

# Women In Technology Leadership Round Table *Fall '16 Event Summary*



## EVENT

*Women in Technology  
Leadership Round Table*  
November 4, 2016  
UC Berkeley  
[wit.berkeley.edu](http://wit.berkeley.edu)

## ORGANIZERS

Camille Crittenden  
Sheila Humphreys  
Tsu-Jae King Liu  
Virginia Smith  
Gitanjali Swamy  
Jo Yuen

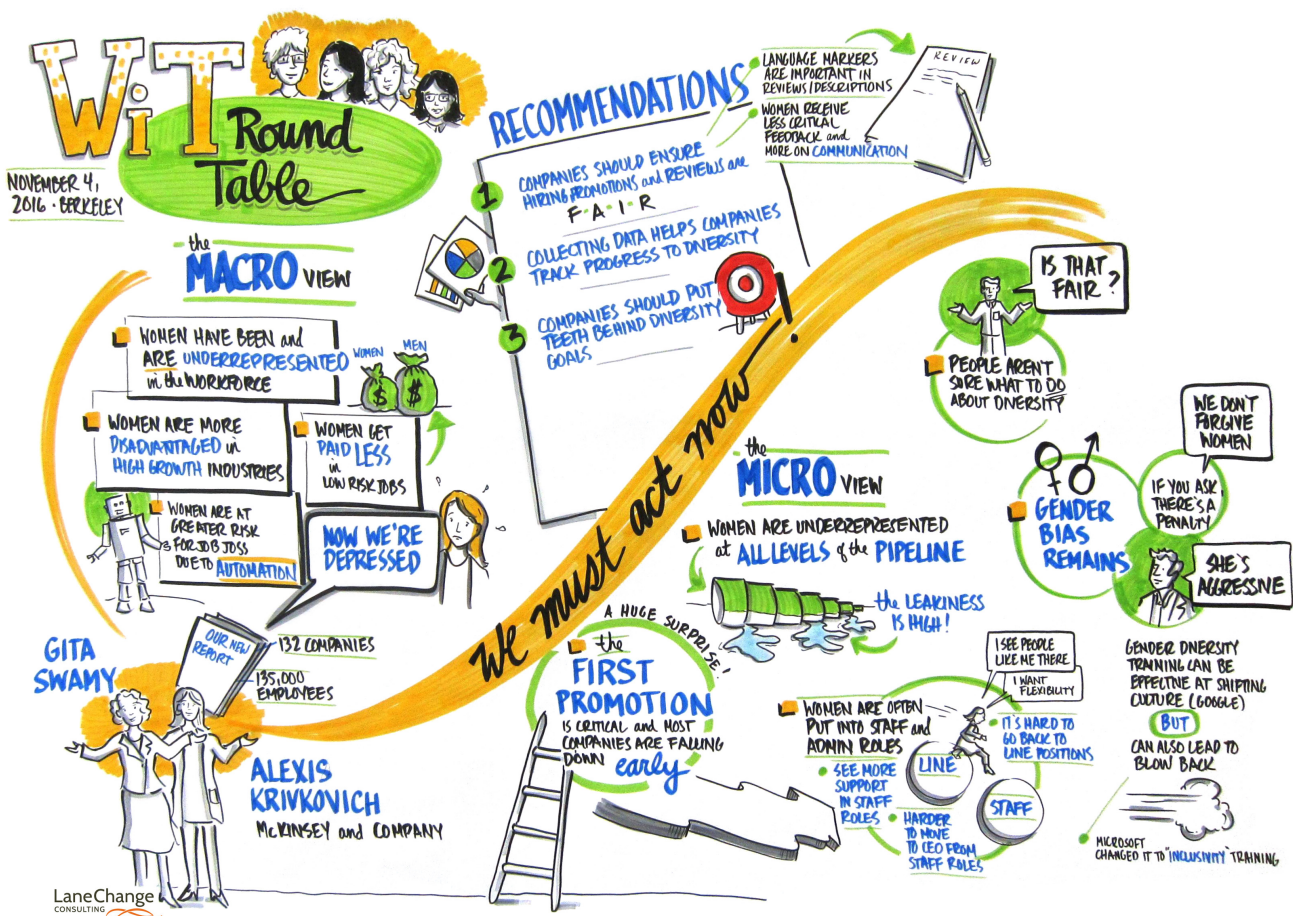
## OVERVIEW

On Friday, November 4, tech leaders gathered at UC Berkeley for the third semi-annual Women in Technology (WiT) Leadership Round Table. The goal of this initiative is to develop long-term sustainable solutions to create a future for all women in technology. We aim to achieve this goal by increasing incentives for inclusion and reducing the high rate of attrition of women working in technology and technology-related areas. Participants of the round table include an accomplished group of industry executives, professors, and leaders in nonprofit organizations. The third meeting built upon the momentum developed in the first two meetings, with the main discussions focusing on *implementing diversity metrics* and developing resources to prepare students in their transition from *campus to career*.

