

Empowering Women in Higher Education and Student Affairs

THEORY, RESEARCH, NARRATIVES,
AND PRACTICE FROM FEMINIST
PERSPECTIVES

Edited By

ANNY A. PASQUE &

WILLIAM NICHOLSON

LINDA J. SAX

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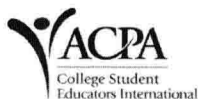
Theory, Research, Narratives, and Practice From Feminist Perspectives

Edited by

PENNY A. PASQUE
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Foreword by

LINDA J. A.





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Published by Stylus Publishing, LLC
22883 Quicksilver Drive
Sterling, Virginia 20166-2102

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Chapter 13 is reprinted with permission from the American College Personnel Association: Abes, E. & Kasch, D. (2007). Using queer theory to explore lesbian college students' multiple dimensions of identity. *Journal of College Student Development*, 48(6), 619–636.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication-Data

Empowering women in higher education and student affairs : theory, research, narratives, and practice from feminist perspectives / edited by Penny A. Pasque and Shelley Errington Nicholson ; foreword by Linda J. Sax.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-57922-350-2 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Women in higher education. 2. Women college teachers.
 3. Women college students. 4. Feminism and higher education.
- I. Pasque, Penny A. II. Nicholson, Shelley Errington.

LC1567.E47 2011

378.0082—dc22

2010018756

13-digit ISBN: 978-1-57922-350-2 (paper)

Printed in the United States of America

All first editions printed on acid free paper
that meets the American National Standards Institute
Z39-48 Standard.

Bulk Purchases

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First Edition, 2011

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

We would like to dedicate this book to all the people who intentionally empower women on a daily basis.

In addition, Shelley would like to thank Sue and Tim Errington for never setting boundaries based on gender and to Scott Nicholson for being a feminist husband and husband to a feminist. Penny would like to thank her mom, Suzanne Haberstroh, for her perseverance as a single mother and her partner, Frank Kaminsky, for endless love and support.

Materials for Course and/or Professional Development Using This Book

A slideshow presentation and annotated bibliography are available to download for courses and professional development opportunities using this text at:

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The materials were funded by a grant through the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) Commission for Professional Preparation.

They have been developed for use in courses such as: gender in higher education and student affairs, diversity in higher education, and intergroup dialogue courses that focus on gender. The slideshow is also suitable for a class session or workshop on women and leadership, mentoring between women, intersectionality, or other related topics.

Acknowledgments

WE THANK THE MANY authors who contributed to this book for their willingness to embark on this iterative and collaborative process. You were willing to read the work from the other authors and reflect upon connections between your feminist research and the research offered throughout this manuscript at various stages in the publication process. Subsequently, the book we offer is threaded together in a unique manner and makes for a more intentional and powerful contribution to the field. Thank you.

In addition, the editorial board was instrumental in providing its unique perspectives and insights to the manuscript. The board offered thoughtful feedback to the editors and chapter authors. This special group of women ensured that this book was approached with multigenerational, multidisciplinary, and multiple feminist perspectives in mind.

We also thank Dorothy Nkhata, graduate assistant for this project through the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Department at the University of Oklahoma, whose efforts helped us tremendously during the 2008–2009 academic year. Dorothy, we wish you well in your academic pursuits and know you will make a strong contribution to higher education in the United States and Malawi. In addition, we thank Pam Harjo and Brenton Wimmer, graduate assistants through the same department, whose efforts helped us with the final stages of completion during the 2009–2010 academic year. Thank you for

your willingness to come late to the project and work on the final details. We also wish you well and know you will both make a strong contribution to the field of student affairs.

Kara Morgan, graduate assistant from The Center for Educational Development and Research, University of Oklahoma, was helpful in transcribing the Sister Circle dialogue between women about gender, race, and student affairs (chapter 12). This transcript was a useful starting point for the chapter included in this book. Thank you, Kara.

Importantly, thank you to the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) Books and Media Board, and Stylus Publication, including Holley Belch and Ellen Broido; we appreciate your advice, counsel, and support throughout this process. Holley, we sincerely believe this book is stronger because of your willingness to work collaboratively with us to fine-tune the manuscript. On the basis of these changes, we believe it has the potential to have a sustaining impact on the field of higher education and student affairs.

Finally, we thank ACPA's Standing Committee for Women (past, present, and future) for providing opportunities for women to come together in order to further strengthen the field in terms of feminist research, scholarship, and practice. The intergenerational and supportive nature of the committee encourages voices to be heard and dreams to be realized.

