

International Briefs *for* Higher Education Leaders

International Briefs for Higher Education Leaders reflects a strategic collaboration between the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Center for International Higher Education (CIHE) at Boston College.

Recognizing that higher education is an increasingly complex global enterprise, the Briefs series is designed to bring a comparative perspective to critical topics and emerging issues. Installments highlight experiences from a variety of national contexts, provide cross country analysis, and explore opportunities for international collaboration.

Articles and contributions are written by leading international scholars, policy-makers, and practitioners, with the ultimate goal of helping institutional and government leaders around the world develop cumulative knowledge to inform policies, establish impactful partnerships, and tackle key challenges affecting higher education today.



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WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP AROUND THE WORLD

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Introduction

Welcome to the ninth edition of *International Brief for Higher Educations Leaders*. Planning for this publication began well over a year ago – and what a year it has been. As the authors so astutely describe, the global pandemic and incidents of racial injustice in the United States and around the world have profoundly impacted the higher education landscape, and the experiences and trajectories of women academics in particular. This installment’s focus on women’s leadership in higher education could not be more timely.

Our goal in this publication is to explore the victories, challenges, contributions, and aspirations of women leaders, and their impact on higher education around the globe. We highlight not only broad trends and commonalities, but the rich diversity of experiences and personal perspectives of the authors and their colleagues, who themselves comprise a stellar and accomplished group of women leaders. We look backwards to examine where we’ve been, but just as importantly, we take an action-oriented look forward toward where we need to go, and how we can get there.

Tessa DeLaquil’s concluding piece beautifully weaves together key themes and recommendations from the publication’s articles. In reflecting on the goals and contributions of this Brief, and the roles ACE, CIHE and other organizations can play in carrying out these recommendations and advancing women’s higher education leadership worldwide, three imperatives in particular stand out:

Elevate diverse women’s voices. The authors note that empowering women leaders begins with ensuring that they have “a seat at the table” at their institutions, in the research literature, and in policy-making. It is not an accident that all of the articles in this publication are authored by women (or teams led by women)—from many countries, and representing a range of higher education roles. Their approaches, writing style, and perspectives vary widely – from Fanny Cheung’s assessment of the global landscape, to country-level historical and contemporary overviews, to the personal leadership journey described by Lily Hsu. We consider this diversity to be the publication’s greatest strength, and an illustration of the power of women’s voices to amplify each other, and collectively provide the insights needed to advance policy and practice.

Support, produce, and disseminate inclusive research. Across the board, authors cite a problematic lack of data on women’s leadership in higher education. As Ashley Gray points out, the research that does exist often centers the experience of women who identify as white – and looking globally, it is limited in geographic and cultural scope. Inclusive approaches and a greater array of data – quantitative and qualitative – are needed to broaden and deepen our understanding of women leaders’ intersectional identities and lived experiences, and to inform policy and practice. This publication is a start in that direction. Linda Chelan Li, Christine Adu-Yeboah, and their co-authors collected original data for their articles; a number of authors gathered existing, sometimes hard-to-find data and analyzed it in new ways. We are grateful for these contributions and hope this publication will draw attention to their work, as well as ignite new research.

Build, strengthen, and connect networks. Many authors underscore the critical importance of networks of individual women scholars and leaders in advancing their own and each other’s work. More broadly, Kristen Renn highlights the power of institutional networks – in this case, among women’s colleges and universities – to address and overcome systemic barriers to women’s advancement. Fanny Cheung, Amalia Di Iorio, and Adèle Moody cite the role of associations, including ACE, in organizing and supporting national, regional, and global women’s networks. And by bringing together researchers



from around the world, this publication itself has created its own scholarly network with the potential for on-going collaboration and contributions to research and practice. Perhaps the right next step is to strive for greater connection among these varied types of networks in order to build an inclusive, multifaceted, multi-tiered web of support – a network of networks – to advance women’s higher education leadership at a global level.

Whatever our next steps, one thing is clear: We cannot stop now. While there has been progress in many contexts, it is critical in this moment that we avoid what Tessa DeLaquil describes as “tenacious complacency.” Higher education is a global enterprise; we cannot view obstacles, such as the instances of outright bullying and violence against women academics cited by Ashley Gray, Christine Adu-Yeboah, Alma Maldonado-Maldonado and their co-authors, as problems endemic to a single place or context. They are shared challenges and will require shared solutions. In short, we are all in this together.

A ladder is only as strong as its weakest rung. Going forward, we need global approaches to shore up the ladder for women leaders in higher education, remove barriers, and promote their success. ACE and CIHE are committed to this work, and we look forward to on-going partnership with our authors, counterpart associations, and women leaders around the world to elevate women’s voices, advance research, build networks, and ultimately, improve equity and quality in higher education at the institutional, national, and global levels.

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The “State” of Women’s Leadership in Higher Education

Fanny M. Cheung

The increasing enrollment of female undergraduate students across most of the world has given the false impression that gender equality has been achieved in higher education. We often hear people say that women are doing well and gender equality is not an issue. Some even say that with the five to 10 percent increase in enrollment rate, women are surpassing men, and consider that a “problem.” However, increased female enrollment in higher education is only one dimension of gender equality, and the unfortunate reality is that equality remains elusive nearly everywhere in the world, particularly when it comes to questions of leadership. A rise in the undergraduate enrollment of female students has not been translated into a similar increase in women’s representation at other levels of the academy. This is a crucial problem for global higher education.

Gender parity in leadership is not only a matter of fairness, but also a crucial requirement in the context of the changing higher education landscape. The social justice dimensions of this issue are self-evident, but there are also clear educational and financial benefits to increasing the proportion of women in leadership positions. Despite rising percentages of women students and junior faculty members, there are still too few role models of female leadership for these changing constituents. Technological changes and internationalization in higher education, epitomized by the COVID-19 pandemic challenge, require diverse perspectives and innovative solutions that transform the traditional male-normed leadership culture.

Studies on women’s leadership show that women are more likely than men to present transformational leadership characteristics which motivate innovation and growth through team work. The business case of women’s leadership in the corporate world demonstrates that companies with more women board members are more profitable. Over the past three years, the Global Citizen Award for World Leaders has been awarded to women leaders who, despite being few in number, have used their political influence to improve the lives of people in poverty.

It is therefore crucial that we take stock of the current “state” of women’s leadership in global higher education, in order to identify key challenges which are preventing women from contributing their substantial talents to the benefit of higher education around the globe.

The Current “State of Play”

The representation of women within senior leadership of higher education is seriously lagging everywhere in the world, with far fewer women than men holding any positions of leadership in every region of the world (see Table 1). There are, of course, signs of progress. For example, it is encouraging to note that 39 out of the top 200 institutions in the world (19.5 percent) are currently led by women, a slight increase from the 34 universities (17 percent) led by women in 2019 (Bothwell, 2020). The statistics for institutions in the top 200 in some individual countries are much more promising (e.g., the US, Sweden, the Netherlands and the UK) (Bothwell, 2020).

However, when the data are further disaggregated, the story becomes more complex. Women leaders in higher education are disproportionately more likely to lead smaller colleges or women’s universities, particularly in South Asian countries, such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka (Morley & Crossouard, 2015). In Japan, South Korea, and Hong Kong, the top national or public universities that have entered the highest ranks of the international league tables are not led by woman presidents.

There is also a fundamental lack of data on gender in many parts of the world, which prevents our ability to truly understand the various dimensions of the issue. In the “gender-blind” contexts of academia, there are few institutional repositories of gender statistics that are collected and reviewed regularly within universities, or held at country or regional levels. As a result, disparities are often not identified.

Gender distribution in different ranks often has to be extracted by researchers from original sources. Where statistics are available, a leaking pipeline of women in senior administration positions in academia is evident (with the possible exception of Scandinavian countries where specific targets have been set and met). Gender analyses help to reveal patterns of bias which are otherwise hidden under the guise of academic meritocracy claiming non-discriminatory equal opportunity policies. As such, a crucial first step for many contexts in the fight against inequality is the development of more robust and disaggregated institutional data.

Systemic Barriers

In addition, much more needs to be done to address the systematic barriers preventing women from achieving leadership positions in higher education. Despite decades of effort through research, training and networking, numerous systematic barriers to women’s leadership in higher education remain at individual, institutional and societal levels.

Table 1. Women in Higher Education Leadership

REGION/COUNTRY	YEAR	PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE LEADERS		
		Institutional Leaders (%)	Executive Leaders (%)	Academic Leaders (%)
Arab League ⁱ	2018	6.8		
Australia	2016	25	34	34
China: "First-class universities"	2019	4.8		
Latin America ⁱⁱ	2020	18		
Pacific Rim ⁱⁱⁱ	2018		21	25
United Kingdom	2018	29	37	31
United States ^{iv}	2016	30.1		

Sources: Assembled by the author based on American Council on Education (2017) [United States], APRU (2019) [Pacific Rim], Eleraqi & Salahuddin (2018) [Arab League], UNESCO-IESALC (2020) [Latin America], WomenCount (2017) [Australia], WomenCount (2018) [United Kingdom], and Zhang (2019) [China].

Female academics across the world share similar constraints, including the work-family interface, synchronization of their life cycle (marriage and childbirth) with the tenure clock, and socialization of femininity that deviates from the patriarchal perception of leadership competence. Cultural barriers grounded in the local contexts of different countries also complicate the picture for many aspiring female leaders.

At the institutional level, most academic institutions remain "gender-blind" in their policies, which – given the constraints listed above – actually results in a bias toward males. The social norms of gender roles, patriarchy, caste, and leadership perception in the wider society permeate through the education system.

With increased competition among universities, greedy institutions are demanding more time and commitment from their faculty members. Geographical mobility and lack of time boundaries pose special challenges for women who have family responsibilities. As evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, the productivity of women academics working from home is much more affected than their male counterparts. Gender equity also remains a peripheral issue, in the context of global competition for academic excellence, student recruitment, and funding.

Support for Women in Higher Education Management

In an attempt to address these inequalities, women's leadership programs have been established in many higher

education institutions around the world – including global initiatives, such as Athena SWAN, and national initiatives, such as Advance UK's Aurora program. Many extra-institutional programs, such as HERS (Higher Education Resource Services) and its international chapters, and the ACE Women's Network, also provide training for women in higher education on professional development and leadership skills to guide them in their advancement.

Several international groups have also added a specific focus on gender equity within and across universities through more general programming. For example, the Association of Commonwealth Universities gender program shares gender-related practices and policies with over 500 member universities and offers gender grants to advance gender equity initiatives on campus. The Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) Asia Pacific Women in Leadership (APWiL) initiative has compiled a Directory of Programs & Initiatives to share case studies among its 65 member universities on challenges in promoting gender equity. Through their gender gap reports in 2013 and 2019, APWiL has also successfully lobbied for an APRU Presidents' Statement on Gender Equity and Diversity and piloted an international mentoring program in 2020 to introduce global and intercultural dimensions of women's leadership.

Individual women have also taken on the challenge, by forming mentoring relationships with younger female academics and establishing networks for mutual support and experience sharing. Many current female leaders in higher education

– particularly those who have made it to the top at globally prestigious universities – are the first women to occupy top positions in their institutions. As pioneers, they have made their way to the top in their own right in mostly gender-blind contexts.

In addition to acting as role models and champions for the next generation of female leaders, some of these pioneer women presidents have established networks. One example is the British Council’s “Action for Women in Higher Education Leadership” group, which organizes a series of dialogues and workshops at the annual Going Global Conference, involving women vice-chancellors and pro-vice-chancellors, that focuses on strategies to promote women’s leadership.

