

A Volume in the International Leadership Association Series

**Women and Leadership:
Research, Theory, and Practice**



**Women
& Leadership
in Higher Education**

Karen A. Long [redacted] [redacted] dsen, Editors

Women and Leadership in Higher Education

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Woman and Leadership in Higher Education

A Volume in
Women and Leadership: Research, Theory, and Practice

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Women and Leadership: Research, Theory, and Practice

Faith Ngunjiri, Susan R. Madsen, and Karen A. Longman, *Series Editors*

Women and Leadership in Higher Education (2014)
edited by Karen A. Longman and Susan R. Madsen

FOREWORD

Warren G. Bennis

Reading through the thoughtful and provocative chapters in this manuscript reminded me of a quote by Marcel Proust, “The real discovery consists not in finding new lands but in seeing with new eyes.” This book gives a fresh perspective to the important issue of women’s leadership in society.

The opening chapters present a clear articulation of the trends and demographic realities in terms of women and leadership across various sectors of the United States, focusing on higher education in particular. Given that the college graduates today at all levels (associate’s through doctoral degrees) are predominately female, the significant underrepresentation of women in senior-level leadership across higher education is troubling.

The middle section of this book summarizes the approaches and curricular content used by three well-respected women’s leadership development programs—the American Council on Education, the Higher Education Resource Services, and the University of San Diego’s Women’s Leadership Academy. In reading these chapters I found myself thinking that, for too long, we have assumed that the male-normed models of leadership development would work to inspire and prepare high-potential women to move into institutional leadership roles. Simply put, our attempts to put new “wine” into “old wineskins” has not worked. The strategies and curricular approaches identified in this section can shape future leadership development programming at the state, regional, or institutional level.

Drawing upon a rich array of research literature, several chapters argue for the importance of bringing women’s perspectives to the leadership

table. Yet doing so has not been easy, given the male-normed cultures of most institutions. Overt and subtle forms of adversity lead to discouragement or opting out, often related to differing systems of values and rewards between men and women. Understanding the dynamics of privilege, internalizing a respect for the value of different perspectives, and being open to fresh thinking can move our campuses beyond the constraints that have held back highly competent women for too long. The final section contains five short and illuminating chapters containing "leadership lessons" from former and current college and university presidents.

As a leadership scholar who has had a front row seat to the evolution of the leadership field for more than 50 years, I want to say "thank you" to the International Leadership Association for supporting this new "Women and Leadership" book series. The focus on higher education in launching the series is both timely and critical. Those involved in higher education, and particularly those who lead institutions of higher education, shape the future in ways that directly influence the vitality and well-being of the United States and our world. Best wishes as the International Leadership Association book series begins to influence both theorists and practitioners to advance a broader and better understanding of the contributors to effective leadership.

Warren Bennis, University Professor and Distinguished Professor of Business Administration at USC. Author of over 30 books on leadership and change. His latest is: Still Surprised: A Memoir of a Life in Leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Karen A. Longman and Susan R. Madsen

Some leaders are born female. Despite this fact, many women who could develop into highly talented leaders find their potential dampened by an array of internal and external factors, and those constraints are evident even in the field of higher education. This book focuses particular attention on the status of women in college and university leadership in the United States, describes the experiences and contributions of women in those leadership roles, and offers strategies and best practices for opening more doors for women to serve in positions of influence across all sectors of higher education. The importance of this work is evident in the fact that, within the United States, women now comprise the majority of students at all levels—associate degrees through doctorates, as well as first professional degrees (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012), yet only 26% of university presidents, 10% of full professors, and less than 30% of the college and university board members are women (Colorado Women's College, 2013).

