

The New IC: Empowering Women and Engaging Men

Gender equality within the U.S. Intelligence Community is not just a “woman’s issue”; ensuring that women and men have equal opportunities to contribute to national security is a community-wide challenge that requires diligence from the entire workforce. Through discussions with members from both the private and public sector, INSA identified a need for a conference that focused on women engaging in a positive dialogue with men in the room.

INSA hosted “The New IC: Empowering Women and Engaging Men” Symposium to provide a forum to discuss the environment for women in the Intelligence Community (IC). The inaugural full-day conference, which fully engaged men in the conversation, involved a diverse set of intelligence professionals with varying levels of experience. The event provided insights on technology, leadership, and women’s roles in the IC and identified tangible actions that attendees could apply in the workplace.

The Event

On Thursday, May 17, 2018, INSA hosted a full-day symposium to examine the challenges and opportunities that women face in the Intelligence Community. The morning started with PDDNI Sue Gordon as the opening keynote and featured government and industry speakers on such topics as:

- Breaking into the leadership pipeline;
- Increasing the number of women in STEM; and
- Exploring men’s roles as leaders, mentors, and allies.

The International Spy Museum presented its “Mother, Daughter, Sister, Spy” luncheon program, which featured presentations by three pioneering female CIA case officers, while a panel of five members of the Amazing Women of the Intelligence Community (AWIC) professional network explained how they created a mentoring organization for women working in national security.

Lynn Dugle, Chairman, President, and CEO of Engility, closed the day with an insightful keynote on lessons learned from a career in intelligence. Attendees gathered afterwards for a networking reception to discuss the day’s dialogue.



Sue Gordon, Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence, discusses why leaders need to embrace technology, as well as what traits make a leader effective.



The *Women in Technology: Bridging the Gap* panel explain why diversity is needed in the workplace and why it doesn’t hurt to be ambitious.



During *The Mentoring Relationship: Men as Allies*, panelists discussed the importance of mentor relationships and the steps necessary to nurture those connections.

Key Insights:

- A diverse workforce attracts better talent, produces better decisions, and drives innovation.
- Gender equity requires commitment by both men and women.
- Leaders must be technologists. Leaders cannot delegate technology to others.
- Effective leaders must demonstrate empathy, be good listeners, and be able to bring team members together.
- Women do not need to be protected from difficult career paths. They should be encouraged, not deterred, from pursuing challenging but rewarding assignments, such as deployments to war zones.
- Women in technology often succumb to “impostor syndrome” – the sense that one hasn’t earned a place at the table. Women should not undervalue their experience.

Recommendations:

- Working with a diverse group of colleagues expands knowledge, broadens mindsets, and yields greater innovation.
- Encourage quieter people to speak up. The most thoughtful idea may go unshared if a leader does not encourage every team member to contribute.
- When an employee speaks, give her your undivided attention. This tells other leaders and staff that everyone’s input is valued.
- Apply for jobs even if you do not fit all of the qualifications. No one checks every box.
- Find people who master technology but also have the soft skills to collaborate and communicate.
- Never be afraid to brief anyone. Act confidently even when you are not.
- Keep showing up. Even if you are the only woman in the room, think of all the meetings that do not have any women in them.
- Continually develop and nurture mentoring relationships. Look for mentors beyond those who are like you.

Thank You, Sponsors and Partners:



ABOUT INSA

The Intelligence and National Security Alliance’s mission is to foster dialogue between public and private elements of the national security sector. INSA approaches this mission through a variety of means, including by organizing conferences, symposia, exercises, and other discussions. INSA also convenes government and industry experts in policy councils that address topics ranging from security clearance reform and insider threats to acquisition management and intelligence law.