail UWPA@siu.edu.