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SPECIAL ISSUE

Women's Leadership in Higher Education

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Guest Editor

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The Genesis

In 2020, the United States celebrates 100 years since the ratification of the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote. In honoring this milestone event, the American Association of University Administrators (AAUA) is publishing this special issue of the *Journal of Higher Education Management* (JHEM) focused on research and reflections on Women's Leadership in Higher Education. This project and a call for submissions was announced at the AAUA Annual Leadership Seminar on June 6, 2019.

The purpose of AAUA's *Journal of Higher Education Management* is to promote and strengthen the profession of college and university administrators and improve their leadership skills. *JHEM* provides a forum for: (a) a discussion of the current issues, problems and challenges facing higher education; (b) an exchange of practical wisdom and techniques in the areas of higher education leadership, policy analysis and development, and institutional management; and (c) the identification and explication of the principles and standards of college and university administration. We are confident this special edition on Women's Leadership in Higher Education meets these goals.

This special issue includes current research on the impact of women leaders in higher education as well as personal reflections from a cross-section of women leaders in their own voice. The latter was a way for women to share their unique perspectives on and lived experiences of higher education leadership, its joys and challenges, the lessons learned, and words of wisdom to future generations.

This special issue was built upon the foundations laid by Astin and Leland in their groundbreaking book *Voices of Women of Influence, Women of Vision*, and the 2014 Legacy Conference in Racine Wisconsin at the Johnson Foundation @ Wingspread that adapted and expanded Astin and Leland's work for the 21st century. This is discussed this in detail in a 2017 article in *JHEM* (http://www.aaua.org/journals/pdfs/JHEM_32-1_2017_FINAL.pdf).

For the personal reflections in this special issue, we reached out to women who know firsthand what the highest levels of postsecondary leadership entail, offering a chance for them to share their unique voices, perspectives, and experiences via storytelling—one of the core values identified at the Wingspread conference as key to intergenerational transmission. These short essays provide a set of very diverse, personal experiences written to help and inspire others along the journey. The overarching questions posed to these women leaders were:

- What is the most important personal story you want and need to tell?
- What principles, values, and ethics formed the basis for your leadership?
- What are the most important lessons you learned as a leader?
- In your view, what remains to be done with respect to women's leadership?

- What wise words of wisdom do you want to share with future generations?

Organizational Structure

Research Articles

Four scholarly research articles were selected through a peer-reviewed process that represent current research on the topic of women's leadership in higher education. They are:

The Arc of Women Academic Leadership: A Survey of Women University Presidents through the Lens of Awareness, Vision, Intentionality, Impact, Joy, and Legacy by Christine K. Cavanaugh, EdD (Pathseekers II, Inc.)

Women's Leadership in Higher Education: Status, Barriers, and Motivators by Susan R. Madsen, EdD (Utah Valley University) and Karen A. Longman, PhD (Azusa Pacific University)

Women of Color: Removing Barriers to the College Presidency by Gloria Thomas, PhD (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

I, too, am a lead(Her): The Power and Possibilities of Women on Governing Boards of Higher Education in California by Raquel M. Rall, PhD and Valeria Orue, PhD Candidate (University of California, Riverside)

Personal Reflections

This section of the special issue begins with a historical reflection by Carole Leland, who co-authored the inspirational *Women of Influence, Women of Vision* in 1993. Along with Carole Leland's historical context, twenty three women leaders share their personal reflections: Sandra Affenito, Jo Allen, Margarita Benitez, Noreen Carrocci, Marie Cini, Mary Sue Coleman, Dorothy Escribano, Deborah Ford, Sister Ann Heath, IHM, Patricia Hsieh, Vicki Martin, Patricia McGuire, Fayneese Miller, Anny Morrobel-Sosa, Elizabeth (Liz) Morse, Felice Nudelman, Katrina Rogers, Mary Sias, Beverly Daniel Tatum, Jackie Taylor, Karen Whitney, Hope Williams, and Julie Wollman. The diversity of voices creates a chorus of unique perspectives and institutional representation.

We are pleased that this special edition of *JHEM* will be online with an indexing capability. This digital format enables us to include a very unique and special podcast of a conversation with Felice Nudelman.

Peer Review Process

We engaged a team of scholars that included AAUA organizational and board members to review the various submitted research articles and reflections. A special thanks for their time, support, critique, review, eagle eyes, and editorial skills is extended to Damon Andrew, John Cavanaugh, Mark Hammons, Sister Ann Heath, IHM, Meredith Hock-Oescher, Elizabeth (Beth) Gill, Newtona (Tina) Johnson, Greg Paveza, and Jacqueline (Jackie) Taylor. A special acknowledgement goes to Dan King as Editor-in-Chief of AAUA's *JHEM*.

Special Acknowledgements

To our knowledge, this Women's Leadership in Higher Education Special Issue is the most extensive combination of current research on women's leadership in higher education and

personal leadership reflections from a diverse group of women higher education leaders in their own words. All of us deeply understand and are grateful for the many women leaders and researchers who have gone before and hewed the leadership paths on which we now tread. So, it is with profound gratitude we acknowledge those who contributed to this body of work and laid the foundations on which this special issue rests.

The Legacy Conference conducted at Wingspread, Racine, Wisconsin in 2014 included: Helen S. Astin, Margarita Benítez, Rebecca M. Blank, Kim Bobby, Christine K. Cavanaugh, Mary-Beth Cooper, Teresa Delgado, Deborah Ford, Barbara Gellman-Danley, Leah Ginty, Susan Henking, Patricia Hsieh, Heather Kind-Keppel, Lucie Lapovsky, Carole Leland, Dorothy Leland, Susan R. Madsen, Elaine Maimon, Felice Nudelman, Kevin P. Reilly, Beverly Daniel Tatum, Claire Van Ummersen, Renee Wachter, Judith White, and Karen M. Whitney.

Those with whom we spent hours interviewing to understand more fully the lived experiences of women higher education leaders: Patricia Arrendondo, Patricia P. Cormier, Sister Patricia Fadden, IHM, Madlyn L. Hanes, Karen S. Haynes, Muriel A. Howard, Jolene Koester, Maravene S. Loeschke, Katherine Lyall, S. Georgia Nugent, Glenda D. Price, Helen J. Streubert, P. Judy Touchton, Kay Shellenkamp, and Julie E. Wollman. They offered their time, perspective, and insights. In addition, 103 university and college women presidents participated anonymously by completing an online that added their voices to the chorus of women presidents.

As evolved and unfolded over a number of years, we have sadly lost some beautiful women's voices that left us too soon. We honor the contributions of Helen S. Astin, Michelle Howard-Vital, Patricia (Pat) Leonard, and Maravene S. Loeschke who will live on in our hearts and in their stories.

We thank the members of AAUA and the Board of Directors for their ongoing encouragement and support of this effort and for the support of the *JHEM* editorial board. A special recognition and appreciation to the AAUA President and Chief Executive Officer Dan King for his amazing generosity, foresight, and leadership. This work could not have happened without all your support, for which we are most grateful.

The Arc of Women Academic Leadership: A Survey of Women University Presidents through the Lens of Awareness, Vision, Intentionality, Impact, Joy, and Legacy

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Over the last 50 years, women have gradually risen to the highest leadership positions within higher educational institutions, that of president and/or chancellor (hereinafter "president"). Past scholarly research has chronicled women presidents' journeys and trajectories to the position (Madsen 2010, 2016), the barriers and challenges faced (Ford & Cavanaugh, 2017; Gagliardi et al., 2017; Hill et al., 2016; Ross & Green, 2000; Scolforo, 2012; Springer, 2013; Touchton & Ingram, 1995; Touchton et al., 1993), mentorship (Cavanaugh, Ford, Leland, & Cooper, 2017), leadership styles (Sandeen, Cavanaugh, & Ford, 2017), and their leadership roles and responsibilities (American Council on Education, 2018; Lapovsky, 2014; Young et al., 2012). Unfortunately, this extensive literature documents that the issues and challenges of becoming an academic leader as a woman have changed little over time.

Women's success in reaching the goal of the college presidency has evolved incrementally. By challenging conventional thinking and expectations, and by intentionally positioning, coaching, and mentoring women to overcome adversity, setbacks, and inequities, more women have been able to fulfill their desired aspiration to lead institutions of higher learning. In the United States, the profile of a typical college or university president has changed slowly over the last thirty years. The percentage of presidencies held by women steadily rose from just under 10 percent in 1986 to 30.1 percent in 2016 according to the American Council on Education (American Council on Education, 2018; Gagliardi et al., 2017). Still, the gender gap is apparent and does not reflect the demographics of the current college student population in which women outnumber men in both enrollment and completion (Gagliardi et al., 2017; Hill et al., 2016; Young et al., 2012). Even in the higher education workplace, although women continue to earn more degrees than men, women still remain under-represented in pipeline positions as tenured faculty and administrators (Hill et al., 2016).

Historical Context

As background, the research summarized here was built upon the foundations laid out in the groundbreaking book by Helen S. Astin and Carole Leland (1991), Women of Influence, Women of Vision: A Cross-Generational Study of Leaders of Social Change and the 30-year reunion known as the Legacy Conference (Women's Voices on Influence and Vision: A Legacy Conference, 2014) conducted at the Johnson Foundation at Wingspread in Racine, Wisconsin. A more detailed discussion of this foundation and the extension of Astin and Leland's work to the 21st century is presented in Ford and Cavanaugh (2017).

The 2014 Legacy Conference reset the conversation on the impact of the "inheritors," a term first introduced by Astin and Leland (1991). Their original model of generational leadership

described the progression from "predecessors," to "instigators," and then to "inheritors." Inspired by this seminal work, this research on current women leaders and the transition to the next generation of academic leaders focuses on understanding the pivotal role played by their "inheritors" and the influence they have had on setting the agenda for women's leadership.

Women of Influence, Women of Vision - A Reflection

Many of the leadership skills, challenges, and coping mechanisms initially identified in Astin and Leland's research in the 1980s remain the same for today's academic women leaders. The authors identified critical leadership skills for women: inventive; creative; risk-taking; innovative; skilled at utilizing networks; adept at using various forms of communication; able to surround themselves with tremendously talented people; self-aware; able to integrate capacities as strategists, facilitators, and communicators; able to let go when appropriate; thorough in doing homework; and fully present and ready.

The leadership challenges identified by Astin and Leland's (1991) work included: social norms; relationships – marriage, children, families, and friendships; toll on self; a universal frustration of not having enough time; lack of control over schedule; loneliness; and lack of balance. Women studied by Astin and Leland employed coping mechanisms such as exercise, physical activity, personal time, reflection, travel, reading, and family time to address these challenges in leadership. The current research reaffirms that both the challenges and coping mechanisms still hold true today for women leaders.

Hartley (1984) wrote that during the initial Women of Influence, Women of Vision convening in 1983, Arvonne Fraser stated, "There is a worldwide sisterhood of problems, women must have the courage to take leadership roles in an international as well as national context. We are interdependent as women, and we are interdependent as nations."

During the 2014 Legacy Conference, Astin and Leland reflected on the changes they noticed during the intervening 31 years and offered the following wisdom and advice to the women participants: "Always be authentic; have courage to be resilient; stand up straight about leadership; embrace your role as developers of leaders; stay connected to other women; nurture and cultivate the sisterhood; create space for more voices to be heard; support one another; and keep the flame alive!"

Listening to Women's Voices

Cavanaugh and Ford examined more deeply the progress and the impact of women's leadership in the academy since Astin and Leland (1991). Their mixed methods study consisted of an online survey with 103 presidents and hour-long interviews with an additional 15 presidents for a total of 118 women presidents participating, all of whom are current or former university presidents across the United States.

Demographically, of the survey respondents, 70% indicated their primary affiliation as public institutions and 30% independent private. They identified their institutional sector as 46% community college, 40% comprehensive, 10% liberal arts, 2% research intensive, and 2% other. As for special affiliations, 33% were religiously affiliated, 30% were Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI), 4% Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), 3% military and 30% other. Geographically, 47% indicated they were at an urban institution, 36% at rural, and 17% at other. As for enrollment, those responding indicated 53% had fewer than 5,000 students, 23% were

between 5,000-15,000 students, 18% were between 15,000 – 30,000 students, and 6% were over 30,000 students. Despite significant differences in these women leaders' academic backgrounds, location, years of experience, and types of institutions, many common themes emerged from their experiences. Six overarching themes that arose from the data were: (1) awareness, (2) vision, (3) intentionality, (4) impact, (5) joy and (6) legacy.

Awareness

Being aware of the issues, challenges, and opportunities for academic leadership allowed women to survey the landscape and observe others. These presidents reported that there was limited access to role models and peer groups, and they often found themselves the first or only female CEO on the campus and in the neighboring community. Many respondents shared concerns that there were different criteria and expectations placed on women leaders, especially in areas regarding toughness in decision making and confronting difficult challenges such as fiscal stability, academic quality, and changing demographics. Others expressed that governing boards and the campus community had many preconceived ideas and showed bias (conscious and unconscious) toward their leadership including demonstrating behaviors based on various stereotypes and misconceptions, displaying sexism, implementing pay inequity, and subtly discriminating. Many shared that there exists a serious pipeline challenge in readiness. They reported too few women qualified and willing to step into higher levels of leadership, due in part to the length of time to achieve faculty tenure and promotion opportunities that seem skewed more favorably towards male colleagues. Work-life balance challenges were reported frequently; these tended to play out in several ways, such as fewer and slower promotions due to being burdened with work-related activities, such as extra committee assignments, as well as with family obligations, including child rearing and elder care.

The following table identifies the challenges that survey respondents indicated they faced in their career.

Challenges Faced In Ones Career	Mean Score (5-Point Likert Scale)
Work/life balance	4.14
Lack of balance	3.93
Politics	3.88
Childcare	3.82
Lack of control over your schedule	3.82
Wage inequity	3.77
Family demands	3.67
Discrimination	3.6
Social norms	3.49
Unrealistic expectations (by self or others)	3.44
Time management	3.35
Relationships	3.25
Loneliness	3.23
Elder care	3.15
Financial constraints	3.06
Timing in promotions	2.79
Lack of mentorship	2.61
Health related issues	2.17
Safety	2.13

there was also a sense that the higher education landscape is changing, with issues such as declining revenues and funding constraints, enrollment and demographic shifts, political climate, pace of change especially with technology, and campus safety and security issues. Interestingly, respondents noted that these issues present equally challenging environments for both women and men.

Vision

Having a vision was a major factor in understanding not only themselves as presidents, but also an understanding about where higher education is going. Participants were asked to share their ethical perspectives and vision through both a personal and professional lens. When asked about the values that define their personal vision, presidents used words such as integrity, honesty, family, diversity, ethical, respect for others, compassion, inclusive, caring, empathy, commitment, and justice. When asked about the values that define their professional vision, presidents still cite integrity first, along with communication, excellence, accountability, transparency, respect, education, valuing others, doing the right thing, community, and success.

Women presidents' vision for themselves as leaders included knowing who they are and what they want. One specific question asked them to share their secrets for success. Comments included strategies such as relationship building, being a multi-tasker, showing empathy, being mentored

and being a mentor, being self-aware and authentic, being prepared, networking, using good communications and listening skills, having a relentless commitment to doing hard things, hiring and nurturing a great team, leveraging the power of being a women leader, respecting others, demonstrating confidence, being courageous and, above all, having the ability to laugh at oneself. When asked to rank six factors of courage in a professional context, respondents most frequently mentioned individual resilience (38%), building capacity among personnel (25%), and advocating and expressing their views, values, and beliefs (24%); in comparison, among the least mentioned were challenging traditional institutional structure and policies (9%), knowing when to walk away (2%), and confronting threats (2%).

One president lamented about the future by saying, "I am concerned about the direction of funding for higher education in this country and by affiliation what that means for women leaders. I think the battle to simply maintain public dollars will be astronomical in the next two decades and the political will it may take to sustain that effort is also daunting. Women need to learn how to be political in every regard in order to assist in 'righting this ship.' Strong leadership is needed now more than ever."

Intentionality

Being intentional about addressing the need for more women leaders in higher education institutions, presidents indicated they purposely have reached out to talented younger women. The advice they shared with women they mentored, coached, and sponsored was to "pay it forward." This motto served as a key to their personal commitment to advancing the next generation of women leaders. The presidents offered the following wisdom to mentees: Be authentic; enjoy what you do and enjoy the people you work with; be resilient; find your balance and joy; work with a broad range of people; make gutsy moves; work at building relationships; be a calculated risk taker; find your own mentors and be willing to be a mentor; be inclusive; know who you are, know your strengths and blind spots; set audacious goals; commit to getting things done; be a thought (ful) leader; and don't take yourself too seriously.

Some signature initiatives highlighting their efforts to be intentional about women's leadership opportunities included describing how they created and encouraged leadership development programs on the campus for women students, faculty, and staff, along with supporting external programs or professional associations such as American Association of University Women (AAUW), Higher Education Resource Services (HERS), and American Council on Education (ACE). Many described facilitating mentoring programs focused on career development and job shadowing and identified how they had implemented reviews and modification of campus policies focused on diversity of searches, equity in hiring, and encouraging a greater awareness of inclusion. While there were some positive changes over time, pay or salary equity was still a critical issue to address and was one of the top items left on an "unfinished agenda."

Impact

When asked about the impact of more women in positions as president, they shared that women were more likely to bring a collaborative perspective to the situation. They also shared that they were advocates for the needs of their campus and see a holistic picture of a system that included being more inclusive, sensitive, and aware of marginalized groups. They indicated that, generally, a woman's style is considered more inclusive, not only in recognizing individual contributions but in the decision-making process. In addition, with more of a critical mass of women to help create networks and resources, they brought a different perspective and new voices to social issues, inspired more women to be leaders, encouraged more women to enroll in higher education programs, and actively engaged women as donors to contribute philanthropically to the institutions. One respondent said about having more women colleagues, "This role can be lonely and going to the bathroom was a place for life and work conversation with other women."

Presidents were asked what significant changes they had observed over the last 30 years. Many noted that more women were in leadership positions at various levels, not only on the campus, but in board rooms and in the related associations. While they indicated that there seemed to be fewer women religious in leadership positions at religiously affiliated institutions, they did acknowledge there was greater acceptance of women as CEOs and that they had much stronger voices for and with women. They also indicated that there was more mentoring, support, and encouragement for women; however, it still wasn't enough. As one president noted, "There are in fact more women in leadership position in higher education but we are also now put in positions which we must make these difficult decisions to keep the enterprise competitive. This is a recognition that women can do these roles, but there are also inequitable expectations of women leaders. If you fail, you fail for all women. If a white man fails, he fails alone."

During the Legacy Conference, Leland noted, "Collaborative work is the most difficult and the most rewarding –it is when you really get something done" (Women's Voices on Influence and Vision: A Legacy Conference, 2014, audio recording). The women discussed the impact of their leadership and shared how they are more likely to demonstrate collaborative approaches and perspectives to their campuses. They shared stories of how they built their leadership teams to include diverse and even controversial perspectives on issues. The women discussed the value of employing win-win strategies when considering complex decision making. In addition, the women were more likely to take a holistic approach and advocated strongly for the needs of all. One of the women presidents commented, "When you have more women on your leadership team, inclusion and collaboration increase."

Joy

Finding the joy in leadership was challenging. When asked about the biggest surprise during their presidency, one respondent wrote, "That I have found joy even on the darkest days," revealing that the expectation of leadership tends to be full of challenges and hardships. Yet others remarked that, "There was joy in helping students learn."

"Vocation is where your great joy meets the world's needs." (Women's Voices on Influence and Vision: A Legacy Conference Legacy Conference, 2014, audio recording). The women presidents in this study talked about the joys of their work and reflected on how they mentored younger, academic, and administrative women and men to lead with their full potential and to excel as leaders and were proud that they opened doors to opportunity for the next generation. The Legacy Conference and research participants shared stories of the many joys they find in their work as leaders. They especially reflected on their engagement with others and service as mentors

and leaders. One president noted, "I am proud that I spent my life serving for the success and welfare of students."

As one president summarized, "The joy of leadership is, for me, wrapped up in the joy of service and making a meaningful, purposeful, and sustainable impact on the lives of others. It is a joy that comes from, as Dawna Markova's (2000) poem [I Will Not Die An Unlived Life] articulates so beautifully, seeing 'that which comes to me as seed goes on as blossom; and that which come to me as blossom goes on as fruit'."

Women presidents appreciated the opportunity to be themselves as leaders. One president commented about the myth that women serving as presidents have a totally unbalanced life, less authentic life, and interpersonal challenges. While most talked about the importance of balance and shared stories of personal challenges, they highlighted the significance of being authentic in their professional and personal lives. Another president shared, "I came to realize that I can be myself in my professional life."

One president noted, "Opportunities now exist (albeit slow to change in certain kinds of institutions). There is less interest in women presidents as curiosities, more interest in our work. More of the time, the fact that we are women doesn't matter a bit. That is a significant progress that it's usually not an issue."

When Carole Leland described her friendship and sisterhood with Lena Austin, she said that, "Lena found joy in seeing passion and commitment by creating new ways of doing work. Her legacy is for us to rekindle the spirit of activism and get the passion back again." (Cavanaugh et al., 2017). This is consistent with Kouzes and Posner's (2008) belief that, "A leader's legacy is really the legacy of many. Leaders make unique contributions, but others play significant parts" (p. 45).

Legacy

"I hope I made a difference." Legacy is often considered something one thinks about either in retirement or when others describe someone's life work. As Kouzes and Posner (2008) described it, "Legacy thinking means dedicating ourselves to making a difference, not just working to achieve fame and fortune. It also means appreciating that others will inherit what we leave behind" (p. 5).

For the women in this study, talking about their respective legacies provoked serious reflection and, in some cases, generated significant silence. The women who had retired seemed to have an easier time defining their legacy but were very humble in talking about their impact as leaders.

Overall, the presidents in this study saw themselves as transformational leaders who placed the mission of their organization and the growth and development of people at the center of their work. Many shared stories of mentoring the next generation of women leaders and making the campus culture more inclusive. Each expressed gratitude for the opportunity to lead their institution.

"The women presidents interviewed for this study showed remarkable courage and humility in describing their contributions to their campuses and communities. Just like for these women, their legacy reverberates throughout higher education through the many lives they have touched as teachers, educators, mentors, sponsors, and leaders." (Ford & Cavanaugh, 2017, p.23)

Based on the evidence in this research, the arc of these presidents' leadership reflects their stories of establishing, growing, and maintaining their own authentic approach to their leadership

roles and responsibilities, and, most important, sustaining and leaving a legacy that inspires a new generation to continue in their footsteps.

Inheritors -- So What?

What does all this mean? When Women of Influence, Women of Vision was published in 1991, Astin and Leland defined the unfinished agenda for women leaders as the need to address continuing and subtle forms of discrimination; confusion and conflict related to feminist identity and philosophy; problems of balance among family, work, and personal agendas; isolation and lack of acceptance within the traditional male hierarchy of institutions and policy groups; economic issues – pay inequity, parity, poverty, and child care; and not enough women in leadership roles. Fast forward to 2020. Most of these points were raised by the presidents in this study as high priorities to address. Still. Although many of the presidents noted progress, all expressed concern that progress is too little and too slow to result in true change (Sandeen, Cavanaugh, & Ford, 2017).

How do we, as "inheritors" in the 21st century, change this narrative? Are we willing to talk about how women lead? Are we willing to talk about how women are (mis)treated ? Are we willing to be authentic, collaborative, and give voice to these issues?

The women presidents in this study defined priorities for the "inheritors" of today: to advance women in leadership roles and to celebrate what it means to be an academic leader. Specifically presidents noted: creating a bigger and more robust pipeline of leadership opportunities for women; sponsoring, nominating, mentoring and coaching more women into leadership roles; promoting more women on college, university, and corporate boards; supporting and nurturing the current generation of women leaders; and sharing the joys of what it means to be a leader (Ford & Cavanaugh, 2017; Lapovsky, 2014).

Personal Reflection

In reflecting on this research and the insightful stories from these presidents, I challenged myself not only as a teacher and researcher but as an executive coach to consider what I can do to guide my students and clients to draw on these pearls of wisdom. I would ask: What is it that you really want? What holds you back? What does success look like for you? How will this hard-won wisdom from these pioneering women's voices inspire you to take the challenge passed to the inheritor generations? How will you accept these challenges? How will you envision the future? How will you tell the stories and the lessons you have learned? How will you articulate the challenges as well as the joys of academic leadership? How will you inspire others to be bold and ambitious and to make a difference in leading higher education institutions? What will the collective impact be? What is left to be done?

Imaging if each woman president or senior administrator reached out and intentionally mentored, coached, or inspired just one talented woman to be an academic leader, we will change the landscape of higher education. We will keep the flame alive. We will achieve Astin and Leland's dream. What a legacy that would be.

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Women's Leadership in Higher Education: Status, Barriers, and Motivators

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Advancing more women into institutional leadership roles in higher education matters. Although numerous studies have documented the value of involving diverse perspectives in decision-making processes (Donovan & Caplan, 2019; Gero & Garrity, 2018; Williams, 2013; Woolley & Malone, 2011), many individuals and organizations—ranging from the corporate sector and the political realm to postsecondary education—have voiced commitments to increasing the representation of women in higher ranks, yet they have been stymied in achieving measurable results. A variety of examples in the research-based literature reflect the glacial pace of progress for women into leadership roles across a variety of fields. Examining the field of higher education, noted leadership scholars Kellerman and Rhode (2017) have debunked the myth that the oft-touted *pipeline theory*, which argues that "over time, a larger number of women on lower rungs of organizational hierarchies will yield a larger number of women on higher ones" (p. 11). Yet these authors note that even after more than 30 years in which this theory has held currency, "the number of women in positions of leadership and management has remained dauntingly and depressingly low" (p. 11).

Despite the cautionary note sounded by Kellerman and Rhode (2017), lack of progress toward higher levels of representation by women in leadership continues to be attributed to a faulty or leaky pipeline. For example, from the corporate perspective, a *Harvard Business Review* cover story authored by Ibarra, Ely, and Kolb (2013) examined the biases that often derail women's leadership aspirations and advancement. Despite corporate efforts to prioritize gender diversity through establishing aspirational goals, these scholars summarize that such efforts have largely failed: "They [CEOs] and their companies spend time, money, and good intentions on efforts *to build a more robust pipeline* of upwardly mobile women, and then not much happens" (p. 62, emphasis added). Similarly, a recent report titled "Women in the Workplace," released by McKinsey & Company (2018), drew upon data from 462 companies employing almost 20 million people to document an alarming demographic pattern:

> Since 2015, the first year of this study, corporate America has made almost no progress in improving women's representation. Women are underrepresented at every level, and women of color are the most underrepresented group of all. [. . .] Women are dramatically outnumbered in senior leadership. Only about 1 in 5 C-suite leaders is a woman, and only 1 in 25 is a woman of color." (p. 5)

The report challenges corporations to take more decisive action to close the gender gaps in hiring and promotions, "*especially early in the pipeline* when women are most overlooked" (p. 3, emphasis added).

The scope of the problem is clear: Across nearly every sector of US society, a pattern of women's underrepresentation in leadership roles is evident (Gangone & Lennon, 2014). This pattern has been fully documented in the field of higher education (American Council on Education, 2017; Gray, Crandall, & Taylor, 2019; Johnson, 2016; Longman & Madsen, 2014), despite the fact that since 2006 the majority of degrees at every level—associate degrees through doctorates—have been earned by women (Johnson, 2016). Thus, for more than a decade, the population of well-educated candidates for leadership roles has not been dominated by men.

These patterns of underrepresentation by women in leadership are particularly troubling given that numerous studies from across various sectors have documented a compelling case for the importance of advancing more women into leadership, as was summarized in a report produced by Madsen (2015). Five benefits to institutions and organizations when women are actively involved on boards and leadership teams include improved financial performance, strengthened organizational climate, increased corporate social responsibility and reputation, leveraging talent, and enhanced innovation and collective intelligence.

For reasons that are both substantive and symbolic, therefore, higher education should be at the forefront of advocacy for greater women's representation in organizational leadership. This case for advocacy in this area is not new; in fact, a decade ago a major national study titled "The White House Project" examined various sectors with the long-term goal of having a woman enter the US presidency (Wilson, 2009) and made a persuasive argument for proactively increasing the visibility of women in higher education leadership:

> When we look at where women stand in the leadership ranks of academia, so much more is at stake than the mere numbers of women who have reached the top. The presence—or absence—of female academic leaders can have far-reaching influences not only on the institutions themselves, but beyond that, on the scope of research and knowledge that affects us all. Studies have shown that when prominent female academics are involved in research, for example, it can affect the nature of both the questions that are asked and the findings. Women in senior faculty positions and top-level leadership positions in academia provide male students, faculty and staff an important opportunity to work with talented women—an experience that will prove increasingly valuable as the overall gender balance in the workforce changes. In addition, these women serve as powerful role models and mentors to younger women starting out on the path to leadership themselves. Thus, these leaders can serve to bring out the best in women of not only this generation but several generations to come. (Wilson, 2009, p. 16)

We therefore acknowledge and support the urgency of preparing and advancing more women into higher education leadership on the one hand. Yet it is important to underscore that although women have been increasingly visible at the "lower" levels of the academic pecking order (e.g., in lower faculty ranks, in support positions to top-level administrators), in terms of campus leadership roles, "significant change, major change, continues to remain elusive" (Kellerman & Rhode, 2017, p. 12).

Having acknowledged the persistent lack of women in leadership all sectors, this article offers a brief overview of the status of women and leadership in higher education, with a primary focus on the United States. A summary of the barriers women often face within postsecondary institutions is then provided. Recognizing that the pipeline theory has historically applied male-normed assumptions about leadership (e.g., the motivators for individuals to aspire to leadership and the attractiveness of various kinds of rewards) to address the underrepresentation of women, the article then examines research related to the motivators for women to step into leadership. In summary, rather than continuing to place stock largely in the pipeline theory, we advocate for proactively recognizing that women have rarely been supported to engage the process of *leader identity development*—defined by Ibarra, Ely, and Kolb (2013) as the process of seeing oneself and being seen by others as a leader. Additionally, given that women typically find the male-normed rewards of power, status, money, and competitive advantage to be hierarchical and self-oriented (Helgesen & Johnson, 2010; Turner, 2012), it is important to understand the dimensions of being in leadership that can motivate women to embrace the opportunities afforded by such roles.