Reasons for the significant underrepresentation of women in senior-level leadership roles across all sectors are complex and multifaceted, as summarized in a book chapter by Ely and Rhode (2010) titled "Women and Leadership: Defining the Challenges." Specifically related to the experiences of women in higher education, many of the factors emerge from "the male norms that define the academy [which] can be daunting" (Van Ummersen, 2009, p. ix). The implications of working in male-normed cultures shape the aspirations and experiences of women who have much to offer as current and future leaders in higher education, yet fledgling talent is too rarely identified and developed. The same holds true across most sectors in the United States today. Expressing concern

for the limited presence of senior-level women in corporate leadership roles, Ibarra, Ely, and Kolb (2013) in a September 2013 cover story of *Harvard Business Review* discuss blockages faced by women that are related to “the often fragile process of coming to see oneself, and to be seen by others as a leader” (p. 62).

Factors that hinder women’s advancement into leadership often relate to a disconnect between the values of many women and the reward structures and goals that shape the culture of most organizations (Helgesen & Johnson, 2010). Thus women may be reticent to “Lean In” (Sandberg, 2013) to their own professional advancement. In exploring the question of whether women lack ambition, Fels (2004) reported research findings indicating that women’s identity is often oriented around giving rather than drawing attention to themselves; this dynamic can negatively impact women’s motivation to pursue leadership. Stated succinctly, cultural norms have traditionally contributed to young girls aspiring to be cheerleaders while boys aspire to be quarterbacks ... a highly visible role that requires risk-taking yet offers the platform for individualistic accolades. The implications of these deeply ingrained and societally recognized roles are profound.

Many of the chapters in this volume articulate various ways that higher education “loses” as a result of the lack of women’s voices at the highest levels of leadership—administrative, faculty, and board leadership. Our students, both male and female, lack important role models; our decision-making processes are often biased as the result of the lack of diverse perspectives around the senior leadership table. Interestingly, a 2013 publication by Jossey-Bass carries the title *The Athena Doctrine: How Women (and the Men Who Think Like Them) Will Rule the Future* (Gerzema & D’Antonio, 2013). Reporting on the findings of a massive international survey of 64,000 respondents about preferred leadership styles, the book emphasizes that “Nearly two thirds of the people around the world—including the majority of men—feel that the world would be a better place if men thought more like women” (p. 7). Higher education has much to gain by identifying, preparing, and advancing more high-potential women into leadership roles.

This book, divided into four parts and containing the chapters briefly described below, presents both the hard facts of the current demographic realities and fresh thinking about how progress can and must be made. The world is changing; higher education collectively, as well as institutions of all types, must change. Bringing more women into leadership is critical to the goal of moving our society and world forward in healthier ways.

PART I: THE STATE OF WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Given the importance of providing foundational information about “The State of Women and Leadership in Higher Education,” this opening section contains three provocative chapters that establish the current demographics, trends, and areas of concern. The first chapter, “Benchmarking Women’s Leadership in Academia and Beyond,” was written by Drs. Lynn M. Gangone and Tiffani Lennon from the Women’s College within the University of Denver. These coauthors highlight the fact that over the four decades since the passage of Title IX, the number of women in leadership positions has remained relatively small. Evidence of the paucity of women in leadership has been much documented; for example, *The White House Project: Benchmarking Women’s Leadership* (2009) report, a multisector examination of women’s presence in the “C-Suite,” concluded that, on average, women held only 18% of the chief executive positions across 10 sectors in the United States. Recently Colorado Women’s College of the University of Denver released *Benchmarking Women’s Leadership in the United States 2013*; this report expanded the original *Benchmarking* study beyond the C-Suite to include senior leaders, such as vice presidents, in 14 sectors. The study concluded that females represent 19% of senior leaders, while males represent 81%. The study also explored industry-specific performance indicators, salary comparisons, and debunked several myths surrounding women and work. This opening chapter presents and discusses the data and recommendations from the 2013 report.

The second chapter, written by Barbara Kellerman (Harvard Kennedy School) and Deborah L. Rhode (Stanford Law School), is titled “Women at the Top: The Pipeline Reconsidered.” This chapter explores the status of women in higher education and strategies to improve that status. Contrary to the widespread view that barriers are coming down, that women are moving up, and that the pipeline will take care of any resulting inequalities, this chapter offers a more sobering assessment. Drs. Kellerman and Rhode argue that women, particularly women of color, are dramatically underrepresented at leadership levels, and that the playing field is far from level. True equality will require challenging the gender stereotypes, in-group favoritism, and unequal domestic roles that continue to keep women from realizing their full potential.