## 1 CONTEXT: NOW IS IMPORTANT

The round table meeting kicked off with a presentation by Alexis Krivkovich (McKinsey & Company) highlighting the status of women in the technology sector and trends for their advancement. The presentation distilled results from a variety of research studies and surveys, including McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.Org's most recent study, *Women in the Workplace*, which gathered data from 132 companies and 34,000 employees. (The full report is available at [www.womenintheworkplace.com](http://www.womenintheworkplace.com).)

Gitanjali Swamy (IoTask) set the stage for Alexis's presentation by calling attention to the fact that women are underrepresented at all ranks of the corporate career pipeline, and the percentage of women declines with each advancing level. This "leaky pipe" phenomenon is observed across all sectors of the workforce but is particularly striking in the technical workforce. Moreover, forecasts from the World Economic Forum and other organizations indicate that despite a thriving, high-growth technology job market, the situation for women will actually worsen as the technology sector expands.





Alexis elucidated root causes for the underrepresentation of women described in the McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.Org study, an initiative she spearheaded. The study found that *unconscious bias* in *hiring* and *promotion* is a key issue. Specifically, they found that there exist large discrepancies between women and men in rates of promotion, beginning at the entry level, and that women are more likely than their male counterparts to be hired or promoted into administrative or marketing roles vs. technical roles.

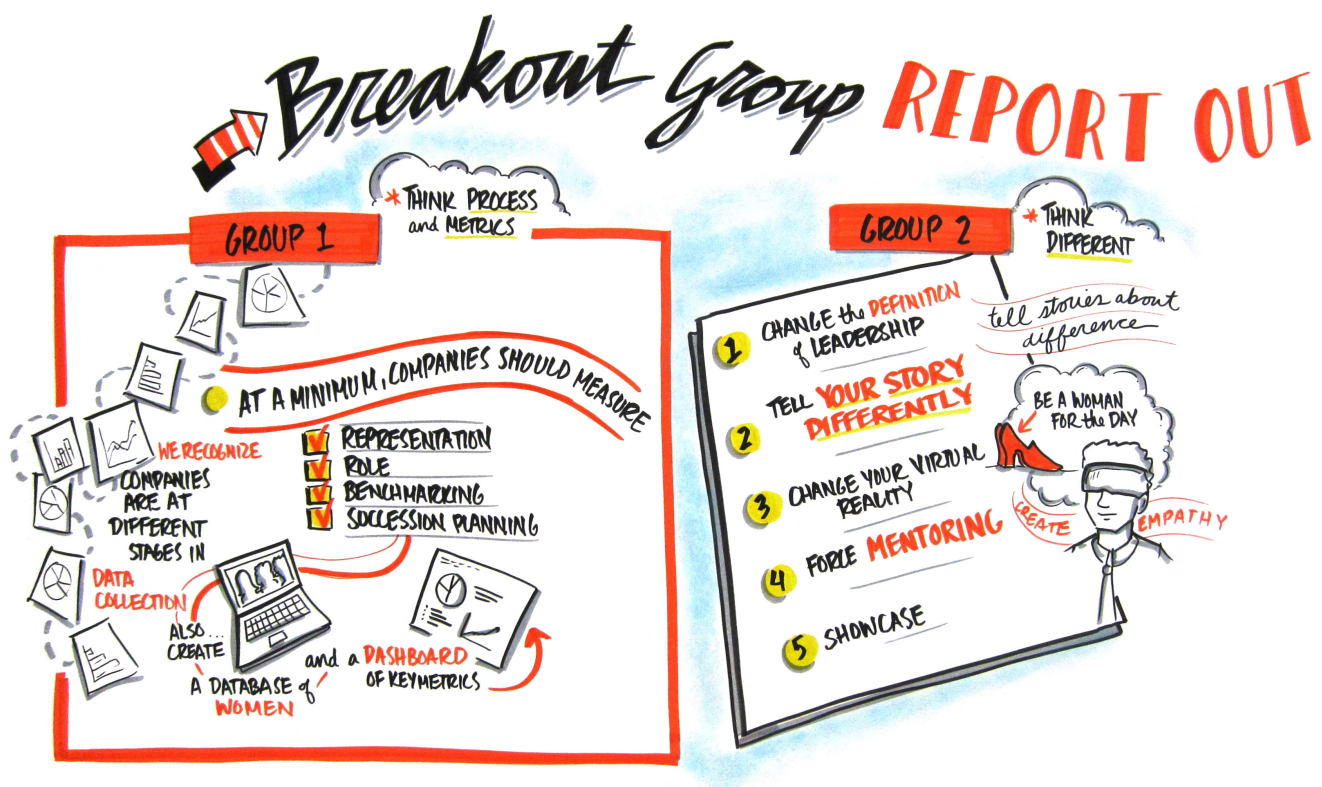
*"The first promotion is critical"*

Also, although the majority of companies in the study offer anti-bias training, few people reported that their personnel decisions are actually evaluated to check for bias. To address this issue, Alexis recommended that companies should not only implement programs and track diversity metrics, but also hold managers *accountable* for diversity within their teams and for fairness in promotions, hiring, and reviews.