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Special thanks to Matthew King and Mikale Pilgrim, graduate assistants at the Center for Educational Development and Research, Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education at the University of Oklahoma for assistance with the index.

Foreword

“**Y**OU MEAN, THAT STILL HAPPENS?” This was the response I received from a campus administrator when I commented, over lunch, on the subtle and overt barriers that hinder women’s achievement and advancement in higher education. As I described the persistent challenges faced by women in higher education and the need for more research on gender equity issues, the administrator—a woman with a wealth of knowledge and experience in higher education—seemed astonished that such work was still necessary.

Students may be skeptical as well. In my experience teaching students about gender issues in higher education, I find that they too are often surprised by the extent to which gender remains such a potent force in shaping the experiences of students in higher education. Many of them assume that the Women’s Movement brought an end to sex discrimination and that the academic successes of today’s college women are a testament to our having already achieved gender equity. Today’s students encounter so many women professionals in higher education—faculty, staff, and administrators—that they are frequently unaware of the persistent gender inequities that exist within each of those populations, whether in terms of salary, resources, power, or prestige.

And yet, if you have picked up this book, you are probably part of another group—one that is either long aware of or perhaps newly curious about the role that gender plays across multiple sectors in higher education. You might be a student enrolled in a women’s studies or education course, a student affairs professional

aiming to improve the experiences of college women, or a researcher or faculty member thirsting for fresh perspectives on gender in higher education.

The contents of this book, carefully chosen and organized by Penny Pasque and Shelley Errington Nicholson, have the potential to both enlighten the skeptics and satisfy the needs of those seeking evidence and allies in the movement for gender equity. This book does much more than simply document persistent gender inequities (though such evidence is provided). What distinguishes this book is its intimacy. The editors have assembled a diverse collection of research papers, historical essays, personal narratives, and quotes that add texture and flavor to the topic of women in higher education. As readers, we are invited into the lives of the authors and, in many cases, the lives of their research subjects.

Distinctively feminist in approach, this book tackles a wide range of issues central to women in higher education and student affairs. Although the perspectives represented in this collection are unique, they are universal. Who among us does not struggle with creating a work–life balance? Who does not question his or her multiple identities? Who has not striven for resilience in an oppressive environment? Readers will forge connections with the text in a way that should inform their work, their studies, and their self-exploration.

Also noteworthy about this collection is its ability to blend feminist theoretical/research perspectives with contemporary issues in student

affairs. Too often, the theoretical world of feminist theory is divorced from the practical world of campus practice. In this book, readers will find diverse feminist perspectives and approaches used to discuss a wide range of campus services and programs, such as women's centers, health centers, leadership programs, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) centers, and athletics. The fact that this book emerged out of a student affairs professional conference is further testament to the value placed on the profession and the potential to forge stronger alliances between scholars and practitioners.

The notion of "intersectionality" is woven beautifully throughout this book, not as a special case, but as a representation of *all* women's multiple identities that are shaped by race, ethnicity, class, culture, sexual orientation, age, national origin, motherhood, and innumerable other forces that construct our lives as undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, practitioners, and administrators.

Further, the book provides important historical perspectives on the experiences of women in higher education and the evolution of student affairs programs designed to serve them. The majority of us who work in higher education are probably unaware of the unique history that has shaped our particular corner of campus life, and this book provides a glimpse into how the Women's Movement and societal shifts altered the trajectory of campus programming for women and the nature of women's leadership in student affairs. This is not the sort of historical backdrop one would normally encounter in a class on the history of higher education or a women's studies course. This fascinating history will help readers reflect both on the nature of the profession and on their "place" in the history of women in higher education.

Consistent with feminist scholarship, the content of this book is intertwined with the backgrounds of its authors. Collectively, the book's 50 contributors reflect the diversity of higher education in terms of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and age. They also represent the range of work within student affairs, including advising, athletics, multicultural affairs, women's centers, admissions, residential life, and leadership programming. Variety is reflected in the authors' disciplinary backgrounds, including anthropology, biology, English, education, history, journalism, law, management, math, physical education, physical science, psychology, sociology, theater, and women's studies. The authors also represent a range of feminist perspectives, evidenced by the varying theoretical lenses and approaches used to approach gender equity in higher education. Diversity among the authors is no accident, as the editors intentionally created a community of scholars and practitioners with varied perspectives and experiences and then capitalized on this diversity by facilitating communication between various chapter authors during the writing process, thereby enhancing the connections across chapters.