Status of Women and Leadership in US Higher Education

In the United States, progress toward the goal of advancing more women into postsecondary leadership has been frustratingly slow (American Council on Education, 2017; Gray, Crandall, & Taylor, 2019; Johnson, 2016; Kellerman & Rhode, 2017). Yet, having an accurate picture of the status quo is helpful in advocating for progress through various means. In this section, we briefly review the demographic trends related to the composition of senior-level leadership of US higher education in general—and presidents in particular—as well as the representation of women on governing bodies (e.g., boards of trustees, regents, commissioners), which hold responsibility for selecting the next generation of presidents and attending to institutional health and financial viability.

A 2013 report issued by the American Council of Education (ACE) titled *On the Pathway to the Presidency* documented that women then comprised 43% of senior administrators in all types of US higher education institutions (Kim, 2013). A 2017 report released by the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources found that women held approximately 50% of all administrative positions in higher education across the United States, with actual representation varying depending on the type of both positions and institutions (Bichsel & McChesney, 2017). For example, a 2009 publication of the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) noted that women represented "52 percent of senior leaders at community colleges, but only 34 percent in doctorate-granting institutions" (Hall, 2010). The observation that women tend to hold lower-level positions and to attain leadership roles in less prestigious institutions has been supported by Nidiffer (2010), who noted that leadership positions held by women tend to be in less "prestigious" areas (e.g., student affairs vs. academic affairs). The demographics justify consistent calls for increased preparation and hiring of women throughout all levels of higher education management and leadership.

Governing bodies that oversee higher education on a statewide basis include boards of regents, commissioners, and education boards; at the level of an individual college or university, a board of trustees or regents is typically responsible for ensuring the integrity of the institutional mission, hiring or firing the president, and monitoring financial viability (Hendrickson, Lane, Harris, & Dorman, 2013). Again, in these key arenas for leadership, women are significantly

underrepresented, as evident in data collected from each state's governing board website (Madsen, Goryunova, & Hew-Len, 2017). Overall as of 2017, women comprised only one-third (33.5%) of members of states' governing bodies, a 4.2% national increase from 2014. In 2017, Nebraska (66.7%), Washington (66.7%), Michigan (63.6%), New York (58.8%), and Rhode Island (58.8%) topped the list on women's representation. The states with the lowest percentage of women on the state's governing board were Missouri (11.1%), Oklahoma (11.1%), Louisiana (12.5%), and Georgia (15.8%).

According to a research report authored by Johnson (2016), which was published by the American Council on Education and the Center for Policy Research and Strategy (ACE/CPRS), female participation on US university and college boards of trustees increased for public institutions from 28.4% in 2010 to 31.5% in 2015; the percentages for private institutions improved slightly from 30.2% in 2010 to 31.7% during the same period.

That same ACE/CPRS report (Johnson, 2016) documented that women had held presidencies at approximately 27% of colleges and universities across the United States as of 2011, with variation between public institutions (29.1% had women in presidential leadership) and private institutions (24.1% had women presidents). Subsequently, the *American College President Study 2017* (ACPS) reported that the number of institutions led by women presidents had risen to 30% (American Council on Education, 2017). In reporting these statistics, Gray, Crandall, and Taylor (2019) emphasized the underrepresentation of women in these key roles; in particular, they issued a call for higher education to address the preparation of women of color as future leaders:

> In 2016, 25 percent of all presidents self-identified as White women, while women of color accounted for only 5 percent of U.S. college and university leaders. This inequity demands we take an intersectional approach to understanding the pathways, supports, and barriers to the presidency for women of color. Such an approach will take careful planning and intentionally designed policies and practices to succeed. (para 2)

Moving from the demographic composition of institutional presidents to chief academic officers, presidents' cabinets, and deans, it is challenging to locate current data. The 2016 ACE/CPRS study (Johnson, 2016) reported that 43.6% of chief academic officers (CAOs) were women (an increase from 39.1% in 2013). The closest US percentages for the gender distribution on presidential cabinets is the 42% of senior institutional officers reported above, providing a fairly accurate snapshot of women in cabinet-level positions. Academic deans are also among key leadership positions within institutions of higher education. In that regard, a CUPA-HR 2017 report identified that the percentage of female deans in the nation had increased from approximately 33% in 2001 to slightly over 40% in 2016.

Nidiffer's (2010) review of the history of women as leaders in academia, which was authored almost a decade ago, makes an important point that likely remains salient for the present day. She observed that although progress has been made in some areas, women continue to lag behind male colleagues in moving into institutional leadership roles. According to Nidiffer, the challenges start at the faculty level, given that "women faculty members at the assistant professor level equal men in several disciplines, but women represent many fewer full professors" (p. 555). Yet it is faculty members at higher ranks who typically have access to key committees that shape the future direction of the institution (e.g., rank and tenure, presidential search committees).

Barriers That Women Face

Regarding the gendered realities of higher education, it is important to consider the barriers and challenges that women confront in considering and/or advancing into leadership roles. Much has been written about the strengths and skills that women often bring to leadership (Helgesen & Johnson, 2010; Kezar, 2014; Turner, 2012); despite these assets, it is clear that the structures, expectations, and rewards characteristic of male-normed organizations often discourage the leadership aspirations of women (Ely & Rhode, 2010; Helgesen & Johnson, 2010). The McKinsey & Company report (2018) titled "Women in the Workplace" used the term "everyday discrimination" (p. 3) for aspects of organizational culture that prevent women from feeling safe and supported at work. Similarly, Ibarra, Ely, and Kolb (2013) described the pervasive damaging effects of *second-generation gender bias*, which "erects powerful but subtle and often invisible barriers for women that arise from cultural assumptions and organizational structures, practices, and patterns of interaction that inadvertently benefit men while putting women at a disadvantage" (p. 64).

Rather than attempting to synthesize the literature related to the barriers women often encounter, we turn to an excellent summary authored by Diehl and Dzubinski (2017), who identified 27 gender-based leadership barriers that exist in higher education settings. The framework proposed by Diehl and Dzubinski is one of the most comprehensive to date and is particularly apropos to this article, given that much of the emerging qualitative data for the model comes from postsecondary contexts. The authors organized the 27 barriers according to the "level of society in which they generally operate most strongly" (p. 273): *macro (societal)*, *meso (organizational)*, and *micro (individual)*.

Macro or *societal barriers* are cultural dimensions that make it challenging for women to be taken seriously and to contribute as leaders. The six barriers that Diehl and Dzubinski (2017) highlight in this area are the following: control of women's voices (restrictions in how they contribute); cultural constraints on women's own choices (constraints by society and social norms); gender stereotypes (generalizations held by society); gender unconsciousness (lack of understanding of how gender plays out in organizations); leadership perceptions (leadership is associated with men); and scrutiny (intense examination of women in leadership).

Diehl and Dzubinski (2017) also identified 16 gender-based *meso* or *organizational barriers*, each of which relates to ways that women's leadership contributions and effectiveness are often discounted within organizations. The barriers at this level include devaluing of communal practice (a more caring and nurturing style is discounted); discrimination (unjust treatment); exclusion from informal networks (limited access); glass cliff realities (being placed in high-risk roles); lack of mentoring, sponsorship, and support (three separate barriers, each of which is relationship-based); male gatekeeping (control of access); male organizational culture (male normed); organizational ambivalence (lack of confidence in women); the queen bee effect (women not supporting women); salary inequality (gender wage gap); tokenism (not being viewed as competent and earning a spot); two-person career structure (the partner is expected to do unpaid work), unequal standards (women must perform at a higher level); and workplace harassment ("sabotage, verbal abuse, bullying, intimidation, sexual harassment, and other behaviors intended to provoke, frighten, intimidate, or bring discomfort," p. 280).

Finally, Diehl and Dzubinski's (2017) third "level of society in which [certain barriers] generally operate most strongly" (p. 273) is *micro* or *individual barriers*. In their initial extensive

interviews with women leaders in higher education, the authors identified five gender-based leadership barriers that operate at this level. Although these barriers typically lie within the woman herself, the authors contend that "the roots lie in cultural and organizational expectations for women's behavior" (p. 280). These include communication style constraints (women must monitor what and how messages are communicated), conscious unconsciousness (choosing to not notice), personalizing (take responsibility for organizational problems), psychological glass ceiling (behave according to society's expectations), and work-life conflict.

Overall, most of the documented challenges for women in higher education settings fall within these 27 gender-based leadership barriers. Understanding the multi-leveled barriers is critical in determining the best strategies to develop women as leaders, while also addressing the processes, structures, and cultures that negatively impact women's aspirations, ambitions, and other motivators for women to consider or step into leadership roles.

Motivators for Women to Lead

In addition to the array of internalized and external barriers that deter women's leadership aspirations and advancement, as described above and by other scholars (e.g., Ely & Rhode, 2010; Helgesen & Johnson, 2010; McKinsey & Company, 2018), factors related to fallacies in the pipeline theory also come into play. Although we do not disagree that bolstering the presence of women from entry-level positions toward the "middle" of the pipeline affords them opportunities to learn skills and establish a credible track record of accomplishments that may lead to subsequent advancement, the data clearly indicate that fewer women than men aspire to the senior-most positions in the first place (Keohane, 2014; McKinsey & Company, 2018). Additionally, the motivations for women to seek leadership roles tend not to be self-promoting (e.g., salary, power, status), but rather are often related to the relational aspects they anticipate being part of leadership (Devnew, Austin, LeBer, & Shapiro, 2017; Helgesen & Johnson, 2010). Additionally, women are more likely to move into leadership out of a desire to make a difference regarding priorities that are important to them; in other words, as Keohane (2014) described, serving in positions that are "*high-impact* rather than *high-profile*" (p. 47).

Accordingly, we argue that attempting to bolster a male-normed pipeline theory as the most effective means of addressing the unsatisfactory status quo may be less effective than understanding and tapping into the motivators for women to embrace the opportunities that accompany being in leadership roles. As part of reframing the necessary steps forward, we also advocate that greater attention be paid to the growing body of literature that distinguishes between the long-touted concept of "leadership development" and what numerous authors refer to as the process of "leader identity development" (e.g., Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, 2013; Komives & Dugan, 2014). Ibarra, Ely, and Kolb (2013) described this "fragile" process:

> People become leaders by *internalizing a leadership identity* and *developing a sense of purpose.* Internalizing a sense of oneself as a leader is an iterative process. A person asserts leadership by taking purposeful action—such as convening a meeting to revive a dormant project. Others affirm or resist the action, thus encouraging or discouraging subsequent assertions. These interactions inform the person's sense of self as a leader and communicate how others view his or her fitness for the role. (p. 62)

In particular, Ibarra (2015) has popularized this concept in her book titled *Act Like a Leader, Think Like a Leader,* which makes a compelling case for adopting the approach of "outsight" (p. 5) rather than the popular concepts of authenticity and the focusing on the inner life of the leader. According to Ibarra, the process of leader identity development involves proactively seeking stretch assignments, being willing to take risks, and networking strategically to advance the priorities of the organization.

As a supplement to the inevitable (and perhaps appropriate) continued focus on the pipeline theory in seeking to advance more women into leadership, we draw from a decade of previous research (Dahlvig & Longman, 2014; Longman, Dahlvig, Wikkerink, Cunningham, & O'Connor, 2011; Longman, Drennan, Beam, & Marble, 2019; Longman, Lamm Bray, Liddell, Hough, & Dahlvig, 2018) to examine three sources of motivation that have been documented as contributing to women's leadership aspirations and professional advancement: (a) *aligning leadership with purpose and calling;* (b) *recognizing the role of "relational responsibility"* in women's leadership journeys; and (c) *tapping the potential of developmental relationships* to inspire and support emerging leaders.

Aligning Leadership with Purpose and Calling

In identifying strategies for corporate leaders to increase the percentage of women in senior-level roles, one of three primary recommendations offered by Ibarra, Ely, and Kolb (2013) is encouraging high-potential women to "focus on behaving in ways that advance the purposes for which they stand" (p. 66). These scholars advocate supporting women to anchor their leadership considerations in purpose, which "enables women to redirect their attention toward shared goals and to consider who they need to be and what they need to learn in order to achieve those goals" (p. 66). Similarly, Keohane's (2014) research with high-capacity university students found that women often assumed top leadership roles in organizations that aligned with their interests and passions, rather than seeking high-status/high power positions elsewhere on campus.

The refocusing of leadership from the individual to the collective benefits related to some larger purpose of a group or organization is consistent with one of the strategies offered by Kay and Shipman (2014) to build confidence in women: Change the language from "me" to "we." This subtle shift in focus contributes to greater willingness on the part of women to step up to the leadership plate. Additionally, research within the context of faith-based higher education identified that women assumed leadership roles in part as a "stewardship" response to becoming aware of gifts and strengths and/or in response to a sense of being called to a broader platform of service that would advance a cause or broader mission (Longman et al., 2011; Longman & Lamm Bray, 2017).

Recognizing the Role of Relational Responsibility

In researching the reasons that talented women chose to leave leadership roles in the corporate sector, a mixed-methods study by Helgesen and Johnson (2010) identified that women who left often reportedly found their values and priorities to be out of sync with the priorities, rewards, and work environment of the male-normed corporate culture in which they had been embedded. Helgesen and Johnson observed that women typically cared deeply about the "fabric" (p. 77) of the workplace; they also sought "satisfaction day-by-day" (p. 57) through the relationships around them, and they chose to exit when those priorities were unmet. In like manner, numerous studies

have documented the communal and empowering characteristics that women often bring to the workplace, as synthesized by Kezar (2014) in a chapter titled "Woman's Contributions to Higher Education Leadership and the Road Ahead." Given that women often embody a relational style of leadership (Binns, 2008; Eagly & Carli, 2007) that prioritizes responsiveness to the context and people of the workplace, it is not surprising that research by Longman, Lamm Bray, Liddell, Hough, and Dahlvig (2018) found that a sense of "relational responsibility" was often the force that propelled women into leadership. This sense of responsibility sometimes took the form of supporting an individual leader who encouraged the woman to move into a broader leadership role; at other times, advancement came in response to encouragement from those around or positionally "below" the woman involved. In other cases, a sense of responsibility to the people of the organization (i.e., care for the institution; Fritz, 2011) caused women to step into leadership when individually they might not have chosen to do so.

Tapping the Potential of Developmental Relationships

The professional contributions of mentors and role models in the leadership journeys of emerging leaders has long been recognized in the literature; more recently, scholars (see the survey of literature by Murphy, Gibson, and Kram, 2017) have also highlighted the importance of "developmental relationships" in the identity development process. Similar to Ibarra, Ely, and Kolb's (2013) description of how others come to see certain individuals as having leadership capacity, Murphy, Gibson, and Kram (2017) explain that "women (and men) define themselves based on how those around them tell them who they are. Given this reality, the developmental network plays a critical role in shaping how an individual crafts her identity" (p. 364).

Past literature has tended to focus on specific kinds of developmentally supportive relationships (e.g., mentoring, executive coaching, sponsorship), although the goal in all cases is to provide opportunities for learning, support, and personal/professional growth (Murphy & Kram, 2014). More recently, the value of having a network of supportive relationships (both within and beyond one's own organization) has been recognized, moving beyond the individualized approach of mentoring, coaching, or sponsorship alone. This trend is consistent with encouragement offered a decade ago by Gibson (2008), who advised women to cultivate relationships outside their own workplace, emphasizing the importance of having a *constellation* of developmental relationship. Gibson described such relationships as being "potentially more critical for women leaders due to their limited access to informal networks in the organizational context" (p. 652).

In summarizing the literature on mentoring, coaching, and the newer concept of sponsorship (Hewlett, 2013), Longman, Drennan, Beam, and Marble (2019) identified having a network of such developmental relationship as being the "secret sauce" (p. 54) of women's leadership development as well as leader identity development. Similar to the motivation to step into leadership for the purposes of advancing a mission or cause about which an individual is passionate, or in response to a sense of "relational responsibility" to individuals or the institution itself, having various kinds of developmental relationships can empower women step into the unknown terrain of broader leadership. The desire, vision, or courage to assume a larger platform may emerge from a recognition that more junior women need role models or mentors; alternatively, colleagues outside of one's own workplace who are part of a developmental network may express confidence in a woman's abilities even when male-normed voices fail to do so.

Further research will undoubtedly identify additional motivators, potentially related to the organizational environment or generational considerations. Just as Diehl and Dzubinski (2017)

offered 27 kinds of barriers that may factor into women's leadership considerations and experiences, there may be a similar number of motivators, each with various nuances, yet to be identified that can be tapped to open new doors for the next generation of emerging leaders.

Conclusion

Scholars and practitioners across higher education agree that the complexities facing education today are greater today than ever before. Hence, wise, strategic, and courageous leaders are needed in the senior ranks of faculty, staff, and administrators in all of our colleges and universities. Yet, we continue to argue that "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" (Longman & Madsen, 2014, p. ix). An impressive body of research has documented the status of women in college and university leadership, and advances in leadership roles, strategies, and best practices have narrowly opened the gates for women to serve as leaders in higher education; however, substantial barriers remain and practices based on conscious and unconscious bias still dominate. Yet, higher education has much to gain by identifying, preparing, and advancing more high-potential women into leadership roles. Achieving this goal must be a priority if we want the best education for our children, grandchildren, neighbors, students, and world.

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Women of Color: Removing Barriers to the College Presidency

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Women of Color Underrepresented in the Presidency

Data from the *American College President Study 2017* (ACPS) document a slow but steady increase for the number of women advancing to the college presidency at U.S. colleges and universities. Currently, women comprise nearly a third of all presidents and chancellors in U.S. higher education, and at this current pace of growth, researchers at the American Council on Education (ACE) very optimistically conclude that women college presidents will achieve parity by 2030 (Howard &Gagliardi, 2018).

While some of ACE policy briefs analyze the ACPS data based on gender and race, such an intersectional gender lens is noticeably absent from Howard and Gagliardi's analysis in their white paper, Leading the Way to Parity. As they note, the overall rate of growth among women college presidents has been steady toward achieving gender parity, and for approximating the representation of female students in American higher education. However, such steady growth and representation is not the case for women of color (henceforth referred to as WOC) with respect to advancing to the presidency. WOC currently comprise a mere 5% of all those in this top institutional leadership role (Gagliardi, Espinosa, Turk, & Taylor, 2017).

Women have outpaced men in obtaining degrees in American higher education at all levels—associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral. Black and Latina undergraduates especially contribute to the growth in female college students (Johnson, 2017). Despite this growing percentage of WOC among all students enrolled in American higher education (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017), this diversity in gender and race is not proportionately increasing among women academics, particularly with respect to WOC advancing into senior leadership roles and the presidency.

Application of Critical Race Theory as an Explanation

In my efforts to understand the underrepresentation of WOC at the top of academic leadership, I was inspired by Professor Erika Wilson, who teaches a course on Critical Race Theory at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Law School. Critical Race Theory, or CRT as it is commonly called, is a compelling theoretical framework for explaining and understanding the experiences of WOC in American higher education. According to Wilson, CRT is a framework that can be used to examine and challenge the ways in which race and racism impact societal structures, practices, and discourses (Wilson, 2019). In fact, CRT is more than a theoretical framework: it is actually a movement comprised of "activists and scholars engaged in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 3).

Legal scholars Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado are cited as the originators of the CRT movement in the 1970s as they were seeking "new theories and strategies…to combat the subtler forms of racism that were gaining ground" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 4). Two of the original five basic tenets of CRT that I employ in this analysis, include:

- Racism is ordinary and the usual way society does business, and is the common, everyday experience of most people of color in this country.

- Counternarratives serve as a tool for people of color to express their own truths in their own voices—individually and collectively—about their experiences with racism in this country (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Spinoffs of CRT, Including Intersectionality

Since the establishment of CRT and its basic tenets, the CRT Movement has evolved to include spinoffs that comprise other legal scholars, as well academics in various interdisciplinary social science groups. Some of the spinoffs include critical discourses from among Asian American, Latinx, LGBTQ and Muslim/Arab caucuses (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

One spinoff that is relevant to the experiences of WOC and their disproportionate representation in higher education leadership stems from the work of legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw. The theory of Intersectionality explains how multiple systems of oppression interact to situate overlapping identities, such as gender, race, social class, sexual orientation and physical ability, which negatively affect the life experiences of marginalized individuals, particularly women. Intersectional analyses work to make power structures visible (Crenshaw, 1989).

Defining Women of Color

For the purpose of this analysis, WOC include all of those who self-identify as Black; Hispanic/Latina (non-white); Asian/Pacific Islander; and/or American Indian/Alaska Native, as categorized by the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2017).

Method

In the pages that follow, I apply tenets of Critical Race Theory and the theory of Intersectionality to the recent literature on the experiences of WOC in the academy.

I examine the experiences and treatment of WOC, as well as their responses to the often-oppressive forces that they encounter in their professional journeys, including experiences that stem from both structural and cultural barriers that WOC encounter. Finally, I end with suggested recommendations for addressing the barriers that prevent WOC from advancing up the ranks and into senior leadership roles--barriers, which if removed, can ultimately lead to more WOC advancing to the college and university presidency.

Racism is Ordinary

In one study on African American women in higher education leadership, the authors note that "[t]here have been a number of different views on the absence of women of color in executive

leadership positions. One reason is due to overt and covert discrimination in employment. While this has become less acceptable in theory, in practice there is still an abundance of documentation that women and minorities still experience discrimination" (Davis & Maldonado, 2015, p. 51).

Indeed, in practice, and in first-person narratives, essays, and empirical studies, the literature clearly documents that racism and discrimination continue to persist for WOC in the academy, particularly those at predominantly white institutions (Bhattacharya,2015; Bilimoria & Buch, 2010; Frazier, 2011; Gutierrez y Muhs, Niemann, Gonzalez, & Harris, 2012; Matthew, 2016; Solórzano, 1998; Turner, 2002; Zambrana, 2018). Two recent edited volumes, *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia* (2012), and *Counternarratives from Women of Color Academics: Bravery, Vulnerability, and Resistance* (2019), are among the most revealing publications to bring attention to the often underreported and unaddressed experiences that WOC encounter in the academy. The title, *Presumed Incompetent*, accurately represents the attitudes which are, to a greater or lesser degree, clear attestations about why WOC feel they are 'presumed incompetent' by students, colleagues, and administrators based solely on their racial identities. WOC are held to different expectations than are their white colleagues, and often fail to meet these unwarranted expectations because the expectations fall far beyond their job descriptions—e.g., to be a mammy to students, a maid, secretary, or a sexual icon for colleagues. When such superfluous expectations go unmet, WOC report receiving threatening or hate mail from students or colleagues; having their expertise and authority challenged on a regular basis; and receiving negative or lower student evaluations for irrelevant factors such as how nice they are, how well they dress, or how attractive students think they are. All of these are dynamics to which their white male counterparts would rarely, if ever, have to succumb (Gutiérrez y Muhs, Niemann, González, & Harris, 2012).

The racism, discrimination, and daily microaggressions that WOC encounter are not just directed at them, one-on-one, from students and colleagues. One overarching theme of *Presumed Incompetent* points out that "predominantly white and male employment and educational institutions systematically disfavor women of color, not solely through individual bias but as part of larger systems of education, employment, media, and other civil society institutions that perpetuate and extend the privileges created by group subordination" (Gutiérrez y Muhs et al., 2012, p. 4).

For many women, such daily slights, snubs, and dismissals are common, particularly in environments where white males dominate in power; however, for WOC the barriers are frequently doubled, tripled or more, based on their multiple marginalized identities.

"The mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical fatigue expressed in the personal stories [of WOC] underscore the damage caused by an unceasing battle against discrimination and the internalization of one's presumed incompetence" (Richardson, 2014, p. 287).

Intersectionality

Essays and narratives penned by WOC tell us that they are not just women who are racial and ethnic minorities; they are entering the academic workforce with an abundance of intersectional identities. They are mothers who prioritize the needs of their children and families, even over the academic research, teaching, and service demands of their careers. They are first-generation immigrants from all continents of the world—Asia, South and Central America, Africa, Europe—and are documented and undocumented. They are members of the LGBTQ community who have same-gender spouses and partners, and are often rearing children as well. They are the first-

generation in their families to be college educated. As a result, many have attended institutions that are not classified as top-tier; yet their metrics show they are amazingly productive scholars and teachers with national reputations. They have work experiences outside of academe, particularly in areas where they have made a social impact, including running nonprofit organizations, and working with populations of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. They are a part of American Indian tribal nations striving to straddle the laws and policies of U.S. governance alongside their own tribal sovereignty. They are hardly a monolith (Whitaker & Grollman, 2019).

With each overlapping intersectional identity, WOC experience increased levels of racism, discrimination, and inequities. For example, a queer Latina scholar in Romance Languages, who is an undocumented immigrant from El Salvador is forced to resist daily affronts to her personhood based on her sexual identity, her undocumented status, and her nationality from a poor, developing country.

An African American single mother of two, who is the first in her family to be college educated and who has achieved all of her degrees in engineering at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), must now prioritize teaching over research in order to have the time that she needs to attend to her school-aged children and aging mother, even though research is her passion. Meanwhile, she must simultaneously combat the perspective from among her colleagues, most of whom are white males, that she is not a serious scholar and is in over her head in her academic position.

In spite of taking accent-reducing classes and using a microphone in the lecture hall, a very petite, introverted Chinese woman in statistics with an outstanding scholarly record and reputation, constantly endures the lowest student evaluations in her predominantly white department. Students share comments such as, "I can't understand her with that accent. She should go back to China."

The compounding effect of intersectional identities simultaneously increases racism and discrimination for WOC. The closest WOC can get to mirroring the heteronormative, middle-class, able-bodied experiences of white women in the academy, is for WOC to be heterosexual, middle-class, American-born, and able-bodied with employment at a minority serving institutions (MSI), including HBCUs. When placed in an environment where they are a part of a majority, at least discrimination based on race/ethnicity is likely reduced or perhaps even eliminated. This might explain why WOC are more likely to serve as presidents of MSIs than they are at non-MSIs: according to ACPS (2017), "fifty-six percent of women of color presidents were at an MSI…" (p. 38).

Counternarratives as Response

How do WOC respond to these persistent instances of racism and discrimination in the academy? A movement among WOC is underway to part ways with stories of hostility and woe. As noted by Whitaker (2019), "despite misogyny, racism, and classism, women of color academics continue to succeed in the academy" (p. xiv). Instead of harping on experiences of misery and trauma, WOC are encouraged to take up the mantle to document their own stories, or counternarratives, of how they are thriving in the academy, in spite of all the negative forces against them. Counternarratives, as one of the tenets of CRT, give voice to people of color to document and share their own truths as an alternative to those in power controlling their narratives for them. Increasingly, counternarratives from WOC are aiming to "shift the narrative from

victimization to empowerment, from inauthenticity to self-definition, and from conformity to resistance." Through their collective storytelling, they are striving to challenge and change what it means to be successful in the academy (Whitaker & Grollman, 2019, p. 20).

Included in these counternarratives are instances of staying put at institutions and leaving on their own terms instead of fleeing in embarrassment after any small or large semblance of failure. WOC tell of getting a seat at the administrative table in order to advocate for greater diversity and fair treatment, while simultaneously succeeding in all their other duties. They share feeling compelled to respond to unfair criticism to defend themselves, even if it puts their jobs and careers on the line. They discuss aligning their values with their actions, which sometimes might mean accepting "dead-end" or "career-killer" diversity work, if their convictions lead them to pursue equity and justice in these roles. They identify and act on food for their souls in order to be courageous and resilient. They recognize what is under their control and what is not, and they channel energies toward positive change. They act as warriors when necessary, with bravery and courage to stand for justice and overcome adversities, while pushing their fears to the side. They take their bold and brilliant intersectional identities into the classrooms, into meetings with colleagues, and into their national and international disciplinary communities. They set goals to establish a sense of belonging for those who are marginalized. They challenge what counts as scholarship, knowledge and core-curricula, and how new knowledge is produced and taught. They prioritize community and solutions to societal ills as a part of their research agendas, in spite of the criticism that their research is their lived experience and not objective enough. They resist; they persist; they are shifting paradigms (Cooper, 2018; Whitaker and Grollman, 2019).

Allies Needed in Removing Barriers

What are the needs of this diverse and divergent group of WOC so that they might have an opportunity to advance in their careers and into the senior ranks of academic leadership? WOC are boldly and bravely taking risks for themselves and for others, but they cannot do it alone. Allies are required to help WOC transform academic culture to become more welcoming and open to others with multiple intersecting identities. WOC need help in increasing opportunities for alternative points of view, even if the alternative views challenge dominant ideologies and deep-rooted social hierarchies. Allies are also needed in acknowledging and demolishing conscious and unconscious biases, rather than replicating divisive behaviors of the past (Zambrana, 2018).

In order for WOC to continue to flourish, the academy must begin to provide greater opportunities for them to grow into roles, allow them to take risks and make mistakes without harsh consequences, such as termination (Gray, Howard & Chessman, 2018). When and if tenure track positions are available, they should be seriously considered for them, and not just as diversity hires. When hired into non-tenure track positions, they should have a clear and transparent, upwardly mobile career trajectory. Even better, there should be opportunities for on- and off-ramps between non-tenure track and tenure track positions as personal and family priorities shift over the course of their careers (ACE, 2005). WOC must receive effective mentoring and coaching from empathetic and culturally competent colleagues and academic leaders who can encourage them to believe in themselves (Gray, Howard, & Chessman, 2018; Whitaker & Grollman, 2019).

For the small number of WOC who do persist and rise through the faculty ranks and into senior leadership roles, they need to encounter a diverse and supportive cadre of colleagues at the decision-making table, especially among college and university boards members. These cabinet

and board members must acknowledge and appreciate the brilliance and bravery that WOC bring to the table. Ultimately, for the WOC who do achieve the role and responsibility of president or chancellor, they must have the support of their board members—with accountability of course, but board support is critical to removing barriers for WOC once they are at the helm (Gray et al., 2018).

American higher education and WOC will mutually benefit from such a paradigm shift. If issues are addressed for the least among those of the academy—in this case WOC—then barriers will ultimately be removed for all to succeed and thrive to great heights, even to the college and university presidency.

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I, too, am a lead(Her): The Power and Possibilities of Women of Color on Governing Boards of Higher Education in California

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I, Too
by Langston Hughes

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

Langston Hughes, "I, Too" from **The Collected Works of Langston Hughes**. (1994)

National demographic shifts have highlighted the need to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion within higher education (Rall, Morgan, & Commodore, forthcoming). Despite ongoing conversations, higher education leadership remains dominated by white men —from the board to institution heads to faculty, etc. (AGB, 2017; Bustillos & Siqueiros, 2018). Not only are boards dominated by white men, but board scholarship is dominated by white male scholars. Current leading theories like organizational theory, principal-agent theory, and others leave little consideration for the voice of the "other" on the board. Higher education governance has been undertheorized because there has not been a need to consider marginalized voices on boards. In order to better understand the potential for systemic change in this area, we must analyze the larger environment in which boards function (Tierney & Rall, 2018).