*"Companies need to put teeth behind their diversity goals"*

## 2 BREAKOUT DISCUSSIONS: IMPLEMENTING THE METRICS

In light of the McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.Org study as well as the round table working group's report *Diversity Metrics for Technology Companies*, participants next broke into two groups to discuss strategies for tracking diversity metrics within their companies. One focused on the specifics of *how to prioritize and implement the metrics*, and the other discussed *innovative programs* to enable the success of the metrics initiative.



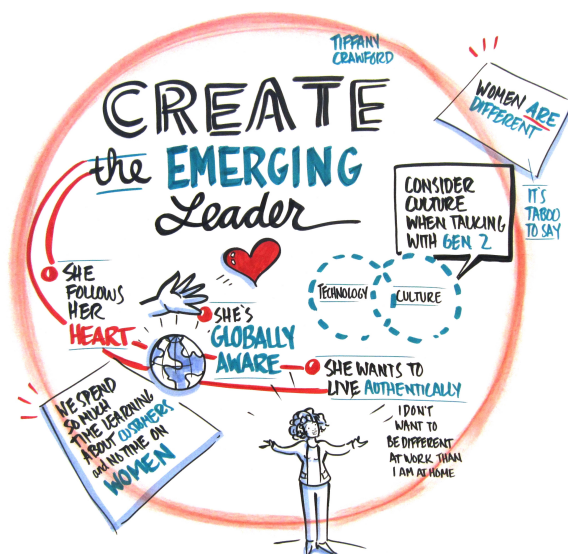
The first breakout group agreed that, at a minimum, each company should track metrics related to women's representation, role, and promotion. Companies can easily do so by joining the McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.Org initiative, which works with companies pro bono to track their diversity metrics and benchmark them against industry trends. (To apply for the 2017 study, see [here](#).) Participants agreed that a simple dashboard of key metrics should be developed and monitored regularly. Ideally, a database of female technologists should be maintained to track their individual progress and serve as a reference for hiring/promotion. Another best practice is to require managers to document specific reasons for not promoting a female technologist and then hold them responsible for her professional development to address those gaps.

*Companies can sign up for the Women in the Workplace study [on this site](#).*

The second breakout group proposed several innovative ideas for promoting diversity in the technical workforce. Foremost is to broaden the definition of leadership. To effect this change, it would be helpful for female leaders to tell their own stories of success and for these narratives to be showcased within the company. The need for empathy amongst colleagues was also discussed at length, with participants proposing measures such as enforcement of mentoring programs and role-playing exercises by company leaders.

### 3 ENCOURAGING WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY

After lunch, Tiffany Crawford shared her efforts to foster appreciation for a new type of leader emerging among the younger generations of workers (Millennials and Generation Z). This new leadership model includes a leader that is more globally aware, wants to make an impact through her work, and has the desire for the work she does to align with who she is. Crawford stressed the importance of considering culture in order to foster an inviting company environment and to stay relevant in recruiting and retention initiatives.