The World Women University Presidents Forum, launched in 2001, invites senior women university leaders from different regions of the world to attend biennial international forums held at different Chinese universities. The European Women Rectors Association, which began as a series of conferences for European women rectors and vice-rectors to share their experiences as academic leaders, was formally established in 2015 to promote the role of women in academic leadership and to advocate for gender equality in higher education in Europe and beyond.

Most of these support efforts target individual women’s capacity building. Although they have helped to build up the pipeline of potential women leaders in some (mainly “Western”) countries, such programs may be primarily reaching the “converted,” with mainstream academic culture remaining largely oblivious. Furthermore, the notion that women are not proportionally represented in leadership positions because of individual agency and skills has been critiqued by some researchers (e.g., Shepherd, 2017), who point to structural and cultural impediments that cannot be addressed by training women themselves. Systemic barriers remain and stall the advancement of gender equity. Furthermore, the situation is not consistent across the world, with many “non-Western” countries lagging behind.

Gender equity measures remain on the fringe even though diversity and inclusion policies have been adopted in some universities. There is a gulf between institutional policies endorsing gender equity and actual practice (Aiston et al., 2020). Without mainstreaming gender equity in academic policies and practices, and without gender equity permeating throughout academic culture across all levels, these policies remain lip service. At the rate it is going, it may take another half-century before parity in higher education is achieved across the world.

Women have been building up their agency and readiness for leadership in higher education. It is clear that in spite of the systemic and cultural barriers in higher education and society, women continue to seek opportunities for leadership, with successful women leaders finding ways to support other women individually through mentorship and leadership development. The onus is then on innovative universities to mainstream gender in all policies and practices across the board to achieve substantive outcomes in gender equity.

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ⁱ Out of 746 universities, only the identities of 702 leaders could be verified.

ⁱⁱ The survey sample included 475 public universities in nine countries.

- ⁱⁱⁱ Thirty-nine out of the 65 member universities of the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) and Universitas 21 completed the survey. Executive leaders include presidents/vice-chancellors, provosts, and deputy vice-chancellors. Academic leaders include deans, associate deans, heads of schools and departments, and course coordinators/leaders.
- ^{iv} The survey sample included 1,546 college and university presidents, chancellors, and CEOs, and the response rate was 43 percent.

Women and Equity in Higher Education: Eradicating Barriers in a Post-Pandemic World

Joanna Regulska

The World of Academia as Gendered and Not Equitable

In a 2015 UNESCO science report, Huyer (2015) again called attention to a well-known fact, that across the world women are underrepresented in research. She pointed out that while women are a majority of recipients of undergraduate and master degrees, and make up almost half of PhD recipients (a clear sign of a progress!), their representation in research is only 28 percent (a global average). Such underrepresentation varies tremendously by country, region, discipline, and/or institution, and while in some cases gender parity in research is almost achieved, in many other instances there is a long path ahead to meeting such a benchmark. Differences in participation and representation are also recognizable at the postdoctoral level. These numbers indicate some progress, yet simple numbers will not suffice to achieve equity.

For women, the pandemic has amplified inequalities across many sectors, including higher education. The forces of marginalization, discrimination, exclusion, and/or oppression in academia vary depending on women's identity markings, on experiences, on where they live and work, and on many other social, economic, political, or cultural circumstances and practices (Gaudette et al., 2018). We know that being a woman and a woman of color in academia these days means that your professional career progress will be more challenging, and that the persistence of inequalities might be further exacerbated.

This is a clear sign of intersectional impacts exercised by many cultural practices and behaviors, existing institutional policies, and legal frameworks or lack thereof. And although

the existence of some barriers may have been acknowledged decades ago, efforts to address them have frequently been selective. Rarely have they been examined collectively; more often their impact has been minimized and simplified, or just ignored.

In order to eradicate inequalities and challenges that women in academia face, these obstacles need to be seen within their full spectrum of complexities and through a nuanced lens of the oppressive and differentiated impacts they exercise. These obstacles need to be seen as intertwined and interconnected. Their collective impact is not simply additive and will vary depending on each woman's identity and circumstances.

By now we know that any meaningful solutions need to involve an understanding of the power of intersectional approaches (Crenshaw, 2017). The gendered division of labor at work and at home, racial biases (conscious and unconscious), stereotyping and prejudices, and/or ageism are products of the process of intersectionality both in the home and within academia. As much as these are questions of gender justice, they are also questions of social and economic justice, and of racial justice—questions of basic human rights.

Visible and Invisible Barriers to Gender Equity Around the World

The barriers and challenges involved in confronting the lack of equity in higher education are diverse. Some are visible and have attracted tremendous efforts, while others are more hidden, subtle, and even more deeply rooted in everyday cultural practices.

One of the most visible barriers to equity is that of equal pay for equal work. Pay-gap struggles have continued around the world for decades, with female faculty regularly being paid less than their male counterparts. In many countries the gap has narrowed, yet nowhere has it been eliminated. In Canada, for example, the gender pay gap at most universities remains visible, and in several instances has increased over the last decade (ADP Canada, 2021). There are examples of institutions addressing and rectifying these injustices. In the US, for example, Princeton University recently agreed to pay back almost one million dollars to its women faculty members. However, such actions remain rare – and have been nonexistent in many contexts around the world.

Other barriers are far less visible but equally intractable. Most obviously, persistent gendered roles and norms related to the division of labor at home remain a significant barrier to gender equity in the academy. Between household commitments, childcare obligations, and family caring duties, women around the world are statistically more likely to put more

hours a day into maintaining and caring for their families than do men (although in several countries child-caring has become more and more equally split between both partners, an indication that progress is being made). These obligations often result in women being forced to decrease the amount of time devoted to professional career progression, although not necessarily affecting their productivity. Nevertheless, some women do consider postponement of their promotions and others consider leaving academia altogether.

Implications are significant for women's long-term financial security, accomplishments and personal satisfaction. They also diminish the academy as a whole, since they deny to society the benefits of women's contributions across professions regardless of their status or pay, in turn reinforcing the persistence of masculine culture and the value assigned to it.

We should also not fail to notice the powerful but hidden barriers that have led to and resulted in the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in academia. Because these barriers are deeply embedded in daily routines and often constitute elements of local institutional cultures, they are in many ways much harder to eradicate.

They come across in the nuanced ways in which women may fail to be asked to serve on certain committees, or to take part in meetings, or in the ways in which they are silenced by those speaking more loudly. Women's contributions to discussions may be appropriated by others, and women may be passed over when the allocation of campus resources is considered or be asked to do more in areas of mentoring, reviewing the work of others, or actually sitting on particular committees. In short, they may be given a heavier workload without adequate resources, recognition, and awards and thereby come to be subject and object of silence/ing. (Aiston & Fo, 2020).

None of these barriers is new. However, our current moment is a new milestone in the journey towards equity, as the pandemic has begun to erase much of the progress that has been made in advancing women's positions and leadership in academia. Over the course of the pandemic, evidence has been mounting that women have submitted fewer manuscripts than men, in the US as well as in other regions of the world (e.g., Europe, Africa, Latin America). They have also experienced a decline in research productivity or in applications for external funding, while trends reflected in scholarship by men show the opposite. This has led leading researchers to believe that "the pandemic has already created cumulative advantages for men," (Squazzoni et al., 2020, p. 1; see also Deryugina, et al., 2021). The term "she-cession" began to acknowledge the reality.

Eliminating Gender-Embedded Inequalities – Impactful Practices

Efforts to address these inequalities have taken place across many countries and institutions with some success, but with much weaker effects in implementation, monitoring, and assessing long-term impacts. National legislation to equalize access, to provide financial resources to women, to regulate gender pay gaps, to protect women from violence, or to eliminate broadly defined sexism in academia (e.g., gender equity, representation of women in course material, admission practices, promotion equity, leadership opportunities, or other recognitions of professional achievements of women) have all no doubt created a less hostile climate and provided opportunities for women. But again, what might in one country and institution be accessible to women, might in another context be inaccessible to them.

Over the years, many universities have themselves intensified their efforts to hire, retain, and advance women across all ranks, to advance women of wide ranges of disciplinary expertise, to create more inclusive environments for women of color, or to commit institutions to hiring dual career partners. These efforts are all in recognition that progress has to be made, but also that different approaches have to be utilized depending on institutional culture, political will, legislative restrictions, available resources and so much more.

However, some of these efforts have not resulted in the intended impacts. For example, the practice of adjusting the tenure clock has been in place at many US institutions for years; the pandemic has further increased the use of this strategy, with numerous universities becoming even more flexible by allowing an automatic one-year extension (e.g., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Florida State University, Penn State) or by asking faculty to apply for tenure (e.g., University of Arizona). Institutions believe that by offering an extension of the tenure clock they support faculty.

Yet, recent discussions with women point out that many of them would prefer to be offered material support rather than clock extension. They worry about salary implications in the long run (indeed, Manchester et al., already in 2013 research, recognized this negative impact for both men and women, with a persistent effect on male faculty). Women also are concerned about the negative perception such a break in the tenure clock may cause (Schleiber, 2021).

Research has shown mixed results. Some point out that an extra year does not have a negative impact on a faculty's chance for promotion and in fact that an extra year "helps faculty to narrow the gap between themselves and those who

did not use the policy,” (Manchester et al., 2013, p. 28). Others indicate however that such extra time may not actually help women, as in the case of economics, where in fact such policy might be of a greater advantage to men who “publish more in top-5 journals after the policies are implemented, but women do not” (Antecol et al. 2018, p. 2439).

These diverse opinions and approaches were echoed in a recent editorial in *Science Advances* (2021). Reese, along with her other women scientist colleagues, reinforced that not only do “inequalities and structural barriers within academia” continue to exist, but also that in order to create an equitable world for women scholars, numerous policy changes and strategies for institutional support have to be implemented, arguing that “until this system is built, we will continue to lose women at every career stage” (Reese, et al., 2021, n.p.).

As much as the pursuit of legislation and policies is then critical, their creation is insufficient; what is vital is their implementation and monitoring. Policies fail for many reasons (not enough support from the top leadership, expectations do not match reality, political complexities in the institution cannot be overcome, or a genuine imbalance of resources, time, leadership will, and of other resources). In short, many forces can shape failures.

We do then need to ask from the start: What is our goal and what will work within our context? What impact do we want to achieve, but also what impacts will our efforts have? Why may our efforts not work for all groups and individuals as intended? Do we need to have common policies, but also diversified implementation strategies tailored to specific groups of individuals and their circumstances? We have to be realistic and act persistently, but often also in small steps.

Some would argue that in the end the biggest drivers of change have been neither legislation nor policies, although both did open doors for women by making higher education accessible, affordable, and more inclusive. Rather, societal changes need to be encouraged as well; changes in everyday cultural practices, in professional opportunities, in recognition and awards. In short, in empowerment of women, be it undergraduate, graduate, postdoctoral students, or junior faculty; all are critical and have to be recognized as a part of any strategy. These forces affect the nature of the changes that occur. They are, for example, visible where senior women’s achievements are celebrated and acknowledged as loudly as those of their male peers; but for that to happen we also need more women in leadership positions, so that they can mentor next generations.

Social norms prevail; they cannot be legislated. It is upon us as individuals to drive the societal change, to pursue gender

and racial diversity, and equity in higher education. Women believe that sisterhood can be empowering, but we need to create these empowering, mentoring collectives (Gaudette et al., 2018). In the end, our democratic practices, our quest for gender, social, and racial justice, depends on all of us— as individuals and as a collective.