Unfortunately, boards of higher education have been markedly absent from the equity conversation in higher education (Rall, Morgan, & Commodore, 2018), and research on women and Women of Color in management, leadership, and administration in higher education is lacking (Waring, 2003). Moreover, there is a dearth of studies that examine how race *and* gender interact to inform leadership in this space (Byrd, 2009; Davis & Maldonado, 2015; Stanley, 2009). Although women have increased their representation in leadership positions within higher education since the late 1980s, they are still outnumbered more than two-to-one on public and private governing boards (Johnson, 2016). Additional research indicates that though women have been surpassing men in the academic attainment for many years, this has not meant advanced outcomes in their professional lives (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2018; NCES, 2019). This "achievement" gap is even more prevalent when we account

for race and note that Women of Color (WoC)[1] are further marginalized in comparison to their white male and female counterparts (Johnson, 2016; NCES, 2018; NCES, 2019).

The influential role of boards makes them crucial to ensuring that higher education maintains its commitment to upholding standards of community and inclusivity, yet, board diversity has been of little concern to higher education scholars (Pusser, Slaughter, & Thomas, 2006). Just 32% of both public and private boards are made up of people identifying as women and only 23% of public boards are made up of racial/ethnic minorities; that number falls to just 17% when extracting minority-serving institutions from the pool (Association of Governing Boards [AGB], 2017). Within California, the UC Board of Regents is 62% white and 73% male; the CSU Board of Trustees is 70% white and 65% male, and the CCC Board of Governors is 77% white and 59% male (Bustillos & Siqueiros, 2018). Nationwide, boards of higher education remain homogeneous along lines of race/ethnicity and gender, and a persistent challenge in higher education is how to expand the number of women in leadership positions (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010).

The purpose of this paper is to dismantle the narrative that we are successfully diversifying boards by adding women to the equation, without also taking into consideration the racial and ethnic backgrounds of those elected to represent the voices of our communities. We investigate how gender, and necessarily, the intersection of gender and race, is considered (or not) within higher education governance literature. By allowing ourselves to see this as both an issue of race *and* gender, we can inform the decision-making process to push for equity and inclusion from the top-down. This paper is part of a larger study where we conducted a systematic analysis of articles published in outlets that have published research on governing boards in the U.S. from 1970 until today. We examined governance scholarship for the application of theoretical frameworks. Simultaneously we examined the demographic changes over time within the 3 major public systems of higher education in California from inception to today. The juxtaposition of theoretical application and demographics revealed that governance continues to ignore gender and racial equity in these pivotal positions. In this paper, we build off of this review to add the voices of women board members to further highlight the need to center the role, experience, and historical exclusion of women (with emphasis on WoC), on the board.

We first introduce the theoretical foundation for this work by bridging critical race feminism and the homogeneity of governing boards to highlight how the most powerful decision-making body in higher education has managed to exclude WoC. We then introduce the voices of several female trustees, most of which, are of color to further illuminate the imperative for expanding our knowledge of who is represented on the board, and how they experience their roles on the board. Next, we debunk the pipeline myth in higher education and make the case for diversified appointments based on the qualifications of women. We conclude with ideas for the future of higher education research on boards that centers both gender and race.

Conceptual Framework – Critical Race Feminism

Today's issues of equity stem from a long history of exclusion of minoritized communities. Following the Civil Rights Movement, America adapted the concept of "color-blindness" to maintain that all men were equal under the law; this meant ignoring the racial differences and the history of injustice (Bell, 1995; Delgado, 1989; Khalifa, Dunbar, & Douglasb, 2013). Racism, Bell (1995) argues, is a silent covenant, that hides in the everyday interactions of people and enforces

[1] We are fully aware that multiple populations are disproportionately represented on the board. For the purposes of this paper, though, we focus on Women of Color due to their double minority status.

power dynamics through social, economic, and political oppression. The belief that Black individuals have the same opportunities offered to them as their white counterparts, fails to address the social construct that sets them back from the same starting line (Bell, 1995, 2004). To disrupt the self-constructed reality of white privilege and understand the struggle of minoritized groups, Delgado (1989) argues that we must listen to the "voice" of the oppressed. By allowing People of Color (PoC) to tell their stories, we can then begin to understand the power of privilege. This concept became one of the main tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT), the idea that counter-storytelling would bring forth a new perspective that has been traditionally unsolicited and hidden (Bell, 1995; Delgado, 1989; Khalifa, Dunbar, & Douglasb, 2013).

CRT allowed Men of Color (MoC) the opportunity to finally have their narratives heard, however, women were still not a part of the conversation (Crenshaw, 1991). It was the rise of feminism that allowed women the opportunity to fight for social mobility; this ideology was focused on the experiences of white women at the expense of WoC (Crenshaw,1991; Wiggins, 2001). Crenshaw (1991) thus introduced the concept of intersectionality and argued that WoC faced dual marginalization from both their racial and gender identities. Using the same tenants of the CRT framework, Critical Race Feminism (CRF) emerged and became an opportunity for WoC to begin sharing their stories and unravel patterns of institutionalized oppression (Childers-McKee & Hytten, 2015). We introduce CRF as a theoretical framework to isolate, analyze, and vocalize the challenges that women face in higher education leadership roles.

I, Too, Matter

Women may encounter multiple layers of isolation within and barriers to accessing the highest levels of university decision-making (Johnson, 2016). Most oppression does not seem like oppression to the perpetrator (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995); dominant groups justify their power with personal narratives or "stock explanations" that rationalize their oppression and maintain their positionality (Delgado, 1989). When women in leadership are vocalized, their stories can help challenge men's self-constructed version of reality. These narratives create necessary jargon to conflict "unconscious" sexism in higher education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Take, for example, the words of a board member in California: "As a woman of color, I had several frustrating moments with respect to individuals attempting to speak over me, cut me off or outright bypass my comments completely." Literature in higher education speaks to education as "property rights" stemmed from the vindication of slavery (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) and argues that whites use this conceptualization to justify control over who gets afforded which privileges in society (Delgado, 1989). In this case, our participant's comments are dismissed by the dominant group because they control what "property" is valuable through their "rights" to exclude (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

CRF challenges that as a double minority, a woman has to convince both her male peers and white peers that her input (property) as a WoC is equally important (Crenshaw, 1991). The dominant group, however, will not see anything wrong with the dismissal because their "reality" of the situation is justified through embedded racism and sexism (Delgado, 1989, Crenshaw, 1991). This board member was not alone in this feeling, her counterpart within the state shared, "Meanwhile...the women were supportive and the men were generally dismissive. I recall asserting my position as a [board member] when the male staff members attempted to cut me off." Even when her title was more powerful than those who were there to help make her role on the board easier, this board member elucidates that many cannot see beyond gender.

As post-secondary institutions push for diversity, diverse voices are essential to inform boards of issues that affect the populations they serve. Without the informed perspective of a marginalized community, boards cannot hold themselves accountable for the needs of those not represented (Chesler & Crowfoot, 1989). Here we put forth the case of another board member who stresses the impact of sharing stories amongst her peers to help one another understand critical issues affecting marginalized groups:

> "I learned so much about my peers, and their struggle to **GET** here and **STAY** here *(emphasis added by the participant)*. It opened my eyes to the pervasive inequities that touch on race, sex, gender identity, religion, citizenship, and so much more. I learned how to interact and build genuine relationships with a cross-section of communities that I most likely wouldn't have engaged with otherwise."

Crenshaw (1991) argues that WoC must account for various intersections of their identity, not just their gender. Her use of intersectionality helped frame CRF theory to understand the marginalization of WoC as complex individuals. By increasing diversity on boards, the intricacies of marginalized identities navigating higher education can become more visible, and in turn, be better understood.

The Pipeline Myth

Pipeline myths attribute the gaps in higher education leadership to the lack of qualified applicants and suggest that men are a better fit for these roles because they possess more appropriate credentials (Johnson, 2016), however recent data shows otherwise (Johnson, 2016; NCES 2018, 2019). Here a board member's testimonial describes what makes governance successful:

> You have to understand the importance of vetting and appointing qualified people. By qualified people, I think you need diversity in male to female, race, but the one thing that's got to be constant regardless of the diversity is that they have been successful in whatever endeavors they've been involved in. The thing is you have to have people who are properly motivated and care about education and want to promote the system and make it the best…

Women have been making progress in education in order to succeed as professionals and be "qualified" leaders in society. Despite our argument to increase racial and gender representation on boards, as one participant stated, it is equally important to appoint *qualified* individuals to leadership roles. CRF suggests there are embedded forms of racial and gender biases in social, economic, and political systems through which WoC are excluded from having a seat at the table (Crenshaw, 1991). Governors and state leadership, who use "the pipeline" as an excuse for the lack of diversity in appointments, rather than explicitly acknowledge racism and sexism as embedded structural and systemic factors that hinder women's success, perpetuate the cycle.

Research on boards of education is limited in nature (Burns, 1966; Martorana, 1963; Michael, Schwartz, & Hamilton, 1997; Russock, 1974), and there is a gap when it comes to understanding the unique contributions that women, and especially, Women of Color can make in higher educational leadership. The changing faces of leaders within higher education necessitate that researchers and practitioners use theoretical frameworks that are applicable to these groups (Brinson, 2006). Using CRF to guide our understanding of how boards of higher education have become so homogenous in representation, we interviewed female board members about their experiences in leadership to highlight how the theory manifests in real situations. The significance of this work is to disrupt the traditional narrative of white, male leaders who make decisions for an increasingly diverse population in academia.

Campus leadership plays a crucial role in the institution and can either establish a sense of belonging or a sense of exclusion for stakeholders (Bustillos & Siqueiros, 2018). Boards have the power to select university chancellors and presidents, and their decisions begin to trickle down the pipeline of educational leadership. Presidents have the power to diversify faculty, staff, and in turn, attract students who see themselves reflected in the institutional structure. When implemented correctly, the chain effect creates a vision of education being accessible and achievable to all students, regardless of their gender, race, or ethnic background. We focused on board members within California to explicate that these gender and racial challenges on the board are even palpable in the most diverse state in the U.S. The University of California (UC) Board of Regents, California State University (CSU) Board of Trustees, the California Community Colleges (CCC) Board of Governors, make decisions that impact all aspects of the student, staff, and faculty lives across the state.

Decades have long passed since both the Civil Rights Movement and the Feminist Movement in the U.S, yet the implications of the legal and social barriers are still felt today. It is time to dismantle the hierarchical standards that have kept women and WoC from being represented at every institutional level, starting with its most powerful decision-makers. The scholarship has taught us that we must scrutinize these inequalities through a CRF lens to understand the intricacies of race and gender in higher education leadership, and how power structures continue to dominate the way governing boards are selected. Using this research, we can push key stakeholders in each state to reflect on their own selection process of boards of trustees and make critically informed decisions that can foster institutional change and promote the learning environment of the colleges and universities they serve. With more women and Women of Color in a pivotal gatekeeping position such as members of governing boards, other essential leadership positions such as presidents, deans, and more might also see better gender and racial equity. The influential role of boards makes them crucial to ensuring that higher education maintains its commitment to upholding standards of community and inclusivity. Additional opportunities coupled with enhanced research and theoretical frames are essential to unlock the power and possibilities of women (and specifically, Women of Color) on governing boards of higher education.

**Note: We intentionally removed names (and even pseudonyms) for these women in this text in recognition of their extremely marginalized positions on the board. They were courageous enough to share their stories with us and it is our intention to keep their words intact without risk of them being identified or retaliated against in a space dominated by white males.*

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Women of Influence, Women of Vision: Past is Prologue

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Leadership is never an isolated concept. It is always deeply embedded in time and context and that is where the idea of our book, Women of Influence, Women of Vision (Astin & Leland, 1991) began. This is the back story for the important work of this journal volume and the many initiatives that have sprung from our original study.

The Backstory

While it is a pleasure to recapture the process of creating this study, it is also bittersweet to do it without my closest friend, Helen Astin, or Lena as so many have known her. Others know her work as a social scientist, researcher, teacher and advocate for women. As I said in her eulogy at UCLA, Lena's caring and generosity had no boundaries and what I miss so often is her joy—her exuberance for life that could transform our thoughts or lift our spirits, or light the way forward. Her memoir, "The Road from Serres: A Feminist Odyssey," is a model that hopefully will inspire others to tell their stories and to build a special history of women that so often remains untold (Astin, 2014).

Untold stories were really the impetus for our work. How the study started, how it was different from previous research and the recurring themes and challenges that emerged are all relevant to the impact the work has had. Lena Astin and I were colleagues at the Center for the Study of Human Problems, a small institute within Stanford University. There one could do research with a continuous stream of colleagues who provided support and feedback that represented their hope for our best efforts. It was never the competitive, cynical or biting criticism that too often was part of academic institutions. Lena and I had signed on for a study of the continuing education for women, one of the major hallmarks of the women's movement and our first-hand observation of leadership by and for women. That study and others we did together were accomplished as the social changes of the l960s and 70s swirled around us.

Also stirring was a new interest in leadership as academic business schools began to sense a need to catch up with a society no longer primarily needing only management expertise. They wanted to turn their curriculum efforts to produce graduates focused on leadership. They emphasized a capacity to not only manage institutions but importantly to move them toward new futures.

At that time the concept of leadership was still elusive and perplexing despite much writing and discussion. But a new language was emerging: vision, participation, strategy, matrix organizations, influence, empowerment, collaboration became some of the new buzz words. Leadership became a "hot" topic in the 80s as was, of course, women as a social force in society. There were prominent, effective spokeswomen for the women's movement but there were also many women unknown or unacknowledged who were demonstrating the competencies that others

sought as new approaches to effective leadership. Not the hierarchical or "great man" phenomena but those of cooperation, collective action, and shared responsibility. We had observed and felt the impact of that kind of leadership and we wondered, with some irritation I confess, why others had not witnessed or built on the same successes of women leaders we celebrated.

New institutions like the College of Human Services, caucuses in the academic disciplines, new publications like the Feminist Press, organizations like Catalyst or major policy reforms like Title IX were the results of women's leadership. Those accomplishments, and more importantly, the leadership actions and dynamics involved, had not been documented. That was the context and that was the impetus for our work: to bring into public view what and how women's leadership was bringing about social change. In the process of studying those events we hoped a model would emerge to provide momentum and reason for future leadership and strategies for change in institutions and societal priorities.

Often those who write book forewords say concisely what authors intended. Here is what Charlotte Bunch, one of the early leaders of the women's movement, wrote in the preface of our work

> "The empowering, cooperative approaches most often associated with women are not exclusively female terrain. If we see these as crucial models for leadership in the twenty-first century, then we do not want only women to adopt them. On the contrary, it is important to break down the mind-set that labels such behavior "feminine," serving to stigmatize it as weak, or less desirable than real leadership, especially at the highest echelons of patriarchal power. It is precisely in such places that female leaders and new approaches are most desperately needed if we are to change the patterns of domination that have become so destructive to the world….
>
> "The wars, violence, and pillage of nature that have resulted from this hierarchal domination model now threaten the very existence of our planet. As a people we must find a more cooperative partnership approach to the relations among us and with the earth; in so doing, we need leadership that is also cooperative and not based on the domination model." (Astin & Leland, p. xii.)

We knew what we wanted to do with our research, and from so many of the lessons of the women's movement we had learned how valuable it was to have colleague support and input. Thus, we began with a session of prominent spokeswomen from several arenas who gathered with us under the sponsorship of the Johnson Foundation's Wingspread at their retreat center. There we listened and learned about issues, trends, concerns that would shape our protocols. And there in l983, we were inspired to find somehow the resources to do what our colleagues affirmed would be a significant contribution to understanding not only women's leadership but the dynamic of social change. Eleanor Holmes Norton was one of those inspirational voices, "The spread of feminism is the most spectacular, extraordinary phenomenon in the last twenty years, and I believe we will accomplish our goals in a million different ways." (Astin & Leland, p. 15).

What was most different about the study, of course, was that it focused on women and their leadership. We had frequent comments, perfectly valid ones, about making it a comparative study of women and men. Our focus was different. Others had been thinking and writing about gender differences, including women's styles in leading compared to men, but this study was the first in that era to focus on women as leaders, what had they accomplished and how had they done it. In

other words, we began with identifiable outcomes and then focused on the leaders who had produced those results. We took liberties in extending the sense of accomplishment to mean the influence of ideas that changed the status of women in society. That meant another difference; we chose women who were not necessarily in positions of leadership. It became a book about education broadly defined to include women from colleges and universities, national educational and scholarly associations, public service agencies, and organizations serving to enhance the opportunities for educated women.

What had been done on gender and leadership studies depended mostly on traditional theoretical models—trait, contingency and situational approaches often using laboratory experiments with instruments and assessments. Our approach honored research parameters but we knew the understanding we sought would lie in the stories and experiences of the women leaders themselves. We chose a qualitative, interview and case study design. Although we collected data about our participants, we heard directly their visions, passions and personal commitments as well as the pain, costs and struggles that sometimes accompanied their successes. Of course, there were many who were not included who would fit our research design but time, money and geography-imposed limitations, and some events may have escaped our observations.

The Instigators

Thus, we began with a cohort of women whose efforts had indeed shaped significant changes on behalf of women and opened new views of how organizations could function and individuals work together. We called them "**Instigators**." We viewed them as catalytic agents who empowered and mobilized others in a collective effort to bring about change. In our extension of leadership beyond positions like college and university presidents, the group included research scholars, women's project heads, and some who led women focused organizations such as Catalyst and the Center for the American Woman in Politics. The legislative arena and publishing were other areas where our instigators demonstrated their leadership success. The Instigators were highly present in the women's movement, and their experiences of personal discrimination and acute awareness of social justice issues were critical dimensions of their motives for taking on leadership roles. They had pursued vigorously, often with parental models, many societal causes, from housing and wages to civil rights and antiwar movements.

As noted, we did not confine ourselves to women only in positions that would be deemed leadership roles. We saw leadership more broadly and therefore chose some highly visible scholars whose work transformed the disciplines and provided inspiration for their students to lead. As one scholar put it, "I think that the medium by which an intellectual mediates between her theoretical work and her active engagement in the society is teaching….I am out to have an impact on that student, to change that student's attitude toward herself or himself, to inspire that student to do better and to go on and do differently."

Soon into the interview process we realized the focus on Instigators alone would not tell the whole story of the leadership experiences we wanted to analyze and convey. The Instigators, frequently with high energy and impatience, often met with resistance in their initial overtures to change organizations and social structures. Behind them we discovered was a cohort of women who held critical positions as heads of women's colleges, deans of women or continuing education, and officers at major foundations with great influence over colleges and universities. They were not the women we associated directly with our outcomes of leadership on behalf of women. They were, however, critical enablers of the instigators. They opened pathways that

allowed their often-younger faculty members or colleagues to gain platforms and visibility for their change initiatives. We could not call them "prior…esses" though that had an authentic ring to it, so we dubbed them "Predecessors." They were few in number, a rather elite group, who managed to accept the male models and traditional subservient roles but nonetheless capitalized on being so frequently the "only woman" on a panel or board or even the head of a professional organization. Indeed, they were leaders but within the boundaries well established by a society that had yet to embrace fully their right to positions of power and prestige. The women, in turn, were somewhat cautious, following protocol and expectations to the letter and seldom challenging publicly and assertively the demands central to the women's movement.

The Inheritors

And then, perhaps giving way to our own hopes for the future, we included a group of women who were inheriting the issues, opportunities and challenges emerging from the 1960s and 1970s. Appropriately, they were called the "**Inheritors."** Here we relied on nominations from the Instigators, soliciting from them the women who were picking up on their initiatives and gaining access to positions because of the shared values, feminist visions, and commitments to changing social structures. In many ways, it was a more difficult cohort to identify. They were just beginning to assume major roles such as university and college presidencies or provost positions or they had been mentored and coached by their Instigator colleagues but had yet to strike out on their own as spokeswomen for the movement.

Major themes from the study were consistent across the three cohorts. Our participants were, in the words of the late John Gardner, "agreement builders" working with and across diverse groups of people. They saw their leadership effectiveness as a result of collaboration and collective action both within the prevailing social systems and outside them. They did not represent the traditional leader-follower model but one that viewed power as relational. Every one of the women presidents talked about influence rather than power because it was seen as interpersonal and value oriented. They recognized that by virtue of their positions they had authority and that others attributed that as power. However, they used their positions as power bases to influence, to develop networks that became powerful agents of change. Their intended styles conveyed non-defensiveness, openness to others, praise and credit where due, giving feedback and working toward consensus. They relied on their own capacity for organization and to being overly prepared. They were women who did their homework, knowing what they were talking about and always admitting they felt the need to be twice as on top of issues as their male colleagues and bosses. Despite that sense of second-class citizenship, they indicated a high level of self-esteem in assessing their own qualities. They conveyed energy, loyalty, commitment and passion—having a mission in life and making a difference in the world. Perhaps that is what enabled many of them to persist with such resilience and to accomplish so much.

We knew we would uncover obstacles and hurdles to the leadership our participants demonstrated. In our early session at Wingspread, Aileen Hernandez, an early NOW leader reminded us,

> "There will be no way that any present leader of the feminist movement could have gotten where she got without a substantial amount of things that went before. To pave the way, there were the people who took all the slurs, and all the slings and arrows… while feminism was being made respectable in our society, because it wasn't always

considered respectable. The early people out there talking about some of the issues that we're now talking about—were very much condemned, very much put up for ridicule, and if you didn't develop some sort of a sense of protective humor on your own, you wound up with all kinds of hysteria when you tried to figure out whether you were making progress at all." (Astin & Leland, p. 17).

Our study underscored that leadership successes were hardly free of struggles and personal sacrifices. Women emphasized the tolls of working in the shadow of their husbands or male colleagues to get their messages heard, of nepotism, or marriage break-ups, raising funds for their work, and the sometimes lack of experience and coaching to do what they saw needing to be done. "You have to take so much guff. You have to take so many rejections. You're swimming upstream." One Instigator admitted, "You also pay in terms of your physical self…I don't know if I could do that again, to work as hard as I feel I worked during that time…I don't know if it's that I am older, so I have that excuse, or if it's psychological, but I don't want to do that again."

Challenges

Challenges for our work were not surprising nor necessarily unique. Funding was critical if we were to do the qualitative, interview, case study we envisioned. And funding was difficult to find—some things never change—but we were talking about women's leaderships and that was not high priority in the world of research support. We were fortunate to have individual champions in three major sources, the Ford Foundation, the Exxon Education Foundation and TIAA-CREF. And of course, we had the initial boost from The Johnson Foundation for our significant brainstorming session at Wingspread. Those resources, however, did have their own constraints and boundaries. The focus on education was one, though it also coincided with the number of women whose accomplishments we wanted to explore. At that point in time, and other than women in public service, many of the women whose accomplishments were visible led from roles in education. We were able to extend the funders rationale to include women thought leaders and organizational change makers in government, professional associations, publications and institutions designed for women.

A second challenge we had set for ourselves was to spend time with each participant, not only to collect data about them but to hear in their own voices the paths they followed to pursue their goals. At the time, the mid-80s, we were not "digitally blessed" and that meant the cost and time of travel to meet the women who agreed to participate. Both Lena and I had "day jobs" and that had to be factored into our continuously extended timelines. It was not until 1991 that the book was finally printed.

The challenge of selecting women was relatively easy based on our criteria of accomplishments and the women who had made those significant contributions to women's issues. It was the Instigators who called our attention to our Predecessors who had so often enabled and protected them as activists. And as noted earlier, the Inheritors were more difficult to distinguish as we often were only able to speculate on who had chosen to follow similar leadership pathways. It became a cohort with considerable generational overlap as more women stepped into leadership roles particularly in coeducational institutions.

Perhaps one challenge to be noted, though never a serious obstacle and probably a great asset, was the difference between Lena and myself. Lena was the wonderfully organized, date-driven scientist and I the great procrastinator, originally intending to be a journalist, finding academic

respectability and comfort in the social sciences. In the language of the familiar Myers-Briggs assessment, a Judger and a Perceiver. I have often admitted that the final publication of the book is more a credit to Lena. I would probably still be interviewing.

Impact

Finally, a word about the impact the study has had. Lena and I have taken great satisfaction in knowing that the book has been a resource for countless courses and discussions on leadership —a catalyst for others to continue to understand both leadership and women leaders. The immediate reaction of many women to the book was to identify with those 60s and70s leaders in the journeys they had taken, the support and obstacles they experienced. More specifically, the book became a starting point for conversations about social change, in particular one Lena and I facilitated over a two-year period under the sponsorship of the Fetzer Foundation. From those discussions there emerged a social change model adopted in college classes and programs to encourage and guide students engaging in community service. That in turn led to the substantial work Lena and husband Alexander Astin undertook in the arena of faculty and student spirituality.

Over the several decades since the book was finished, Lena and I have been asked to talk about our work and to speak about the women we had come to admire and celebrate. On one such occasion, a luncheon for corporate women in Omaha, Nebraska, a woman asked me to sign a book copy and I asked if it were for her. "No" she replied, "it is for my six-year-old daughter. I want her to know she has a **legacy**." That brings us to the present and the respectful and sensitive overtures Deborah Ford and Christine Cavanaugh made to us. They wanted to go where we had gone, to ask what had become of that legacy. Who and where are the women leaders of today and for tomorrow? Nothing could be more rewarding than to know that not only our work but our women leaders have provided impetus for continuing research and writing. And importantly for changing society.

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Vocation, Leadership, and Authentic Self

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As a vocation, higher education leadership has called me to be my best, most authentic self. Over my forty-year career, there has been a central theme, and that is my desire to improve the human condition. This commitment has been foundational: through my early calling to health and natural sciences, academics, women's health research, and higher education leadership, all center on optimizing the patient's, client's, student's well-being to achieve one's best self. Being a leader in higher education, I am dedicated to ensuring the full realization of the entire campus community's and organization's health and well-being. Yet I work diligently to never lose sight of why I entered the Academy—to support and enable the success of students. The privilege of being able to help support the transformation of a student's life through education brings me the greatest joy. This work is only achieved when the entire campus community – internal and external–work together in support of the mission. There is never just one solution to the future; there are many. I work continually to hone my multicultural intelligence and emotional agility, as inclusive leadership requires us to listen–and learn—with great generosity and care. Indeed, great leaders know there is more than one way to achieve an outcome and we must lead without all the answers, especially as we traverse the ever-evolving higher education landscape.

When I began to write the current chapter in my higher education leadership story–as Provost and Dean of the Faculty at Norwich University in Northfield, Vermont–I opened my mind and heart to change and eagerly embraced new opportunities and challenges. I viewed this new role as a call to action–to lead a shared vision across the institution and to advance an agenda for diversity, equity, and inclusion. At the same time, I have been able to continue my own personal growth as a leader, expanding my skill sets to lead change in the midst of the dynamic and disruptive higher education environment.

Having had a long tenure at an undergraduate women's college, I was eager to expand the breadth and depth of my professional portfolio, as well as to stretch my cultural agility by serving a comprehensive regional institution with a rich military history and a reverse gender demographic, with a greater proportion of historically male-dominated disciplines. While I had a vision for me, it took a full year to observe and to learn from the community; to establish trust, build relationships, and receive feedback to create a shared institutional vision to advance change. I began by studying the foundation of the institution, that is, the culture, the values, the beliefs and the institutional history and traditions for both the Corps of Cadets and Civilian students. I pored through documents relating to the mission and the legacy of experiential teaching and learning. In this way, I purposefully immersed myself into the culture and took every chance to observe and engage with military tradition, which was decidedly new to me. Throughout this yearlong process, I learned about the barriers and difficulties of the past as well as the hopes and dreams for the future. This work provided understanding and insight into the centrality of the institution's mission, and it has allowed me to use my inner confidence and courage to establish a forward-thinking action plan that fuels our entire community.

As a life-long learner, I have been encouraged and inspired each day. I regularly encounter issues that require creative and critical thinking, sound judgment, and thoughtful interpersonal skills in order to arrive at solutions that respect the many competing priorities of a complex and mission-forward institution. My deep passion, moral code and the congruency between my own principles, values, and ethics and those of the institution inform my leadership.

Imparting a shared vision is about values, trust, collaboration, communication, transparency, clarity, and developing the capability of emerging leaders. This work we do together, at every level, to effect change for the betterment of our communities, can only happen by learning the culture. Being leaders, we must seek to immerse ourselves in the missions and aspirations of our institutions, to grow *into* culture, to move *with* culture in order to reshape it from within. We need leaders at every level of the institution who have vision and purpose. Yet while we are change agents, we must remain true to self, humble, and committed to leading with courage, empathy, ethics, integrity and mutual respect.

While it is important for *all* leaders to work purposefully and authentically, we as women must work together as we advance our leadership journeys. We must answer the call to action on behalf of all women working in the field of higher education, toward the outcome of developing future leaders to continue the good work of today. Based on data from the American Council on Education's study of College Presidents, the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), reports that in 2016, 54% of CIC presidents indicate they intend to step down within three to nine years. Replacing so many leaders will be an enormous challenge – but it presents an enormous opportunity to close the gender gap in higher education leadership. To be sure, this is hard, boots-on-the-ground work. We must continually prepare ourselves to step up and lead. We must stretch ourselves at every level and continue to advance our skill sets, gain greater financial acumen, and increase our knowledge and experience developing and managing human resources, budgets, strategic and operational plans. We must admit when we don't know something, and we must seek training to equip ourselves with a robust toolkit for leadership. We must learn how to clearly define and articulate goals and build effective, action-oriented teams to achieve results. We must empower others, manage up, down, and over. Look for opportunities to become comfortable with the uncomfortable. Be innovative and take calculated risks. And we must remember to celebrate the plans our teams create and their individual and collective achievements along the way. There is much we can all do in support of women's leadership in higher education – but two calls to action in particular are crucial. They are that we must help one another and we must expand the pool of change agents.

We Must Help One Another

Even though women have higher educational attainment levels than men, this is not reflected in the number of women holding positions with high faculty rank, salary, or prestige. (ACE, 2017). In other words, *the higher the fewer*. There is no question women throughout institutions of higher learning are committed, educated, and capable of transformative leadership. But sometimes we need a push to move up to a higher level in our leadership journey.