Their approach appears to have been a success. *Empowering Women in Higher Education and Student Affairs: Theory, Research, Narratives, and Practice From Feminist Perspectives* is a welcome addition to the scholarship on gender and education. It invites readers in, provides them with a mix of personal connections and intellectual substance, and then challenges them to use their positions as students, educators, practitioners, and researchers in order to advance the cause of gender equity in higher education.

Linda J. Sax
University of California, Los Angeles

Preface

Penny A. Pasque and Shelley Errington Nicholson

IN THEIR IMPORTANT RESEARCH ON women's leadership, Helen Astin and Carol Leland (1991) describe a feminist conceptual model of leadership that "rests on the assumption that leadership manifests itself when there is an action to bring about change in an organization, an institution, or the social system—in other words, an action to make a positive difference in people's lives. Leadership, then, is conceived as a creative process that results in change" (Astin & Leland, 1991, p. 116). In this spirit of feminist leadership and social change, we offer *Empowering Women in Higher Education and Student Affairs: Theory, Research, Narratives, and Practice From Feminist Perspectives*, a collaborative book of scholarship from an intergenerational group of women, men, and transgender people with different social identities, feminist perspectives, and professional identities who work at various institutional types. This edited book updates our knowledge of women in higher education and student affairs, as it builds upon and extends research on women students, faculty, and administrators through various feminist lenses and feminist methodological approaches.

The initial idea for this writing project began at the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) convention's 2007 annual meeting of the Standing Committee for Women (SCW) where members were planning for the following convention and SCW's 35th anniversary. In conjunction with the 35th anniversary in 2008, SCW was

pleased to announce a "call for chapters" for this book. At this same convention, Carol Gilligan (2008) delivered the insightful closing address and asked all members of the association to consider a new and inclusive gender paradigm that resists the dominant values of the patriarchy (see Guido-DiBrito [2008] for a description of the intimate luncheon after the address). Gilligan also shared a part of her personal story as a mother, scholar, theorist, and activist. She illustrated the ways in which human nature *resists* false dualities often urged under a patriarchy, such as the forced choice between men versus women and nature versus nurture. It is not a woman's or man's problem, she discussed; "we have all been captivated by this false story" and it's time for change.

The manifestations of this false story are actualized in the inequities lived by members of our educational communities. For example, women and people of color do not reach the position of Chief Student Affairs Officer at similar rates as do White males (Reason, Walker, & Robinson, 2002). Further, women are more likely to be chief diversity officers (56% are women) than chief academic officers or provosts (38% women; King & Gomez, 2008), where only 7% of all senior administrators are women of color and only 3% of chief academic officers are women of color (King & Gomez, 2008). Importantly, the percentage of degrees conferred to women has increased over the years (Ropers-Huilman, 2002), yet the disparities across institution type

(e.g., community colleges, regional institutions, Ivy League universities) are not often addressed.

The wage gap also continues where women who work full time earn approximately 78 cents for every dollar men earn (U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). Moreover, African American women make approximately 67 cents and Hispanic women approximately 58 cents on the dollar as compared with White men. Numbers for Native American women, Middle Eastern American women, and transgender persons were not available, signifying another gap—a gap in research. After their review of pay inequities for recently hired faculty, Porter, Toutkoushian, and Moore (2008) state that “pay equity by gender and race remains an important, and unresolved issue in academe” (p. 482) and “there are fewer gender differences in pay for recently hired faculty than is true for the entire academic labor market” (p. 483). As a resource to further explore these statistics, the American Association for University Women (2008) provides a pay gap table, where people may click on a state and see the gender earnings gap for that specific state.

These disparities are far-reaching and reify patriarchal trends found throughout history. Matilda Joslyn Gage (1826–1898) and Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902) called this inequity the “four-fold oppression” of women’s lives as women had no say in government, religion, economics, or social life (cited in Wagner, 1996). A century later, issues of inequity have not been completely addressed. In our review of the archival materials¹ of SCW in anticipation of this publication, we found that the national association continued to struggle with issues of gender inequity in 1970, and some of these same issues continue today. For example, ACPA President Charles L. Lewis wrote,

the changing patterns of administrative organization[s] have unquestionably lessened the impact and involvement of women in central student personnel decisions. The topic and concerns are bantered about frequently in little conclave, but no one

gets the problem out on the board in open discussion. The current women’s liberation moves on the college campus indicates some of the frustration.