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Women in Higher Education Leadership: Challenges in Hong Kong

Linda Chelan Li & Iris Chui Ping Kam

Expansion of higher education opportunities in recent decades in Hong Kong has led to increasing numbers of women undergraduate students and enhanced women's participation in the workforce.ⁱ Women's employment in higher education institutions (HEIs) gives a different picture, however. Women accounted for just over one third (34.3 percent) of all teaching staff of various grades at the eight public universitiesⁱⁱ in 2019/20, a small rise from 30.0 percent in 2001/02 (Census and Statistics Department, 2020). Women's representation in leadership and decision-making positions remains low.

Indeed, even for participation in the general workforce, women's participation rate drops progressively as age increases, whilst the male participation rate remains steady throughout,ⁱⁱⁱ suggesting the diverse impact of family caring responsibilities and other laden differentiating treatments and stereotypes. This 'exit' of women after ten years of full-time employment may explain why there are far fewer women than men at senior management levels in various work settings, even though there are a comparable number of female to male undergraduates, and in some disciplines, a greater number.

While the diversity and inclusion policy in Hong Kong formally guarantees everyone – regardless of gender, race and age – equal rights and opportunities, and the institutional norms of meritocratic competitiveness seem to suggest that women now compete on equal terms with men, issues of gender equality have persisted. Any discussion of these issues has received only lip service in both HEIs and society at large. For example, the importance of adding a gender perspective in management practices has been trivialized.

Key actors in both public and private sectors similarly uphold a passive attitude on gender issues and prefer not to take any proactive action, stressing that “a compulsory requirement on the gender proportion... would pose practical operational difficulties” (Hong Kong Government, 2015). Institutional infrastructure is also conspicuously deficient. There is a lack of high-quality gender-related data in the public domain, and little enhancement of legislative measures and mechanisms for gender development after the enactment of the Sex Discrimination Ordinance in 1995, and the establishment of the Equal Opportunities Commission in 1996.

We wish to stress that while the underrepresentation of women in higher education leadership roles is in itself, as we shall

review below, a reason for concern and action, the significance of this issue goes beyond sheer numbers and affects the proper functioning of higher education and related processes of knowledge production and distribution. The unique contributions of women as leaders – as knowledge producers and transmitters, mentors and role models, and change agents – should be incorporated for the benefit of the HEI and its role in social transformation.

Hong Kong higher education will need to more proactively address these challenges. In this short contribution, we review the baseline across several key dimensions and offer some initial thoughts on possible directions for new and greater efforts to seek improvement.

Data

Effecting desirable change requires, as a first and essential prerequisite, an adequate understanding of the baseline situation. At present, there is a paucity of quality data and no comprehensive database on female professors and senior leaders in higher education in Hong Kong. The gender breakdown in relation to the statistics of academic and research staff of the eight publicly funded universities was not shown in the annual reports of the University Grants Committee (UGC), which manages the public funding channels of the universities.

For the preparation of this essay, we have requested and sought advice from UGC to locate the data. The data available is however of broad categories and does not inform us of women's representation in higher education leadership positions. We have thus resorted to a manual search through the staff profile sections on university websites in November 2020.

Our findings indicate that women accounted for fewer than one quarter of senior administrative positions (departmental headships, faculty deanships and top management) at eight public universities in Hong Kong. Moreover, the majority of these women in the senior positions occupy the lower echelons of these ranks. For example, among the 13.3 percent of women in top management roles^{iv}, none took up the positions of president or provost. The 24.1 percent of women in deanships are mostly (88.6 percent) in the associate role. Women are even more thinly represented in full professorships, accounting for 10.6 percent of the 362 chaired professors and 17.5 percent of 1,180 full professors across the eight universities, according to our manual count^v. The small number of women full-chair professors in turn limits opportunities for women to advance into formal leadership positions at the universities.

The underrepresentation of women in higher education leadership positions not only means truncated careers for many

women, but it also results in a lack of role models for our students, especially for female students. Moreover, we should stress that such basic data presented requires meticulous efforts in data collection. There is also no historical data available.

An essential and small step towards positive change is to improve the higher education public database of the UGC, so that the cost of research into the women's participation issue may be reduced and that evidence-based discussion may be encouraged. Trend data by unit and rank should be collated regularly and released to the public to facilitate further inquiry into possible pathways to improve the gender situation. The UGC annual reports on higher education institutional performance may also incorporate more gender-related analysis and discussion as part of the enhanced sustainability of the sector.

Legislation

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government has introduced gender mainstreaming in public services since 2002 and encouraged enterprises and non-government services to participate on a voluntary basis. However, gender mainstreaming has not been accorded a suitable priority in the higher education sector.

Based on our manual search, the share of female members on university governing boards (Senates, Councils and Courts) as of November 2020 (at 21.6 percent) has remained more or less stagnant over the years. Similarly, the percentage of female membership of the UGC is 21.7 percent as of the 31st of March 2019. These ratios suggest that HEIs have not responded favorably to policy directives on promoting gender equality.

These ratios in higher education are no better than even those of governing boards of companies listed on the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong (26 percent as of 2015), raising critiques that the higher education sector has failed to lead society in social transformations (Community Business, 2015; Springer, 2016). As women account for over one third of non-professorial grades but only 10 to 17 percent of professors and chaired professors, the need for more proactive action is clear and conspicuous. To address these challenges, universities should, as a start, support and strengthen work-life balance policies to reduce the impact of family caring responsibilities on female staff.

Professional Development for Males and Females

The government has been aware of the necessity to strengthen gender training and public education. Compared to a decade ago, there has been some progress, but there is much room for

further improvement. Gender is not, for example, included in the curriculum of most management programs in Hong Kong universities, though several universities have offered specific gender-related programs. The limited provision of knowledge construction via curriculum development in higher education results in persisting gender stereotypes in terms of the role of women in and outside the home which affects the aspirations of women to leadership positions.

To facilitate further discussion on the topic, universities can join hands to develop a series of knowledge transfer lectures and workshops on good management practices, whether or not there are feminine qualities for leadership among the female senior management, and how this may have affected their career paths. Another possible topic that could be explored in the lecture series is the role of mentoring experiences in facilitating women faculty taking up leadership roles.

Research

Women in higher education leadership positions, including senior administrative positions and professorships, in the eight public universities account for one-fifth of the total positions as of November 2020. Albeit in low numbers, the female higher education leaders' experiences deserve a lot more attention in order to learn about how they have confronted the deep challenges embedded in institutions and systems (Morley, 2013). Studies of these female leaders' real-life experiences will help not only to inspire future leaders, but also form part of the wealth of knowledge on gender and higher education change.

The government and universities will be well served to introduce gender-friendly measures to battle unconscious bias against female staff, to extend educational programs to include gender perspectives across a broader spectrum of subject areas, and to encourage gender as a subject of study. To sum up, while more women than men are now enrolling in higher education as students, in Hong Kong, women are substantially outnumbered in academic employment especially in leadership roles. A ceiling is there, glass or not. This has sparked renewed calls for more research to investigate the possible institutional obstacles.

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ⁱ According to the Census and Statistics Department (2020), the ratio of female to male enrollments in higher education institutions is 984 males per 1,000 females aged 15 and over and 73.5% of the women with university education were economically active in 2019.

ⁱⁱ They are The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), The Hong Kong University (HKU), The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST), City University of Hong Kong (CityU), The Hong Kong Polytechnic University of Hong Kong (PolyU), Hong Kong Baptist University (BU), Lingnan University (LU), and The Education University of Hong Kong (EduU).

ⁱⁱⁱ For example, the labor force participation rate is 87.2% for women aged 25-29 and it drops to 74.6% for women aged 40-44, but it is 91.4% and 95.1% respectively for men in 2019 (Census and Statistics Department 2020).

^{iv} The top management positions refer to presidents/vice-chancellors, provosts, vice Presidents, associate vice presidents and associate provosts.

^v A manual search was conducted during 1-15 November 2020 covering the staff sections of official websites of the 8 public universities in Hong Kong receiving funding from the Universities Grant Council of Hong Kong.

ried by women (National Statistical Bureau (NSB), 2020). In the same year, women accounted for only 32 percent in the total number of university rectors (presidents) (NSB, 2020).

The government of Kazakhstan recognizes the importance of increasing women's participation in leadership. The *Conception for Family and Gender Policy for 2017-2030* envisions the advancement of women leaders in social and political life as one of the main priorities and sets the target of 30 percent participation of women in leadership roles by the end of 2030. The *Plan for Implementation of the Conception for 2017-2019*, however, did not provide any specific sets of actions aimed at advancement of women in leadership in general nor in higher education leadership in particular.

A clearly articulated sectoral plan of actions may be necessary and such a plan could benefit from an in-depth research-based understanding of the experiences of women in higher education leadership. Such understanding is currently limited due to the low policy and scholarly research capacity in the country.

This contribution summarizes some of the key insights from my research on factors contributing to underrepresentation of women in higher education. Some of the insights echo what is known from research in other contexts. However, a number of insights reveal some previously unknown mechanisms suppressing women's advancement to decision-making positions.

Factors Present in Other Contexts

Psychosocial theory (e.g., Eagly & Carly, 2007) is very useful in understanding individual level factors suppressing women's participation in leadership in Kazakhstan. Women are greatly affected by the legacy of the sexual division of labor and the gender role expectations, which support the division. There is a lingering societal pressure on women to marry and to become a mother on time, to play the primary role in child-caring and house-keeping, as well as to be modest, unambitious, caring, serving and compliant with the husband and his extended family. These ideals are inculcated from childhood and push women to put their families ahead of their careers

As a result, women rarely aspire to become leaders, frequently feel unqualified when offered opportunities and sometimes actively reject any promotion offers. Consistent with psychosocial theory, women leaders find it hard to combine their family and professional responsibilities. Performing the double load at home and at work, they experience the feeling of guilt for not sticking to their primary gender role responsibilities and for being "bad" wives and mothers.

Women's Leadership in Higher Education in Kazakhstan

Aliya Kuzhabekova

Introduction

Higher education in Kazakhstan has undergone significant transformations over the thirty years of the country's independence. The change has been driven by the understanding of the country's leadership that higher education plays a key role in economic and social modernization of a post-Soviet state.

While women actively participate in the process of planning and implementation of higher education reforms as faculty, university administrators, researchers, analysts, and the staff of policy-making bodies, they continue to be underrepresented in leadership positions, especially, at the top level of university administration, as well as in municipal and regional departments of education and the Ministry of Education and Science. In 2019, only 24 percent of the total number of leadership positions in Kazakhstani higher education were occu-

Gendered organization theory (e.g., Aiston, 2014; Jones et al., 2015) helps to explain many organizational-level factors creating barriers for women leaders. Some aspects of the structure, culture, and organizational practices in Kazakhstani universities inherently favor men over women. Male colleagues, and frequently women themselves, tend to think about the career of a woman as secondary to motherhood and implement career planning around the cultural timeframes set for women to be actively engaged in childcare. Not surprisingly, many women at childrearing age who participated in my research, reported that they found it difficult to achieve a promotion.

Based on comments from the participants, some colleagues and supervisors believe that men are better cut for leadership roles due to their assumed predisposition for “large picture view and strategic thinking,” while women are culturally viewed as being better in caring roles. To counteract these stereotypes in organizations, women usually become more critical of their own performance. Many women tend to overwork, and those who manage to achieve higher positions demand over-commitment from their subordinates, who then give their women supervisors lower evaluations compared with evaluations provided for men (due to the same very stereotypes the women try to counteract).

Finally, male-dominated power hierarchies at universities use informal communication and decision-making channels, which are largely inaccessible to females. Decisions are “often made in smoking rooms, pubs while drinking a bottle of beer, while playing golf, football or billiards,” all of which constitute “games that only guys play.” These activities often take place outside the normal working hours, when females are expected to be at home performing their family responsibilities.