Therefore, at every level: seek a sponsor. At every level: be a sponsor. Find someone you can rely on as a confidant, who can provide critical, constructive feedback for your improvement and advancement. Seek to connect with colleagues across your institution and outside of your institution. Loop back to your professional organizations, such as the AAUA, ACE Women's Network, HERS – this is your group. This is where you can find camaraderie, support, and

encouragement for your journey. Steadily, by supporting each other, we are gaining ground: between 1986 and 2016, the number of women presidents at CIC institutions increased 13 percentage points – to 30 percent. (CIC, 2018). Higher education continues to place more women in executive roles than does corporate America (Moody, 2018). But I believe we can do even better.

We Must Expand the Pool of Change Agents

The first step to expanding the pool of change agents in an organization is to begin with yourself: commit to gaining a deep understanding of why you seek change or improvement. Make certain it is congruent with what you truly believe – your core values and principles. Then collaborate to shape a collective ambition that moves beyond individual goals in order to achieve and sustain excellence for all (Ready & Trulove, 2011). We are perpetually changing, transforming ourselves, standing ever-ready to enable the growth of others toward the goal of supporting inclusive, resilient, mission-driven institutions of learning.

Vision is defined as "what I aspire to be." It proposes one's future aims. We are all leaders with vision and with purpose, and there is immense value in defining both explicitly – for ourselves and for the institutions and organizations we serve. What does the future need from women as leaders? The future of higher education will inform the answer in myriad ways, but equipped with the dedication to lead with intent and purpose, together we stand ready to answer the call.

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Beyond Checkboxes and Skill Sets: The Making of a Leader in Higher Education

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> "So, what's next for you?" The question stunned me. It was my first week on the job as a new provost, and the president was asking me about my next step.
>
> "I'm not sure. Right now, I just want to do a good job as Provost."
>
> "Well, let's assume you want a presidency….where would you want to be president?"
>
> "That part," I said, "is easy: my *alma mater*, Meredith College."
>
> Seven years later, he came into my office and asked if I knew that Meredith's president had announced her retirement. When I responded that I did know, he quietly closed my office door, turned to me and said, "It's time."

Yes. It was time. Time for me to take the years of lessons, mentoring, good and bad experiences and shape them into evidence of my preparation for a presidency at my beloved Meredith. The element of timing is critical, and we have all certainly witnessed people who waited too long to voice their interest in leadership and, despite being exceptionally well-prepared, were simply overlooked, just as I have seen those too eager for the leadership roles they got without being more fully prepared. They peaked far too early and then, sadly, crashed and burned.

So one of the most important aspects of my pathway to leadership has been this fortunate combination of timing and the power of others' faith in me—faith that includes a good "atta girl" when things go well as much as a good "what were you thinking?" when silly, weakly executed, or careless miscalculations resulted in poor outcomes.

As much as timing has mattered, my years of good friendships and mentors and sponsors have given me the bonus of hearing and learning from more than one leader. And throughout those relationships, I developed the practice of weighing their advice against my own instincts—oftentimes seeing what I might have missed but just as often forcing myself to acknowledge the emotions driving the decisions I was about to make—whether fear, ego, empathy, or indifference. That acknowledgement has been instrumental in helping me see the kind of leader I was becoming (or at least the perceptions of the leader I was becoming) and weighing my comfort with that description. Did it feel authentic? Am I proud of who and what this decision or attitude seems to say about me? I well recall one mentor encouraging me to apply for a presidency at an institution I would simply never consider (for all sorts of personal and professional reasons). I realized then that I had not been clear about my priorities—nor about my emotional responses to this work and the kind of "fit" I wanted in an institutional home. The ability to be honest with a mentor/sponsor

is critical to the sanctity of the relationship; no one appreciates having her well-intended advice ignored with no explanation or further elucidation.

Having those honest conversations reflects my having grown up in a family with clear principles and morals, and I believe I cling to those values even more strongly as I have aged. As just one example, and one challenging aspect of leadership, is the need for confidentiality as one progresses, resulting frequently in an inability to address criticism or misperceptions about the basis for an action. Yet violating that confidence takes a higher toll than weathering the storms of leadership. I remind myself that the purpose is not secrecy and, above all, I seek ways to be transparent about decisions and situations as a means of creating an inclusive community. But protecting the identity and situations others face—whether for legal reasons or sheer kindness—is one of the great moral principles of leadership.

In that and all sorts of other ways, preparing for higher education leadership or the presidency can be overwhelming with needed insights into every corner of the campus and every risk and opportunity. From budgeting to federal/state compliance reporting to insurance to legal challenges, real estate and more, the list reminds us that we are running cities here: hotels (residence halls), entertainment venues (stadiums, theaters, galleries), regulations and contracts with performers (athletes, musicians, actors), restaurants (food courts, dining halls, bistros), security, clubs/organizations, utilities, transportation—and all before we get to the heart of the academy: curriculum, faculty, labs, libraries. I believe the most important lesson among this chaos is understanding the role I specifically play and the role that others play; the collaboration of the academy is (or should be) exemplary in all enterprises. After all, our most valued "output," a well-educated citizen who is ready to participate in every sector of her world (work, family, community, and more), calls on us to muster expertise in our own roles and how they intersect with the work of others, without having to be in everybody else's business.

That sense of role and place is particularly powerful for women whom research credits as great collaborators. On that and other fronts, women leaders are making some important inroads, particularly as they learn not only to mentor other women, but to actually sponsor them. Increasingly, we recommend other women for leadership roles, stop conversations where a woman's idea has been spoken but ignored (only to have a man express it to the admiration of others), or defend their decisions when we know men making the same decision would get a pass (or even kudos!). We seek fairness in evaluations and compensation, insist on professional development opportunities for women, and look for ways to enhance workplace friendliness for women, many of whom are doing extra duty with children and elderly parents. We anticipate that women may stop out of work to rear children, and can be creative in ways to keep them engaged and, eventually, welcome them back to the professional track they temporarily paused. In short, we can be open and creative and flexible — getting beyond the rigidity of "this is just business" and better focusing on "this is a valuable human being whom I want in my campus community."

Now in my ninth year as president, I value every one of these lessons, mentors, and experiences in ways I could not have foreseen (or appreciated) as preparation for leadership. Through the years, I've learned some important elements of budgeting, fund-raising, marketing, legal affairs, human resources policies, student life, residential life, honor codes, real estate, dining contracts, security procedures, and more. Yet, I must say what I wish I had pursued much, much earlier in my career was not just skills or even supporters, but wisdom. Out of wisdom comes a sense of peace (even when making untenable decisions—and there will be many), a sense of clarity (because it requires us to tease out the elements of those decisions), and a sense of responsibility (in knowing my job versus knowing what I'd prefer to do).

Most of all, I hope the quest for wisdom can become more deeply embedded in the search for pathways to leadership. Professional development, fellowships, workshops, mentorships, roles with increasing responsibilities are the proving grounds, and the experiences and lessons along the way are orchestrated to give us "marketable skills." Indeed, the timing of opportunities, the supporters who fight for us, and all the training we acquire along the way are no small things in the day-in, day-out and accumulating days of learning to be a leader. But the power of developing wisdom with its concomitant attributes of kindness, strategic thinking, clarity, vision, and peace—for me, that is the calling card of a true leader.

May we all more intentionally seek wisdom.

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No Higher Calling

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My great good fortune was to grow up on a university campus, at a time when our public university—the University of Puerto Rico (UPR)—was a leading change agent in the modernization of Puerto Rico and in opening up extraordinary opportunities to our youth. Access to excellence was the social justice goal our institution lived by, and my father, Jaime Benítez, launched and led that initiative as head of UPR from 1942 to 1971, taking the university from a two-campus institution to an 8-campus system with multiple graduate programs and professional schools that increased educational and economic levels throughout the island.

I realize that such a life experience is not frequent. However, I have known many women whose parents were devoted to higher education, and who taught by example exactly what my parents taught me: there is no higher calling than to create opportunities for the underrepresented that actually transform lives. This category not only includes academics. It also includes the children of parents who could not go to college themselves, but who worked very hard so their children had the chances they didn't.

To become and to remain a leader, I believe serving a higher cause is indispensable. One cannot be a true leader only for one's own sake. Knowing you work for others who would not have a voice if it weren't for you, is what will sustain you in the many dark nights of the soul that lie ahead. Make no mistake: there are dark nights ahead. But there is also joy, and hope, and gratitude along the way. Your rewards often come from unexpected sources. You will be nourished by the excitement of breaking new ground for others to tread, and spurred by the urgency to defend and protect what has been gained for students who will not know your name. A recurring joy will be reencountering later in life many of the students whose life was touched, and ultimately changed, by the programs and experiences that you helped make possible.

Many women are uncomfortable with speaking out in public, especially about complicated or controversial topics. Doing your homework before speaking out is, of course, necessary; but so is remembering your duty to speak up for those who have had no voice, and who might remain voiceless if you remain silent. As you wait for the ideal moment or the most precise phrasing before speaking, remember Voltaire's dictum: "Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good."

This is what I have learned from observing my father, listening to my mother—always a wise thing to do!--, and from my own experience as a college president, senior federal officer, and executive in the nonprofit sector. My father taught me to aim high and think big; he also taught me the power of example, and of connecting through storytelling. A leader must be able to tell the story of her community, of her own trajectory, of her institution, with love and enthusiasm, in words and with examples that will resonate with the audience before her. Every commencement speech my father ever made—and I listened to many!—included touching references to the role of great teachers, as well as to the achievements of members of the graduating class, often mentioning parents as the inspiration and greatest advocates for their children's accomplishments.

My mother warned me early and often to be careful with humor and offhand comments that could be misinterpreted; to maintain careful records of household and entertaining expenses; to take stock of the votes before faculty and board meetings; and to make sure to share in the sorrows as well as in the triumphs of the college community. "Have your mourning suit ready, because you will be going to a lot of funerals."

Let us consider some of the challenges and sorrows that await a leader in higher education. Uprooting from family and community in the pursuit of professional and institutional goals is practically inevitable. Even if you stay in the same institution, the tenor of many of your relationships will alter as you make your way up the power and decision-making structure. "You have changed; this is not the way you used to be" is something you will hear—or hear about—when a promotion is denied, a sabbatical is not granted, or some disciplinary or cost saving action is taken that affects a (formerly) close colleague. There is not much you can do about this, except make sure you follow established procedures scrupulously, document your actions and decisions, and be as evenhanded as you possibly can in your judgments.

As your visibility increases and the stakes rise, so will the possibility of betrayal, whether it involves leaking or misrepresenting a confidence, breaking what you understood to be a serious commitment, or an ally making unexpected common cause with your adversaries. Don't act in haste, but do take your precautions, and don't let your feelings show. A calm demeanor keeps your adversaries guessing and counteracts the narrative of the emotional woman that someone will surely try to apply to you.

How you handle defeat and public humiliation will say a lot about you. Again, a calm demeanor conveys grace under pressure. Let the enduring commitment to a cause that is greater than you sustain you against frustration and despair. Draw strength from inner resources to demonstrate support and solidarity for others. Know when it is time to go and when it is time to stay—and how will you know that? My mother used to tell me: *"A ese precio se alquila la casa"*—rough translation, "That's the price of admission;" literally, "That's what the house rents for," when I grumbled to her during difficult times. But grumbling is not quitting, nor is it a breach of trust as long as it's kept private. It is when you realize a decision before you will go against your principles, or will cause serious harm to your institution or to a group within it that you will find the strength and the courage to say no, even if it costs you the position you've worked so hard to get. There will be new opportunities down the road, and you will leave with your dignity intact.

In closing: life has shown me that you always reencounter the folks you left behind, and the best way to show your former adversaries who you are, is to treat them as the colleagues they once were, without rancor nor rage. Hopefully they, too, have learned a few lessons along the way, and their memories of you are tempered with respect. In any case, you'll always have the memories of the students you served and the colleagues you helped who will remember you with affection and gratitude. There's no better reward.

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The Power of Educating the Whole Person

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A Personal Story

My personal story is similar to so many others in that it ultimately demonstrates that education is the empowering vehicle for a good life. My four grandparents were migrants to Ohio from Italy. I was the first in my family to attend college. My father got his GED while I was in college so that he could get promoted to be a foreman in the steel mill where he worked. I never imagined that I would be a professor much less a college president when I was growing up. I went to college in 1971, amassing $10,000 in student loans by the time I graduated in 1975. It was the best investment I ever made! Repayment was deferred while I was on assistantships for four years of graduate school. After ten years of $90 a month in payments I was debt free, and already an associate professor with tenure, department chair, and president of the faculty senate. I have been blessed all along this journey with mentors of both genders who encouraged me to risk that next step in what looks like a planned career - from Chair to Associate Dean (Saint Louis University) to Dean (University of St. Thomas [MN]) to Provost (Spring Hill College) to President (Newman University) for the last 12 years of my higher education career.

Without a doubt, a most pivotal stop along the way was the American Council on Education Fellowship that I enjoyed in 1991-92 at Tulane University where several women were in executive positions. The year was an immersion experience in higher education administration in which we had three weeklong seminars with the 34 Fellows learning from national higher education leaders and one another, attending national and regional meetings, and visiting nearly 30 campuses. That year confirmed for me that my vocation would be to stay in Catholic higher education as I was drawn to a mission-driven, values-based focus on educating the "whole person" that I was experiencing at Saint Louis University, and that I witnessed in national gatherings and visits to other Catholic Colleges.

Approach to Leadership

From the time I was department chair, it occurred to me that the primary functions of an administrator are to lead, to serve, and to advocate in a collaborative fashion. My view reflects what Ford and Cavanaugh (2017) found in reflections from women presidents that: "…women bring a more collaborative leadership style and value win-win strategies when making decisions" (p. 18). With my background in interpersonal and small group communication, an authoritarian mindset or what I saw as the delusion of exercising power were to be avoided if at all possible.

I have been a fan of Astin and Leland's definition of leadership since 1991: "...leadership is a process by which members of a group are empowered to work together synergistically toward a common goal or vision that will create change, transform institutions, and thus improve the quality of life. The leader - a catalytic force - is someone who by virtue of her position or opportunity,

empowers others toward the collective action in accomplishing the goal or vision" (p. 8). I have returned to this definition many times when giving presentations on women's leadership in higher education and in the business world.

I also use several "c" words to characterize the basis of my leadership - **c**atalyst, **c**oach, **c**heerleader, **c**olleague, **c**ollaborator, **c**onsensus-builder describe my view of the role of leader. I would much rather decisions bubble up through these processes than to make an edict or issue a directive. **C**ongruent and **c**onsistent **c**ommunication (speaking and listening) that demonstrates **c**are and **c**oncern for the other is critical to **c**onnecting and building relationships. Being **c**lear and transparent and following through on **c**ommitments made are two means of building trust. And trust is essential to being that **c**atalytic force described by Astin and Leland. I know that some of my direct reports, usually male, have believed that I am too open, but I've always believed that lack of information and/or ambiguity leads folks to think and fear the worst. Again, I see trusting relationships as key to leading both internally and externally. For me it has been a welcome challenge to try to build those relationships with every constituency - students, faculty, staff, Board, Sponsors, donors, civic leaders, corporate executives, and so on. For example, relationships were absolutely critical to our recently completed major capital campaign that led to a new science center and renovated nursing and allied health facilities for our campus.

I believe that academic leaders at all levels should be of service to their various constituencies, and whatever that service is should be prompt. Finally, I believe that academic leaders should be advocates for their department, school, and/or university. I have never tired of promoting my university and our mission internally and externally.

Still a Work In Progress

It was gratifying to see the Council of Independent College's recent study of Chief Academic Officers finding that 50 percent of Chief Academic Officers are now women compared with 39 percent in 2009 (2019). At the president's level, however, the most recent ACE study indicated that still only 30 percent of presidents are women (2017). There is progress, but it seems slow to me. For example, when I was looking at presidencies in 2006-2007, most of the Jesuit Catholic universities still had bylaws that required the president to be a Jesuit. In 2019, 16 are now lay and, of those, three are women. At Newman University, which has been sponsored by the Adorers of the Blood of Christ for 86 years, only 3 of the 11 presidents have been Sisters and I was the first laywoman appointed.

As noted above, I do believe that higher education, like all industries, benefits from the collaborative approach that I've seen women bring to the table. The higher education landscape is changing so rapidly that the expertise of all institutional leaders needs to come together to meet the challenging headwinds of today. Just as I was beginning my higher education career, the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education issued a report, "3,000 Futures," in which they asserted that those universities with a well-defined and implemented sense of identity would be the ones to survive and thrive into the 21st century (1980). I believe that this is still true today. It has been a privilege and joy to work alongside others at St. Louis University, the University of St. Thomas, Spring Hill College, and Newman University as together we worked to advance the well-defined missions, visions, and identities of these distinctive institutions. My education and the opportunities to serve in education for 40 years have brought immeasurable blessings and a great life!

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Making Sense of Your Leadership: Be Who You Are

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I write every day in my job as the leader of a nonprofit. In my years as an academic administrator, I wrote more words than I could ever hope to count. I've published and presented frequently.

And yet this request to write about my leadership was the hardest piece I've written perhaps since my dissertation. That exercise was difficult because of an exacting advisor who used a lot of red ink for his feedback to me. But this current block came from an entirely different source. For this piece we were asked to write from our own experience. While I recalled many successes and great work with exemplary teams, I recalled far more times when I wished I had done better as a leader.

And then on a long walk while I pondered my inability to simply write about what I have done every day for most of the past 30 years, it hit me: write about the struggle inherent in effective leadership. Not the theories, not the models, not the pithy bromides that reduce leadership to sayings from famous figures. The truth is that leadership is at one and the same time exhilarating, demanding, rewarding, painful, energizing and exhausting. And that's just on Monday.

What is the Most Important Personal Story You Want and Need to Tell?

The personal story I most want and need to tell has to do with my own journey into the professional sphere as a leader. Coming from a lower-class, blue-collar family, I was raised to believe that I could do anything I wanted in the world through hard work. What my family could not tell me, because they did not know, was that in addition to hard work, it helped to have entree to the mutually reinforcing network that the upper classes have cultivated through generations. J. D. Vance expressed this well in his bestseller, *Hillbilly Elegy*.

When I am asked about women as leaders and barriers to our success, I often add class to my answer. We are not comfortable talking about class differences in our society; we are raised to ignore them. Ask anyone you know what class they are from and most will answer "the middle class." Yet, how many of us, if we are being truly honest, grew up in lower middle-class or even lower-class homes? The cultural lacunae that results from growing up in a home not attuned to the ways of the professional classes can be debilitating.

Through the years, most of us learned that college could be leveraged as a means to advance through the class structure. But the roots of who we are stay with us and impact how we view the world, our role in it, and how we enact that role. In other words, as a leader, I am grounded in my approach from the perspective of my upbringing.

I have learned through the years to share my background and my story. It is comforting to those who also wish to move into the professional classes to know that others have made the same journey. By sharing my story, others realize they can make it as well.

What Principles, Values, And Ethics Formed The Basis For Your Leadership?

I am fortunate in that I have worked for some great leaders. To this day, when I am in a perplexing situation I will think back to one of the best leaders I have worked for and ask myself what she would do in the situation. Of course, I have also learned through formal leadership training and from experience as a leader of hundreds and thousands of staff and faculty over the years. And, like most of us, I have worked for some less-than-exemplary leaders and have learned a great deal about what not to do during those chapters in my career.

One of the key principles I believe is important in leadership is to demonstrate passion and excitement for the work. We spend too much time in our jobs to merely go through the motions. If I'm not enthusiastic about what we are trying to accomplish, I know it's time to move on. Enthusiasm is infectious, and teams deserve to have an energetic leader who is leading the way.

I also strongly believe in hiring the very best individuals you can attract, hopefully those smarter than you, who can help create a team that is far stronger together. I also emphasize the importance of a strong leadership team who hold one another accountable and who also work across their units to support the greater good. A collection of lone wolves at the top competing for attention and resources can be harmful to the rest of the organization. I seek to create strong teams to run the organization together.

In terms of values I believe that integrity, honesty, and humility can go a long way. As a leader, I make mistakes--we all do. It's the human condition. And when I do, I make a point to apologize. I believe it's important for those who work for us know that they can make mistakes and recover, that their leader(s) make mistakes as well, and that no one is above saying "I was wrong...and I will fix this."

Perhaps the strongest value I hold is that, as a leader, one of my most important jobs is to support my team and "have their back." I try to make sure they when we achieve a goal, they get the credit, and when we fail, I take the blame. That's what a good leader does for her team. In the end, it's my most important job. The team works hard every day and needs to know that they have the cover to take risks and sometimes fail and sometimes spectacularly succeed.

What are the Most Important Lessons You Learned as a Leader?

The most important lessons I have learned boil down to two things: (a) Keep yourself balanced and grounded to be effective; and (b) Take care of your team.

Staying balanced and grounded is no small feat today. As a leader being pulled in multiple directions, it is easy to get caught up in activity and lose your inner compass. Most worst decisions have been made after weeks of too much travel, too many meetings, and not enough rest. Often, the most important thing I can do is slow down and breathe deeply. The most perplexing issue becomes much easier to solve after a good night's rest or a long walk. Simply getting back to basics can usually help solve the stickiest problem.

As much as I drive myself to succeed, I know that I expect a lot of my team. And so, I also try to assess where my team is in terms of energy. Are they working too many long hours? Are priorities shifting too quickly? Have I asked them to do more than they have the capacity to do? I try to surround myself with people who also drive themselves to achieve big goals, and they often have to be reminded to maintain balance and groundedness.

Ironically, the best way to take care of my team is to take care of me. When I unplug for weekends, take my vacations, and remember to spend quality time with friends and family, it gives my team the space to recharge as well.

In Your View, What Remains to be Done With Respect to Women's Leadership?

I wish I could say "nothing"--that we have come to a place where we can drop the gendered modifier and just talk about leadership. However, as we look at top jobs in industry, higher education, and public service, it's pretty clear: women are still not represented at the highest levels in sufficient numbers. We seem to be experiencing a major shift in larger numbers of women running for public office, and it took a concerted effort to make that happen. Where are the similar efforts in higher education and industry? Many talented women are ready to lead at the highest levels in all sectors of society. We need to see a concerted program of effort to prepare and place more women in leadership roles and to support them once they have ascended to those roles.

What Wise Words of Wisdom Do You Want to Share With Future Generations?

It's not really for me to say if my words are "wise" or not. I do know that, as a younger me, I probably ignored any "wisdom" shared with me. There really is something special about experiencing a range of life events and reaching a stage of life where important themes come together. I'm not sure these wise words can be passed along; more likely they have to be lived to fully benefit from them. Yet, I will share what I believe to be the wisdom accrued from a life of leadership if only so that I can make sense of it.

Leadership is a privilege, not an entitlement. You need to earn that leadership role every day. Never take it for granted.

A leader's main role is to elevate her team. Develop them, support them, challenge them, protect them. They are capable of doing amazing work if they have a safe place to take appropriate risks.

Never take yourself as seriously as others seem to. Keep a "court jester"--someone who will remind you of your humanity.

A leader is most effective when she knows herself well, embraces her roots as a strength, allows herself to be vulnerable, and never fears to speak up for her team. One of my favorite sayings, attributed to an unknown author, is this: "When in doubt, be yourself." I keep this taped to my laptop to view it frequently. When I am myself, I am the leader I want and need to be.

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The First Woman: My Story

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For the past 25 years, I have had the phrase "the first woman" affixed to my work. I was the first woman to be president of the University of Iowa, and the first to lead the University of Michigan. I am proud to have led these great research universities. I could not have imagined holding such positions when I began my career in academe as a young scientist.

Today's female college students have grown up in a world where women hold powerful positions – as elected officials, heads of government, CEOs of major corporations and presidents of universities. When I was in college, there were no women Supreme Court justices, or women astronauts, and certainly no women were serious contenders for president of the United States.

In the 50 years since earning my doctorate in biochemistry from the University of North Carolina, there has been a sea change in the acceptance and influence of women as effective, powerful leaders. I have seen – and lived – this change from both ends of the spectrum, from being shut out of work because of my gender to being celebrated as "the first woman president" at exceptional institutions.

Through it all, I have learned you cannot predict your career path. There will be roadblocks and detours, and unexpected turns, and all of that was critical to my development as a leader. Some of my most difficult challenges came early in my career, at a time when I was determined to be a research scientist. Without those challenges, and a determination to learn and grow from every experience, I would never have become a university president.

My husband and I arrived at the University of Kentucky in 1971, two years after receiving our Ph.Ds. He was recruited as a faculty member in political science. I had an NIH fellowship that I could move to Kentucky, so the biochemistry department welcomed me. I was an easy hire for a laboratory because I came with funding.

As my husband moved forward on the tenure track, I secured grants and worked as a full-time researcher. In the late 1970s, the biochemistry department prepared to expand with several new faculty slots and I applied for one. The then-department chair called me into his office and told me that they would not hire a woman for any of these openings. There had been no women professors, and he informed me that was not going to change with the new hires. In short, do not bother.

I was stunned. I was so taken aback that I consulted with a senior law professor at the university about whether to sue. His advice was direct: If you never want to get a job in the academy, sue. But if you want to get a job, put your head down, get the grants and be successful. At some point, he counseled, the department will have to hire you.

I do not believe this advice would be given, or heeded, in 2020. I hope no young scientist, female or male, would face such discrimination, although I suspect it may well still occur. But in the mid-1970s, there was no real choice for me. My husband was not going to leave his career, we had a young son, and we did not want to start over at another university. My department chair

even said my husband might not win tenure if I were to push my case, meaning we would leave Kentucky and making my hire as a faculty member pointless.

I made the decision to work hard and secure grant money for both my position and the salaries of several graduate students, research assistants and postdoctoral fellows. I published my research findings. I was determined to demonstrate my worth – both intellectually and financially. It took several years working as a research associate, but I finally was hired into a tenure-track position, then in time was granted tenure.

It would have been easy to become embittered during this time in my career. That is, however, not my nature. Instead, I remained open to new opportunities and challenges as a way to grow professionally. I ended up having a fabulous 19-year career at the University of Kentucky (as did my husband) and the experiences I gained altered my path in ways I could not have imagined when we arrived in Lexington in 1971.

After advancing to full professor, I was invited to be part of a faculty group tasked with envisioning the future of the university. This allowed me to interact with scholars from different disciplines, and caused me to think more broadly about the direction of the institution. I learned about university life outside the laboratory. At approximately the same time I was asked to be the director of research for the university's cancer center. I did not initially want this position; I was beyond happy leading a laboratory and did not want to abandon that part of my career. But I decided to take on this new responsibility, and to my surprise found administrative work outside the lab just as interesting and challenging as the lab itself.

Finally, I was appointed to the search committee seeking a new university president. This work was a huge revelation to me, because I saw how a university functions and what is required of its president. It was an assignment that helped to demystify the work of a leader, and I began to envision myself in such a role.

These experiences and revelations pushed me in a new direction that, over the years, would take me to four additional universities as a dean, a provost, and a president with nearly 20 years of experience in leading two institutions. Today, I am completing four years as president of the Association of American Universities, the first woman in that role, representing 63 of the country's finest research universities.

None of this would have been possible had I left the University of Kentucky in my first years there. Instead, despite the early discrimination I faced, I worked to prove myself and took advantage of opportunities outside of my comfort zone.

Today, in 2020, it is more important than ever that higher education provide structured leadership opportunities for up-and-coming leaders, women and men. Too often, we look outside of academe for leadership, believing the best can be found in the political arena or business world. I don't believe this is always the case. We have wonderful talent in our laboratories and academic departments that should be nurtured and encouraged.

However, we can indeed learn from the corporate world. I have served on corporate boards and have been struck by the commitment of business and industry to grow its own talent. I see how they encourage potential leaders, providing them with varied and challenging opportunities in different areas of the organization. They are very deliberate about identifying promising employees and preparing them as the next generation of department and corporate leaders. Higher education can develop leaders in a similar way by grooming young academics for leadership roles as department chairs, deans, provosts, and chancellors and presidents. This will benefit not only individual universities but higher education overall.

When I made the dramatic – and unplanned – shift from scientific research to academic administration, I learned firsthand that as a leader you will be confronted with decisions you must make. I learned the values of listening, compromising, and of trust and integrity to find common ground. I came to appreciate the weight of responsibility that comes with making final and sometimes difficult decisions, and explaining why those decisions were made. And I grew accustomed to knowing that leadership means disappointing some people, because you will not always make the choices they want. That is true at all levels of leadership.

Whether you are a woman or a man, leadership is demanding work. Universities, by their very nature, are places where the culture resists authority and hierarchical leadership. We owe it to tomorrow's leaders – perhaps a young scientist working in a biochemistry lab or an aspiring poet in the English department – to provide them with the tools and opportunities to succeed. We also owe it to the public we serve to prepare the best leaders possible to lead these vital institutions.

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Riding the Waves of Transformational and Complex Leadership

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"That life is complicated is a fact of great analytic importance"
(Patricia Williams, **The Alchemy of Race and Rights**)

On our campuses across the country, we are experiencing movements awash with heightened awareness about disparities and the painful roles exclusion and privilege play in our history. These movements challenge us as leaders of higher education, particularly when we are asked to transform our institutions. Missing this can imperil a leader's path—even those who are most respected. In this article, I share my reflections about leadership and lessons I have learned with our community over the course of my first term as president of Gallaudet University.

As senior leaders in higher education, our leadership must provide experiences that prepare our students to engage and lead in the healthy civil discourse upon which our democracy relies to thrive. The dynamics of conflict and division experienced ~~on~~ in most of our campus communities mirror significant social, cultural, and demographic changes occurring globally, and they underlie the complex leadership challenges we face as we lead transformation. These dynamics can be dangerous and tricky to navigate. Our challenge is to create an environment where our students, faculty, and staff feel welcomed and encouraged to learn and grow collectively—which brings about transformation and assures that our institutions are places of safe harbor for learning, experimentation, and innovation.

Higher education's tradition of shared governance adds to the complexity of leadership. Shared governance, with its system of checks and balances, represents the ideals of a democratic and engaged citizenship. The ethos of shared governance (Rosenberg, 2014), grounded in curiosity and learning, is an asset that invites close collaboration among stakeholders required to change the behavior of an entire institution (Rosenberg, 2014). This ethos also instinctively appeals to those who demonstrate leadership reflective of and responsive to our community's values. As a result, the strength of this ethos can be a measure of our success, because as we practice this ethos, we model the ideals at the heart of our democracy.