The third chapter, “Leadership Out Front and Behind the Scenes: Young Women’s Ambitions for Leadership Today,” was written by Dr. Nannerl O. Keohane, former president of Wellesley College and Duke University. This chapter explores the attitudes toward leadership of contemporary female undergraduates, drawing from the results of a 2011 study she chaired at Princeton University on the occasion of the 40th

anniversary of Princeton becoming a coeducational institution. The female students at Princeton reported that they prefer “high impact” rather than “high profile” jobs; they want to make a difference in a cause they care about or work “behind the scenes” to get the job done. Notably, Princeton’s female students were less involved in the top leadership of traditional campus organizations than their male peers, but many of them were committed to top-level posts in cause-oriented organizations. These findings suggest that young women should be encouraged to think more positively about top posts in traditional organizations. Beyond this, however, the findings also suggest that a more capacious conception of leadership might encourage more female students to pursue significant leadership roles in a variety of contexts.

PART II: STRATEGIES FOR WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The status quo of underrepresentation of women in top-level leadership roles across higher education, as described in the opening chapters, is problematic for many reasons. In response to the current realities, Part II of this volume provides descriptions of three prominent women’s leadership development programs and/or initiatives that offer fresh thinking on how progress can be made. The first, written by Leah Witcher Jackson Teague (associate dean of the Baylor Law School) and Kim Bobby (director of the Inclusive Excellence Group at the American Council on Education), is titled “American Council on Education’s IDEALS for Women Leaders: Identify, Develop, Encourage, Advance, Link, and Support.” These coauthors argue that leading higher education institutions is difficult but critically important in shaping society’s future, and that diversity improves innovation and performance yet is sorely lacking at the highest levels of leadership. This chapter discusses the 40-year commitment of the American Council on Education to advancing women into leadership through an extensive system of state, regional, and national leadership development programs. Also discussed is the Moving the Needle initiative, a collaborative effort to raise national awareness of the importance of gender parity and to establish a blueprint for achieving gender parity through deliberate action by higher education decision and policy makers.

Judith S. White, executive director of the Higher Education Resource Services (HERS), authored the fifth chapter, titled “HERS at 50: Curriculum and Connections for Empowering the Next Generation of Women Leaders in Higher Education.” Dr. White shares the conviction that the development of a new generation of women for senior posts in higher education is critically important to meet the need for a diverse cadre of

leaders that is capable of responding to the challenges of a rapidly changing environment. The work of HERS has assisted in meeting this need since 1976, providing leadership development training for more than 5,000 women from over 1,200 campuses in the United States and other nations. HERS complements the best practices learned from decades of experience with its signature residential program, HERS Institutes, with fresh research-based insights about curricular and pedagogical approaches that will best prepare women to lead effectively in future years.

The third chapter in this section, titled "Developing Women's Leadership: An Innovative and Unique Approach to Raising Leadership Capacity," was written by Dr. Lorri Sulpizio, coordinator of the Women's Leadership Academy (WLA) in the School of Leadership and Education Sciences at the University of San Diego. This chapter describes how the WLA has created uniquely designed programs to develop women's leadership capacity. The WLA programs make a clear distinction between leadership and authority, acknowledge the existing organizational gender bias, encourage a balance of a feminine and masculine expression, and utilize a pedagogical method based on group dynamics. The theoretical foundation for the WLA programs is presented in this chapter, with examples that illustrate how a safe environment is provided for women to explore leadership identity and to learn about advanced concepts of authority and leadership, while sharpening the skills that are most difficult for women leaders.