Professionalization theory (Blackmore, 2014) provides another explanation for why women rarely become rectors and ministers. There exist two career ladders in Kazakhstani higher education: academic affairs/student administration and non-academic administration. One of these is in teaching and academic affairs, while the other one is in administration. Women can choose to climb either of these ladders.

However, the highest rung of the former is the position of a Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs; while the top rungs of the latter going beyond the position of a Vice Rector on any of the administrative issues (Finance, Administration, International Affairs and Research) to the position of a Rector and, ultimately, Minister of Education, are reserved for men. They require the notorious qualities of “strategic vision and global thinking,” as well as likability to external stakeholders, who expect “a male face.” Meanwhile, leadership in academic af-

fairs is often associated with handling lots of paperwork and working after hours, which are rarely desired by men. Unsurprisingly, it is this type of leadership to which women are marginalized.

Factors Not Identified in Other Contexts

One of the key factors shaping the experiences of women leaders in Kazakhstan is a complex combination of conflicting gender role expectations, which arises from the country’s ongoing transition. On the one hand, women continue to be influenced by the emancipatory gender role expectations of the Soviet times. Within the set of expectations, a woman was viewed as an important contributor to both economic and social development; was expected to both work and to serve as the primary caretaker in the family, viewed as a key social institution. As a legacy of the Soviet times, women not only continue to have access to generous childcare leave and parental benefits, but also enjoy societal tolerance to their career aspirations while facing gender-differentiated career tracks with some jobs considered to be more appropriate for women.

On the other hand, independence has brought to Kazakhstan donor-promoted neoliberal economic reforms and the accompanying democratization agenda. The government started to actively pursue the gender equality argument, while access to international mass media led to the spread of the Western beliefs that a woman could choose any profession and any distribution of family responsibilities she wanted. The spread of these beliefs has been particularly notable in private and highly internationalized universities, as well as among younger generations of employees.

Finally, the process of democratization has been accompanied by the concurrent process of national identity formation, which has led to the restoration of the more conservative traditional expectations, highly influenced by Islam. The overlap of the conflicting sets of expectations create both complications and opportunities in the experiences of a woman leader. A woman has to assume multiple personas depending on the specific context and gender-role expectations of those with whom she is interacting.

Another unexpected source of challenges faced by women leaders in Kazakhstan is related to the male-favoring rules of operation of informal partner-client networks in political structures. These networks originate from the Soviet clan networks, which shadowed the formal authoritarian bureaucracy and the traditional kinship networks.

One of the ways in which informal networks affect the experiences of women leaders is via “team leadership.” The rectorship position in Kazakhstan is perceived as a pathway to a political career. Rectors often use it as an opportunity to strengthen the

team of their “loyalists,” who they bring to the organization and who they rely on in their envisioned political career. The key money-related positions at the university, which may enhance wealth or a political resume, are frequently reserved for the members of the rector’s team. Hence, women advance to leadership mostly in the academic track, where they eventually face the notorious glass ceiling.

Moreover, members of the rector’s team are often integrated into external informal networks. Membership in the networks requires engagement in client-patron relations, often associated with corruption or informal gift giving. Even when an ambitious woman is invited by a rector to join his team, she is rarely ready to deal with corruption, finds it difficult to participate in informal celebrations, which take place outside the work hours, and to contribute large gifts necessary for maintaining patron-client relations.

Such a relational and monetary investment go against gender role expectations in Kazakhstan, where women are expected to favor family to work commitments, and where they traditionally perform a subordinate role in family budgeting and financial decision making. In short, the rules of operation of informal exchange networks are also written with a guy in mind.

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Malaysian Women in Higher Education Leadership: Promise Without Progress

Norzaini Azman

Malaysia, a modern, Islamic, multi-racial country, has been considered one of the more progressive states in Asia with regard to women’s progress and achievement in education. Of

the population of 32.5 million, 15.8 million (48.3 percent) are women, and female labor force participation is at 56 percent. Female adult literacy increased from 61.3 percent in 1980 to 93.5 percent in 2018 (UNESCO, 2019). Girls fare relatively well in the school system and generally do better than boys. This gap in favor of girls is noticeable even at a young age, as girls often get better marks than boys in elementary and lower secondary schools. Affordable pre-school and free public school education have significantly bridged gender disparities in access to and success in education (UNICEF, 2019).

In the higher education system, more women than men enroll in college and university programs after completing their high school education. The number of female students rose six-fold from 10.8 to 77.4 million between 1970 and 2008 and twelvefold from 1.05 to 13.3 million between 2009 and 2019. For the past two decades, more women (an average of 65 percent) than men were enrolled at the undergraduate level. In 2019, the majority of students pursuing a master’s degree were women (60 percent), and 47.8 percent at the PhD level were women. Women also comprise a large part of the academic profession in public universities (57 percent).

The expanding presence of women in the country’s education sector is at least partially due to various government interventions in this area. In the Malaysian Constitution, protection of women is legislated in federal and state governments’ policy initiatives. The Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MoWFCDD), established in 2001, aims at elevating women and encouraging development of their potential in various sectors. Every state in Malaysia has an executive councilor or Exco in charge of women’s affairs. Malaysia has a National Women’s Policy which aims to develop and empower women by mainstreaming their interests in achieving gender equality as well as by imposing an official quota of at least 30 percent of the leadership in public and private institutions to comprise women.

However, despite the official stance on improving women’s participation in and progress toward leadership roles, certain challenges persist. An obvious one is that women’s employment earnings are on average still lower than men’s, even with comparable educational qualifications. Furthermore, high rates of women’s participation in higher education have yet to translate into proportional representation in their access to academic leadership and to top decision-making positions in higher education.

Women’s Representation in Higher Education Leadership

As of 2020, only two (10 percent) of the Vice-Chancellors in the 20 public universities are women, including all five of the

most prestigious public research universities. (It is important to note that in Malaysia, the posts of Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Governance Board members, and Chairs of Public Universities are political appointments). This number is actually declining as some pioneering female leaders are retiring. (In 2015, four VCs were women). In addition, a mere 6.2 percent (or four out of 64) currently appointed Deputy Vice-Chancellors are women, and only two of these are positions at the research universities. This is despite the fact that the majority of those research universities' students (62.6 percent) are women and that most female professors (62.7 percent) are at the research universities.

The 2020 figures also show that only one (5 percent) female was appointed to lead the Board of Governors/Directors of a public university, and only 21.1 percent (42) of government-nominated board members are women. Delving deeper into specific top leadership positions such as managing general services, finance, and human resources of public universities, men primarily occupy the position of Chief Finance Officer (60 percent) (only 8 bursars out of 20 are female), and women account for only 25 percent (5 out of 20) of the Chief Administration Officer (Registrar) posts.

Fewer women in leadership positions means that women are underrepresented across all-decision-making fora, including committees, boards, recruitment panels and among the executives. This results in inadequate representation of women's voices, interests and concerns in decision-making. This also means that currently the expertise and skills of a significant part of the higher education workforce are being under-utilized. Thus, the dearth of women's representation at

the top reflects a failure to optimize female talents – of which Malaysia is in dire need. Also, due to this underrepresentation of women, little is known about their unique leadership traits, their journeys to earning their particular leadership roles, and their experience of leading within the Malaysian higher education system.

The minimal representation of women in top-tier managerial leadership positions reflects the existence of the glass ceiling that limits Malaysian women's potential. An explanation for the continuing disproportion of women's representation in academic leadership and high level management roles starts in the disproportionate promotion of women to senior academic ranks.

In 2019, while Malaysian women held more than half of the full-time academic posts in the public universities, and more than 60 percent of all lecturer and below-lecturer positions, they held fewer academic positions than men at the Associate Professor level and above. This means that women are at or over parity across academic ranks except for Professor (see Table 2). A gender gap remains in promotion to academic leadership posts, such that men are more likely to be promoted to professorship than women.

While few women are promoted and flourish as academic leaders, fewer still receive the highest national recognitions in academia as compared to their male counterparts. Synthesis of data from the National Academic Awards listing by the Ministry of Higher Education (2020) shows that fewer women than men have been conferred awards in the last 13 years.

Table 2. Number of academics by gender at Malaysian public universities, 2019

Academic Rank	Male	Female	Total
Professor	1,128 (63.9%)	636 (36.1%)	1,764 (100.0%)
Associate Professor	2,285 (51.4%)	2,162 (48.6%)	4,447 (100.0%)
Lecturer	8,509 (39.2%)	13,223 (60.8%)	21,732 (100.0%)
Language Teacher	317 (28.4%)	801 (71.6%)	1,118 (100.0%)
Total	12,239 (42.1%)	16,822 (57.9%)	29,061 (100.0%)

Source: Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia (2019)

Introduced in 2006, the annual awards cover four broad areas of excellence, namely journal and book publication; product innovation; arts and creativity; and teaching, including two overall excellence awards for young scholars and academic stars from institutions of higher learning, in recognition of their contribution to knowledge creation and transfer at both the national and global levels. The prizes include a trophy, a certificate, and financial rewards ranging from USD 12 thousand to 50 thousand.

Only two out of 14 recipients of the most prestigious academic stars award and two out of five recipients of the young scholars' award have been women. Only five women have been conferred the arts and creativity awards compared to 10 men. Likewise, fewer women have won awards for teaching (10 out of 22 recipients) and publication (7 out of 19 recipients). In the years 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2017, all the awards were won by male academics. In addition, of the five recipients of the Distinguished Professor designation, conferred upon an outstanding senior professor by the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) (2010-2020) in recognition of a professor's outstanding scholarship and expertise as well as inter-disciplinary knowledge, and whose work in public advocacy has impacted society, only one was a woman.

Lingering Issues and Influencing Factors

The limited studies that exist on the topic of women's leadership in Malaysian higher education offer a multitude of factors to explain the gender gap in promotion to academic and managerial leadership in Malaysia, many of which echo those identified in other global contexts.

Firstly, cultural expectations related to family dynamics play a vital role, with female academics expected (and often willing) to take on traditional roles at home, juggling the responsibilities of caregiving and housekeeping with their full-time jobs. Women in a traditional Asian family set-up in Malaysia need to be supported by an enabling environment which will help them to succeed at work, including allowing flexible working hours and family-support programs such as on-site day care, as well as other various women-focused skill-building programs.

Second, cultural norms in behavior may explain, at least in part, why women lack ambition to rise to the top of the ladder and settle for playing second fiddle to men. In a male-dominated Asian society, glass ceilings and walls have been systematically constructed from cultural and religious beliefs, behaviors, and practices that train women to conform to engage in what is considered gender appropriate work and lifestyle. Prejudices against and misconceptions about women's leadership potential and merit are believed to have flourished as a consequence of gender bias and a lack of transparency in

the selection and promotion processes.

More male academics tend to share the values of the new neo-liberal university or greedy institutions than female academics, and by complying with competitive, performative measures, austerity cultures and unmanageably large workloads, male academics are thus more likely to be promoted. Malaysian women's contributions as scholars are often ignored, confirming that gender bias exists in judgements of excellence – even by peers. Women experience isolation caused by lack of access to women peers, role models, and mentors. Women's reluctance to opt for high profile positions or to apply for higher promotions implies that they are invisible to the decision makers.

This leads to another issue regarding sponsorship and recognition from top management as an impediment located in micropolitical power relations, including favoritism and sponsorship, which enable men more than women since men have better social capital in the form of networks and political connections. Since those who hold the authority of appointing the top leadership posts themselves are men, homosociability or cloning is rampant as male decision-makers tend to select 'insiders' and people who are similar to the leaders they are replacing.