On February 5, 1970, President Lewis requested a temporary committee on the role of women in the profession to be chaired by Elizabeth A. Greenleaf, which led to the establishment of the Women’s Task Force and later to the Standing Committee for Women, where the standing committee continues to address the complex lives of women on college campuses.

As these perspectives and statistics reflect, the lived and systemic nature of sexism continues to prevail. The goal of this book is to add to the current body of knowledge about women and higher education by considering the past experiences of women in a contemporary context and exploring the present experiences of women students, faculty, and administrators in detail through various feminist perspectives. We also address the intersections of gender and other social identities (i.e., race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, ability). Specifically, we consider this book a welcomed complement to the National Association for Student Personnel Administrator’s *Journal About Women in Higher Education* (we actively encouraged, and continue to encourage, authors to submit to this important journal), the Association for the Study of Higher Education’s *Women in Higher Education: A Feminist Perspective* (Glazer-Raymo, Townsend, & Ropers-Huilman, 2000), and Hesse-Biber & Leavy’s (2007) *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis*. Our hope is that this book contributes to, not competes with, the scholarship about and by women in higher education and student affairs. We anticipate that the implications garnered from this book are instructive for higher education leaders, researchers, administrators, faculty, and graduate students interested in the most up-to-date research on women in student affairs and higher education and, together, we push against the barriers of sexism and oppression in higher education.

Importantly, we have taken an innovative approach to the writing and revising process, one that mirrors the collaborative nature found in feminist theories. The chapter revision process was unique in that (as outlined in the call for chapters) after selection chapter authors were asked to read other chapters selected for the book that related to their original research and build upon each other's work. This process reflects feminist ideals for learning that are holistic and relational (Ropers-Huilman, 2002). In this manner, the chapters are less siloed (as is typical in an edited book) and instead "talk with each other" at various points. We hope this strengthens the book and more readily advances the current knowledge in the field. For example, during the revision process, the author of the chapter on women's and gender centers (Susan Marine, Harvard University, chapter 2) read the strategies for change chapter on campus women's centers as classrooms (Jennifer Wies, Xavier University, chapter 15) and vice versa. Authors cite each other in an informal manner (utilizing first and last names and the chapter number), as is reflective of our e-mail communication during the editorial process where primarily first names were used. Authors were also able to request any chapter in the table of contents, and in some cases they did request to read additional chapters.

This book includes historical, qualitative, quantitative, narrative, and dialogic chapters, each of which provides a different feminist perspective on the state of women in higher education and student affairs. Each section begins with a quote from seminal scholars in the field who have furthered a feminist and inclusive agenda through their research and/or practice. We offer these quotes to signal that the following chapters build upon the scholarship of people who have come before us and to encourage readers to seek out the original sources.

Section one of this book is titled "Setting the Context: A Contemporary Re/Examination of Women in Higher Education and Student Affairs." In the introductory chapter, we provide

a context for the book by distinguishing between various feminist perspectives (i.e., liberal, radical, multicultural, womanist, eco, and global feminism) and explore various feminist methodologies. This chapter discusses the implications of the feminist theories and methodological approaches for higher education and student affairs. In chapter 2, Susan Marine qualitatively explores the role of women's centers as lively, evolving hubs of feminist engagement within the academy. Through interviews with over 20 women from centers across the country, she discusses the importance of more institutional support in terms of resources and human capital to enable women's centers to reach their full potential in pursuit of gender equity. Susan effectively argues for continued use of the word *feminism*, with its myriad definitions and complex history, and discusses the word's importance as we usher in the next generation of leadership for women's and gender centers. Chapter 3 by Jennifer Lee Hoffman provides an intriguing historical analysis of the rise and fall of women leaders in the academy. Subsequently, the effect of various approaches to educating women students both in single-sex and coeducational settings is examined. Jennifer puts forth a strong case for the challenges women still face as educators and administrators in the academy. In chapter 4's unique and historical look at the "powerful collaborations between deans of women and directors of physical education," Thalia Mulvihill explores the organizational and professional experiences of the women who developed this initiative, the first of its kind. Their innovative perspective about how to develop the whole student is one of the foundational principles of student affairs and provides information about current-day leadership toward institutional change. Thalia's chapter provides further historical context through the examination of feminist approaches that were groundbreaking for the field and are relevant today.