PART III: WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES AND CONTRIBUTIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

This section of the book focuses on women's experiences in higher education leadership and the contributions of women who hold positional leadership roles. Chapter 7, "Women's Contributions to Leadership and the Road Ahead," was written by Dr. Adrianna Kezar from the University of Southern California. She argues that one of the major contributions of women leaders is a fundamental rethinking of what leadership is as a phenomenon and how it can be enacted. In contrast to past hierarchical and command-and-control perspectives, images of leadership based on studies of women must now reflect mutual power and influence processes, attention to relationships and tasks, and democratic and participatory forms of decision making. Leadership is now more focused on ethics and values than was the case in past eras. Furthermore, a variety of studies have identified that the characteristics associated with women's leadership are related with more effective leadership. While acknowledging the con-

tributions that women bring to leadership, it is important to note that higher education is increasingly a market-driven, corporate environment that does not favor the important leadership approaches typical of women. This chapter concludes with the suggestion that to be successful in this neoliberal environment, women may need to implement a hybrid form of leadership that integrates the effective style of leadership that women have brought in the past, but blend it with strategies that have also been associated with the agentic style of men's leadership in order to navigate strategically on today's campuses.

Amy Diehl, from Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania, authored Chapter 8, titled "Approaches of Women Leaders in Higher Education: Navigating Adversity, Barriers, and Obstacles," based on her dissertation research. This qualitative study involved face-to-face interviews with 26 women in senior leadership roles in higher education; the chapter addresses the findings related to her research question: "How do women leaders in higher education make meaning of adversity?" The goal of the research was to explore whether participants have experienced adversity, what such experiences meant to their lives both personally and professionally, and how they responded to such events. Adversity negatively impacted the self-esteem and perceived sense of power for many participants. To navigate adversity, the women used strategies to empower themselves and reach out to others. This chapter provides details and insights around three themes related to how participants made it through adversity: reframing, resilience, and self-efficacy.

"Women Leaders, Authenticity, and Higher Education: Convictions and Contradictions" is the title for Chapter 9 of this book. Similarly drawing from a recent dissertation study, Rita Gardiner, from the University of Western Ontario, presents the findings of her research. This chapter considers the interconnections among women's leadership experiences in higher education, authenticity, and an ethic of care. In addition to drawing upon relevant literature, key findings from a phenomenological inquiry conducted with 10 senior women leaders in higher education are presented and discussed. Three main themes emerged from an analysis of the interview data in this study. The first theme related to care and relationships. The effects of gender socialization constituted the second theme. The third theme concerned the conflicts that arose in the minds of the participants when organizational expectations were perceived to be incongruent with their personal convictions. The chapter concludes by suggesting that focusing on women's leadership experiences in the context of higher education, alongside an ethic of care, may open up new directions for research into authentic leadership.

The final chapter in this section, "Madame President: Gender's Impact in the Presidential Suite," emerged from the dissertation research of the

author, Mary L. Bucklin from Northern Kentucky University. She noted that even with the gradual increase of women in presidential roles, these leaders experience the job differently than do their male counterparts for reasons related to their gender; more specifically, related to role incongruity. Dr. Bucklin conducted interviews with eight women presidents of doctoral-granting universities (i.e., women at the top of their field). Her findings indicated that these women continued to be judged against the stereotypical model of how women should look, speak, and behave. In general, the presidents were aware of gender's influence, but took intentional steps to lessen its impact on their ability to fulfill their presidential responsibilities.

PART IV: LESSONS FROM THE TRENCHES: PERSPECTIVES FROM FEMALE PRESIDENTS

This final section of the book, titled "Lessons from the Trenches," offers essays from five former or current college or university presidents. Rita Bornstein, former president of Rollins College, shares her insights in a chapter titled "Leadership Legitimacy, Managed Authenticity, and Emotional Stability: Keys to a Successful Presidency." After 14 years in the presidency, Dr. Bornstein reflects on three themes that she views to be key to a successful presidency: (1) the quest for legitimacy, (2) managed authenticity, and (3) emotional intelligence. Clearly, presidents must establish their legitimacy based largely on the competent handling of their responsibilities and demonstrating appreciation for the institutional culture. Yet equally important is the ability to fulfill the responsibilities of the presidency with skills related to management style and personality.