Finally, the long-standing association of men with leadership authority alongside internalized oppression suggests that women may not value other women promoted as leaders. This may be due to the misconception about women tending to overstate their assertiveness, autonomy and authority when they become leaders (Morley et al., 2017; Singh, 2008).

Closing Thoughts

Women's representation in the leadership of the Malaysian higher education sector has not reached the critical mass set by the government and is, in fact, lower compared to some other ASEAN countries.

In the last decade, various initiatives and research projects on empowering and advancing women in other sectors have been established (e.g., the Women in Leadership, Malaysia program, supported by the Ministry of Human Resources). However, there is very little attention being paid to this issue within the higher education sector specifically. The Higher Education Leadership Academy (AKEPT) under the Ministry of Higher Education was set up in 2007 to provide leadership development for the top and mid-level management leaders of Malaysia's higher education institutions. However, no signature programming is in place to specifically support and empower women in overcoming challenges in their careers and in accessing leadership posts.

Also, higher education institutions are not facilitating women academics' access to professional development courses or support to increase research productivity and scientific participation (for instance, by making information held by institutions freely available to female academics without having to rely on colleagues or mentors). Thus, progress in women's leadership development has been slower than desired, and in fact the trend of women in leadership has regressed. There remains much to be studied and more to be done with regard to the state of women in the Malaysian higher education system.

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Women's Leadership in Ghanaian Higher Education: A Matter of Tokenism, Equality, or Equity?

Christine Adu-Yeboah, Georgina Yaa Oduro & Dorothy Takyiakwaa

In contrast to much of the rest of the world, where women are now accessing higher education at equal – or sometimes higher – rates than men, higher education in Africa remains highly unequal, when it comes to gender. While female access to basic and secondary education is improving in Africa, challenges in access and participation in higher education persist. Female students remain underrepresented in higher education, and fewer still progress to become academics. This situation reflects in the insignificant number of women that occupy top-level management positions and public life in general (Ohene, 2010) to represent and influence decisions concerning female students and women academics.

The statistics on women academics in Africa generally and Ghana specifically are unimpressive, even though this may not be different from what pertains globally. In Ghana, al-

though females constitute the majority (52 percent) of the population, women constitute only about 20 to 25 percent of all research and academic staff in higher education institutions (HEIs) (Mabokela & Mlambo, 2017). As a result, female representation in leadership positions within higher education is even less evident.

National and Institutional Policies

Women's leadership in higher education is necessary, legally justifiable and has positive impact on development goals (Tsikata, 2009). Indeed, it is conventionally acknowledged that women in leadership positions are better leaders, fair, and high performers. However, there is no gender desk within the Ministry of Higher Education, nor are there any explicit national policies on affirmative action in the sector.

Despite this lack of national policy, many HEIs in Ghana have sought to reduce gender inequalities within higher education by instituting admission quotas and favorable cut-off points for females (Britwum et al., 2014). This effort has however not expanded to hiring and filling leadership positions, nor is it strictly adhered to. Others have set up gender and women's centers, which are presumed to be signs of awareness of the endemic inequalities and hostile environment, and more so, to meet international standards and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. But these too have yet to result in significant change.

Despite the hard work and tenacious advocacy of organizations such as Network for Women's Rights and ABANTU for development, which seek to create awareness and push institutions to adopt actions that increase women's active participation in public life, institutional policy frameworks – such as affirmative action and other gender policies which might drive action – remain elusive in the Ghanaian context.

Contextualizing the Experiences of Female Leaders in Ghanaian Higher Education

Factors accounting for the historical and current state of women's leadership in HEIs are myriad and woven into the fabric of Ghanaian society. The patriarchal nature of Ghanaian society, which assumes that females will assume household and caring duties within the family, inhibits both the educational attainment of females and their ability to progress to leadership roles within the academy. Consequently, males continue to dominate the higher education landscape and occupy key positions. According to Tsikata (2007), male domination, suffused with other sexual and gender dynamics, determines the experiences of the few women who manage to attain high levels in academia. As such, efforts to address these inequalities should consider context and intersectionality to pave the way for women to participate and thrive in leadership.

Therefore, for a deeper contextual understanding of the experiences of women in leadership, it was important, for the purpose of this Brief, to interact with some (five) purposively selected women who are either currently or have in the past occupied middle or top-level management positions in four public Ghanaian universities. The positions they occupied include head of department, dean, registrar, director, and rector/vice-chancellor. The shared experiences of these individuals have informed the discussion that follows.

1. Increasing representation at entry levels and sealing the 'leaky pipe.'

As has already been discussed, fewer women than men access higher education in Ghana. In addition, more women continue to drop out at every stage of the postgraduate hierarchy than men, leaving too few women to assume leadership positions. One of the building blocks of improving women's leadership in higher education is, therefore, simply increasing their numbers at student and faculty entry levels. The use of quotas and admission cut-off points from secondary school onward could, therefore, help to ensure that more women progress beyond the postgraduate level and have the opportunity to access education and skills for leadership.

2. Improving inclusive leadership

According to the women leaders interviewed for this brief, those currently 'included' in leadership positions often feel that they have been given their positions for "tokenistic" reasons (i.e., an effort to "show" gender representation without engaging more deeply with the issue). In their experience, these few leading women recounted feeling almost punished for their meticulousness and high levels of productivity and skill by being made to assume positions with enormous workloads. These responsibilities, coupled with their reproductive and productive roles in Ghana's gender stereotypical culture (and reinforced by a lack of proper mentoring in the workplace), can be crushing – which then discourages other women from assuming leadership roles.

Moreover, the higher education environment is often neither friendly nor accommodating to women leaders, as they frequently lack a free hand to exercise their agentic rights. Women leaders are often bullied and frustrated by their academic colleagues, especially males, thus making their administration an arduous task.

Efforts should be made to (re)kindle women's interest in leadership and improve inclusivity in higher education. This could be achieved through human resource development, leadership programs and robust mentoring, with a special fo-

cus on women's needs. In addition, it is vital that institutions work to remove existing threats and create enablers such as specific protective measures that safeguard women against discrimination, and supportive structures including psychological support, and an ombudsperson(s) that can provide help to women within HEIs.

3. Need for networks and persistent advocacy

The few women who have been leaders in HEIs call for increased exposure to other improved and workable ways of doing leadership, as well as progressive HEI structures and programs to counter negative stereotypes of women leaders and women's leadership. In this connection, publicizing women's leadership in HEIs will be an invaluable avenue to deconstruct tendencies to stereotypical perception. This includes highlighting role models, normalizing women leaders, and countering myths. Through the formation of women's networks and alliances including male allies, the critical mass of women's advocates will gain traction. Many have also succeeded based on the support received from peers in networks, research collaboration, and advocacy.

4. Continuous push for national and institutional policies

Ghanaian HEIs have to draw on the gender agenda, i.e., the internationally growing support for gender equality and emerging perspectives, to improve both participation and impact of women's leadership. Policy guidelines and programs should not be merely diplomatic and imply gender-specific issues. Goals, tasks, deliverables, measurements, monitoring and evaluation, and sanctions should be stated clearly, and not implied. Requisition is needed, for example, to tie implementation to promotion and career advancement, rather than relying on individual moral judgement and effort.

Conclusion

Ghana, like other African countries and developing contexts, suffers endemic inequalities which are evident in the almost non-existent participation of women in higher education leadership. HEIs are known to be meritocratic and open to equal opportunities in theory, but this is not so in practice.

Ghanaian women in higher education face the burden of juggling multiple roles prescribed by cultural norms: being carers, reproductive roles, and additionally competing with their male counterparts to obtain the requisite qualifications, capabilities, and competences to fit into the academe. The few women who have obtained leadership positions in Ghanaian higher education appear to be more so the beneficiaries of tokenism – lacking negotiating power and remaining absent in important decision-making – than true success stories.

Women's active participation in leadership and public life is essential to achieve broad development goals, as helping women to rise benefits both the institution and the entire nation's development. An inclusive environment with key enablers is imperative to achieve this. HEIs should create exemplars of inclusive leadership, not tokenism or checkbox representation. Women in HEIs should constitute a critical mass to demand equity in leadership. The success of today's HEIs lies in designing and implementing context-specific policies for inclusive leadership.

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Reconstructing Notions of Leadership: The Gendered Nature of South African University Spaces

Adèle Moody

The concept of leadership has long been viewed in a traditional sense considering a Euro-American model, that valorizes a "patriarchal, male-gendered perspective" (Moody, 2020). Attributes of self-confidence, speaking with authority, taking initiative in leading a team, and decisive decision-making have been positively viewed when displayed in men, with negative consequences for women (and men) who act outside of perceived gendered norms. We have been socialized to associate such behaviors as characteristically male, as well as with successful leadership traits. The notion is that women generally engender a more caring, service-orientated leadership style, which does not lend itself to a trajectory of successful leadership.

It is these unquestioned and often unchallenged gendered norms that shape societies views of leadership, seeping into our university spaces, and vice versa. They weave a collage of complexities and intricacies of structural and cultural barriers for women aspiring to leadership.

The challenge is to deconstruct these notions of leadership and to embrace women and men as equal to the task. Leadership is not gender-associated, but amongst others traits, is contextually affected, demanding the ability to read, analyze and recognize what can be expected in navigating the higher education milieu. This is reflected more recently in the South African context, in the fallist movement of 2015/2016 (Booyesen, 2016) and the global COVID-19 context which have demanded forms of resilience and agility not necessarily associated with traditional gendered-notions of leadership.

Higher Education Leadership in South Africa

It is a sad reality that in South Africa's public universities, only four (15.4 percent) of twenty-six vice chancellors (the equivalent of university president in the USA) are women. Despite various changes of leadership at public universities over the past decade, this figure has remained static, until this past year (2020), when – finally – two new universities (the University of South Africa and Walter Sisulu University) identified women to serve in this capacity. These changes will bring the figure to six (23 percent), a far cry from the fifty-percent mark as aspired to in all areas of society, by the former South African president Nelson Mandela in 1994.

A desktop review of public South African universities reflects that within the positions of deputy vice chancellors (DVCs) (the second-highest rank of university leadership in South African public universities), there has been more of an increase in certain kinds of leadership positions, with, for example, the proportion of women serving as DVC for Academic Affairs and/or Research rising from 26 percent in 2013 to 52 percent in 2020. (The statistics of these two DVC positions have been combined as these portfolios are often combined in institutions.) This is a positive trend and achievement of note within South Africa, given that only a few years back these positions were mainly occupied by men. However, when including all DVC portfolios in the public higher education sector, the percentage drops to 47 percent as other DVC positions – such as operations, transformation and others – remain male-dominated.

There is also much still to be done in the area of faculty leadership (with approximately 69 percent of deans being male) and registrars (where only about a third are currently women). What is positive in the South African context has been

renewed energy on this issue, as initiated by the late, former first President of a democratic South Africa, Nelson Mandela. President Cyril Ramaphosa has continued to lead from the front in affirming women and recognizing gender equality by appointing women to political leadership positions. Through its current President, South Africa forms part of those nations whose leaders are vocal on women's roles and positions as equal to those of men in our society. This paves the way to challenge the social and cultural constructs that continuously subjugate women and girls and emboldens women to, confidently and without fear of harassment, take up the challenge of leadership.

Universities as Gendered Spaces

The focus on my work in women and leadership in the South African context (e.g., Moodly & Toni, 2017; Toni & Moodly, 2019) has largely focused on the dynamics which impact the progress of South African women into higher education leadership. These challenges are global in nature, impacted by social systems of structured patriarchy and gendered spaces which delineate the traditional roles of men and women in our societies. They are also entrenched at various levels of society, including those described by Nguyen (2013) as the micro (family), meso (work) and macro (societal) levels.