This section is (as all sections are) followed by a few short and meaningful narratives on gender and feminism by students, administrators,

and faculty throughout the field. These reflections provide an array of diverse perspectives and lived experiences on gender and higher education through various feminist lenses. In addition, the depth of these experiences reminds us of the human faces impacted by the research, policies, and procedures enacted throughout institutions and the field of higher education. In this way, we hope to highlight how theoretical frameworks, research questions, methodological approaches, policies, and procedures *remain political* and have direct implications on people's daily lives. In this specific section, Rosemary Perez reflects on her struggles with internal racism and microaggressions as a "model minority," Cindy Clark discusses the judgment she faced as a stay-at-home mom, a student, and "just a girl," and Kelly Winters describes the collective energy and possibility of women space at women's colleges.

Section two, "Considering Experiences of Women Throughout the Academy: An Exploration of Undergraduates, Graduate Students, and Administrators," explores in depth the qualitative experiences of various women across the country who are educated in and/or are employed by our colleges and universities. In chapter 5, written by Racheal Stimpson and Kimberly Filer, the authors focus on an often-marginalized population of women in higher education, graduate students. Specifically, Racheal and Kim explore the work-life balance for over 800 women graduate students. They offer us personal stories and solid research that illustrates what is already known anecdotally: Women have less confidence in their ability to complete a terminal degree while successfully balancing school and home. The chapter concludes with practical advice for both students and student affairs professionals. In chapter 6, Monica Marcelis Fochtman explores the experiences of "high-achieving women" and how they survive in administrative positions in higher education. Importantly, she found that participant(s) had "different mentoring needs at different times in her career, indicating that the necessity and de-

sire for mentors never goes away, but shifts as her career progresses." Monica's study highlights the need for various mentoring opportunities at different points in a woman's career, which is an underlying principle of this book's editorial and revision process. In chapter 7, Annemarie Vaccaro continues to explore the experience of women in college through her interviews with 58 nontraditional-aged students. She uses feminist, critical race, and racial identity theories to analyze women's educational experiences and introduces a new and important term, *self-investment*. Jennifer Sader, in chapter 8, also explores the experiences of women students, this time women in a predominantly male field, computer science. This chapter serves as an exemplar for graduate students considering feminist qualitative research, as Jennifer intentionally lays out her feminist theoretical framework and methods of inquiry. In addition, her chapter is instructive in terms of the implications for institutional practice such as advising and programming support for women in a male-dominated field.

The narratives round out our exploration of the experiences of women in this section. Dorothy Nkhata shares her lived experiences growing up in Malawi, Africa, and how this motivates her to excel academically; Jennifer Dudeck-Lenis shares her life's journey from an undergraduate at a women's college to student affairs practitioner; Kristie Atkinson considers the complexities of gender in intercultural contexts when studying abroad; and Robbie offers reflections on reclaiming gender and gender construction.

Section three, "Exploring Identity Contexts: The Intersections of Class, Gender, Race, and Sexual Orientation for Faculty, Administrators, and Students," considers the intersections of multiple identities through qualitative research, narrative, and dialogic discussions. In chapter 9, Venice Thandi Sulé employs Black Feminist Thought and Political Race theoretical perspectives to examine how race matters in the lives of tenured Black female faculty at predominately White research institutions. Thandi discusses the

important role of institutions to serve as sites of collective action and transformation in order to intentionally address gender and racial inequities. Through storytelling in chapter 10, Florence Guido describes her experience as a first-generation Italian American growing up in the Southwest. Flo explores the complexities of identity across the generations in her family as she addresses the intersections of her own gender, race, nationality, and class and how these constructions influence her research and practice in higher education and student affairs. In chapter 11, Penny Rice examines the economically underprivileged women on our college campuses. Through the lens of social justice work, she provides insight into the lives of three women who share their struggles and triumphs in college. The chapter concludes with an inspiring call to action for all higher education practitioners. Chapter 12 is modeled after the ACPA SCW's Sister Circle discussions held at the convention each year. This roundtable provides a space and opportunity for women of color to dialogue about various professional and personal challenges in the field of student affairs and provides a supportive environment in order to work toward action strategies for change. In this chapter, we have an opportunity to read the verbal dialogue between the women as they reflect on their professional journeys and their own multiple social identities. Elisa Abes and David Kasch use Queer Theory to explore lesbian college students' multiple dimensions of identity in chapter 13, reprinted with permission from the *Journal of College Student Development*. Elisa and David employ constructivist narrative inquiry as they uncover how identities are constantly forming and reforming. The implications are far-reaching for researchers and administrators as they/we challenge heteronormative assumptions underlying student development theory. In chapter 14, Amy Stalzer Sengupta and Yvette Loury Upton discuss a familiar concept, student identity development theory, with a focus on the development of college women and, in a unique manner, explore their findings against the

backdrop of existing feminist theoretical perspectives. More specifically, Amy and Yvette utilize a combination of theoretical and personal narratives that explore women's identity development and its intersection with other forms of identity development (i.e., women of color). This original research advances feminist theories of women student development.