In Chapter 12, Ann Hart, current president of the University of Arizona, summarizes some of the lessons she has learned in her chapter titled "Docs, Jocks, and Other Wildlife: The Challenges and Potential for Women Leaders in the 21st Century Public Research University." Dr. Hart notes that the proportion of women presidents at colleges and universities throughout the United States has increased significantly over the past several decades, yet the number of women leaders at research universities remains low compared to other sectors. She argues that for women who fill these roles, four components of the public research university—major research achievements, land-grant roles, big-time sports, and academic medicine—often combine to present unique challenges (and opportunities) that compound traditional gender dynamics and therefore merit attention. This chapter describes the interaction of these components of the modern public research university and how women leaders can prepare to manage them effectively.

Sherry Penney, as a former president of the University of Massachusetts Boston, summarizes her lessons learned in the chapter titled "Twenty-First Century Presidents Must Work With Multiple Stakeholders and Be Agents of Change." Dr. Penney describes the many skills and experiences that one needs to be effective in the presidency and provides suggestions about how to develop those skills. Encouragement and advice are offered for those who plan to take the presidential route are offered. In addition, her chapter outlines ways in which presidents must work with the many constituencies that are part of the larger university community. The concluding section offers a discussion of the changes that need to take place in postsecondary education and how presidents can and must be successful change agents.

Chapter 14, "*No Te Dejes*: Giving Voice to Issues that Choose You," was written by Juliet García, president of the University of Texas at Brownsville. Dr. García's personal story of growing up between the cultures of Mexico and the United States illustrates the power of higher education to transform lives. In just one generation, the university education that had been urged by her parents resulted in families that now include lawyers, physicians, engineers, and teachers. From the perspective of her service as the first female Mexican American-appointed president of a college or university in the United States, Dr. García communicates her passion for others to have the same educational opportunities. This chapter, which challenges institutional leaders to be people of conviction and courage, recounts the author's experience of opposing the division of her campus by an 18-foot wall as mandated by the Secure Fence Act. The act required the U.S. government to build a 700-mile barrier along the Texas-Mexico border by the end of 2008.

The final chapter in this section and in the book is one titled "Grounded" by Karen Holbrook, who previously served as president of The Ohio State University. Drawing from her experiences over more than 40 years in higher education, Dr. Holbrook describes searching for a thread that had been present throughout her career—a career that spanned six research universities, one liberal arts college, and various positions with increasing levels of responsibility. Throughout the transitions, the concept of "grounding" provided a source of strength and represented an attribute that provided identity. For Dr. Holbrook, part of that grounding has been reflected in a commitment to maintain an inquisitive mind, and embracing what is fun and exciting about the academic life. This chapter concludes with a challenge for academics to recognize and live into their grounding—whether it is professional, personal, or spiritual—thereby finding both personal peace of mind and fulfillment as a leader of many.

CONCLUSION

"Some leaders are born female" were the opening words of this introduction. Scholars and practitioners across U.S. higher education would agree that the complexities facing postsecondary education are greater today than ever before; indeed, the challenges facing our world are greater than ever before. Wise and courageous leaders are needed in the senior ranks of faculty, staff, and administrators and across all institutional types. In Sheryl Sandberg's *Lean In* (2013), legendary investor Warren Buffett is cited as having remarked that "one of the reasons for his great success was that he was competing with only half of the population" (p. 7). Sandberg continues, "The Warren Buffetts of my generation are still largely enjoying this advantage. When more people get in the race, more records will be broken. And the achievements will extend beyond those individuals to benefit us all" (p. 7). The hope of the authors who have contributed to this volume is that many records will be broken because more women are encouraged and equipped to enter senior-level leadership roles. If that goal is not achieved expeditiously, higher education will continue to lose, our students will lose, and eventually the entire world will lose as high-potential women are overlooked and their talents left untapped.

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