Universities do not exist separately from society. Rather, they are microcosms of the broader society. As such, the cultural and structural barriers manifest within these spaces are often reflections of the broader societal structures, gendered spaces and dominant patriarchal culture found elsewhere in South African society. In South Africa, as is the case in various parts of the African continent and the globe, the 'hegemonic cultural traditions' which dictate the traditional roles of men (mostly and often as 'agentic' and therefore more affiliated with leadership) and women (as 'communal' in their responsibilities to family and community), extend beyond the micro level into the meso and macro levels (Nguyen, 2013).

Conversations that I have had with female DVCs regarding their pathways to leadership have revealed that the inspiration to pursue leadership positions often requires both personal interest in pursuing academic development and active encouragement and affirmation by colleagues. The reflections of these pioneering women indicate that affirmation should not only come from external sources, but must also come from within, with women needing to also affirm themselves and their capabilities. Self-affirmation is necessary for women to transcend the institutional barriers which tend to lock women into "servant leadership" (i.e., caring and service-orientated leadership roles) and/or in middle-management positions.

The Construct of Leadership

The construct of leadership is continuously evolving in the ever-changing higher education landscape. Resilience and agility to adapt to an increasingly volatile and transforming environment has demanded a review of leadership characteristics. Complex circumstances, such as the South African universities' fallist protests of 2015/16 and, more recently, the global COVID-19 pandemic, place enormous pressure on university leadership and expose the need for our sector to innovate. It is no longer sufficient to rely on traditional notions of leadership. Rather, a broader range of competences, including resilience and the ability to pre-empt, read and analyze complex psychological, political and socio-economic contexts, are now necessary in order for university leaders to remain relevant in expanding the frontiers of knowledge.

Many of these 'ways of doing' (e.g., being caring and service-oriented) are traditionally associated with women, rather than men, indicating that the current moment would greatly benefit from an increase in female higher education leaders. Of course, such characteristics are not biologically male or female. Caring, service-oriented traits should not be exclusively associated with women, just as those traditionally associated with men (e.g., decisiveness, confidence, etc.) should not be accepted as exclusively male. Our growing understanding of gender as non-binary further complicates the picture.

However, there is no question that higher education institutions need to embrace leadership traits which have not been traditionally valued in the sector in order to thrive in our ever-changing society. Support for more women in higher education leadership positions would seem to be a necessary component of such a shift.

Conclusion

The trend of an increasing number of South African women as DVCs is encouraging, and provides a platform for the voices of women in executive leadership of our institutions. Equally encouraging is the existence of constructive programs, designed to address the social and cultural constructs that impede women's trajectories to leadership, including the Universities South Africa (USAf) Higher Education Leadership Management Programme (HELM), which supports and proactively facilitates the development of women towards higher education leadership, inviting women in leadership to share their experiences and strategies in navigating these spaces. HERS-SA Academy works in a similar capacity, to advance the "leadership development of women in the Higher Education sector" (HERS-SA, n.d., n.p.). However, more must be done in order to move this agenda forward.

Despite continuing challenges, South Africa has come a long way from the roles that women have traditionally occupied. This is reflected in the leadership roles within the political and higher education domains, where the elevation of women is a powerful message to those who still seek to perpetuate notions of patriarchy and oppression of women. However, more must be done to transform the gendered nature of university spaces. Universities should, ideally, challenge patriarchal and gendered norms, which stereotype the notion of leadership and associated competences in favor of men. Instead, they often serve to perpetuate these very stereotypes. In order to counteract these entrenched barriers to equality within the academy, changes must be made at both the individual and the institutional levels. Women must learn to embrace their self-confidence and assert themselves within university spaces of influence and power, without threat of ostracism or isolation.

At the same time, institutional leadership, both male and female, should exercise their agency in these influential positions, by opening up spaces to debate and by challenging the traditional constructs of leadership as gendered in favor of male-stereotyped qualities. Unless traditionalist thinking within institutions is transformed and women are embraced as competent leaders, who can provide leadership qualities which are necessary for a successful future, universities may find themselves in an upward battle, continuously driven by forces beyond their control. Natural disasters have the uncanny ability to act as catalysts of transformation. However, we should not wait until another global upheaval to make this necessary paradigm shift.

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The Scourge of Gender-Based Violence in Mexican Higher Education

Alma Maldonado-Maldonado & Roberto Rodríguez Gómez

As is the case in many other parts of the world, very few females hold the highest positions at higher education institutions in Mexico (or elsewhere in Latin America). According to the International Institute of UNESCO for Latin American and the Caribbean higher education (IESALC by its acronym in Spanish), only 18 percent of a sample of institutions has a female president. In Mexico specifically, only about 23 percent of institutions represented by the National Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutions (ANUIES) have female presidents (see Table 3). When looking across the entire sector (not just that part of the sector represented by ANUIES), in 2020, there were 21 female university presidents at private institutions and eight at public universities (FIMPES, 2018).

Barriers to Leadership

These limited numbers are due to a number of systemic barriers which affect women aspiring to university leadership positions in Mexico, including stereotypes about female leadership characteristics; a lack of institutional support for family needs (e.g., maternity leave); limited female role models, gatekeepers and informal networks; and unfair expectations vis-a-vis women's academic careers (especially when compared to the demands on men aspiring to similar roles). For various reasons, including family demands and cultural expectations, women tend to receive fewer promotions than men, and this affects their access to leadership roles.

There is a strong “macho” culture in Latin American societies, which privileges traditionally “male” characteristics over those considered traditionally “female”. Men are also more likely than women to work in disciplines that most often lead to university leadership positions, and also to serve on the board of directors which determines university leadership.

Consolidation has been carried out in a variety of ways. One example can be seen in the way the HE network was changed, including the creation of a set of leading universities to serve as the anchors of the HE system. The 21 universities participating in the excellence initiative known as “Project 5-100” (launched in 2013) enjoy additional financial resources and considerable shares of student enrollments, especially at the master's level.

Table 3. Proportion of male and female presidents in higher education institutions that are members of ANUIES

	Male Presidents	Female Presidents
Total Higher Education Institutions: 203	157 77.3%	46 22.7%
Technological Public Institutions: 108	81 75%	27 25%
Public Research Centers: 24	16 66.7%	8 33.3%
Public Universities: 48	40 83.3%	8 16.7%
Private Universities: 23	17 73.9%	6 26.1%

Source: ANUIES, 2021.

Gender-Based Violence and University Protests

Although many of these issues can also be identified in other contexts, a specific challenge facing Mexican higher education is the specter of gender-based violence. Recent statistics tell a terrifying story. Out of 46.5 million women older than 15 years of age in Mexico, 66 percent (about 30.7 million) have faced some type of violence at least once in their lives. Almost 43.9 percent have experienced violence from their husbands or partners, and this situation is worse among women who married before 18 years of age. Finally, in 2019, there were 3,874 cases of feminicides, the largest number of cases in the last 30 years. This amounts to 10 murdered women per day (INEGI, 2020).

In 2019, anger over this issue erupted at university campuses across the country, including the National Autonomous University of Mexico, with female students, faculty and staff (and their allies) shutting down academic operations in order to demand both the right to denounce sexual violence and the establishment of better processes to protect women and punish perpetrators. Anger about the very limited numbers of females in university leadership positions also featured in the protests.

These protests have received responses on three levels:

a) *Institutional*. Most higher education institutions have established mechanisms to treat and to manage cases of sexual violence on campus. In some cases, strategies have been developed to include the gender perspective at institutions, including within the curriculum.

b) *Systemic*. The National Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutions has agreed to establish a general protocol for complaints against gender-based violence

within higher education institutions in order to support institutional processes, contribute to coordinating the efforts of establishing formal complaints with legal consequences, and attend to victims of violence together with federal authorities, the Women's National Institute, the National Justice Department, and the Ministry of Education.

c) *Legal*. The new General Law of Higher Education was approved on April 20th this year. It includes a gender perspective (including dispositions related to fighting gender violence), and stresses the relevance of human rights, particularly the importance of the right to education and prioritizing students.

The New General Higher Education Law

Indeed, there are a number of hopeful signs apparent in the new General Higher Education Law. This legislation is the first in Mexican history that attempts to coordinate and organize the higher education system. Its main purpose is to establish a general and unified framework for higher education institutions, both public and private, that will establish the rights and the obligations of institutions, academics, student communities, the orientation of the public policy agenda and the institutional programs related to this educational level, and the government and governance principles to coordinate the higher education system.

One of the most relevant aspects of this law is the inclusion of a gender approach in several of its chapters. This new law, incorporates general principles of inclusion, equity, non-discrimination, affirmative action policies for the beginning and the end of the programs, a transversal approach to the gender perspective in the curriculum, and several specific dispositions to fight gender violence, among the most important.

Although it is hopeful to see gender playing such a key role in the new legislation, there are some concerns, particularly related to the very small number of women who were consulted during the writing of this law. In fact, it was only in the third stage of the process in which the possibility of including a gender approach was really open in the drafting process. One hypothesis to explain why the writing of the law did not include women until a later stage may be because this is the first time that 50 percent of the Mexican Congress is composed of women. Another explanation may have to do with the protests against gender-based violence that took place in the country in 2019.

Regardless of the explanation, the result is that women were only represented in small numbers during the final stages of the law's development. As such, the law could have included more of an emphasis on gender equality than is currently the case.

Conclusions

Tertiary enrollment of women in Latin America has surpassed the 50 percent mark, including in Mexico. However, the number of female academics, particularly those in higher rank positions, remains unequal to men. There is still a lot of room for improvement.

The normative, legal, and institutional responses against systemic violence against women in tertiary education are only a reflection of what is happening in the larger Mexican society. Although these responses are an important step in the route to solving this complicated situation, they are also insufficient, given that the problems women face go beyond higher education institutions. There is a need for broader societal change in order to truly address the barriers facing women in Mexican higher education today.

However, at the same time, we must acknowledge the progress that has been made. Women today receive numerous supports, many of which were not in existence for previous generations. Universities have made significant changes to their structures, including moving towards more democratic methods for electing university leaders, and gradually promoting increasing numbers of women to leadership roles. There is, therefore, no point of returning to where the country used to be. New generations of Mexican women will never stop striving for change.

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Breaking the Barriers for Women in Higher Education: An Australian Perspective

Amalia Di Iorio

Gender equality has been high on the agenda of Australian universities for over three decades. During this time much has happened. There is clear evidence the sector has been highly responsive to workplace gender equality legislation. Universities have developed both institutional and cross-institutional programs to support women in pursuing their leadership aspirations and attaining their career goals. The sector's peak body, Universities Australia, actively promotes gender equality in higher education through Universities Australia Women. Institutions seek recognition of their efforts in closing the gender gap through international rankings, awards and accreditations.

So where are we today? The good news is that in Australia we have almost achieved gender balance, with women representing 48 percent of all academic staff in 2019. This is a significant increase from 35 percent in the late 1990s. The not so good news is that some of the long-standing challenges faced by women within the sector still exist, and these have led to a persistent underrepresentation of women in leadership positions.

Women in the Majority, But Not at the Top

Australia's university sector is highly feminized. While female representation in the academic workforce has only approached a balanced position in recent years, the proportion of women amongst non-academic staff has been heavily tilted the other way, climbing at a steady pace from 60

percent in 1999 to 67 percent in 2019. Moreover, women represent 60 percent of students in higher education, and they outnumber men in higher education completion rates. Yet, this phenomenon is not reflected at the executive level of universities.