The narratives in this section also exhibit the intersections of multiple identities. Xyanthe Neider reflects upon the legacies from which she grew and discusses the intersections of her own identities as a biracial, nontraditional, first-generation college student who is a single parent. Kimberley Fernandes shares the complexities of skin and gender as she learns how to "break out" of silence to share her story as an Indian woman (from South Asia). Rachel Wagner explores the intersections of dis/ability and gender as she relays her journey toward profundity reaped from her "loss."

Section four, "Advancing the Future: Strategies for Changing Dominant Paradigms," encourages an innovative and strategic look at the future of higher education and student affairs, one that interrupts dominant patriarchal paradigms. In chapter 15, Jennifer Wies explores the connection between Women's Centers and a commitment to education and learning through both quantitative and qualitative methods. Examination of the Women's Center as Classroom model at Xavier University imparts practical information about how to replicate such a program on other campuses. In addition, assessment guidelines and suggestions are put forth in an effort to encourage practitioners to examine the effectiveness of their current programs. Chapter 16 assesses the current state of research on women student affairs administrators. Tamara Yakaboski and Saran Donahoo examine different perspectives of women in student affairs administration including the unique experiences of African American women, Asian and Asian American women, and women with children and families. This chapter concludes with an

examination of some of the gender-based assumptions in student affairs. In chapter 17, Lindsay Orchowski, Eric Zimak, Troy Robison, Justin Reeder, Ryan Rhoades, Christine Gidycz, and Alan Berkowitz provide a look inside a sexual assault prevention program at a midsized Midwestern university. Through an examination of current issues associated with creating and implementing a sexual assault prevention program, Lindsay and colleagues encourage readers to identify challenges present on their campuses and provide useful tips on overcoming those challenges. Lee Hawthorne Calizo, in chapter 18, tells the inspiring story of how six female administrators at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, created a cohort-based model for women's advancement within the academy. A discussion of the activities of the first two years, in addition to the significant learning that occurred, is shared in an effort to inspire the replication of this program throughout the field. Similar to Monica Marcelis Fochtman (chapter 6), Lee's focus on high-level female administrators fills a sizable gap in the current higher education literature, which often ignores full-time administrators.

Kelly Maxwell discusses how the personal is political as she describes how her personal life and professional work in higher education are inextricably linked. Cayden Mak reflects on the antitransgender bias faced as an undergraduate minority student on campus and love's place in the academy. Vanidy Bailey grapples with heterosexual norms as she encourages administrators to recognize the power they/we have to change a life or destroy a dream, encouraging administrators to be good stewards of this power.

Together with Amanda Suniti Niskodé-Dossett, we conclude the book with a unique capstone that reviews the various chapters through different feminist lenses and methodological approaches that we outlined in chapter 1. In addition, we make a deliberate call for women, men, and transgender scholars and educators to work toward centering feminist perspectives (and other marginalized perspectives) in research and prac-

tice as the complexities of college and university life continue to evolve. In issuing this call, we highlight (1) feminist inquiry: uncovering lenses and assumptions; (2) feminist inquiry: influencing research and scholarship; and (3) questions and implications for future feminist research and practice. Finally, we discuss the challenges and opportunities we face as we look to advance the role of women who hold multiple identities in student affairs and higher education.

The ACPA SCW's mission is "to transform the culture of higher education and student affairs to empower women" (ACPA, 2008). The vision states that "as a committee of ACPA, the Standing Committee for Women works to create an environment that supports the lifelong holistic development of women. We accomplish this through coalition building, education, and advocacy for women." The process of this book, from inception to publication, was a collaborative process that, we hope, continues to build coalitions between scholars and practitioners throughout the field. We also hope the research and programs described in this book inspire the next generation of research, scholarship, and practice about (and with) women in higher education and student affairs in order to reduce patriarchal paradigms and foster an educational climate of equity and social justice.

NOTE

1. We would like to share a special "thank you" to Ann Bowers, the ACPA national archivist at Bowling Green State University, for such convenient and useful access to the archives.

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