Recalibrating Leadership Through Mindshift Consciousness

Since my arrival at Gallaudet University in January 2016, I have been buffeted by emotions, frustrations, hopes and high expectations for change, all rising before me as large waves, some with whitecaps. I have felt, at times like a surfer, falling often and hard, feeling the slap of the water upon impact. (Many of these feelings in the community stem from movements led by this and other communities to fight for rights, call attention to inequities, and celebrate our essence and beauty as a diverse and complex community.) At first, I quickly got back up and pushed ahead. As I faced challenges, I learned that to strengthen shared commitment to our future, there would

be times when I would need to acquiesce thoughtfully, to listen and understand, and to acknowledge that leadership requires negotiation and repositioning, but from a different center than we are often taught—a center that is tied to our understanding of our own intersectional (Crenshaw, 1989), or multiple, identities as leaders.

Successfully transforming an institution in this environment requires change management on two levels. The first level is the individual effort to actively recognize that our respective intersectional identities impact our ways of being with each other—what I call "mindshift consciousness." The second level is the work of organizing systemic change through engaging multiple stakeholders, particularly the board, faculty, staff, and students.

Our mindshift consciousness is a condition required for us, as leaders, to create momentum with organizational systemic change by encouraging development of such mindshifts in others. It is the deliberate awareness of these mindshifts that creates meaningful relationships, because we can be thoughtful with our response once we recognize the assumptions and decisions someone might make about us based on first impressions and cursory interactions. These learnings must then be tied directly to the work of curating culture to create collective movement forward.

After facing several challenges, I learned that by practicing mindshift consciousness, turning my focus inward, I am able to integrate my understanding of how my own identities, leadership strengths and weaknesses, and my unconscious and conscious biases influence relationship dynamics as I interact with others. This introspection is critical to redefining and improving my responses to forces I experience. I am able to see how my different "ways of being," including being Deaf, racially white, a fluent bilingual language user (~~ASL/~~American Sign Language and English), a woman, mother, and spouse (to a woman), influences expectations, hopes and behaviors—mindshifts—of people within our community and within myself. Being conscious of these mindshifts heightens my own awareness of the professional and personal practices that are no longer serving me and others well. As a result, I have continued to recalibrate my leadership strategies—adopting new practices and shedding ineffective ones.

As I learn, I see learning in others in our collaboration. Together, within our system of shared governance, we are witnessing the strengthening of our collective momentum where we continue to outpace our own expectations of what we can achieve together as a community—one of the traits of a strong, democratic community. My experiences with the work of mindshift consciousness reminds me, however, that our collective unity and momentum is still fragile due to our work in dismantling our ways of being and systems that reinforce inequity and exclusion.

Complex Leadership in Practice: Gallaudet University

Gallaudet University, founded in 1864 by a congressional charter ~~and~~ that was signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln at the height of the Civil War, is a bilingual, diverse, multicultural institution that ensures the advancement of the deaf and hard of hearing through American Sign Language (ASL) and English.

In 2014, the Gallaudet community commenced a search for a new president. The Black Lives Matter movement was taking root. Barack Obama was president of the United States. The 2016 presidential election was looming over our country, and Hillary Rodham Clinton, the first woman to win a major party nomination, was the frontrunner. By the end of my first year at Gallaudet, Donald J. Trump was sworn in. The issues of exclusion and privilege swirling in the public life and politics of this country framed the conversations taking place at Gallaudet where racism, sexism (including Title IX), ableism, and, specific to the lives of deaf people across a spectrum of

identities, audism (discrimination against deaf people on the basis of their inability to hear and use of sign language as opposed to spoken language [Humphries, 1977]) and linguicism, were also creating turbulence in the community. As Gallaudet's first Deaf (and bilingual) female president to identify openly as a member of the LGBTQIA community, I expected this turbulence when I started my term. But the restiveness and speed accompanying one wave of tumult after another revealed a deeper intensity and depth of the community's pain, frustration and demand for recognition, understanding and engagement than I and many others expected.

Strategies to Engage in Mindshift Consciousness and Organizational Systemic Change

One month before I started at Gallaudet, a group of students of color sent me a vlog (a video blog communicated through ASL), asking that I take immediate steps to address racism and to announce a plan for the campus by the end of my first month. This call to action by students was a stark reminder that, despite my other identities associated with oppressive experiences, such as being Deaf and a user of ASL, my white identity and being in a position of power was the one most immediately visible to them. It created assumptions about my access and privilege, cast doubt on my commitment to dismantling racism, and questioned whether I was capable of understanding injustice endured based on the color of their skin. Accessing my own self-awareness of this in relation to the students, allowed me to lead from a different place, diffusing some of the public tension by recognizing the need to act in collaboration with them to move forward.

Noted diversity author Amanda Sinclair observed that "*when leaders are less engrossed in being themselves, they are better at providing leadership – they are more present, more able to see what's going on and more able to be open and connected to others*. (Sinclair, 2011)."

I agree.

In this situation, it was less important how I have developed to become who I am as a leader and the strengths, values, and skills I bring to this leadership role. This type of personal leadership development and branding work that is common in leadership training programs, which Sinclair (2011) gently attempts to redirect in her leadership development work, while helpful, only supplies a portion of the leadership I was being asked to provide by students, and, I learned later, our faculty and staff of color, at Gallaudet.

When we interact with the community, our visible and self-disclosed identities trigger old mindshifts and create new ones, which in turn influence how we view ourselves and others. Reflect for a moment on what you experienced as you read the description of me. What perplexed you? What excited you? What assumptions did you make about the kind of dynamics I would bring in our interaction through this article? Think now about similar mental processes—mindshifts—happening with every individual in the organization. Imagine the types of collective conversations within some groups that reinforce stereotypes and old patterns of being. Yet other groups may be open to exploring the impact of the changes in relation to the leader. When we encounter the individual and collective reactions to ourselves, that information, if processed non-defensively (without "being engrossed in ourselves"), illuminates our patterns of thinking and perceptions of ourselves and others. This is liminal, vastly underutilized space. Below are key strategies leaders can use to seize the opportunities in this space and curate culture to create collective movement forward.

1. **Encourage Experiences Designed to Reveal the Complexity of Intersectionality.**

The Black Lives Matter movement inspired Gallaudet's faculty and staff to organize a course on Black Lives Matter. Our students designed a campus-wide "Privilege Walk" event, open to everyone. People filled the basketball court. The Privilege Walk asked questions such as: if you have a family member who has been in prison, take a step back; if you are a woman, take a step back; if your parents have a college education, take a step forward. The closer one was relative to the front of the room represented more privilege. At the end, everyone could see who ended up in the front and who was in the back. Emotions ran high. The visually depicted inequities provided a visceral, mental, and emotional awakening for many who were, for the first time, beginning to understand the significance of how often our unrecognized life circumstances and experiences shape our lives, and importantly, those of others. This shared community experience was a powerful tool to develop the mindshifts that, in turn, change the way we respond to one another.

2. Participate in Restorative Justice Programs and Dialogues for Healing. Participation in restorative justice circles and being open to dialogue to address conflicts that arose from past decisions made by me and other leaders has proven to be an important step in the healing process. We recognized the benefits of the restorative justice expertise in our Title IX teams and the need to expand the impact of restorative justice practices on our campus. Gallaudet leadership has begun to invest more broadly in educating and building skills among staff and faculty to facilitate restorative justice practices to support community healing.

It was through dialogue with students and staff that I was made aware of community outrage over how we were not honoring those who played an instrumental role in the fight for equality in Gallaudet's history. A memorial, placed on a decorative brick wall, facing away from the nearby bus stop and street, and toward our conference center, was "minimized, hidden from sight and generic." In effect, it was hidden in plain view. The memorial recognized the Millers, a black family who fought to have their deaf son attend Kendall School, the then-segregated elementary school on our campus. The Miller case (*Miller v. Board of Education of District of Columbia*, 1952) was a seminal one that was a precursor to *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). This case granted the Millers the right to have their son and other black children attend Kendall School instead of being forced to travel for as long as an hour to the a school for the deaf in Maryland. After listening to the black deaf community express how the placement of the memorial had affected them, our dialogue shifted to how to make it right. That led to the redesign of the memorial to ensure that it reflects its importance in Gallaudet's history and our struggle for equal access. It will now face the campus, and in particular will face an auditorium named after our first black deaf male graduate, Dr. Andrew J. Foster. Our community will have an opportunity to show their support through fundraising efforts, and we have secured institutional support for this important public memorial, which will eventually be linked to the African American Trail in Washington, D.C. Engaging the black deaf community, including people who may not have attended Gallaudet, is revealing not only the complexity, but the resiliency and positive momentum toward equity and justice that have been building over time. This encounter has given Gallaudet an opportunity to reframe this story to one of possibility, growth, and strength.

3. Observe Your Leadership in Context and Build A Committed Team. When I started in my position as president, all of my direct reports were people who could hear with varying fluency with ASL. Only one was another woman. Despite my authority as president of Gallaudet, it was stressful being the only Deaf person in a male-dominated environment. Upon self-

reflection, despite my discomfort at the time, the experience was invaluable. It created a mindshift —an awareness of how isolated and marginalized I felt.

This, in turn, created for me a sense of urgency to ensure the environment was safe and productive for all of us. I began to look for commitment in each leader to explore the complexity of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) and how each of us engages our own leadership. Slowly, our team is becoming more self-aware, diverse and committed to growing our knowledge to be able to manage complex multicultural organizational development work. In the process of realizing my own mindshifts through self-reflection and dialogue with others, those around me who regularly witness my learning and leadership adjustments, have also shifted their perspectives —making another mindshift—creating a positive, dynamic relationship experience that supports our collective growth.

In "Being Leaders: Identity and Identity Work in Leadership," Sinclair (2011), explains that "structural bases of power exert pressure and encourage self-policing of identities." She notes that individuals often arrive with assumptions about power, emotion, gender and so on and…take up a position in the group…to enact those assumptions." Based on this, she emphasizes that this requires leaders to "begin to understand the places from which those assumptions have originated, [experimenting] with different ways of 'doing' power, emotion and gender in the group and … [noticing the] impacts on them, their leadership and the group's learning (Sinclair, 2011)."

Complex and transformative leadership requires us to be vigilant and in a constant state of self-reflection, learning, and engagement—with ourselves and others in our community. Observing and supporting healing around the sources of suffering requires a discipline of identifying the loci of privilege and access within oneself and the community that have not been distributed equitably. We often need allies to help us "see" these dynamics, and we must be open to attempts at engagement if we wish to navigate through changes together and improve the experience for everyone. These allies can include executive coaches, spiritual advisors, life coaches, but it is important that leaders have allies close-by on their teams and within the organization. As Sinclair (2011) explains, "the goal is not to discover self but to get better at observing the processes and practices in identity-in-action, to perhaps be less reactive and more mindful as various apparitions of identity needs appear (Atkins, 2008)." As leaders, we must observe how different or how aligned identities are with each other. Then, learn how our identities are associated with the complex histories within the context of different experiences of others in our community. The more varied or the more significant the differences between the leader's intersectional identities and that of the community, the more attention is required by the leader to demonstrate adaptive and equity-minded leadership together with constant attention to self-awareness.

4. Apply Adaptive Leadership Skill of Distributing Losses. Ronald Heifitz, a leading scholar in adaptive leadership, has often said, "What people resist is not change *per se*, but loss (2009)." He emphasizes the importance of recognizing the experience of loss and building tolerance for change by distributing losses across different groups in a way that can be borne by each one. If the loss borne by one group is too high, it can lead to a strong reactive and disruptive response. Understanding where people experience loss (often expressed as frustration and blame) are clues to help assess where access, or the lack thereof, to privilege is present—often unconsciously.

Our community taught me early on that leadership cannot be disconnected from the losses and gains that the community experiences with the identities, values, and practices of a

transformational leader. I intentionally notice how my own identity perceptions (especially around privileges and inequities) shifts in relationships I have been building through my leadership role. This work has helped me to deepen dialogues with multiple stakeholders during conflict. Our conversations build compassion for the challenging issues we face in our leadership, particularly the complexity of gains and losses experienced by different people for different reasons. Additionally, the conscious effort to understand the losses and gains that people express as they experience the impact of decisions helps us gauge whether we are distributing losses and gains equitably across our community. When we do this as senior leaders, it provides opportunities for self-reflection, facilitating the mindshifts necessary to positively improve our relationships and capacity to lead. When we do this work well, we build knowledge that helps design more effective actions that distribute losses and gains more equitably, stabilizing the waters for a greater number of people strengthening their engagement in the work of transformation (Sinclair, 2011).

5. Balance Demands of Performance Goals and Deadlines with Reflective Leadership. A reflective style of leadership must balance between competing pressures to move quickly and to be present with, and learn from, each other (Heifetz, 2009). I have learned that there are usually more positive than negative consequences when I agree to extend important deadlines based on requests to have more time to be reflective. For example, shortly after I started, we agreed to make developing a bilingual framework—a critical need tied to Gallaudet's bilingual mission—a priority. This topic has lacked shared understanding in our community for many years, despite efforts dating back to 1983 to define this part of our mission more clearly. When we set our first plan, the task force was given one year to complete this. However, their effort faced another collapse unless they were given more time due to the complexity of this work, particularly with intersectional and multiple identities related to being deaf and users of ASL, layered with the complexity of working in two languages. Ultimately, the collective wisdom and persistence demonstrated by all of us to address this complexity resulted in the task force ~~to~~ presenting a framework in February 2019 that received broad-based community approval, including that of our Board of Trustees. It was the first-ever bilingual framework developed in ASL first, and then later transcribed into English. We believe this was also the first time an original policy was proposed and developed in ASL before being translated into English—a transformational experience for a language-minority community in this higher education context.

6. Build Multicultural Organizational Development Capacity for Leadership and Systems Change. When we are aligned and aware of our identities and the challenges we face, we become more effective in removing barriers. This readiness for change is created through commitment to self-awareness, dialogue and purposeful multicultural engagement—commonly referred to as multicultural organizational development (Jackson, 2006). As I am learning, multicultural organizational development is an important key to unlocking this potential in each of us individually and collectively. (Marchesani and Jackson, 2005).

This is the area of growth on which we are now focusing at Gallaudet University. We have been assessing our current state organizationally, investing in cohorts of employees (faculty and staff) to engage in personal growth and self-awareness, and designing more team-based work that builds on our collective strengths and wisdom—with the goal of assuring that systemic change truly embeds in our organization. Our faculty started the work of building expertise with multicultural organizational development before I arrived. We are focusing on continuing to develop their expertise and having them work collaboratively to share this knowledge, beginning

with our executive leadership. We recognize that our commitment as senior leaders is critical to building momentum. Yet, we are acutely aware of the complexity and challenge of this work. As leaders, we are dealing with largely unconsciously built systems that now must be unpacked. To surmount this challenge, we are aware that unpacked and new norms based on successful collaboration builds new levels of consciousness in our communities. Mindset consciousness and multicultural organizational development work gives us the tools to know when to bail out of the wave and tread water to let people catch up, breathe, and recover before collectively moving forward.

Closing Reflections

Sinclair (2011) poignantly observes that "freedom lies in our ongoing commitment to practices that put a persistent value on reflexivity and seeing things as they are, rather than getting caught up in the truths we are told about them." When others are connected to us and we with them, the depth of dialogue, shared understanding, and empathy stimulates innovation and invites collaborative agility—the keys to transformation. The sense of belonging that leaders cultivate allows people to arrive as their full selves and fosters the sharing of diverse ideas and learning and growing together. This adaptation reinforces a growth mindset critical to building a learning organization that can creatively navigate the waves of organizational life.

Engaging more intentionally in this mindshift consciousness practice, we continue to learn that if we miss a wave, it slows our pace, deepening our connections and giving us time to build the energy we need collectively to catch another wave. Navigating the waters becomes less brutal and turbulent, letting us recover more quickly to rebuild our momentum. This learning and engagement supports the underpinning of citizenship and strengthens our democracy. It unlocks the creative power that underlies the turbulent waters of our changing times. It models for our future generations how to navigate the complex challenges they face.

In my acceptance speech as president (2015), I shared with our signing community that this is not "my presidency, it is *our* presidency." The notion of "our presidency" invites a different kind of presence and leadership building capacity not only for me, but for our whole community. It creates a commitment to building self-awareness so we grow together. It focuses on well-being, equity, and belonging. It supports seeing individuals and communities through different lenses, appreciating the rich histories and experiences that we have each built and endured over time. It invites sharing the journey of transformation with all of its joys, trepidations, and pain.

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The Power of the Journey: Beginnings and Endings Notwithstanding

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The most important personal story I can share is how I came to understand my role as a leader in 2016 when I was named Interim President of a higher education institution in crisis. Over the preceding fourteen-year period, I had served as Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, as Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and as Provost. I had the good fortune to work for public state institutions and private liberal arts colleges in Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New York, all contributing to a better understanding of the higher education environment and its challenges in each sector. Prior to serving as an administrator, I was extremely committed to my role as a faculty member, interacting on a daily basis with students, in and out of the classroom, at each institution. When I accepted the role of Interim Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs at a state public college, it was understood that I would serve solely for an academic year, during a national search, before enthusiastically returning to my faculty role. This interim position, however, unexpectedly developed into a new professional path. What helped me decide to apply during the search process for the permanent role, after some very deep reflection as I loved teaching and working directly with students, was the unanticipated realization that I was able to have more of a positive impact on students' education as an administrator by studying national and regional trends, developing policy and directly supporting students, faculty and staff. Surprisingly, I also relished the fact that, except for the presidency, most academic administrators, are fairly anonymous to students. While, as an executive administrator, I did meet with students who were either facing difficulties (appeals primarily) or who were being awarded some type of honor, most students did not recognize me and I was able to put them at ease when I introduced myself during our conversations. The advantage of this circumstance was that I was able to walk the campus and attend college events on a regular basis in order to speak to students about issues important to them. These conversations directly contributed to my role in developing academic policies and procedures as well as working more productively with student support services, financial affairs and college advancement.

Another advantage, once I transitioned from faculty to administrator, was to learn and truly appreciate exactly how so many committed individuals in the college community had supported me, as well as my students, in the teaching/ learning process. I was extremely humbled to be shaken out of my belief that as a faculty member, I was the center of the academic universe. To use a well-worn cliché, it really does take a village to educate each and every student. The concept of an all-inclusive educational community, consequently, was placed at the very core of my leadership approach. After serving five years in this position and as the Interim Provost at Worcester State College, I accepted the position in 2007 of Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (subsequently Provost) at The College of New Rochelle, a private liberal arts college in New York, with a 115-year mission of access for populations formerly overlooked.

A Crisis in Leadership

In 2016, it was discovered that my institution, with over 3500 students in four schools and six campuses, and over 700 staff and faculty members, was mired in a crisis stemming from fraudulent financial activity. The sitting president resigned and I was asked to take on the role of Interim President. The trajectory of this financial malfeasance is well-documented elsewhere, and I will not reexamine in this essay the College's path from a flourishing college ten years earlier to its closure in 2019.

As CEO of the College, I was asked to work, on a daily basis, with the College community, the board, the chief restructuring officer, general counsel, state and regional accrediting agencies, the USDOE and several investigating agencies. As difficult as this new role was in a very perilous time for the College, each of my previous leadership experiences had led me to a solid understanding of how to best proceed. As part of a leadership team, we were able to resolve the majority of the issues facing the College, over the next two years, albeit not without its challenges. What worked very much in the favor of the College was that every academic, financial and legal agency, without fail, worked with us to preserve an institution that was perceived as serving the public good.

It was determined from the start that at the end of my tenure as the "crisis or bad news president" whose role it was to stabilize the institution, the plan was for me to step aside to allow for the next visionary president to lead the College into the future. My tenure ended in spring 2018 as the 14th President was selected. For myriad reasons, principal among them, was not following through with carefully crafted strategies, the College did not progress as planned and was left no alternative but to cease operations 16 months later in the summer of 2019.

Taking on The Vision

I believe that the success we were able to achieve from 2016-2018 was centered on teamwork and involving the entire community in the process. To be clear, while the process was transparent and many decisions were very difficult to make and not always agreed upon by the entire community, every decision was centered on a single premise: What was best for the institution, and especially its students? As Interim President, I was able to restructure the executive leadership team to form a more inclusive cabinet that incorporated governance leaders (faculty and staff) as well as a representative board member, deans and vice presidents. We met monthly, more often when necessary, to share information and discuss the challenges facing the institution; our main objective being to work together to resolve the issues that we had the authority to determine. Through this venue (as well as town meetings) we were able to share financial, accreditation and legal developments with our constituents. I met with student leaders and students on all campuses and openly discussed the issues and the fact that our sustainability would require a lot of effort and still might not be assured. A wonderful surprise for us was that students did not transfer (as we expected greater attrition), but rather continued to support the College during this period citing their satisfaction with their academic programs and faculty.

Implementing a Direction

While impossible to make difficult decisions that would please every member of the community, the Chair of the Board of Trustees and I were transparent in communicating the

reasons supporting these decisions. I worked to not take criticism personally; I understood the insecurity of the community members when thinking of their own future as well as the future of the institution. As Interim President, I was the face of indefensible activities indiscernibly effected over more than a decade. What led many to support my presidency, I believe, was the fact that, I was respected for my commitment to academic excellence and "truth telling" even when the specifics were difficult to accept. Moreover, I had been inclusive of faculty, students and staff in decision-making in academic affairs. I valued others' expertise and at the end when a path was chosen, most felt heard, even if the end result was not exactly what they would have chosen. I carried this empowerment of others over to my role as Interim President and it served the institution well.

How It Ended

As I reflect on my years at The College of New Rochelle, I am proud of the collective work that was done to graduate approximately 3,200 students between 2016-2019, the majority students of color, over 80% Pell recipients, most over 30 years of age. In addition, upon closing, the College was able to place all remaining students at a sister institution, with a similar mission, that supported both their educational progress and financial aid packages. As higher education professionals (regardless of titles), our primary responsibility is always to our students.

I believe that the ultimate lesson here is that everyone in the community can make a difference and, working together, clearly institution/student-focused, they will increase the possibility of success exponentially. No one individual has all the answers, but as a team, pooling all available talent, coupled with a belief that the institution is serving the common good, will lead to the best possible solution of sometimes insurmountable problems.

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The Joys of Leading a University

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"All our dreams can come true — if we have the courage to pursue them." (Walt Disney)

Yes, dreams do come true and I am proud that I have been able to actualize one of my professional dreams. It seems like only yesterday when I was appointed to serve as the sixth chancellor at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, and now I am in my 11th year of leading an amazing learning community. Many articles are written about the various pathways to and challenges of the presidency. I have noticed in many of these discussions, too few leaders talk about the joys of University leadership, especially from the perspective of a woman leader. I want to share a few of my most memorable experiences and offer three leadership lessons emphasizing the joys of leading a University in the 21st century.

Leading a University is an all-in responsibility, and at UW-Parkside, it is easy to lead with meaning, to be bold, and to be present. As Anna Quindlen reminds us in *A Short Guide to a Happy Life*, "I show up, I listen, and I try to laugh" (Quindlen, 2000, p. 16). I know that serving as a leader is not a sprint but a marathon, and it takes time to achieve results, build relationships, and to make a real and lasting difference. I remind myself that I am Debbie, first and foremost, and that the role of chancellor does not define who I am as a person. My family is my strength, support, and continues to ground me to reality. I appreciate the wisdom from many of my mentors and in particular, John Cavanaugh, who reminded me when he was president at the University of West Florida "I come to my job, not to my life." I have taken this to heart as I am aware of how important it is to prioritize family, friendships, health, responsibilities, and career.

I was drawn to Wisconsin and to the University of Wisconsin-Parkside because of mission alignment with my personal and professional values. I joined a University community where the people: students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members, are valued, and where a growth mindset is embraced. The vision of UW-Parkside is to transform lives, and it brings me great joy to hear the recurring mantra from alumni who proudly say "if not for Parkside…" As a first-generation college student, I know how important it is for me to be a part of a learning community dedicated to serving first-generation students and to improving outcomes for all students.

Prior to moving to Wisconsin, one of my mentors, Dr. Dennis Golden, President Emeritus at Fontbonne University, offered to host a "presidential teach-in." Dr. Golden and I first met when I was working on my doctorate at the University of Louisville. He served as Vice President for Student Affairs and was my professor, doctoral advisor, and mentor. The two-day intensive "presidential teach-in" involved discussions about the role of president, leadership lessons, reviewing his do's and don'ts for leaders, and sharing a robust list of resources for the transition to the chancellorship. As chancellor, I have worked hard to live by Dr. Golden's

example and follow his leadership principles for effective leaders. I continue to live by his principles of (1) thinking longer term; (2) relating beyond the organization; (3) influencing beyond boundaries; (4) emphasizing vision and values; (5) demonstrating political skill; and (6) renewing the process.

During this Presidential Teach-In, I witnessed how he modeled each of these principles with students, his staff, his colleagues, and community members. One of the most memorable moments from this experience occurred during Sunday evening mass following our first day of meetings when Denny took a card from his pocket and started writing notes. I did not know at the time, but the notecard was for me. On it, he summarized his wisdom and key thoughts including these words: Faith, Family, Friends, Wisdom, Courage, Ethics, Do the Next Right Thing, The Students are the Prime Matter, Grace, Guide, How I Respond is My Choice, Absorb Chaos-Give Back Calm-Provide Hope, You are Ready! What a gift! I continue to carry this card in my wallet as a reminder of my role as a leader and of the powerful influence of mentors. When Dr. Golden officially retired in 2014, I stopped by his campus to personally congratulate him and to say thank you. I shared with him a copy of the card and reminded him of how meaningful his mentorship is to me and how he positioned me for success at UW-Parkside. Taking time to express gratitude keeps me humble and joy filled.

Embracing opportunities and leading through the challenges are keys to success in the 21st century. In reflecting over my career, I have found joy in following three enduring leadership principles, (1) Leading with Meaning, (2) Being Bold, and (3) Being Present.

Leading With Meaning

Leading with meaning guides my day-to-day actions, long-term thinking, and view of what is on the horizon. Serving as chancellor allows me to develop meaning in my life as an educator, authentic leader, community steward, learner, advocate, visionary, and mentor. I have the great fortune to witness first-hand the transformative power of higher education for first-generation college students; to create a learning environment that supports faculty to do their best work as scholars, teachers, and mentors; and to partner with community leaders to advance new ideas that improve the quality of life across the region. Leading with meaning comes easily when you work with an academic community that is mission-focused, places students at the center of decision making, and creates opportunities for dreams to come true for all members.

One of my most rewarding responsibilities as chancellor is to be a loud and proud storyteller and champion for student success. Each day brings new ways to celebrate the transformative power of a UW-Parkside education. I see the journey begin for new freshman and transfer students at orientation and during the beginning of the semester when students, faculty, and staff are eager to start anew and draw closer to achieving their dreams. I never get tired of the start of a new semester and always make time to greet new students, assist with move-in at the residence halls, attend new faculty and staff orientation, and serve ice cream during the student involvement fair. At the other end of the spectrum, Commencement day is bitter-sweet for me. I am so proud of our graduates, their successes, and their perseverance to earn a degree, but I am somewhat sad knowing I will not see them regularly on campus. The feeling is similar to when my own two children went off to college and seeing them transform from wide-eyed and eager teenagers to become mature, responsible, and successful college graduates and young adults. The best part for these graduates is knowing their legacy of academic excellence and leadership lives on through those they touch inside and outside of the classroom. I delight

in knowing that, as alumni, they continue to represent the best and brightest that higher education can offer.

Being Bold

Being bold as a leader positions the University to think strategically and to innovate in a rapidly changing world. We know that change in inevitable, but growth is optional. In order to grow, a culture of planning, assessment, and using evidence/data to inform decision making needs to exist. Leaders must have the discipline to plan, act, and assess in order to make bold decisions. As my institution embarks on its third strategic plan in a decade, the UW-Parkside Strategic Framework 2025, being bold is critical. By 2025, we plan to increase the number of graduates by 50% and build on increasing student success outcomes.[1] Being bold also means extending the boundaries of the campus as we build new partnerships and collaborations locally, regionally, nationally, and around the world. I follow the mantra, "If not us, who? And if not now, when?" in making bold decisions to advance the mission of the University.

Being Present

Being present is foundational to building trust and a key component when cultivating, sustaining, and nurturing relationships. The most memorable experiences and highlights of my first decade as Chancellor always involve relationships with the vast array of stakeholders and how their lives interface with the University. As a leader, one must learn to show up fully present. As Amy Cuddy notes, "Presence is the state of being attuned to and able to comfortably express our true thoughts, feelings, values, and potential" (Cuddy, 2015, p. 24). When you are fully present, you can listen, see the linkages, and leverage the assets of the University with the needs of the campus and the community. I learned from a wise woman, it is through dialogue that we build relationships, through relationships that we build trust, and with trust we create meaningful solutions to address the issues of today and tomorrow.

As a female leader, I take seriously the commitment to inspire and mentor future generations so more women have the opportunities to lead universities and other organizations. In 2019, only 30% of college and university presidents are women. As a way to pay it forward and to advance this agenda, I make time to write, read, and conduct research. Inspired early in my career by the 1991 book by Helen Lena Astin and Carole Leland, *Women of Influence, Women of Vision*, I have always seen myself as an inheritor of the work of women leaders as outlined in their book. A few years ago, I was fortunate to engage with these two amazing women and convene a Legacy Conference for University Women Leaders (Women's Voices on Influence and Vision: A Legacy Conference, 2014). My colleague and co-author, Chris Cavanaugh, and I gathered 25 women leaders in higher education with Helen and Carole at The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread in November 2014. During the conference, we reflected, strategized, shared stories, and laughed (Ford & Cavanaugh, 2017). We agreed to keep the flames alive for women of all generations by continuing our research and embarked on a +1 campaign by each focusing on encouraging and supporting one-woman at a time to pursue academic leadership (Women's Voices on Influence and Vision: A Legacy Conference 2014, Audio Recording). I believe and know that we are the leaders who will inspire, support, sponsor and empower more women to pursue top leadership roles.

[1] https://www.uwp.edu/explore/offices/chancellor/strategicframework.cfm

About 15 years ago, I picked up Anna Quindlen's book, A Short Guide to a Happy Life, while traveling through an airport. It is a quick read that is full of insightful lessons. Near the end of her book she reflects on a conversation with a homeless man on the pier near Coney Island. She asked him why he stayed in the cold, and his response as he looked at the Atlantic Ocean was, "Look at the view, young lady. Look at the view" (Quindlen, 2000, p. 50). She goes on, "And every day in some little way, I try to do what he said. I try to look at the view. That's all. Words of wisdom from a man with not a dime in his pocket, no place to go, nowhere to be. Look at the view. When I do what he said, I am never disappointed" (Quindlen, 2000, p. 50).