Across the thirty-nine Australian universities, eleven vice-chancellors/presidents and ten chancellors are female. Fifteen Australian universities have never had a female vice-chancellor, and five have never had a female chancellor or vice-chancellor. These statistics are unsurprising when considering the glacial pace at which women have progressed in attaining professoriate positions, which forms the traditional pathway to the most senior executive roles within a university. Being a professor is, in most cases, a requirement for taking up a vice-chancellor or deputy vice-chancellor role. However, in 2019, only 36 percent of all female academics in Australia held professor or associate professor positions. This proportion has increased by about 10 percent across each decade over the past 30 years.

Breaking the Barriers

It is well documented that women, in general, do not see themselves as leaders. A recent KPMG (2015) survey of 3000 US women reported that about 60 percent found it difficult to see themselves as a leader, and many were cautious about taking steps toward leadership roles. A lack of confidence, encouragement, connections and/or opportunities were cited as possible reasons for these findings. Women are less likely to apply for a promotion, they are less likely to ask for a pay rise (and when they do, they ask for considerably less than male counterparts), and they are less likely to believe they will succeed in achieving their goals.

Against this backdrop, women in academia have the added complexity of dependence on research performance for progressing up the leadership ladder, which includes attracting external research funding. This is often a dilemma for women, since it is women who are more inclined to take career breaks to raise a family or for other caring responsibilities, and therefore interrupt and retard their research output.

Their productivity cycle is likely to be severely impeded through a diminished number of publications, and therefore diminished opportunities to apply for coveted research funding. Disrupted access to research networks and colleagues further exacerbates the problem and contributes to slower career advancement. In addition, women typically remain responsible for day-to-day childcare and household duties which consume time and energy. If women return to work on a part-time basis, much of their time is likely to be teaching classes.

In response to these challenges, Australian universities have developed a variety of institutional programs to support female academics who have had career interruptions. There is a particular focus on STEM disciplines, where women are hugely underrepresented. At the national level, the Australian government funds the Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) Athena SWAN program, and 32 universities have been awarded accreditation under the Athena SWAN Charter. Further, the Australian Research Council (ARC) is working with the higher education sector to develop measures to achieve gender parity in research funding applications, while the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is developing strategies to improve the retention and progression of women in the health and medical research workforce.

As a country, Australia has been relatively progressive in addressing gender equality issues in the workplace. The Australian government passed the first piece of legislation to address gender discrimination in employment in 1986. The current legislation, the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012, is administered by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) and measures employers against six standardized gender equality indicators. These include the gender composition of an organization's workforce and governing body, remuneration of both men and women, support for employees with family and caring responsibilities through flexible working arrangements, and levels of sex-based harassment or discrimination. These legislative frameworks have provided clear guidelines for Australian universities to develop strategies and initiatives to address gender inequity and support successful women's leadership both at the institutional level and as a sector.

Redressing longstanding barriers in the recruitment, promotion and retention of women is at the forefront of this work. Universities Australia Women, led by senior academic women, provides support to universities through the development of resources in areas including recruitment, mentoring, and sponsorship, and in tackling cognitive biases, such as unconscious bias. Moreover, there are many examples of academic promotion support programs, women in leadership programs and mentoring schemes across the Australian tertiary sector.

In some cases, universities have applied for an exemption to the legislation in order to advertise jobs for female-only applicants in a bid to lift the representation of women within their workforce. Some male vice-chancellors have become strong advocates of gender equality, inclusive workplaces and advancing women in leadership by becoming members of groups such as the Champions of Change Coalition. Thirteen of the 39 Australian universities hold a WGEA Employer of Choice for Gender Equality citation award.

Recent Threats

However, despite these significant accomplishments, recent events have served as an important reminder that progress is not guaranteed and advances are not always sustainable. The effects of COVID-19 on Australian universities – particularly the almost immediate drop in international enrolments and the rapid “pivot” to online delivery for all programs – have had a devastating effect on the academic workforce.

Compounding the impact are the added responsibilities of childcare, home schooling and other family obligations, responsibilities which continue to fall disproportionately on women. As a result, female academics in Australia have suffered significant setbacks as a result of the pandemic. A recent Australian study indicates, for example, that women have experienced: (i) excessive workloads in teaching, administrative duties and caring/family responsibilities; (ii) lower levels of academic mentoring than men; and (iii) little opportunity for research throughout the pandemic period (Duncanson et al., 2020). Such changes in productivity will undoubtedly have a negative consequence on the careers of academic women.

Further, a report by the Australian Academy of Science (2020) finds job insecurity a more troubling issue for women in STEM than for men during this time. With high proportions of women employed on short-term contracts and in casual jobs, they are more likely to be threatened by cuts to research and teaching jobs. The report also says female academics in Australia have taken up a disproportionate share of the work transferring programs online, and they have assumed the vast majority of domestic work such as home-schooling children.

The overwhelming fear within the sector is that such regression in the progress made in gender equality and in actively supporting career advancement for women in higher education may take years to reverse. Understanding the critical nature of this unprecedented situation, and in a show of solidarity and commitment, a number of Australian universities (but not all) and sector partners signed the Australian Higher Education Joint Sector Position Statement on ‘Preserving Gender Equity as a Higher Education Priority During and After COVID-19’ in 2020.

The largely positive record of progress on gender equality in Australia’s university sector is now at a critical juncture. In addition to the direct effects of the pandemic, the absence of international students has severely damaged the sector’s business model of the last twenty years. As universities make hard choices in response, their choices about where spending and support are maintained will provide a very clear signal of the underlying commitment to gender equality across the sector.

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Women in Academia in Finland – A Success Story?

Terhi Nokkala

One of the defining images about the current COVID-19 pandemic is a quote by Damian Barr¹, summarizing the essence of his poem, released in the middle of the pandemic. *We are not all in the same boat. We are all in the same storm. Some are on super-yachts. Some have just the one oar.* While this stanza was written to describe the experiences of different countries, professions, and socio-economic groups in the pandemic, it can also be read as a metaphor of academia, in which different people sail or row on very different boats. The more one is burdened by precarious employment, institutionalized sexism and racism, or caregiver responsibilities, and the less support one has from networks, mentors, and employers, the smaller and more rickety one’s boat is going to be.

One of the global success stories of women’s equality is Finland, a country of 5.5 million inhabitants in Europe, north of the 60th latitude. Finland is considered one of the most equal societies in the world by the European Gender Equality Index, one of the best countries for mothers according to Save the Children’s *State of the World’s Mothers* report, and one of the most competitive societies in the World Economic Forum’s competitiveness ranking (Husu, 2019). But, how does Finland fare in terms of fostering gender equality in academia?

Finnish Higher Education in Brief

The Finnish higher education sector comprises 14 universities and 24 universities of applied sciences (UAS). While the history of the university sector dates back to the establishment of the Royal Academy of Turku (nowadays, University of Helsinki) in 1640, the universities of applied sciences were established only in 1992, and do not confer doctoral degrees. The university sector hosts 77,000 students at bachelor-, 59,000 at master- and 18,000 at doctoral-levels; while the

UAS host 131,000 students at the bachelor-level and 16,000 at the master-level. Both sectors are publicly funded, and do not charge tuition fees in degree programs taught in the national languages Finnish and Swedish. In 2016, tuition fees were introduced for non-European Union students in English taught programs. Throughout this contribution, I will focus specifically on the university sector.

Finnish Figures in European Comparison

In 2020, nearly 55 percentⁱⁱ of all students in Finnish universities were women; and the female majority applied to students in bachelor, master, as well as doctoral programs. While the share of women is almost equal to or even slightly larger than that of men in the lower stages of an academic careerⁱⁱⁱ, women consistently lag in Grade A positions in most European countries. While the EU average is 23.7 percent (European Commission Directorate-General Research & Innovation (ECRI), 2019, p. 119), in Finland, women represent 32 percent of the full professors, up from 25 percent in 2010, but still falling short of parity between men and women.

The women to men ratio of corresponding authorship in all fields of research & development in 2013-2017 was 0.62 to 1; higher than the EU average of 0.47 to 1 and the global average of 0.46 to 1 (ECRI, 2019, p. 139). While fewer female than male team leaders applied for research funding from the Academy of Finland in 2017, the most important Finnish funding body for scientific research, female team leaders were relatively more likely to receive it. In this again the situation for women in Finland compares favorably against the average in EU countries, where the success rate for male team leaders was higher (ECRI, 2019, p. 173).

The recent data from over 800 member universities of the European University Association (EUA, 2020) show that only about 15 percent of the rectors are female; and the figure among vice rectors is nearly 30 percent. In 20 of the 48 countries from which the EUA membership is drawn, there are no female rectors among EUA member universities. In Finland, currently 29 percent^{iv} of university rectors and 38 percent of vice-rectors are women. However, the percentages should be treated with caution. Given that Finland only has 14 universities, changing one individual constitutes a significant change in the percentage of women as university leaders.

Equal Academia Requires an Equal Society

The success story for women in any field starts with a society that ensures a safe and healthy childhood and financially accessible education from primary school to university. Given that pursuing a doctoral degree and embarking on an academic career often coincides with establishing a family,

affordable and easily available childcare is one of the key societal services, and female academics in Finland do benefit from such provision. Children in Finland have had a subjective right to fulltime affordable day care since 1995 (with a brief period in the late 2010s where the subjective right only applied to half-a-day care); this means that the public authorities have an obligation to provide a full-time day care place for every child, regardless of the parents' income. The maximum monthly charge for day care is less than 300 EUR per child (median gross income in Finland in 2019 was 3140 EUR per month); and progressively lower if the parents' income is low or if the family size is big.

In addition, female academics in Finland have benefited from general public support for the higher education sector. Although Finnish universities are increasingly influenced by the global neoliberal trend of academic capitalism and accelerated performativity pressures, they have to date been largely cushioned by primarily public funding, and a lack of dependence on tuition fees. This has enabled universities to remain humane employers, in terms of expectations around workload, etc., and, as a result, has allowed women to have families regardless of pursuing an academic career.

The Finnish legislation similarly supports equality in academia. Equality between men and women, as well as other forms of non-discrimination, are enshrined in the Finnish constitution as well as in 60 other acts and regulations^v. The Finnish *Act on Equality between Women and Men* was passed in 1987 and amended several times. It contains provisions that obligate, for example, educational institutions to advance equality.

The Ministry of Education and Culture ensures that higher education institutions fulfil their equality obligations. Each university is required to have an equality and non-discrimination plan, which is reviewed in the performance negotiations between the university and the Ministry. The plans typically contain provisions for equal recruitment, career development, salary, reconciliation of work and family life, and prevention of discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying. Equality and non-discrimination activities are also one of the aspects evaluated in the Finnish Education Evaluation Council's quality audits, which all institutions undergo every six years (Tanhua, 2020).

Future Challenges

The pandemic year 2020 saw the 150th anniversary of the first woman in Finland entering the university – Maria Tschetshulin, the daughter of a wealthy Russian-born merchant. In 1870, she was granted a dispensation from her sex to study at the Imperial Alexander University (nowadays, University of Helsinki), but upon her father's death in 1873 she discontinued her studies to take care of the ailing family business.

It took another nine years until the first woman, Emma Irene Åström, graduated from the university. Despite the progress in the past 150 years, there are still many challenges.

Career progression in Finland has typically not been based on individual merit, but on open competition for vacant positions on every career step. The introduction of tenure tracks in the past decade, still constituting a very small minority of academic positions, have sparked fresh concerns about whether gender equality will be sidelined by the new demands. To boost internationalization of scholars in Finland, the Academy of Finland has started to require a mobility period before one is eligible to apply for postdoctoral or senior scholar funding, leading to unintended consequences for gender equality.

