Network links OSU women to ‘real’ world

By Kevin R. Walter
Lantern staff writer

College Women's Network is a new campus organization which hopes to prepare college women for life outside the halls of the university, said Meagan Varley, a senior from Hilton Head Island, N.C., and president of the organization.

The network is made up of college and professional women from the community, where the professionals can serve as mentors.

Varley said the organization will "help women know what they're up against and help to get support."

Betty Joe Hudson, associate dean of University College, will serve as adviser to the organization.

"Personal contact with women in as many professional areas as possible," is one goal Hudson has for the organization.

College Women's Network is made up of two committees, one made up of college women and the other Friends of College Women's Network, composed of professional women, Varley explained.

The college students will meet every other week and the professionals will meet once a month, she said.

"Time commitments of the professionals will be the biggest problem," Hudson said.

She said the professionals will provide the students with tips for success and pitfalls to look out for.

"(The organization) will deal with a little bit of everything, including how to balance a family and a career and job discrimination and inequalities, if the problem presents itself," Hudson said.

Varley said the organization will be broken down to any conceivable profession but will not spend as much time on education and nursing, which are already professions dominated by women.

The meetings are open to anyone interested and are not restricted to women, Varley said.

The next meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Sunday in the Ohio Union Memorial Room.

For more information on the organization, contact Varley at 268-1659.
Women's group to begin service

By Bob Underwood
Lantern staff writer

The College Women's Network, a service organization designed to help women students get jobs by connecting them with female professionals, is geared to start in mid-May, said Megan Varley, president of the network.

Varley, a senior from Hilton Head Island, N.C., said the network is conducting a mailing campaign to recruit professional women and collect biographical data from them to add to their files.

Because the group's effort to recruit professionals just began, it is still too early to gauge the results of the campaign, Varley said.

Varley said that about 30 students have registered for the networking service. These students will be given the names of businesswomen who have expressed an interest in helping them on a personal basis.

Currently, however, the group has only about 20 professional women slated to mentor students, she said.

Varley said many professional women do not have time to take on a mentoring relationship with a student and would rather help the network by speaking at luncheons.

Kirsten Isgro, a senior from Berea, who is the group's on-campus liaison, said that aside from mentoring on a one-to-one basis and speaking at luncheons, professional women can get involved in the network in three other ways.

Women can volunteer to speak at roundtables, send in donations, or join the "Friends of CWN Committee" to contribute ideas, Isgro said.

Betty Joe Hudson, associate dean of University College and the group's advisor, said she became interested in the group because she knows the importance of networking.

It is an opportunity for women students to learn if they need to prepare for certain difficulties as females when they enter their field, Hudson said.

For example, Hudson said, single women without families may be expected to "take up the slack" for their co-workers and work extra hours at the office.

Varley said, in general, women in today's work force lack role models, and this makes pursuing a career that much harder. "If those role models aren't there for you, then you feel that you're going at it alone."

Varley also said professional women may have trouble being taken seriously by their male co-workers. For example, she said, women may be victims of politicking and may not be listened to in a conference room.

Varley said the membership of the network is very diverse, ranging from those who are radical feminists wanting to change the political structure, to those who do not consider themselves feminists.

Varley, however, said instead of arguing over each other's diverse political views, the group would rather concentrate on the common goal of networking. "Our goal is coming together, not tearing apart," she said.

Varley said the group meetings, luncheons, and roundtables are open to men as well as women, although no men as of yet have attended. "It's not a prerequisite that you be a feminist to be in our group," she said.

Varley, who expects to graduate in the spring of 1988, said the network, whose members are mostly juniors and seniors, needs members to continue the group after its current members graduate.

But, she said, her biggest goal is to see the group serving a population of 500 to 800 women before she graduates.

The next roundtable, a discussion on "Women in Medicine," will be at 6 p.m. Wednesday in Ohio Union Buckeye Suite E.

For more information, contact Varley at 268-1959.
Women’s group aims to provide career role models for students

By Michelle L. Weber
Lantern staff writer

Providing professional women to serve as role models to undergraduate women and encouraging them to actively pursue their chosen fields of study, are the main objectives of the College Women’s Network.

Sarah Allgeier, network president, said she wants to see more solidarity among women on campus and hopes undergraduate students will get more involved with women in the community.

“I’d like to see more awareness of their professional areas, more awareness of their potential and what’s available to them specifically as women,” said Allgeier, a junior from Columbus who is majoring in both Political Science and Women’s Studies.

The group was founded two years ago by Megan Varley, a senior from Warren majoring in both English and Women’s Studies. Varley will graduate this spring.

“I started the group because I felt there was a real need for professional role models for students,” Varley said.

She said that before the group was organized, she and her friends had no access to women already working in their areas of interest.

Varley believes professional women can act as mentors to guide students in pursuing their careers.

At the time, Varley was already involved with the Association of Women Students, but wanted a different focus. The association has more of a theoretical approach and deals with special interest issues such as lesbian affairs, homophobia and rape.

Varley was interested in a more practical orientation.

The College Women’s Network works on integrating women students with professional women’s organizations within the community. It sends representatives to meetings held by the National Organization of Women and to the Women’s Roundtable, a community organization in which women from various professions get together and discuss women’s issues.

Through these community organizations, the network is able to meet professional women in all areas and then set up their own roundtables. The network has sponsored roundtables entitled “Women in Law” and “Women in Art.”

The roundtables are in the Ohio Union and consist of five or six women from the university and the community who are professionals in a certain field. They are then asked questions about their goals, what advice they would give to students entering their field, what they feel is the area of greatest difficulty for women in their field and other questions.

The College Women’s Network tries to include women of varying perspectives in the roundtables.

“We stress minority involvement,” Allgeier said. “We try to have as many minority women as possible on the panels themselves to represent professional images for minority women on campus.”

These involved seem to be extremely open to helping women move up, she said.

“If I talk to one woman, she gives me ten names, and those people give me ten names of other women who might be interested,” she said. “It’s amazing the networking that goes on.”

Allgeier said the networks problems lie in student membership.

“While I’m very, very motivated for this group and the people who are involved seem to be very motivated, we do need the people power,” she said.

Allgeier said the network can be extremely beneficial to those involved.

“I know people who have talked to women in particular areas of their interest,” she said. “They stay in touch with them, they create their own luncheons and then later they check out internships.”

Allgeier said the network supplies students with the potential to find a mentor, but it’s up to the individual students to take the initiative and do the follow-up on their own.

The group sometimes sponsors informal luncheons at which students and professionals can get together and talk after the initial roundtable.