I agree with Anna and make time to look at the view. I believe everyone can be a teacher, everyone can influence, everyone can inspire and everyone has the power to empower. As I reflect and celebrate my years as chancellor at UW-Parkside, I feel warmth in my heart for all of the people I have met, have learned with, have educated, and with whom I have shared stories. I know my life is richer because of those who have influenced, challenged, and inspired me. I am grateful for the opportunity to live out my values, beliefs, and dreams as a servant leader and to show up as my authentic self.

As for the future, I still dream, and am compelled to tell the courageous and awesome stories that inspire joy and commitment to women's leadership. I am fortunate to have this opportunity to share some of my thoughts on leadership, and the wisdom that was so graciously offered to me as I pass them on to the next generation of academic leaders.

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Mentors and Models: What Matters?

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What Difference Does It Make?

Whenever I ask a question about why someone became a teacher, invariably the answer involves the same key components: service, impact, and mission. Assuredly, each aspect holds slight nuances of meaning or interpretation for individuals, but teachers seem to respond to a calling (service), hope to make a difference in the lives of students (impact), and want to be part of a clearly articulated, transformative process (mission). I have been a teacher throughout my entire career so these concepts have genuinely resonated with me over my 30 years in higher education both as a leader and in my practice of leadership. Our models matter.

The power of an educational setting became vividly apparent to me when I began teaching mathematics at the collegiate level and encountered students coming from a wide diversity of institutions. My high school and undergraduate college were institutions devoted exclusively to woman's education, where fostering women's leadership potential and an awareness of possibility was inherently rooted in their mission and structures. While pursuing my master's degree, the faculty made a concerted effort to foster and encourage women in mathematics; but for me, that was normal, as it was simply how I had experienced all prior instructors. However, by way of contrast, in speaking with women classmates, I learned some of the distinctions in regard to encouragement, expectation for achievement, and treatment experienced throughout their educational journey, experiences not associated with talent or ability, but of cultural attitude. The chair of the mathematics department at Bryn Mawr College, where I attained the doctoral degree, served as an example who created an environment of support. Her work to encourage and support young women to enter the STEM fields (long before this idea was broadly popularized) intensified and validated my belief in encouraging and supporting the unique talents of individuals, even while the world might be struggling with traditional models and cultural obstacles. Our mentors matter.

Never Work a Day

My mother never used terms like positional and situational leadership, but her example taught their meaning through example. She could call on multiple strengths and keen insight when circumstances demanded her to be director, coach, delegator, or supporter. Fundamental to my mother's modeling was her belief that you do everything from a position of love.

Love within the context of professional service might be re-labeled passion, delight, motivation, or commitment. Regardless of how it is renamed, love for what one does in the service of an institution's mission and goals influences actions, mindset, choices, and decisions. Perhaps that has to do with how this type of love focuses one's attention outward. Rather than a

self-serving or self-promoting dedication to the job, love opens the possibility of work as wholly mission driven.

I am reminded of the statement of Jesuit Father Pedro Arrupe who believed: "What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you do with your evenings, how you spend your weekends, what you read, whom you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude." Such a love translates into meaning, purpose, and ultimately fulfillment - personal wholeness - in the midst of chaotic and busy lives. If the adage, "find something you love and you will never work a day in your life," is true, then I can honestly say I may never have worked a day in my life as a leader. What you love matters.

Serve to Lead

Sometimes the right message comes at the right time; certainly, the philosophy of servant leadership was that message for me. The development of servant leadership as proposed by Robert Greenleaf (2002), involves three phases: a call to serve; an intentional choice to serve through leading; and leading with a mindset to prioritize the holistic growth of others and their communities. I have found that higher education settings provide many opportunities to be intentional about service in the advancement of the institution's mission. Unexpectedly, at one meeting of the university's Leadership Team, I recall the conversation that a *Student Lead* was needed to head the implementation of a new enterprise computer software system. Image my surprise when the conversation shifted to why I should lead the project! With great apprehension, I agreed to serve. The project drew together a broad base of institutional associates working on a common project, with a common vision, learning to achieve that vision through differing perspectives and challenging experiences. Lessons of teamwork, mutual support, dealing with frazzled nerves and competing priorities led to a flow of positive energy across the institution. This openness to serving, looking beyond the boundaries of the job, provided amazing insights into leading. What is in your mindset matters.

Power and Leadership are Not Synonyms

When I became the vice president for academic affairs, I learned that I did not understand "power." Up to that point in time, I had lived in a smaller world where personal contact and collaboration worked. As an executive officer, I wondered to what extent my power should serve as the bridge among interests, between the practical and the visionary. Struggling with the nature of power in my new role required deep reflection. The author of *Good to Great*, Jim Collins, legitimized my perceptions of "power" when he proposed that "legislative leadership relies more upon persuasion, political currency and shared interests to create the conditions for the right decision to happen" (pp.10-11). He references "humility and professional will" as key factors in creating influence to promote and advance - with dedication and determination - the mission or work of the institution. What you do and how you do it matters.

Sustained Inspiration Takes Work

One of the most successful and sustained faculty-led projects instituted while I was vice president is the Immaculata University Academy for Metacognition. I learned strategies for

reflections on my own leadership practice by listening to the faculty who reflected on their teaching practices and shared these reflections in regular table discussions. Consistent with the Academy's approach, I chose to keep some questions in mind to focus my personal awareness and responsiveness to specific leadership characteristics.

Some guiding questions which enhanced my deeper reflection and the qualities I was seeking to explore regularly included:

- *Would I have wanted to be a follower of myself today*? (modeling beliefs)
- *What did I do that no one else in the organization could do*? (making an impact)
- *Who mattered to me today*? (valuing service)
- *What questions did I pose, and whom did I ask*? (seeking insights)
- *Was I engaged in solutions-finding*? (channeling power)
- *What brought me inner joy*? (celebrating mission)

Chasms Invariably Separate Traveling and Arriving

Future women leaders will undoubtedly face their own unique struggles and challenges. Learning to lead and developing a leadership style often require time, opportunity, and openness to the unexpected invitation to do something beyond one's title or position. I recommend being an observer: watch how others lead, reflect personally perhaps with a trusted colleague, and hone your skills based on your observations. Prepare your attitude and bring your A-game with energy, enthusiasm, and personal investment.

Many women have blazed trails to remove gender bias from careers and societally defined female roles. Our gratitude to our fore sisters should be evident in our storytelling, as the past tends to repeat itself if not remembered. What we remember matters.

Women leaders have a responsibility to foster women's leadership development, but so do all leaders who see potential in another. Perhaps women do have a singular brand of leadership with a unique richness that will enhance the governance of institutions of the future. If not a brand, at the very least, many women manifest keen interest in issues which impact what is human and humane. Defining, highlighting, and applying that rich reservoir of talent and insight will contribute to the positive transformation of higher education.

Leadership can be developed, inherent, and fostered; however, latent leaders sometimes need a mentor or a model to draw out their leadership potential. For leaders of today, our role might be to personally offer the invitation to aspiring candidates and to "dispute mindsets that suggest leadership is gender-defined and shift the paradigm to leadership that is "fit-defined" (ILA, 2015, p. 19). What steps come next matter!

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The Power of Passion

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As an immigrant with English as my second language and a stay-at-home mother raising two children, I had never thought about pursuing a career as a Community College President. The journey has been long and challenging, yet very rewarding. I am very grateful to the many wonderful mentors who encouraged, supported, and guided me as a re-entry woman travelling through my career path to pursue my passion for education.

In 1978, after resigning from my job as a Program Coordinator at a national broadcasting corporation in Taiwan, I came to the United States and landed at Detroit Metropolitan International Airport. That same year, an opportunity presented itself for me to go to Wayne State University to start my master's degree. I was interested in obtaining a degree in bilingual education (English and Spanish), but I was discouraged by a graduate school advisor, because according to him, I was not a native speaker of either English or Spanish, even though my major during my undergraduate study was English with a minor in Spanish. The advisor's loud laugh made me feel embarrassed; I apologized to the advisor for being so "ignorant" and agreed that I would again research the University's catalog to find a different major. This "discouragement" was how I ended up with a master's degree in Guidance and Counseling. As a young immigrant, I did not realize what I encountered then was a form of discrimination because I am a foreigner and a female.

Passion with a Purpose

Fast forward to 1987, due to growing financial needs and after being a full-time mother for six years, I returned to school with the hope to learn how to use computers and find a career for myself. I have always had a passion for education and was fortunate enough to meet my first mentor in the United States, Dr. Ervin Harlacher, who later became my doctoral dissertation chair. Dr. Harlacher encouraged me to choose a career in the community college system and guided me through my doctoral study program. With his support, working two part-time jobs and a full-time job as a community college counselor, taking care of two little ones, and commuting one and half hours each way from home to work daily, I finished my doctoral degree within two years and ten months. However, even with a major in Institutional Management in Higher Education focusing on Community College Administration and a doctorate in Education, without any administrative experience in higher education, I was not qualified for an entry-level administrator's position at any community college. Two months after obtaining my doctoral degree, I noticed there was a Transfer Center Director, an "administrative" position, opening at a private 4-year university. I applied and was hired. However, I did not plan to stay at the position long because I wanted to return to the community college system to apply what I had learned from my doctoral program. A year later, I successfully returned to community colleges to be a Transfer Center Director, but I had to commute four hours each way from the worksite to my home weekly. Due to family

reasons, I had to quit that job after one year. I applied for a Transfer Center Director and Articulation officer position at another community college that was closer to my home. The commute was only a 70-minute drive each way and allowed me to go home each day to take care of my family. I remember, at the end of my interview, the search committee chair said to me, "Dr. Hsieh, you had a good interview, but we are concerned that you could not stay at this job for long. It seems that you jumped from one job to another." I was glad the chair shared this concern aloud. I said, "I was a stay-at-home mother and I was behind my classmates and peers by six years in terms of pursuing my career. My goal is to take care of my family and simultaneously learn as fast as I can professionally to reach my career goal as a dean." The female chair nodded her head and said, "Thank you." One day later I received and accepted the job offer. Three years later, I got my first deanship. Up to that point, to be a dean was my career goal. It was when I was a dean, that I was frequently told by my supervisor and my professional associates that I was "Presidential material." Actually, when Dr. Harlacher put my doctoral hood on me, he said, "Dr. Hsieh, when are you going to be a College President?" I did not take it seriously then because I had never thought about it. Slowly and gradually, doors started opening for me, and I took advantage of those opportunities. Within three years, I went through the career ladder, moved from the dean's position to a vice presidency. After serving as a Vice President at two different community colleges for a total of six years, I obtained my first College Presidency in 2005. This was 15 years after I left my full-time mother role to pursue my professional career. I remained in this role of College President in a multi-college district for 14 years, after which I was appointed as the Superintendent/President of a single college community college district, and this is the position I which I currently serve.

Learning and Living: Making a Difference

Even though being a full-time mother for six years created a gap in my career path, my trajectory moving from one college to another allowed me to learn a lot. The learning ranged from how to take my caring nature in my role as dedicated mother focused on my children and expand that caring perspective to those on my staff, striving to be a role model for both. I believe I have been able to do this by always sticking to my principles, which are based on integrity and professional ethics. As a leader, I also learned to value honesty and teamwork and to treat others with respect. I enjoy working with individuals from different backgrounds and truly believe diversity is a powerful catalyst in bringing talents together to contribute to a team's success.

Throughout the years, I was very blessed to have learned from so many female leaders and mentors who were very generous in sharing their experiences. To give back, I have served as an ACE Spectrum Leadership Program Presidential Advisor and volunteered on many leadership panels which enabled me to share my experience and trajectory with those individuals aspiring to be leaders. From these experiences, I have learned that as a leader, in particular a female leader, it is important to understand the value and support the need to build a leadership pipeline, in particular a pipeline for female leaders in higher education because proportionally, female administrators are still the minority in higher education. I also learned that as a female leader, it is important to be fearless when it comes to carrying out an institution's mission, even though it might mean there is a high price to pay. In other words, I have never compromised my principles and integrity, even when the authority above threatened me. Giving up was the easy way out but I have never believed in the easy way.

As student demographics continue to evolve in higher education and majority of those students are female, there is an urgent need to encourage more females to take leadership roles from an early age, preferably starting with the 3rd graders in primary schools. A lot of research has shown when children reach the 4th grade, they have already "decided" who and what they want to be. Encouraging, inspiring, and mentoring are critical to female children. There is also the need to have more support from the spouses and/or significant others to allow females to consider leadership roles. The male counterparts in higher education need to treat their female colleagues with respect and have high confidence in their abilities to perform their duties. Sadly, even in today's world, many minority female leaders still have to overcome the challenge of racism and discrimination at work, in addition to taking care of the family responsibility at home.

However, as an ethnic minority and female, I have noticed that millennials and generation Z tend to be more tolerant and accept differences associated with ethnicity, race, and sexual orientation. They love diversity and consider it as a plus at work and in their professional and personal relationships. As the future generations will be more and more diverse, not just in terms of ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, etc., I have seen the trend to encourage and promote more diverse leadership, not only in higher education, but in other professions as well. To ensure all will be treated fairly and equitably, and students will benefit from interacting with and learning from leaders with diverse backgrounds, as a female leader, I consider supporting this trend as a top priority.

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Reflections on Navigating Transformational Change

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With over 40 years of leadership experience and education, I still find major change efforts daunting. As I have risen up the ladder to president of a large, urban two-year college, situational power has not proven to be sufficient to sustain transformational, large-scale initiatives. I have learned that it requires so much more.

According to Montuori and Donnell (2018), transformative leadership is predicated on the notion that everyone contributes to and co-creates the future. Leaders can transform organizations and create positive change by strategic thinking involving key stakeholders, alignment and support of people working in effective teams, and through understanding the systems, culture, and resources needed to launch, execute, and sustain the change.

Further, Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2009) posited that transformational change shifts the culture and structure to support a new direction, requiring the engagement of the critical mass of the organization's employees and community involvement. This type of change and its corresponding leadership requires a mindset shift of its members, the ability to build agility competencies, a networked approach to both internal and external relationships and teams, and a new way of thinking about and understanding of the future through a shared vision.

Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) embarked on a tremendous change effort in 2015 with our first Promise program. We were able to articulate the shared vision, get internal and external support for the change, and develop new systems and processes in 145 days to announce this program publicly. This announcement made front page news and in the process transformed our reputation and mindsets. Three years after we introduced the MATC Promise for New High School Graduates in September 2015, we followed it with the successful launch of our MATC Promise for Adults program.

Our Promise for New High School Graduates provides free tuition for eligible high school students enrolling immediately after graduation. Our public-private partnership model leverages federal and state financial aid with critical private donations providing a "last dollar" scholarship to fill the gap between what aid pays and the cost of tuition. The Promise program unlocks opportunity and makes college a reality for students who never thought it was possible. It helps them achieve their educational dreams and attain the skills for family-sustaining careers, thereby strengthening our regional economy.

Articulate the Rationale For Change

Burns (1978) proposed that transformational leaders move their followers to action by introducing the moral value of the change, which appeals to their need to make changes that help improve society. When I first introduced this groundbreaking program, it required that important constituencies accepted and supported the effort. These constituencies include the college's board

of directors, the MATC Foundation's board of directors, the president's cabinet, faculty, staff, alumni, potential students, high school partners, community leaders, politicians, corporate foundations, and the media. My team and I used the early stages of change to convey the moral, economic, and social imperative of improving college access, especially for young adults from low-income families.

Bass (1985) expanded on the work of Burns to explain the psychological workings underlying transformation and the leadership required. The leader influences the followers because of the trust they place in the leader's ability to inspire the change. The opportunity to offer a program that benefited our most economically disadvantaged students and met our college mission was especially appealing to many of our key partners and employees who shared this vision and personal mission.

When we undertook the difficult work of building new and agile systems in fundraising, recruitment and admissions, we kept our bold and compelling vision for improving our community at the forefront. The passion shown by leaders of Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), high school principals, counselors, faculty and staff was palpable and highly effective. MPS is our area's largest K-12 district and more than 80 percent of the students qualify for free and reduced lunch.

In "Charting the Course – The Path to Transformation in Education," Loverme Akhtar & Kotter (2019) recommended creating a sense of urgency around a "Big Opportunity" which is "a compelling vision of why you need to transform and what is possible if you do." Convincing people to support the change is critical; successful leaders communicate the "what" while always emphasizing the "why."

My team used compelling statistics in numerous presentations to convey to MATC's employees and board of directors the regional need for the new program and its financial viability. I emphasized the urgency to undertake the difficult work of change immediately and why we intended to become the first college in our state to implement a Promise program. I did not want to wait another year to offer this opportunity for students to begin their educational journey because the data showed that at MPS high schools, over 50 percent of the students did not enroll in college immediately after graduation. National data indicated that economically disadvantaged students do not believe college is affordable. Our college is in one of the most impoverished cities in the United States and data demonstrates that the more education you attain, the higher salaries you earn.

When explaining the need for this change effort, I shared that employers throughout our community are desperate to fill jobs. In the Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce Economic Outlook Survey, 60 percent of employers said they were having trouble filling open positions, mostly due to a lack of qualified workers. There remains a continuing skills and interest gap due to retirements of baby boomers and fewer high school graduates. Many residents are not familiar with the family-sustaining, high-demand careers that are available to them.

Numerous local residents lacked the resources and support to gain the necessary degrees to fill the available jobs. Since many of these roles were middle-skill jobs, those that require more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree, MATC was uniquely positioned to meet the workforce needs with our programs. For more than 100 years, MATC's mission has remained to meet student, workforce, and community needs.

We launched a fundraising campaign, on the same day as we held a news conference in 2015, to raise $1 million to support this effort. This declaration was another bold move for us and I

publicly shared my belief that our community would step up and help support this important initiative. We successfully raised over $1 million in the first year.

Since we began the MATC Promise for New High School Graduates, we have served approximately 500 qualified direct-from-high school students. Because of the speed with which we were able to implement this program and realize early success with approximately 3,000 applications in our first year, we garnered national attention when Dr. Jill Biden, former U.S. second lady and a community college professor, presented the keynote address at our spring commencement. This event led to our largest donation to expand the Promise program: a $500,000 personal gift from local philanthropist Chris Abele, who is also the elected Milwaukee County executive. The most fulfilling outcome for me was seeing Promise students in their graduation gowns and hearing about their new jobs.

The success of this program has been recognized by a local neighborhood development award during a gala celebration, providing an upbeat opportunity to celebrate our success with students, donors, employees and college leadership. We have presented at national conferences, received a national award, been asked to share our materials, and received other recognition along the way.

Today, 11 of the 16 colleges in the Wisconsin Technical College System have implemented similar programs for direct-from-high school graduates, described at wistechcolleges.org/promise-programs. Several of these colleges are seeking to expand to the Adult Promise as well.

As we worked to fine-tune our program for high school seniors, we also launched a pilot for a Promise program targeting adults in Milwaukee's 53206 ZIP code, which some describe as the area's poorest and most troubled neighborhood in Milwaukee given its residents' high incarceration rates, poverty, and health concerns. We continued to repeat the rationale for change. Currently, 135,000 residents of Milwaukee County have some college courses but no credential or degree. Similar to the response to our direct from high school program, we received 3,000 applications in our first year and most of them were from our former students who realized that they had an opportunity to return to college and finish.

Valuable Lessons

We learned valuable lessons from our transformational change, and additional advice I would share is:

- Use a productive, collaboration approach. Collaboration is noted as a key value of our college and we provided opportunities for input regarding system and process changes, as well as allowed staff and administrators to volunteer as mentors for the new cohort of students. These engagement activities built trust and buy-in and resulted in productive progress in a timely manner.

- Engage in continuous process improvement with teams. Key players from the college's financial aid, recruitment, foundation, marketing and communications teams; faculty union leaders; Promise staff; and I met weekly for the first year to review lessons learned as well as gather student feedback for improvement. This "Promise Implementation Team" evolved to a "Promise Reset Team," which tweaked the approach, including updating eligibility from a maximum "expected family contribution" to eligibility for federal Pell grants.

- Review the data to make decisions. Our success in attracting students to apply for the Promise program led to an examination of graduation rates, and this initiated the launch of another transformational change. The graduation data indicated that we needed to better serve students to strengthen retention rates, especially for our students of color. We joined the nationally recognized American Association of Community Colleges' Guided Pathways framework, which has proven to increase retention and graduation rates at participating schools.

- Consider expansion. We built upon the success of the MATC Promise for New High School Graduates when we launched the MATC Promise for Adults districtwide in May 2018. We found from our pilot that many students were in loan default or had depleted their financial aid and developed strategies for students to address these hurdles and continue their educational goals.

- Articulate a compelling, moral imperative vision that speaks to your organization's mission and explaining the "why." Showing how your organization can make a significant change in your community and for its students is critical. A plan for implementation and evaluation is important, along with ensuring adequate resources to support it. Recognition and celebration of the early wins help build momentum. Explaining the purpose of the change will garner support more quickly.

- Be a "champion" and remain optimistic throughout the change. Large-scale change is a daunting process; transformational leadership strategies will be required to address the range of concerns presented by stakeholders to help change mindsets.

Leading a large organization through change has been the most challenging and rewarding experience of my career. Our shared mission of providing higher education opportunities to our communities makes transformational change inevitable throughout an institution's history. When you know that your work will change lives and improve the community, the effort is vital and worthwhile. I continue to reflect on my leadership practice and realize the complexity of change is a constant reminder of the need to co-create and articulate a compelling vision for the future, build effective teams, realign resources, honor the culture and change mindsets and so much more in order to realize a better future for the college and those it serves.

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Authentic Leadership

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In the picture, a woman in a bright blue suit stands out in a room full of men in their sober dark colors. She points to a man across the table who appears to be angry. Some of those present say he bullied her, and she responded firmly. Some of the other men are looking down, frowning, possibly wishing they could be anywhere else but in that place at that moment.

The iconic photo of Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi confronting President Donald Trump in the White House Cabinet Room on October 16, 2019 touched a nerve for me, as it did for many women leaders. While certainly less consequential, I have had my fair share of uncomfortable encounters with powerful men in rooms where I have been the only woman at the table.

As part of a group of college presidents who meet periodically, I've had to negotiate the often-murky boundaries of fair criticism versus bullying by male colleagues. One man in this group, now retired, would routinely disparage my input or talk over me. On one notorious occasion, as we presidents discussed a joint project and I questioned some of the details, the bully across the table became enraged and shouted at me, "Why don't you shut up! I'm sick of hearing you talk!" The other men were clearly embarrassed, but silent. I stood my ground, unwilling to fold even in the face of his withering words. This was par for the course, an occupational hazard for a woman daring to "lean-in" on what had previously been a comfortable men's club.

When I talk to women about leadership, particularly when the audience is younger women just starting out who often think the old barriers no longer exist, I tell them that there are three fundamental rules for being an effective leader that have particular application to women in executive roles: • *Be Authentic* • *Tell the Truth* • *Take Reasonable Risks*

Authenticity is Essential for Leadership Effectiveness

Self-knowledge is the underpinning of authenticity, an essential foundation for effective leadership. Women leaders find themselves under constant scrutiny, whether over fashion choices or tone of voice or body type or management style. As a young president (I was only 36 when I became Trinity's president) I would receive visits from alumnae of Trinity who offered "helpful" advice on everything from my wardrobe (tone down the colors), my speaking style (soften your voice), my politics (you should keep your opinions to yourself, dear). Faculty were even harsher, complaining that I should stick to making sure their parking spaces were available each day but certainly not have anything to say about the curriculum. Students even got into the act; one student leader told me that the students would take me more seriously if I were an older man in a suit and tie, the image they had from my immediate predecessor.

I made the rookie mistake of trying to change my style to respond to the many criticisms, with near-disastrous results. I became unhappy, indecisive and ineffective. Fortunately, I had some great advisors, particularly among our trustees, who gave me the right advice: be yourself and

move ahead. They helped me to learn that I could not just roleplay what others thought a college president should be; I had to be the college president, authentically, in my own voice and style.

Most people have no idea what the leader's job really is --- what does a college president actually do all day, every day, every week? --- so they project their own ideas onto the role and the person inhabiting the role. This projection creates perceptions about what the person should be doing, versus what is really happening, and that misperception spreads through the usual channels of gossip about the president and her latest gambits.

Once I understood the phenomenon of projection, I became more comfortable with setting aside the dubious advice of others, expressing my leadership in my own voice. I also came to realize that an important part of my job was to care for those whose harsh criticisms were really expressions of their own doubts, fears about the future, longing for a mythical past. Rather than defending myself and pushing them away, I had to move closer to them and reach out to comfort, guide and motivate even the most intransigent resisters so that we could move ahead with the changes necessary to strengthen Trinity.

As I grew more confident, I found I could lower my guard, show good humor, and take risks that seemed worthwhile. I became a better leader when I asserted my authentic self.

Tell the Truth

Authenticity requires a rigorous habit of truthfulness. Women in leadership positions, already facing some daunting pushback, might find it tempting to shade the truth, but a lack of candor will ultimately undermine a presidency.

Women college presidents often break the glass ceiling --- becoming "the first" woman president at their institution --- only to find themselves landing in a treacherous spot known as the "glass cliff," an institution teetering on the edge of crisis. Presidents of troubled institutions face ethical issues over how much public candor is necessary, whether they will risk their jobs if broad knowledge of the institutional condition might end their presidencies prematurely. But telling the truth is not only ethical, it can also be liberating.

In the first decade of my presidency at Trinity, our student body changed dramatically from predominantly white, Catholic and upper-middle-class to predominantly Black, Baptist and low income. During this transition, many of our traditional alumnae were angry, and I had a tendency to soft-pedal what was happening. But one afternoon, at an alumnae luncheon at a beautiful elite venue in Florida overlooking a spectacular ocean view, an alum started grilling me on the SAT scores and other characteristics of the "new" Trinity students. I had dealt with this line of questions before, but on this day I replied more honestly than ever. I spoke of the struggles of our young women from the city, very low-income students of color who suffered many hurdles on the way to college degrees. I pointed out that they had a much longer and harder road to travel than any of us who enjoyed Trinity in earlier decades, and yet, the same kind of success we alumnae realized also became the remarkable success of today's students. Trinity was founded to give women access to a great education, I concluded, and this long tradition continues today with students who need this kind of education more than ever.

The room was dead silent as I spoke. I took a breath, and looked around, braced for a critical outcry. Instead, to my utter surprise, the alumnae rose and began clapping, and a few even cheered. My hostess came up to me with a big smile and said, "At last, you've told us the real story. We've been waiting to hear it for years! Keep telling us the truth, we can take it!"

Take Good Risks to Reach Goals

Telling the story of today's Trinity students was a risk—and it paid off! After that moment, I became fearless in discussing the challenges and successes of our modern mission at Trinity.

Effective leaders must have large capacity to take risks in order to move institutions forward. Too many college presidents, male and female, err on the side of preserving the status quo in order to avoid the controversies that are a necessary part of change. "But the alumnae will not like it," is an excuse for keeping an unsustainable status quo. Presidents are not museum curators. We are business leaders and we must make sure our institutions are positioned to thrive in the future, not just burnishing fond memories of a glorious past.

A woman taking on a university presidency is often a harbinger of change. The very idea of change is poison to many people in the academy who believe that presidents should reinforce and uphold tradition. Consequently, the woman president's embodiment of the change dynamic will invite critique, opposition, and possibly outright resistance.

A leader's ultimate job is to persuade the community to move ahead with her, a feat requiring insight, patience, and the ability to make a compelling case for the kind of change that will ensure a bright future for the institution. The most successful women presidents do this with authenticity, honesty, and a healthy appetite for taking the risk that the community will move with her. Like Speaker Pelosi standing tall in that room full of powerful men, a woman who is a college or university president will not back down in the face of criticism, and instead, respond with dignity and determination to lead her institution to a better place.

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Women Leaders in Higher Education: Leading For and Through Change Education

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"You may encounter defeats, but you must not be defeated." (Maya Angelou)

Several years ago, I wrote a book chapter, entitled *Untangling the Ivy Vines: A Perspective of Women of Color in Higher Education* (Miller, 2010), that focused on the broad challenges faced by women leaders in higher education. I argued that a subset of women, those of color, were subject to different standards. While all leaders are held accountable to maintain their roles as campus leaders, women, and in particular, women of color often have to work at another level not only to maintain their leadership roles but to prove their deservedness for the positions they hold. This additional burden of proof, to succeed beyond what normatively would be considered effective, can at times feel like walking a tightrope, pushed from the top to change the culture of the campus while striving for distinctiveness and pulled from the bottom to be distinctive without significantly changing institutional norms and structures. A difficult task for any leader. For women and people of color, formidable. Failing is not an option.

Of course, the challenges faced by women and women of color are not unique. It is commonplace for a leader to be expected to be all things to every campus constituency. We are being asked to be more entrepreneurial, rethink notions of what comprises a liberal arts education, employ different financial models to balance budgets (Bolton & Gallos, 2011; Fullan & Scott, 2009), to say nothing about having to justify higher education institutions' existence as a public and a necessary good. Nor are we immune from the extreme pressures impacting society as a whole. No ivy tower protections saved us from the fallout resulting from the economy tanking in 2008-2009, where countless families lost their ability to continue to pay for their student's education, many struggling just to meet basic living costs. The cascade of impacts caused by that event still ripple across our campuses, unsettling our priorities and undermining our best intentions.

Perhaps, though, there was a silver lining for women in higher education unleashed from the chaos of the time. For one, many of our institutions were destabilized leading to the resignations of several long-term male presidents, creating opportunities for women already serving as provosts or deans. Women were now getting the calls, suddenly considered viable and desirable candidates for a presidency. The atmosphere was ripe for new leaders and leadership. Women and people of color, in the eyes of many, representing change. This was no better exemplified than by the newly installed occupants of the White House, President Barack and Michelle Obama.

Yet, it was one thing to break through the male and color barriers, as it were. It was another to survive once on the other side. By some hidden sleight of hand, the bar for success was raised for

women. In a report released by the American Council of Education (Howard & Gagliardi, 2018), it was found that women were less likely to report awareness of the institution's financial health or the challenges needing to be faced than men were during the search process. Thus, aimed with less information to start their tenures, women were expected to right the financial problems of their new institutions and meet and solve the unexpected challenges confronting us when first stepping on campus, often in less time than is needed to develop a coherent strategy to chart the path forward. We were captaining the boat, but someone neglected to pack the sails.