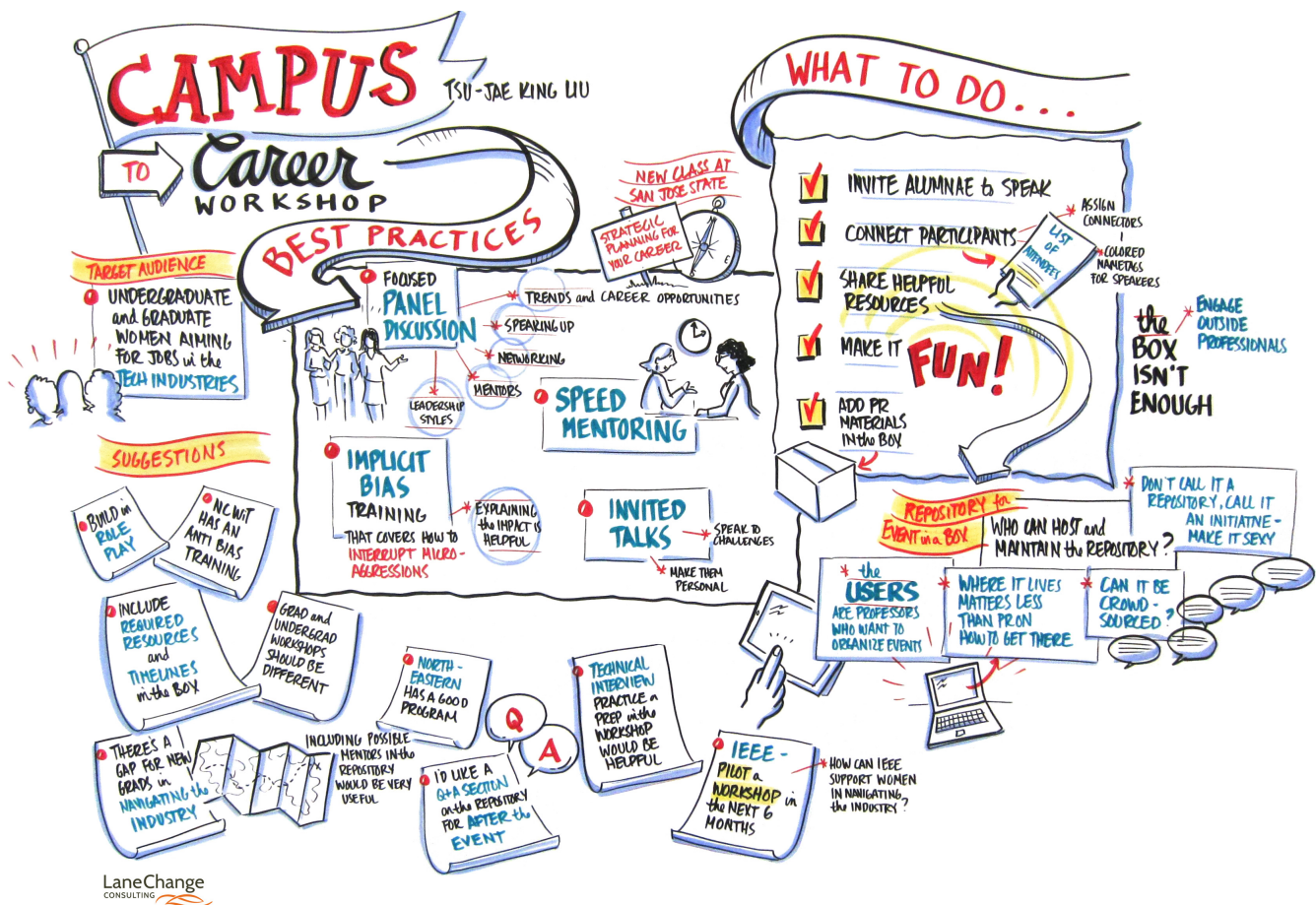


In particular, to reach the younger group, more emphasis should be placed on connecting with them—who they are and what drives them—and committing to their growth personally and professionally. Participants agreed that cultural aspects are important, noting that if as much time were spent understanding the employees of a company as understanding its customers, diverse and inclusive working environments would be much easier to create.

Next, Tsu-Jae King Liu led a discussion of best practices, developed by another working group of the round table, for inspiring and preparing women to boldly pursue technical careers and leadership. Two products of this initiative were discussed:

1. A list of key elements of effective “campus to career” events (hosted by a company, university, or professional society);
2. An online career resource repository.

These are intended to cultivate skills and provide information to students and young technical professionals, to help prepare them for successful technical careers. Moving forward, the group aims to create a “workshop-in-a-box,” including guidelines, schedules, and materials, to perpetuate best practices. These materials can be made widely available through the resource repository, along with other relevant resources for women considering careers in technology.



## 4 NEXT STEPS: A NEW CENTER AND ACTION ITEMS

The meeting concluded with the announcement of a new Center for Women in Technology at UC Berkeley, co-founded by Camille Crittenden (CITRIS and the Banatao Institute) and Tsu-Jae King Liu (College of Engineering). The mission of the center is:

*To advance contributions from women in engineering fields by supporting graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, entrepreneurs and early-career faculty to pursue and persist in positions within academia, industry and the public sector.*

The center will host the WiT Leadership Round Table meetings, as well as other events, in the pursuit of sustainable solutions for improving inclusion in tech.

Finally, the participants of the round table each committed to take at least one action in response to the discussions throughout the day. The round table committee and McKinsey & Company agreed to work together towards a common goal of improved diversity metrics. As part of this, the groups will consider the recommendations of the WiT Metrics Framework, chaired by Andrea Goldsmith, for incorporation in the McKinsey Women in The Workplace initiative (and vice-versa). Together, we hope to encourage companies to be accountable for meaningful diversity metrics, by tracking metrics within their organizations, taking regular surveys of their employees, and setting concrete targets for improvement. The working group will also begin assembling a set of materials for the “workshop-in-a-box” and resource repository.