I speak from experience. As a candidate for a deanship at the University of Vermont (UVM), where I worked prior to assuming the Presidency of Hamline University, I was informed about a deficit during the search process only to find once on the job that it was much larger than initially reported to me. Likewise, at Hamline, there, no mention was made of a deficit, but again, once on the job I found that the University had been running regular deficits for years. Given the short tenure of women presidents today, one to five years (Howard & Gagliari, 2018), I can only speculate as to the duration of mine had I not quickly assembled a team to develop, implement, and execute a strategic financial budget plan. While we were fortunate to eliminate both budget deficits in a timely fashion, each required making painful cuts in both personnel and programs, viewed positively by senior leadership at UVM and the trustees at Hamline, but not so by those affected.

In my many years as an administrator, and as a leader in higher education, I have come to understand that leadership is measured not only by our performance on the job, but by how well we meet the expectations that others invest in our leadership. To clarify what I mean, in my efforts to deal with Hamline's budget shortfall I realized, as I developed a plan of attack, that I had to be intentional in my approach. Meeting with and listening to all constituent affected groups, standard practice in such situations, where the ability to listen and reflect upon what is said is critical to successful and effective leadership (Miller, 2010). I came to realize, also, the extent of the hope and trust others were investing in my leadership to get the job done. But the job I was expected to do went beyond the budget. I was also expected to identify new net revenue growth opportunities, increase University visibility and reputation, increase fund development, re-establish morale, run the campus and, oh yes, balance the budget.

Visibility and transparency are hallmarks of good leadership. No one would question the efficacy of both. Yet, as a woman of color, I never for a minute assumed that I could arrive on campus and focus entirely on the hard issues facing the University. I understood from past experiences that my very presence on campus would require a reconceptualization of what it means to be visible. Not only was there an expectation that I would "show up" for campus events, which I did, happily, wanting to establish myself as an approachable president, there were forces external to the campus that also demanded my time. You see, the announcement of my selection as president was met with great jubilation by the community attended by much fanfare and media attention. I was expected to be active in the various communities that makeup the Twin Cities and be a presence within the national higher education community. To this day, it is not unusual for me to be introduced as the first African-American president of Hamline University, an announcement done with an immense amount of pride, and I understood that during the early years of my presidency it was both to my advantage and the University's that I was named such. But there will come a time, if it hasn't already, when the lead story should be about my accomplishments rather than my racial/ethnic identity.

What will most likely take longer to change, however, is the notion that women of color are change agents. The notion is magical, of course, that we possess some special power to affect

change. I would like to think that we do, but understand that the magic is attributed to us by those whose interests require our success. This is not inherently a bad thing, but for those of us placed under this burden, the window for constructing a reign of successful leadership remains open to us for only so long.

I am proud of all that I have accomplished in higher education. Having risen through the ranks —as an academic, first as an assistant, to associate, to full professor—then in various leadership positions, from program coordinator, to center director, dean, and president. And, while the road at each stage was not always smooth, my way forward would have been much bumpier if not for the many people who supported and mentored me along the way. To recognize just a few, Vartan Gregorian (past president of Brown University and currently the president of the Carnegie Foundation), Ruth Simmons (past president of Brown University and current president of Prairie View University and my ACE mentor), and Robert Zimmer (past provost at Brown and current president of the University of Chicago). They all taught me more than I can ever thank them for. So, my advice is to identify one or more mentors early in the leadership journey. A mentor can often serve to mitigate potential problems by serving as a role model, sounding board, and a confidant.

In sum, the ability to manage expectations, to lead in the face of rising uncertainty and potential instability and, at the same time, to successfully move a campus forward are hallmarks of effective leadership. Maya Angelou's comments about rising from defeat is prescient for women leaders. As a senior leader, a woman, and a woman of color, I have encountered setbacks and experienced defeats. Still, with each one, I prepare anew, and think again of, and say . . . and then I rise.

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Persistence: I'm Not Done Yet!

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My Personal Odyssey

Like many other faculty and administrators, my personal odyssey through higher education has included many challenges and accomplishments. For some of us the journey depicted in our vitae is marked by specific milestones, that consisted of paths that needed to be cleared as we climbed hurdles and walked through doors carrying our multiple identities, which had to be layered or shed, as needed. for our own self-protection.

Throughout my academic and administrative career, I have faced many decision points that have challenged my professional ethics and personal principles. And almost every one of them has involved people; their actions or non-actions, relationships or behavior toward others. I have resigned from two positions in my career because of that. I do not regret either of those decisions, for they were principled ones and they allowed me to maintain my integrity. I sought other administrative positions and others pursued me, but there were the inevitable questions: did you really resign? were you fired? can you tell us why? Not many people believe that someone would actually leave a job on principle. Interviews came and went, followed by calls and the common refrain: 'I'm sorry…but, they want to go in a different direction.' After a few of those calls I decided that maybe it was time to retire and return to the Dominican Republic (DR). That was not the most popular decision with many of my friends and some of my relatives. They all thought it was too drastic, too soon to retire, and that I had so much more to contribute. But, I had made significant cross-country moves for my academic career before and I thought that it might be the best thing to do. After all, how difficult could it be to return 'home'?

From the Beginning

I was born in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) during one of the most brutal dictatorships of the last century. My mother, her sister and I left for New York City when I was seven years old for all the same reasons that immigrants move or relocate: for the hope to forge a better life for their children and themselves. I could not start school at the end of the calendar year when we arrived, so I began to learn English watching television, especially the 'follow-the-bouncing-ball' singing segment of the old Mitch Miller Show. Meanwhile, my mother and aunt found jobs as seamstresses in several uptown sweatshops. Almost all of the women who worked there were Latinas. I remember waiting for my mother at the cafeteria in the factory, sitting on the floor, feeling the cold drafts and watching the flecks of fibers glistening from the sunlight shining through the windows of the warehouse. I also vividly remember thinking that this was not work I ever wanted to do.

After finishing eighth grade, with my mother now remarried, we moved to Puerto Rico where I was enrolled in a new school. I got through the first two years of high school with good grades even though I did not have an extensive Spanish vocabulary and felt that mathematics was the

only language that I truly knew. I wasn't very focused about what to do after graduation; neither of my parents had gone to college and they did not know how to advise me, but most of my friends were talking about college and I just followed their lead. I thought I might study engineering because I was skilled at math, but those disciplines were only offered at the Mayagüez campus of the University of Puerto Rico (UPR), some 75 miles away from home. My parents could not afford the tuition, room and board so I agreed to stay home and enrolled at the main campus in Rio Piedras.

I began college coursework the summer before my freshman year with two courses in advanced calculus. I soon learned from several of my new classmates that UPR offered an opportunity for students like us: a waiver of full tuition if you maintained a 3.5 GPA or better, and the only payment required was being that of the student activity fee (~$21/semester). My parents and I were relieved at this opportunity and they decided to do everything possible to support me and make sure that the only job I needed to do was to study hard and keep a 3.5 GPA. I took advantage of this opportunity for each of 8 semesters and 4 summers, taking between 18-21 credits per semester learning as much as possible. Nevertheless, paying for the textbooks was still a hardship. I fell in love with physics and chemistry and majored in both. My physical chemistry professor approached several students and invited us to join his research group. He encouraged us to apply for graduate school and we did so with his help and knowledge of both our interests and the institutions where he thought we would we thrive. With his assistance, I applied to and was accepted in the chemistry graduate program at SUNY-Stony Brook. I could go back to New York!

There were only three women in my entering class of twenty-one at Stony Brook. Common to many of the very few female graduate students at the time, I experienced inappropriate sexual advances and harassment during my studies and decided it best to complete the master's degree and move on. But one of the friends in whom I had confided my concerns told his advisor about what I was experiencing and he suggested that I switch research teams to join his. He had just been made an offer at the University of Southern California and I could finish my doctoral degree there. I took advantage of that opportunity and have been grateful for his incredible kindness and support ever since.

I was offered my first tenure-track position in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Alabama (UA) shortly after accepting a post-doctoral fellowship at San Jose State University in conjunction with IBM-Almaden. Soon upon beginning my academic career I was told that I was the first tenure-track female and non-Caucasian ever hired in the physical sciences at the University since its inception. I should have inferred that sooner given the number of minority students who approached me with a combination of surprise and wonder because I was the first woman they had as a faculty/instructor; but I was too focused on my research trajectory as what would gain me tenure. Nevertheless, I left UA more than a year before tenure consideration after experiencing multiple racially charged incidents and realizing that my views on the importance of a liberal education did not coincide with those of my colleagues at the time. I still love the institution, just not some of the 'traditions' still espoused by some of its constituents.

I joined the College of Engineering at California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) at the start of the newly named Department of Materials Engineering. I was also told that I was the first tenure-track female faculty hired in the College of Engineering since its inception' and it finally dawned on me that I might have to continue to play this role for a while. This is what persistence looks like: you end up being the, if not one, of the remaining few.

I served in several faculty governance leadership positions during my tenure at Cal Poly, and chaired the Faculty Senate for a year. That was followed by a year as an American Council on Education (ACE) Faculty Fellow at the University of Delaware (UD) under the mentoring of the President, Provost and Vice Provost for Graduate Programs and Research. All participants in the ACE Fellows class were expected to engage in a project that would benefit both the host and home institutions of each Fellow. When I approached the President at UD, he said that they had no need for a project other than 'me'; my project was to learn as much as possible and learn how to become a better and transformational leader. I was surprised and grateful for the opportunity to spend an entire year observing, asking questions and learning. All of my colleagues and I recognized what an incredible gift that was.

Over the next several years at Cal Poly, I worked on various administrative projects with some success. And that began a series of administrative moves: Dean of the College of Science and Technology at Georgia Southern University, Dean of the College of Science at the University of Texas at El Paso, and Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at Lehman College of the City University of New York. I found strong resonance with each of these institutions because of their explicit focus on the ideals of providing affordable access to quality higher education to hopeful and resilient students, many of whom are first generation college students and/or come from underserved communities.

I've been the first or the second in so many of my positions and felt the pressure of expectations, of others viewing me as the representative of an entire community, and of not failing us all. That is an awful burden to lay on any single individual; but it is something that we take on in order to ensure that we do not remain the only ones along the paths that should be made easier for others to follow. I always knew that I wanted to make a difference, and teaching was one way to best do that, especially for others who looked like or were like me...because as Marion Wright Edelman says: "you can't be what you don't see." I also felt thankful for the many opportunities I had been afforded, and the support I had received from many mentors and allies.... all men, all Caucasian.

Where I Am Now

During the time spent back in the Dominican Republic getting reacquainted with my family and former culture, I also used the opportunity to reflect on what drives me, on what I enjoy and why I wake up every morning with a sense of purpose. I began a different leadership training program with *nineQ™* to expand my approaches to integrated leadership. Through them, I was able to succinctly articulate my personal values (*education, integrity, service, and impact*) and how they influence my actions. As the beneficiary of great and committed teachers of public education, I believed that I had a personal claim to the goal of educating people for the betterment of humanity, only to realize that it already had a name and was developed by someone else more than 100 years ago. It is known as *The Wisconsin Idea*, one of the foundational expressions for the value and responsibility of public higher education. That brought me to this new position and a perfect fit to help think through what *The Wisconsin Idea* means for the 21st century and a new generation of diverse students.

Almost every day there is an opportunity for me to think of my grandfather, who barely knew how to read or write. And although he was a sharecropper, his real passion was being a shoemaker. I inherited the molds of the baby shoes he used for my mother and he then used for me. So, when things might not go well or I've had a difficult day, all I have to do is look at those

old baby shoe molds and I remember where I came from, what I have accomplished so far, and what is left to do; because I'm not done yet!

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The Power of Connection

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I have the best job. Every day, I get to connect TIAA to the higher education community—our largest sector of clients. I get to connect the talented people who are responsible for educating our citizens with what matters most to them.

A key aspect of this is aligning our mission to the higher education mission. Higher education institutions educate the world to improve the lives of our citizens, our communities and our planet. Having grown into a Fortune 100 financial services organization over 100-plus years, TIAA has worked to do the same by being grounded by our core values, including putting the customer first and delivering excellence; by committing to responsible investing and being a force for good; and by building on our legacy of serving the broad financial needs of those who make a difference in the world.

Women are a key constituency for TIAA, and they make up the majority of our five million participants. As a result, we invest in supporting those organizations whose mission is to advance women in higher education. I get to connect TIAA with such great organizations as HERS, ACE, NACUBO and their regions, WLI, WCC, and several state-level organizations. We prioritize this effort because it matters to our clients and to us. I also work closely with Marketing and the TIAA Institute, our think tank, to advance their partnerships and programs for women, as well. For example, we partnered with ACE on the American College President Study, and we recently hosted the 2019 TIAA Institute Women's Leadership Forum. Our support includes thought leadership, sponsorship funding, engagement, and networking opportunities. This work has led to many beautiful friendships, which my female colleagues at TIAA and I cherish. We look forward to engaging with women in higher education because we get the opportunity to do the things we love and are passionate about with people that are so much more than professional acquaintances. We approach these opportunities as not only support for our kindred spirits in higher education but as opportunities for personal development. Trust me when I say that I do not have a hard time getting women to attend, speak and engage at these events.

Common Themes

Having been in this role for more than 10 years, I have observed some common themes to this work:

- There are dedicated women warriors who don't give up. Other women we need to tap on the shoulder, encourage to lead, develop and embrace. The biggest challenge is bringing the collective together on priorities, strategies and a roadmap to get where we want to go: the critical who, what, when, where and why. I am an eternal optimist, and I believe that individually women want to excel, lead and have impact, but

culturally we are still swimming upstream—fighting imposter syndrome, burnout, double binds and our own imposed cultural norms.

- All women are fighting to move the needle to gender equality. Whether it's in the form of pay equality, leadership or equal opportunity, the strength of our convictions does not change.

- Our primary focus is on the skills and strategies that we need, but we don't spend enough time on wellness. We need to find space to create peace in our lives so that we can continue to battle again tomorrow. We need strong bodies, minds and spirits to be the warriors and participants that future generations of women need. TIAA's mission is to support people in their financial well-being. Money is power. We need to embrace financial well-being as a support structure for our personal and professional missions.

As I have been working in this field, I have grounded myself in these efforts, both for higher education and for our greater community. I, too, am one of these warriors working for my slice of the world, serving as national co-chair of TIAA Advance, our business resource group, and many other efforts at TIAA. I volunteer politically and civically in my community, and my most personally satisfying contribution has been raising my two daughters to be warriors for equality. It's been my passion both professionally and personally for so long that it was surprising for me when we hosted an internal event last year for a small cohort of women leaders at TIAA, and I saw firsthand the impact of coming together and collaborating, talking and engaging in a safe environment. The goal was to share knowledge and best practices on how to seek and achieve leadership in our respective professional spheres, covering everything from how to give feedback, negotiate, take risks and pay it forward. The team had two days together, and the atmosphere transformed from just another work convening to a candid, constructive and engaging dialog that touched the hearts and minds of my colleagues. I left that event awed by the women that I have the privilege to work with, but, more importantly, with a deeper understanding of how much we need to create and sustain a community for true change.

If I know anything, it's that this work is hard. It takes all of us to keep the momentum moving. We need this community, now more than ever, to move the needle. It has been 100 years since we fought and won the right to vote, and we have not and cannot let up. Let's continue the fight and build the communities, structures and support that we need to sustain the efforts for all involved! Our world depends on it.

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With A Little Help From My Friends: An Audio Conversation With Felice Nudelman and Emily Richman

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With A Little Help From My Friends

Whether through serendipitous opportunity, planned and prepared, or lifelong curiosity and a desire to create, the pathway to leadership is full of twists and turns, challenges and opportunities. Listen in on a conversation between Emily Richmond, public editor of the Education Writers Association and Felice Nudelman, executive director, the American Democracy Project at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), that focuses on the nontraditional pathway, mentorship and innovation. Prior to joining AASCU, Nudelman was chancellor of Antioch University and prior to that executive director, education The New York Times.

WAV (use the following link or paste it into your browser):
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MP3 (use the following link or paste it into your browser):
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Kzr1D0MnvevZKNeHBaoX54bXznIkIMk1/view?usp=sharing

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Cultivating the Garden of Leadership

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Fielding Graduate University is my second presidency; my first was at age 9. In 1972, I became the President of the 4-H chapter of Milford, Conn., in New Haven County. While the organization has morphed over the years, the mission remains much the same ─ to help youth acquire knowledge**,** develop life skills, and form attitudes to enable them to become self-directing, productive and contributing members of society (4-H, 2019). 4-H emphasizes the importance of involving youth in the learning process as part of their ongoing development. Until I wrote the above sentences, I was unaware of the impact that this foundational learning philosophy has had on my life, continuing to the present day.

We were a loose collection of mostly "farm" kids. As the post-war suburbs replaced farms in rural Connecticut, 4-H became more diverse in ethnicity, gender, and background. By the time I ascended to the President's role, we were a group connected by an interest in farm-like work (raising animals, growing vegetables) but mostly we wore plaid shirts, sported bad haircuts, and vied for blue ribbons. We met every week in Rita Simone's mocha-colored fake-paneled living room, in a house that sagged rather than leaned into the modest hill. My older brother, Spencer, often dropped me off from a tow truck on his way to an early evening wreck on the I-95 turnpike, and, if he finished early, would come by to drink Lancer's with the other parents who were smoking in the tiny kitchen. Meanwhile, I would be leading important matters of state, such as who would address envelopes for the announcement of the upcoming horse show, or how would we divide up the work at the August County Fair? I loved working with people on a common task to achieve a larger goal. Like my current job.

Why I was elected remains a mystery to me, although I suspect it had something to do with me being willing and unaware of the amount of effort it would necessitate to accomplish the mission. Not unlike the 8th grade award of "most helpful" bestowed on me four years later by my student peers, a foreshadowing of my future self was lurking in this early experience. Naïve and stereotypical though it seems now, I thought I learned that girls work hard, but more quietly than boys, that boys liked the headliner type jobs, such as working with big animals and public speaking, but girls could be counted on for tasks such as typing, telephoning, and keeping track of people and things. White kids talked more; brown and black kids kept to themselves, but would participate if you asked them. I learned that girl leaders were more accepted if they didn't show anger, expressed agreeableness, and talked less. Also, never brag. I smile at my response to feedback from the chain-smoking Rita that I needed to curb my day-dreaming tendencies: "I will work harder." In essence, that short statement sums up my professional response to obstacles.

Nothing in my background would indicate that my path would take me to a university presidency. Yes, I am privileged by white skin that gave me a big leap up the ladder of life, and a few lucky breaks, including a Pell grant and a decent undergraduate education -- the only one in a

family awash in factory workers -- but leadership was for other people. How I got from there to here is too long a story for these pages, but here is what I learned along the way.

Principles, Values, Ethics, Lessons, and For Future Generations

You can't be a good leader if you don't like or care about people. If you are a misanthrope, you will not be effective in the academy overall. Partially, this is because you have to learn to see beyond what people present to you, which means you need to listen carefully. But mostly, it's because higher education is fundamentally an endeavor about honoring the aspirations of other people. In university life, patience is a skill worth cultivating in order to build essential relationships that lead to broader goals. The most important lesson is that you need to create an environment where people can bring their whole selves to their development as leaders. That means giving them freedom of expression while setting boundaries; respecting that they are on their own learning path; and holding them accountable to their work in a firm and caring manner. The words are easier to write than execute, but the word that I use in my own mind lately is "clarity."

Back to my first Presidency, when I had clarity about the efforts needed for a successful horse show, I was able to be explicit about expectations. People are willing to follow and accept direction when they know that you trust them and care about them as individuals. Even better, they will accomplish a mission if you give them clear boundaries and flexible parameters. While you may be nodding your head that this is an obvious truth, it is not evident judging by all the supervisors and direct reports I have spoken to over the years. 4-H is no different than my present circumstances as President of a non-profit free-standing graduate institution, fiercely independent and beautiful in its clarity about the multiple learning models in evidence throughout our diverse doctoral, master's, and certificate programs. People respond to clarity even more than they do to vision.

Tending to My Values Garden

As a seventh-year President, below are the articulated values I try to bring to my role (in alphabetical order). As I reflect on these values, the garden as metaphor comes to life. That leadership is fundamentally about the constant attention to harrowing, planting, weeding, picking, and gleaning that results in land bearing sustenance for the community.

Authenticity: Perhaps a buzz word in these times, authenticity to me means bringing what you can to the leadership role at every moment, remembering that people are equally dashed and inspired by what you say next. This is a hard lesson I've learned, and one that I re-learn on occasion. As President, one has outsized positional authority—use it sparingly and wisely.

Beauty: I used the term "beautiful" deliberately above to describe my university. I think of this word much as Plato did, that beauty is also meant to be sublime and a virtue that inspires and delights (Plato's Aesthetics, 2016). Think of your institution as a dynamic organism and imagine it at its best self. This is beauty.

Diversity: I am trained as a political scientist and historian, with a specialization in environmental issues. An essential principle in ecology is that a diverse environment is a healthy one. I know this to be true of organizational life. Cultivate a team of different backgrounds. The literature shows that we make better decisions when we are part of a diverse team (Rock & Grant, 2016). As a caution, try not to think in binaries: black/white, old/young, gay/straight, female/male, other/self and think in multiplicities, that is, the intersectionality of all the people in

the room. It is at the crossroads of these intersections where some of the best discussions and debates are had. Cultivate them and you will create robust decision-making processes.

Social Justice: In 2000, I stood on the edge of the Grand Canyon while President Clinton added another 1 million acres to the national monument, holding these lands in perpetuity for future generations. As part of the conservation team that made this proclamation possible, I thought, "there is nothing more I can do to help Mother Earth." Not true. What I can do is work in higher education to advocate for positive social change. If our sector is not devoted to improving conditions for humanity, who will do so instead of us? Sometimes, I think of the poster hanging in my childhood bedroom, *I thought that someone ought to do something; then I realized that I am someone* (attributed to Lily Tomlin, 2019).

Uniqueness: Every day, I start with a two-minute meditation, asking "what can I do today for my institution that no one else can do?" This moment allows you as a leader the opportunity to inspire yourself. Try it. It works. Uniqueness is also a value in that we can accord our direct reports and supervisors with the same respect: what are they uniquely bringing to their roles? What can you do to remind them of the importance of the unique qualities they bring to their own work?

A Final Note on Women's Leadership

In 2020, the United States celebrates 100 years since the ratification of the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote. All around the country, efforts are underway in higher education, government, non-profits, and within companies to reflect on women's leadership across all sectors. Although women have gained access to higher education, and been granted many rights afforded only to men in previous centuries, such as the right to hold property, the overall numbers of women in executive positions remain far below the demographic figures. For example, women make up 51% of the overall population, but occupy roughly 25% of the positions in the US Congress; 21% of the nation's university presidents; and just 5% of the C-suite positions in the S&P 500 (Warner, Ellman, & Boesch, 2018). For women of color, the figures are more dismal.

In my view, the glacial pace of change is a direct consequence of a deep-seated misogynistic and racist patriarchy, one that inhibits all of us in a manner consonant with the values stated above. It will take all of us, regardless of our identity status, to be bold and challenge current social norms, in order to break through to new ways of knowing and being in the world.

One hundred years from now, it is my hope that a young woman will be writing about the 200th anniversary of the ratification and note, "we are far beyond what we could have forecast in 2020 now that we are…." While I may not know the answer after the ellipses, I do know that the essential questions are being asked and answered by a new generation of women who build from what we leave them.

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Defying the Odds: Making A Way Out of No Way

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Have you ever awakened from a dream that seemed so real that you had thought it had happened? After 40 years in higher education and with ten and a half years as a president , it is still hard to believe my life as a university president was not a dream. I grew up in Jackson, Mississippi, as the oldest of three children. Both of my parents were also born and raised in Mississippi and only had 8th grade educations, because there were no public high schools for blacks when they were growing up. Mississippi was at the center of education segregation for many years before and after the Brown vs. Board of Education. (Loewen, 1973).

As I grew up in Jackson in the early fifties, I went to elementary school for half days for my first three years. There were not enough teachers, only old textbooks from the white schools and not enough classroom space to educate the number of black children. I was the child who sat under the open windows to listen to the stories and get the assignments. I am the graduate student who was told that there was no space for me in the study group preparing for prelims, even though they admitted two other students after telling me "No." Rather than see either of these events as unfair and give up, I learned and internalized that "Life is not fair…it has never been and never will be. Get over it, and do what must be done."

From elementary school through high school and college, I gained several intangible skills from my parents, my teachers and from two faculty members at Tougaloo College, James W. Loewen and Ernst Borinski. In different ways, they all helped me understand that, when I encountered obstacles in life, those obstacles could be turned into victories with the right coping strategies. My parents had instilled in me the idea that I could excel at anything if I was willing to work hard and not settle for anything less than the best. By the time I finished college, I found that I had become stubbornly hopeful in thinking that I could, perhaps, somehow move past Jim Crow and persistent racism. I had developed both the skills and mental mindset that would propel me forward and allow me to push and sometimes crash through barriers which were meant to hold me back.

The first time I even knew or thought about the odds that I faced in graduating from high school, going straight to college, and from there straight into graduate school and earning a Ph.D., was when I was giving opening remarks as chair of the board of directors of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) at their annual meeting in 2010. When I included comments about my background, a man in attendance approached me afterwards and excitedly said that "I had defied the odds!" He noted that there was less than 1 in 100 chance that I could or should be standing there. U.S. Census Bureau data on the Educational Attainment of Adults age 25 and older who had earned doctorate degree supported his conclusion (Baum & Steele, 2017). That figure was compounded farther by the fact that I had graduated with a Ph.D. in 1980 and that I am a black woman who also became a university president of a four-year institution.

While the statistics concerning women presidents are slowing rising, it will be 2030 before we come close to parity. Programs like the Millennium Leadership Initiative (MLI) that I run are impacting the numbers of underrepresented people becoming presidents. Currently, only 30.1 percent of presidents are women, and only 7-8% of those are black. Most black female presidents are found in two year or comprehensive institutions; only a few are at doctorial granting institutions. When you hold type of institutions constant, most black women who are presidents are also found largely at minority serving institutions (Gagliardi & Howard, 2018). Bates indicated that Black women have emerged as one of the most accomplished groups in higher education, despite sexism, racism, and facing more overall challenges and see this group as incredibly marginalized in the roles of presidential leadership (Bates, 2007).

As a university president, I found myself needing to challenge some of society's misconceptions about women in general and about black women, specifically. I became a university president in 2004 after just my second interview for a presidency. While I had come out of my first interview as the candidate of choice by the campus stakeholders, system administrators had indicated that they really wanted a man; they did not believe a woman could be strong enough to successfully manage the presidency at that institution. A little more than six years later, after being in the job as a university president and taking on some national higher education leadership roles, I got a call one day from one of those system officials indicating that they now realized that they had been wrong in their assessment of my abilities and my strength to lead.

Being in the position of a university president meant I often found myself in a center stage role. I am naturally an introvert, so becoming comfortable in a center stage role was something I had to learn. When I was in high school, I decided to try acting to help me learn to take on other roles comfortably. While working for the YWCA, I learned that all leaders are not born; that leadership could be learned. In my ten years at the University of Texas at Dallas, I quickly learned to dress for the next role you wanted, not shy away from making decisions, not to wait to be told what to do; assign yourself and to show up fully prepared to take risks. It was there that I really found my voice working as the only woman cabinet member. I learned that doing something I was initially uncomfortable doing, making noise, worked.

By now you can see that there were certain principles, values and a sense of ethics forming the basis for my leadership style. I believe that you must always be transparent in your communications and your actions. Additionally, you must learn to set goals for yourself and continually update those goals. Having no goals means you don't know where you are going. Oddly enough, early on as a child I was apprehensive about failing. I learned that one could be apprehensive about failure, but that it did not mean you had to give in to that fear. That knowledge motivated me to work even harder.

Two other items were also key to my success as a leader. First, always understand your priorities. I learned to define what was important to me, and then to find a job that allowed me to work within those parameters Do not have a great career and lose out on a great family! I once turned down what seemed like a great opportunity, but it would have caused me to be away from home a lot when my daughter was 15, a vulnerable time for teenagers. Second, always keep working! An old African parable summarizes my philosophy: "Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up. It knows it must run faster than the fastest cheetah, or it will be killed. Every morning in Africa, a cheetah wakes up. It knows that it must outrun the slowest gazelle, or it will starve to death. It does not matter whether you are a cheetah or a gazelle. When the sun comes up, you'd better be running!"

Lessons Learned as President

Lessons that I learned as a president which I found to be important are:

- Remember to put students first and then extend those efforts to a broader more engaged campus and community.

- Learn the importance of making the right decisions for the institution, irrespective of how unpopular those decisions might be.

- Don't underestimate the importance of having good budgeting skills, knowledge about governance, athletics and fund development;

- Understand that you can't lead alone; pick a good senior team and delegate effectively. My 8-year-old daughter taught me an invaluable lesson when she was selling girl scout cookies, and I wanted her to sell cookies alone. She "leaned in" and told me that it is not what any one person sells or does, it is what you do as a team. TEAM means that everyone achieves more.

- Develop three kinds of bones. A funny bone that allows you to laugh at yourself, a wish bone to remember to dream big and a backbone to give the strength to stand up for what you believe.

- Finally, don't ever worry about your "legacy." Your work and actions will speak for themselves. It is not important to take credit for everything; what is important is that the work is done.

Women, especially black women, are a powerful link in the struggle for equality in higher education. How we lead and govern institutions of higher education will ensure greater student preparation and success. The lessons we have learned prove that racism and sexism can be overcome. Our successes remind us about our responsibility to keep the promise of this nation to have a higher education system accessible for all who dare to dream.

Success in our jobs comes in many shapes. I heard someone say that as presidents we often plant shade trees but are unable to ever sit under the shade they provide. Sometimes, I can see the impact of my work from things like a photo of the first class of Doctorate in Nursing Practice students to graduate last December from a program started under my presidency; other times, I am reminded of what I achieved from the hundreds of notes and emails from students who tracked me down to share with me what they are doing with their lives. It is often easy to forget what we might have achieved because we are often too busy worrying about what we didn't do.

Now, at the end of my career, I can look back and say I defied the odds and have made a way out of no way. I was able to have the rare opportunity to have engaged in work of real consequence.

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From *Me* to *We*: A Journey to Presidential Leadership

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I was thrilled when it was announced in the spring of 2002 that I was president-elect of Spelman College. It was both exciting and daunting – the idea of moving to a new school in a new city, taking on a new identity as "the president of Spelman College." I did not know then just how much my perspective would change in the process, a journey I describe as going "from *me* to *we.*"

My academic career began in the classroom as a professor of psychology. The life of a faculty member is pretty "me" focused. I do not mean that in any derogatory way. One of the things I loved about being a professor was my autonomy. For the most part, I could teach what I wanted. I could choose the texts, create the assignments and establish the grading criteria. When I entered the classroom, it was all about me and my students. The research projects I worked on were "mine." The publications were "mine." Though I benefitted from the help and support of many people, my success as a professor was viewed as my individual accomplishment.

However, when you take on administrative duties, that begins to change, at least a little. As a department chair, for example, the focus broadens to "my department" or maybe even "our department," still a rather narrow perspective. Typically, a department chair attends to the needs and interests of departmental colleagues and their students. The questions of concern are these: What resources does my department need? Who is paying attention to what my department thinks is important?

Often it is not until you are in a senior administrative role that you begin to really think in terms of the "we" – the whole institution. Moving beyond the boundaries of departmental and divisional categories to think about the entire institution, with all of its complexity and interconnections, is a habit of mind that takes time to cultivate. Yet it is just that holistic perspective that institutional leaders need to be effective.

As a faculty member, I progressed steadily through the academic ranks. In 1996, twelve years after the completion of my Ph.D., I achieved the status of tenured full professor at Mount Holyoke College, with my second book, *"Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" and Other Conversations about Race,* on track for its 1997 publication. That faculty "me" experience was working well.

Then, my colleagues agreed that it was my turn to serve as department chair, and I reluctantly accepted. While I recognized within myself a need for a new challenge, being department chair was not what I had in mind. Still in my first year as chair, I sought out some career advice from a colleague, and she suggested that I consider applying for the position of Dean of the College at Mount Holyoke, the chief student affairs position which included responsibility for undergraduate studies as well as all co-curricular areas of student life. Almost instantly, I responded, "Who in her right mind would want that job?" I imagined endless days of boring meetings. She said, "You are not using your imagination – if you were the dean, you could take the ideas that you have been

writing about and put them into practice. You could really impact the student experience here. And what you do here will influence practice at other schools, too."

From that vantage point campus, leadership had some appeal. I decided to apply and I was selected. In the summer of 1998 I became the Dean, cautiously agreeing to an initial three-year term. I quickly discovered that my colleague was right, the job was full of creative possibility and opportunity for positive impact, both on campus and off. The learning curve was just the challenge I needed. As Dean of the College, I was a member of President Joanne Creighton's senior management team. Sitting in her weekly cabinet meeting was a tremendous education. I enjoyed learning about how the component parts of the institution worked together. I began attending professional meetings designed for administrators, and my reading list expanded from my disciplinary interests to include books on leadership and team building. I started writing articles about the innovative programs my team and I had initiated, and my reputation as an effective dean began to grow.

But I still wasn't thinking institutionally – not completely. It was a time of fiscal constraint, and everyone's budget had to be reduced. My goal, shared by each of my colleagues around the table, was to protect my own divisional budget. We strategized about ways to protect our pet projects. We certainly thought we had the best interest of the students and the institution at heart, but fundamentally we were protecting our turf.

It was not until I became a college president that the "me" to "we" shift happened. Had I aspired to become a president? No, but after a couple of years as Dean, I began to receive letters of nomination for executive roles from search consultants. I threw them away. But then, I received two important pieces of advice which set me firmly on the presidential path.

The first came from a Mount Holyoke trustee who saw my leadership potential. He encouraged me to apply for a presidency at least once, just so I could learn from the interview process. The second came in 2000 from Barbara Brown Zikmund, then the president of Hartford Seminary. At the time, I was completing a MA in Religious Studies and BBZ was my advisor. When she asked if I had considered presidential leadership, and I replied that I was unsure, she said, "Well, a lot of people think you can just go out and find a presidency. It doesn't work that way, presidencies find you. And you can't be president of just any institution. The job is too demanding. It should be a place you truly love. After all, you will do a lot for your lover."

The wisdom of those two mentors rang in my ears when just a few months later, I was nominated for the presidency of a small liberal arts college that sparked my interest. I decided to apply. I wasn't fully committed to the idea, but it seemed worth exploring. My interview went well, and I was being considered as a finalist. Then I had to decide – did I really want to pursue this position all the way to the end? Was this a college I could truly love? Would it be more satisfying than my current position as dean? I sought the advice of three women, all current or former college presidents, including President Creighton. All encouraged me to wait for another opportunity. President Creighton was most persuasive when she said, "if you stay here at Mount Holyoke, when I go on sabbatical next year, you can be the acting president." That was the perfect solution! I could test out being a president, without leaving home or moving my family. I withdrew from the search. As promised, in January 2002, President Creighton took her sabbatical, and I served as the acting president for the next six months.

In this new role, my perspective quickly shifted from "me" to "we." Imagine sitting in an auditorium at a faculty meeting. In your seat, you are looking at the president who is speaking from the front of the room. As a faculty member or even as dean, the focus of your attention is narrow. It is on the person in the center, in this case, the president. When I became the acting

president, I was the one sitting in the center, and my focus had to be broad. I had to take in everyone in the auditorium. The first time I sat in that seat it felt quite awkward, in part because I was so used to being in the audience. Now I was the focus of attention, and I felt the weight of the responsibility. It was a transformative moment in terms of my own sense of identity as a leader. I began to claim the idea that leading an institution was something I could do.

Just a few weeks later, I was nominated for the presidency of Spelman College. I was not immediately sure it was a job that I wanted, primarily because I was so comfortable at Mount Holyoke, and Massachusetts was my home. I knew of Spelman by reputation only. I had never been to the campus. To help me decide about whether to apply or not, I made an unannounced and unescorted visit to the campus just to see and feel its energy and imagine myself there. On that initial visit, the defining moment came when I picked up an admissions brochure and read this paragraph:

> *When you are inducted into the Spelman sisterhood in a candlelight ceremony, you are given the power to change your life and to light the world. When you graduate, you walk into the Oval and through the Arch, the same path past graduates have taken. For 120 years now, Spelman has sought to develop the total person: to instill in our students a sense of responsibility for bringing about positive change in the world. This is our heritage and our calling.*

Those words captured my imagination. I knew in an instant that Spelman College was a place I would truly love. In August 2002, I entered its gates as the new president.

In my new role, I quickly learned that the journey from "me" to "we" was one I had to help other people take as well. Just as I was once a "me" professor, or a "my team" dean, as president I worked daily with people who were coming from the "me" perspective as well. I had to help them see how they fit into the big picture, and to understand how we all had to work together for the greater good, a process that took time and patience. One of the most helpful books on leadership that I read during that time is John Kotter's book, *Leading Change (1996).*

A key component of leading change is "creating the guiding coalition" – building a team with enough power to lead the change, and then getting the group to work together like a team – all rowing in the same direction (Kotter, 1996, p. 57). Early in my tenure, I sometimes felt that my senior leaders were like war lords coming to our weekly meetings, each protecting their territory, ready to do battle with anyone who challenged their turf. Too much "me" and not enough "we" was stifling progress. Kotter's insights helped me understand what I was seeing.

He writes, *"People who have spent their careers in a single department or division are often taught loyalty to their immediate group and distrust of the motives of others, even if they are in the same firm. Lack of communication and many other factors heighten misplaced rivalry"* (1996, p. 61). The only way to solve that problem was to foster trust. It took time and intentionality to build trusting relationships with and between my senior staff members. But when it started to happen, it felt great. Shared vision, shared goals, and shared effort was transformational. Getting from "me" to "we" made all the difference.

In his poem, *On Work,* poet Kahlil Gibran (1923/1978, p. 27) captures the power of that transformation.

> *And what is it to work with love?*
> *It is to weave cloth with threads drawn from*

your own heart, even as if your beloved were to wear
that cloth.
It is to build a house with affection, even as if your
beloved were to dwell in that house…
Work is love made visible.

When we get past "me" to "we", we work with trust and with love, and a spirit of joy. It doesn't get better than that.

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Graciously Relentless

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When I arrived at DePaul University as a twenty-nine-year-old assistant professor, I remember thinking carefully about how to perform my new role as teacher so as to muster the authority to effectively lead a class of students only a few years younger than myself. In the navy Brooks Brothers skirted suit that fulfilled my 1980 notion of what a female professor might wear, I approached the photocopying machine. A priest, also on the faculty, was finishing up with his syllabi. "Do you need to copy something, sweetie?" he asked. "Yes, thanks," I smiled, startled at the ease with which he had demolished my carefully crafted fledgling professor-persona.

Not long after joining the faculty, and while still untenured, I came out as a lesbian. I was sufficiently concerned that this might not end well, that I, a performance studies scholar and teacher, took a computer programming course, to see if I had any aptitude for a career in the new field of computer science, should higher education prove a dead end. Miraculously, despite a personnel committee member who voted against me on the grounds that my coming out indicated mental instability, DePaul tenured me.

I collaborated with a group of women faculty from across the university to form a Women's Studies program, which I soon found myself directing. The Communication program separated from the English Department, and I became that young department's chair. Another group of faculty created a proposal for a Humanities Center, and I served for several years as its director. Again, and again, I found myself joining forces and energy with faculty who wanted to create something new. In 2007, I became the founding dean of the College of Communication and the first out lesbian to join DePaul's Deans Council. A year later, a second out (Latina) lesbian joined our group, and for a while we were not just the only gay people serving as deans, we were the only women. Two is always better than one.

As women's studies director, chair, dean, and provost, I prioritized hiring and empowering diverse teams of talented faculty and staff. I believed we needed all those backgrounds and perspectives represented on our team if we were to successfully fulfill our mission. The barriers, though not quite as insurmountable as forty years ago, remain real, and stubbornly persistent. Being the only, or only one of very few, adds significantly to the pressure of what are already high-pressure jobs.

One of the consequences of institutionalized discrimination based on gender, race, religion, sexual identity, ability and more, is that people who have encountered these barriers tend to assume that they have to be twice or three times as prepared and accomplished in order to be seen as plausible candidates. They are not wrong.

Research has not confirmed the existence of innate differences in women's and men's capabilities, but there is evidence that the same behavior is evaluated differently based on gender. Women leaders are expected to be strong but nurturing, firm but friendly, gracious but strategic, hard driving but never noticeably ambitious. Role conflict between gender roles and leadership

roles is embedded in the system. Women develop a range of strategies for how to wield power and promote change without being perceived so negatively that they can no longer be effective.

"How are you going to work with us to get all these things done, if you become our provost, given the resistance you will likely encounter?" I was asked when I interviewed at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ). Those two and a half days are something of a blur to me, but a faculty council president later told me that my answer became something of a mantra among women leaders on our campus. "I'm going to be graciously relentless." That does sound like a succinct encapsulation of my approach to making change in higher education as an outsider on the inside.

To build diverse teams and institutions we have to pay careful attention to how we hire, mentor, and evaluate faculty and staff. Faculty of color, LGBT faculty and staff, women, and anyone encountering the many categories of discrimination that operate in our society need to witness leaders offering more than lip service to a commitment to diversity, leaders who grasp the unique pressures that come from being constantly measured and found wanting based on an invisible and unacknowledged white heterosexual male standard. Not surprisingly, that implicit standard can start to shape our own sense of our ability.

Over dinner with one of the candidates for a deanship at TCNJ, I asked the highly accomplished associate dean from a nearby university why not remain where she was and pursue the soon to be open deanship there. "That school is extremely large and complex," she told me, "and it includes a department," here she named the department, "with which I have no experience. I'm not sure I'm prepared to lead it."

I paused for a beat and looked at her. "You do realize there is not a man alive who would say what you just said. As you advance in your career, you will inevitably take on responsibility for units with which you have no experience. Men are encouraged in a robust belief in their potential and self-nominate for positions that go beyond their current level of experience. Women often hold themselves back until they believe they have already mastered all the skills they will need in their next job." She looked at me in surprise and with a degree of genuine self-recognition.

We hired that highly qualified candidate, one of four talented deans (including three women and two deans of color) we were able to bring to the college during my five years as provost, and within weeks of her arrival on campus, faculty and administrators alike were commending me for my decision. I'm glad she didn't want to remain where she was and wait for the deanship there to come open. There is great value in bringing what you have learned at a prior institution to a new campus and coming in fresh. But her expression of a belief that she had not yet sufficiently prepared herself for the next step is one all too common not only among women, but often among those considering their applications.

Critical masses are important and empowering. It is extremely isolating and difficult to find yourself the only faculty member of color or out LGBT administrator, for instance. Leaders need to actively foster and support groups that can bring together and empower those who have historically been excluded from power and opportunity in our institutions. DePaul did not really start to become more intentionally inclusive of LGBT faculty and staff until well after a group of us formed a Queer Studies book group in the early nineties and began developing our relationships with one another and our awareness of how much of the success of our college and university was built on our efforts. In those years, when our dean, at college meetings, would call out the accomplishments of various faculty, whether as leaders, grants getters, authors, or winners of awards, we would sit there silently and do what we called the Queer Count, counting how many of the recognized faculty were LGBT. This educated us about how crucial our contributions were to

the work of the university and emboldened us to continue pushing for more support and recognition from our Roman Catholic institution.

Given the inevitable resistance to change that all leaders always encounter, how do we encourage our institutions to make the necessary changes? One of my central insights about leadership came to me from studying tai chi. Although tai chi looks like some kind of graceful dance, it is also a quite powerful martial art. It works by taking the energy of one's attacker, joining it, and then redirecting it. Essentially, as physics teaches us, it takes a great deal more force to move an object that is not in motion than one that is already moving. As leaders, we need to be always on the alert for where energy is moving in our institutions and then find ways to join that energy with resources, encouragement, and attention, sometimes redirecting it or shaping it while in motion, in ways that better serve our students and our institution.

At this particular moment in history, there is no shortage of energy in motion on our campuses. A critical aspect of leadership is finding energy (sometimes in the form of just a handful of interested and dedicated individuals) that when joined by crucial support, can manifest amazing programs or unleash the creativity of talented faculty and staff.

While I was provost, the president, accompanied by the treasurer and myself, presented the proposed annual budget to the Faculty Senate. The budget highlighted the need to develop new revenue streams. "We already know what we're good at," one senator, chair of his department, skeptically remarked. He was referring to the outstanding undergraduate experience laden with high impact practices that has garnered TCNJ national recognition. "Why can't we just keep doing what we have been doing?"

"Because we have been doing what we have been doing, and that's how we got here," the president replied, meaning without the resources we would need going forward.

Change is coming to our campuses with a degree of speed and intensity that our often traditionally structured and governed institutions are ill prepared to meet. If we keep doing what we have been doing, we will not unleash the innovation and creativity required to serve the needs of today's and tomorrow's students. In an era of urgent need and shrinking resources, we will require all the richness of ideas and experience that diverse teams can bring in order to find bold solutions to the problem of making higher education available to every single person who wants it.

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Unfinished Business: What Remains to be Done with Respect to Women and Leadership

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What if, regarding women and leadership, the greatest piece of unfinished business has to do with us (women)?

I believe it is not enough for women to simply point out what's wrong with the world around us and to lament about the continued lack of women in leadership. Women need to act now to make things right for other women. A quote generally attributed to Mahatmas Ghandi that in fact comes from author and educator Arleen Lorrance (1974), "... be the change you want to see....," perfectly describes the point. If you want to see more women in leadership, then be the change that makes it happen. Consider this an immediate call for self-reflection and action within your own sphere of influence. No matter what position you may hold in an organization, take this moment to reflect on the extent that you have intentionally made the workspace better for women.

One could believe that reflection and action should only be a call to the "higher ups" in the organization. I suggest not to wait until you reach a certain level of leadership or to pester the few women at the top to act. Every woman needs to work in ways that increase the number of women advancing to positions of leadership. Take responsibility right now, no matter your current position, and support women as a core aspect of your work. For further inspiration we can listen to the lyrics of an iconic 1980s song, written by Annie Lenox and Dave Stewart and sung by Aretha Franklin and Annie Lenox: "Sisters Are Doin' It For Themselves." Women are "Standin' on their own two feet, And ringin' on their own bells."

To be clear, this call for women empowered leadership is not simply righting the historical wrongs of the disenfranchisement of women. The lived experiences and earned expertise of women successfully leading and managing within a historically sexist, patriarchal society inevitably inform how women manage and lead. Women bring insights to the leadership table at a time higher education desperately needs the best leadership talent. Any organization that is disproportionately led by men is structurally denying itself a population of outstanding women leaders. Denying leadership to women is denying a range of talented leaders for these times. This essay will suggest three actions women can take to stand up and ring the bell for women, leadership, and the future of higher education.

The first action is to work in ways that build authentic professional relationships between women. Creating quality professional relationships at work pushes past a historical narrative of scarcity and adversity. The scarcity narrative is that there are only a few positions available to women and that it is every woman for herself. This narrative keeps us from working together. We must come to know each other. We must come to know what we have in common and build upon those common interests. Ask yourself, how can I either create or contribute to an effort that will bring the women of my institution together? The simple act of coming together, taking the time to get to know each other and really (I mean really) listen to each other is powerful. Authentic sincere active listening leads to a deeper understanding of those we engage. With

understanding comes the space where we can have both disagreement and agreement. From that space, we can agree on a few items in common that every woman can work to advance every day and every way in their work. Creating these spaces can be small simple efforts such as a standing lunch for all women in a department or college who meet and pick a topic for discussion with the goal of understanding common interests. Efforts can be elaborate and large, involving an entire university committing to a formal program of engagement, such as programs offered through LeanIn (leanin.org) that provide free and low cost resources on how to create these spaces and eliminate gender discrimination in the workplace. There is no right answer. The wrong answer is to do nothing.

The second action calls out the way our universities operate that perpetuate structural barriers to women's leadership. Within "your organizational neck of the woods," look at the organization's operation and act to improve the operational machinery for women by removing arbitrary barriers to leadership. In higher education our machinery takes the form of policies, procedures and practices. For example, let us look at how leaders are hired. At colleges and universities across the country thousands of leadership positions are filled every year, disproportionately by men. What if a network of women at your institution collectively insisted that policies, procedures and practices require every leadership position be filled using a search committee to recommend candidates. A second expectation is that all search committees must have women serving on the committee. The women acting together on the committee would champion that the pool of candidates be diverse and inclusive and must include women. All women should strongly reject tired notions "that there are no qualified women" and voice expectations that there are highly qualified women and that it is the process that is broken and needs to be fixed. Third, require the search committee including the person who finally does the hiring, participate in an implicit bias training program. Research has shown that even a short program describing and discussing implicit gender bias reduces gender bias in hiring decisions (Carnes, 2016; Girod, 2016).These actions over time will change the outcomes of who holds leadership positions. Changing how we operate is often not sensational or publicly celebrated, but it is the best way to ensure long-term change. What would it mean to your students and to your institution's mission if half the leadership positions were held by women?

The third action is for all women "to break the bad habit" of their own implicit gender bias. Is it possible that women are just as vulnerable to the "bad habit" of implicit bias? Researchers at University of Wisconsin-Madison (Carnes, 2016) looked at implicit bias as a "bad habit" that needed to be broken. From a "habit-breaking" construct the authors experimented with two control groups of faculty using a multi-step intervention process of awareness, self-efficacy, and replacement of new habits in order to break the "gender bias habit." The intervention was one 2.5-hour interactive workshop. They found that the single intervention had significant and positive effects on participants post-intervention. They also found that "the majority of male and female faculty have at least a slight bias linking male with leadership and female with supporter." For women to break their own bad habit of implicit gender bias, they must stop idealizing leadership as male and be comfortable and confident with themselves and their leadership as female. The call to action is a call to disrupt the historical and cultural structures that have defined and confined women, women's work, and women's role in society.

In conclusion, this essay offers the notion that women themselves may be the "unfinished business" or what now most remains to be addressed, specifically women recognizing and seizing their own power and agency to support other women in ways that result in more women leading our colleges and universities. Valuing professional relationships between women that are

authentic and mutually supportive helps all women succeed. Our history and culture in the United States has socialized some women to believe that it is ok to be less loyal to one another in the workplace and even to accept that the lack of women in leadership is based on stereotypical notions of women's inadequacy. This is a bad habit of implicit bias that must be broken. We must dispute these stereotypes and disrupt our colleges and universities through active professional networks of women changing institutional operations and breaking historical cultures of bias. The work is hard, but the payoff ensures all women taking their rightful place at the leadership table. In closing, let's consider the last lines of Lenox and Stewart's (1985) song as a guide toward our future: "People pay to hear what we say. Standin' it on our own two feet, yea. Bring it on down and back. Here we come now."

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Reaching Out: A View of the Evolution of Private Higher Education Leadership

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North Carolina's K-12 and higher education sectors, philanthropic community and business and non-profit leaders have worked over the past two years on an effort called "myFutureNC" to develop a broadly supported education attainment goal which has been adopted by the 2019 North Carolina General Assembly. The goal: by 2030, 2 million North Carolinians, ages 25-44, will have a high-quality postsecondary degree or credential. While this is a new goal for the state, increasing the education attainment of our citizens, especially from my home state, North Carolina, has long been a goal of elected officials as well as one of my personal goals. Increasing education attainment is one of the major reasons I became part of North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities in 1986 and why I have continued in the role of president since 1992.

North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU) is the statewide office of the 36 private, non-profit colleges and universities in the state. We represent private higher education in North Carolina and in Washington on public policy issues and work closely with the public k-12 and higher education sectors in the state. NCICU also provides professional development opportunities for campus administrators, raises funds for scholarships and grants and develops collaborative programs to provide cost savings for our campuses. We oversee grant projects in areas such as articulation for transfer students and establish and implement student-focused projects. These include the State of North Carolina Undergraduate Research and Creativity Symposium (in partnership with the UNC system) and the NCICU Ethics Bowl, which offers teams of students from our colleges and universities the experience of presenting arguments and proposing solutions for ethical issues to leaders in government, non-profit organizations and the corporate sector who volunteer as judges for the event.

Each of these efforts is designed to assist independent colleges and universities in North Carolina in educating more students and in providing a wide array of student experiences to develop leadership potential. Private colleges and universities in North Carolina provide the "right fit" for 90,000 students, many of whom are first-generation college students from small, rural high schools and low-income families. One-half of our North Carolina undergraduates are eligible for Pell grants and about 80 percent of all NCICU students receive some type of financial aid. In order to be successful in college and be able to increase the quality of life for their families as college graduates, these students need significant additional financial support and college environments in which they can thrive.

The work we do, at NCICU and at state private higher education offices across the country, has a direct impact on our colleges and universities and on our students. Without state and federal financial aid and private and institutional scholarships and grants, most students would not be able to attend or persist in college. The success of our students results in North Carolina's independent colleges and universities awarding about one-third of the baccalaureate degrees in the state and one-third of the graduate and professional degrees. This includes 25 percent of the teachers who

graduate from college in North Carolina and the awarding of 55 percent of pharmacy degrees, 59 percent of medical degrees, 63 percent of law degrees and 89 percent of physician assistant's degrees.

In addition to transforming the lives and futures of thousands of graduates and their families each year, this level of degree attainment is critical to the success of our state and myFutureNC in reaching the 2030 education attainment goal. Part of my role as president of NCICU has been to ensure that independent higher education participates fully as a partner in these and other statewide education efforts.

In reflecting on the changes in NCICU's role during my tenure as president, I recognize that we work much more closely than previously with our colleagues in the other education sectors in North Carolina and with our colleagues in similar offices in other states. One of the most important leadership lessons I have learned over the years is the value of being willing to reach out to others to talk about the issues and challenges we have in common and suggest ways we might work together to address them. My experience in higher education has been and continues to be that such outreach efforts are generally appreciated and welcomed and can lead to lasting partnerships across the education continuum.

In North Carolina, outreach from our office has led to the establishment of 25 administrative and faculty leadership groups which meet at least annually for professional development and problem-solving. Such efforts also have led to grants on trusteeship, the development of the NCICU Collaborative Initiative, scholarship and programmatic fundraising, grants for articulation projects, a digital learning initiative for teacher educations, and college access and success projects. Many of these projects are efforts with one or more of the other education sectors, including the State of North Carolina Undergraduate Symposium. The NCICU Ethics Bowl requires the support of a large number of donors and volunteers from across the state to be successful. The outpouring of support, both financial and as judges and moderators has been consistent with judges returning each of the eight years we have held the event and providing outstanding support and affirmation as well as constructive criticism for individual growth to the students. Willingness to ask, offers to be the convener, agreement to work collaboratively - all of these are leadership lessons I have found to be effective and to lead to valuable results.

When I joined NCICU in 1986, there was one woman who served as president among the almost 40 independent colleges and universities in the state and few women who were chief academic officers, chief business officers, heads of advancement or other major cabinet positions. There has been substantial change over the years, with nine women serving as presidents currently and many more who have served as presidents of all types of institutions from our two-year college, colleges for women, historically black colleges and universities, liberal arts colleges, and comprehensive universities to our largest research university.

Many more women are chief academic officers and other cabinet members now as well as department chairs and serve in a variety of leadership positions at private and public colleges and universities in North Carolina and across the country. More than half of most undergraduate student bodies and, increasingly, of graduate and professional programs, are comprised of women. It is important for the number of women in higher education leadership to continue to grow so that women are encouraged to expand and extend their careers. Students also need to continue to have more women in leadership in higher education as role models, mentors and supporters, welcoming them as the next generation of women leaders.

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Women's Leadership: An Outdated Concept that Won't Go Away

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I am compelled to begin by challenging the concept of "women's leadership" insofar as it implies a particular leadership style or approach to working with others based on gender. I think we all know from experiencing many leaders over the course of our professional and personal lives, that individuals' ways of leading are reflective of their dispositions and experiences not their gender, per se. Stereotypical gender expectations rarely align with the reality of leaders we admire, emulate, and willingly follow. Moreover, as we now recognize, the fluidity of gender identity and its many expressions may further render "women's leadership" an oversimplified and outdated concept.

At the same time, gender is often evident or deliberately expressed in our bodies and our names and my experience includes frequent reminders that gender stereotypes and biases are alive and well. Moreover, these biases are sometimes unreservedly shared with women who happen to be in leadership positions, often in the form of micro-aggressions.

So, although the concept of "women's leadership" as a distinct approach may be outdated, women leaders do face special challenges, just as any underrepresented group does (latest statistics show that only 22% of doctorate granting institutions have female presidents). Still we must not conflate the reality of bias and related challenges with the questionable notion of gendered leadership styles or approaches to the work. Nor can we allow others to frame our professional identities around gender or any other characteristic. In fact, when asked what's it's like to be a female university president I often say I am not a "female university president" I am a "university president."

Problematic and Persistent Assumptions about Women's Leadership

While my gender is largely irrelevant to how I lead, I am aware that it is not irrelevant to others. The competence of leaders who happen to be women is often doubted until proven. I have been called (by a man) "that new little girl" and have been told (by a woman) that I am too small to be a president. I doubt such comments would have been made, at least not openly, about a male leader of small build who is clearly energetic, in good physical shape, and is a highly experienced and successful leader.

Assumptions that a female leader will not be competent based on appearance are fairly easily overcome, however, by proving quickly that she is more than competent. Measurable, observable outcomes speak for themselves despite any resistance we may encounter early on. In the face of resistance, I have always relished the opportunity to prove wrong those who doubt that I can do something in my professional life.

But there are stereotypes and biases that are not as easily overcome. Implicit assumptions that as a woman you will lead in a gentle way, warmly embrace mediocre performance, and resist making difficult decisions are less often stated but no less dysfunctional. They are also insidious because they can result in success being viewed through a lens of expectations for stereotypical approaches to leadership. Unrealized expectations can overshadow important accomplishments.

It is not unusual to hear a successful female leader called a "strong woman" (not always a compliment), but it is rare to hear a male university president called a "strong man." It is assumed that men are strong; women are not. That's why the qualifier is used in the first place. No one has ever called me "gentle," indecisive or tolerant of anything less than excellence; instead I am an unrelenting force for continuous improvement, accountability and success. Being such a force is not always appreciated in female leaders because it's not how they are expected to lead. Instead, likeability and alignment with stereotypical expectations sometimes play an outsized role in judgements of success as a leader, rather than competence and results. This is a reality for female leaders not because "women's leadership" is different from men's, but because too many people still hold, often without awareness or intent to discriminate, different expectations for women leaders.

Intentionally Leading with Values

What have I learned from my experiences and observations? In the end, good leadership is valued regardless of the leader's personal characteristics and stereotypes erode with time. I believe that good leadership is grounded in the following: trust; appreciation for diverse perspectives; courage; ethics; hard work; and gratitude.

Trust is built from relationships, transparency and evidence that you do what you say you will do. Investing time and energy in building relationships—to getting to know the people you work with and letting them get to know you-- is the foundation of trust. For those who are driven to get work done, time spent building relationships may seem inconsequential but there is nothing more important.

Equally important to building trust is transparency- sharing data, explaining decisions, recognizing that everyone in the organization cares and wants to know what's happening and why. Related to transparency is reliability – leaders must do what they say they are going to do. They must be dependable and honest to build trust.

People want to be heard and understood and they want to know their ideas are valued enough to be considered. Good leaders seek, listen to and learn from diverse perspectives and they develop the ability to imagine and anticipate other's interpretations and reactions to their words and deeds. Understanding how messages and decisions will land—their impact not their intent—allows leaders to communicate more effectively and lead with respect for everyone in their organization.

To be successful, leaders need exceptional courage to make the right decisions, to take action, and to admit mistakes. Courage is linked to ethical behavior; a leader with unflinching ethics not only knows right from wrong but will always do the right thing for the organization even if it's unpopular and even if no one is watching.

It may go without saying, but excellent leaders demonstrate commitment in how hard they work for the institution and its constituents. That kind of always-on work and the weight of decision-making can cause a great deal of stress. I find that I can put the stress into perspective and lessen it when I remember that it is an honor and a privilege to do work that makes a

difference for individuals and for our society. In fact, this awareness results in deep gratitude for the opportunity to make a difference and gratitude to members of my team without whom I could not do my work.

A Reluctant Role Model

I want to do my work and do it well and I expect to be judged as a leader not a female leader. Nevertheless, as our university students often remind me, female leaders are role models. And as role models we have a responsibility to mentor other women, help them find the access points to leadership positions, and support them in those roles so that someday we will overcome the underrepresentation of female leaders and a reflection like this one will be a historical artifact rather than a statement of lived experience.

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