The publicly funded Finnish universities have largely been sheltered from the pandemic woes of tuition-fee dependent universities around the world. However, they may yet encounter funding cuts later on, if the public tax revenue shrinks due to the economic downturn resulting from the pandemic; and this may sour the atmosphere and slow down equality development.

The strong focus on gender equality has perhaps overshadowed other forms of equality and non-discrimination, such as equality regardless of socio-economic and cultural background, language, immigration background and ethnicity. Finnish universities are not very sensitive to the hardships faced by the international academics, who often have worse career trajectories than Finnish-born academics. As Finland has only relatively recently acquired a more sizable community of first and second generation Finns, their experiences in universities are similarly not yet recognized, and discussion on intersectionality remains scarce.

Therefore, while gender equality in Finland seems to be in relatively good shape, there is no room for complacency. The aforementioned recent developments, and other potential threats, like the global rise of neo-conservatism, may also spur new challenges for women's equality in academia.

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- ⁱ <https://www.damianbarr.com/latest/https/we-are-not-all-in-the-same-boat>
- ⁱⁱ The latest Finnish student and staff statistics are collected from Vipunen - Education Statistic Finland database.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Share of women in academic positions: Grade D 47 percent; Grade C 51 percent, Grade B 48 percent (Vipunen, 2020). Share of Women in academic positions according to EU country average: Grade D 47 percent; Grade C 46 percent, Grade B 40 percent (ECRI, 2019). Grade D corresponds with positions not requiring a PhD; including salaried doctoral researcher positions; Grade C with postdoctoral or a lecturer positions. Grade B corresponds with senior researcher or senior lecturer positions and Grade A with full professorship.
- ^{iv} The data about rectors and vice-rectors were collected from university websites on 20.2.2021
- ^v <https://thl.fi/fi/web/sukupuolten-tasa-arvo/lait-ja-politiikka/tasa-arvoon-liittyva-saantely>

Leading Women's Colleges and Universities Around the World

Kristen A. Renn

Women's colleges and universities (WCUs) around the world have historically been seen as opening doors to female students when they were denied access to postsecondary education. They have also, however, been key locations for women to take up leadership as presidents, chancellors, rectors, provosts, and department chairs. From 1837, when educator Mary Lyon founded Mount Holyoke Female Seminary (now Mount Holyoke College) in the United States, pioneering women educators have excelled in leading WCUs. Today, WCUs offer challenging and fulfilling leadership roles for female academics at a time when women's higher education is no longer a rarity. In most world regions, the challenges facing leaders of WCUs are less often related to the right of female students to go to university and more often about sustaining single-gender colleges and universities as counter-cultural institutions in largely co-educational postsecondary landscapes.

Women's Colleges and Universities (WCUs)

WCUs are postsecondary institutions whose mission is to educate female students. Sometimes called single-sex or single-gender institutions, WCUs have a rich history in North America, Europe, Australia, and East Asia where they were founded to open higher education to female students beginning in the 19th century. In these regions, WCUs have decreased in number over time, as state-supported institutions

opened as co-educational and former men-only institutions opened their doors to women. In the US, for example, there were over 275 women's institutions in the mid-20th century, but now there are fewer than 35; all are private, with small enrollments (a few hundred to a few thousand students), and usually feature a liberal arts curriculum (Renn, 2020).

WCUs are a critical point of access to postsecondary education for women in the Middle East and Central Asia, where culture and custom largely proscribe mixed-gender education (Renn, 2020). WCUs are nearly invisible in South and Central America. A few women's institutions have opened in Africa in the past few decades to offer specialized curricula (e.g., medicine, agriculture, education, business, STEM) in efforts to promote gender equity more broadly, though co-education remains by far the predominant model. India offers a counterexample in that both co-education and single-sex education are common postsecondary models; in this setting, the WCU sector is thriving, with over 4500 colleges and universities exclusively for female students, 30 percent of which take a vocational focus (India Today Web Desk, 2016). Around the world, then, there are WCUs in need of executive leadership.

Status of Female Leadership of WCUs

In interviews with 20 leaders of WCUs, I came to understand the ways that single-sex institutions provided opportunities that were not open to women in the co-educational sector. While there are men who are founders, rectors, presidents, and chancellors of WCUs, these institutions offer unique opportunities for women leaders. It is difficult to ascertain worldwide statistics on the genders of WCU executives, but in my observation there are regional trends. I met no men leading WCUs in North America, Europe, Australia, or East Asia. In the Middle East and Africa, there were male chancellors or rectors, with cabinets of powerful vice-chancellors (VCs) or vice-rectors (VRs) that were majority female. In South Asia, there was a mix, with female leaders at more elite institutions and male leaders at more regional WCUs, and in the Middle East and Africa, where there were male senior executives, there was also a cabinet of powerful female leaders. These trends make some sense in the larger social context in which these WCUs operate, of somewhat traditional gendered divisions of labor: men represent the institution to the outside world, government, industry, and so on, but women are responsible for leadership of divisions within the institution, resembling the historic "separate spheres" of gendered labor (see Kerber, 1988).

One mechanism through which WCUs generate opportunities for women leaders is through the tradition – not unique to WCUs – of hiring graduates of an institution as faculty who then rise to academic leadership (Renn, 2014). Alternatively,

one WCU may hire an alumna of another WCU, recognizing her connection to the tradition of women's education, thus creating a network of allegiances among sister institutions that hire one another's graduates as faculty and leaders. These traditions of hiring one's own or from a social network are not new to higher education; they are the processes through which men have retained a disproportionate share of leadership roles over time. WCUs offer a counterinfluence by creating their own networks of influence and opportunity.

Even when WCUs do not hire their own or other WCUs' alumnae, they often purposefully seek out women as institutional leaders. This effort to provide students with role models of women leaders is part of the explicit agenda of many WCUs to cultivate leadership among students (Renn, 2014). Facing sexism and obstacles to advancement at formerly men's and other co-educational institutions, female academic leaders may find more doors open to them at WCUs. Once in leadership positions at WCUs, these senior and cabinet-level executives face less sexism from faculty, students, and governing boards than they do at co-educational institutions that remain dominated by male leaders (Renn, 2014). In the same way that students understand that they are expected to step into leadership, women in senior leadership at WCUs quickly ascertain that there is no one else to step forward regardless of the task at hand, even if it would typically be seen as a "man's job" (for example, overseeing campus construction, negotiating major financial deals, dealing with hostility or threats).

Another way WCUs expand opportunities for women leaders is by purposefully recruiting and retaining gender diverse faculties. Academic leadership pipelines often start with faculty, and cultivating leadership among diverse faculty opens future opportunities. As with campus leaders, worldwide statistics on faculty gender diversity are difficult to ascertain, but UNESCO (2020) estimates that about 43 percent of tertiary academic staff are female. By contrast, the WCUs I have studied employ disproportionate percentages of female faculty, for some of the same reasons they hire female leaders (i.e., hiring alumnae, trying to offer role models to students). Hiring and promoting female faculty, investing in their leadership capacity, and calling on them for leadership roles, such as department chair, sets them on a path toward academic leadership.

Finally, WCUs contribute to the overall presence of women in postsecondary leadership. Presidencies of elite women's colleges in the US, for example, have become training grounds for women who go on to presidencies of prestigious coeducational universities (e.g., Brown University and Duke University) and national higher education associations (Association of American Colleges and Universities or AAC&U).

Conclusion: WCU Leaders Working Against the Tide

Wherever they are, WCUs are in some way countercultural. They are single-sex institutions in regions where co-education heavily dominates (Africa, Australia, East Asia, Europe, North America, South Asia) or they are fighting for wider acceptance of women's higher education (some cultural groups in Central Asia, Middle East, South Asia). To lead a countercultural institution while also dealing with the issues (for example, financial sustainability, quality of education, competition for faculty and resources) facing every other postsecondary leader is a particular challenge. WCU leaders provide access for female students where necessary and maintain the particular roles of WCUs in providing equitable learning environments, promoting leadership development for students and faculty, and contributing to gender equity in local communities (Renn, 2014).

Women leading WCUs also serve an historical and contemporary role as symbols of possibility in gender equity in postsecondary education (Renn, 2014). They are visible reminders that women can and do lead in all sectors of society, and that they are invested in maintaining WCUs as pathways to leadership for other women.

Policy interventions often include implementation of forward thinking/looking curricula, with attention paid to postsecondary preparation, focused streaming in late secondary school that allows students to choose traditional or vocational tracks, and investments in teacher training and the teaching profession.

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Women's Leadership in a Diverse Higher Education Landscape: The Case of Indonesia

Dorothy Ferary

Indonesia is one of the most complex national contexts in the world. The world's fourth most populous country (with an estimated 269 million people in 2020), Indonesia boasts a high degree of socio-cultural diversity, with more than 350 ethnicities and 700 languages. It is home to the world's largest Muslim population and is also the world's third largest democracy.

These complexities are mirrored in the country's education system, including the higher education sector. The formal education system in Indonesia is unusual in that both secular and religious institutions have equal standing. Religious and non-religious institutions offer both religious and secular studies. This differs from other majority Muslim-populated countries, where Islamic institutions often function primarily to train clerics. Two government bodies oversee education in the country: The Ministry of Education and Culture, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Over eight million students are registered at some 4,670 Indonesian higher education institutions (HEIs), and, in 2018, 52 percent of these students were female. In the same year, of the 3 percent of students reported as dropping out of their courses, 60 percent were male (MoRHE, 2018). Females in Indonesia are, therefore, more likely to participate in higher education and to finish their courses, once they enroll. However, despite these encouraging statistics, gender equality has not yet been achieved in Indonesia, as the high proportion of female students in higher education is reflected neither in the faculty ranks nor in the executive leadership of HEIs across the country.

Barriers to Women's Careers in HEIs

In Indonesia, academic career advancement is based on accumulated credits obtained through (i) education/teaching, (ii) research, (iii) community service, and (iv) other educational activities. In addition to these credits, there are also minimum requirements for working experience and publications. In theory, career advancement is based on merit, allowing for equal opportunity. However, in practice, most of the more senior academic positions are held by men. This can also be seen in managerial positions, where most of the deans and rectors are male. This is due to a variety of factors, such as patriarchal culture, social norms, and religion (Dzuhayatin & Edwards, 2010).

Indonesian society tends to favor men in leadership positions. This allows masculine models of leadership and values to dominate decision-making processes. As women have limited say in these decision-making processes, their career advancement is hindered. In the public sphere, this can be seen from the shortfalls in various policies and practices, for example, the lack of childcare service provision and fewer opportunities for women to participate in capacity building training. In the domestic sphere, men are invariably seen as the family's main breadwinner and are involved very little in domestic work. Women are expected to carry this burden. Women therefore see themselves as the second income earner, often receiving less support from their husbands and family members to pursue their career. This influences their future visions and holds back their aspirations for career advancement. Once the husband has a high enough income, the wife is less likely to continue to pursue her career.

The social norms that dictate women's position in domestic roles have also negatively impacted their career trajectory, even in a workplace that values meritocracy. Besides teaching, academics are now expected to be engaged in global competition. More international research and publications mean setting aside additional time to look for funding, conducting collaborative research, and disseminating this research internationally; time which female academics often do not have because of their domestic duties. Furthermore, in order to climb to more senior positions, academics are also required to complete a PhD. The time spent and the cost to do a PhD have also put women off as they need to put their family's needs first. Thus, the combination of pressures from their double roles hinders their ability to engage fully in their academic work.

The gap between male and female leadership is particularly significant within Islamic HEIs. Some conservative groups believe that women should not become leaders, based on the interpretation of a Quran verse (an-Nisa verse 34) and a Hadith from Abu Bakrah. Although this view is being questioned by modernist and neo-modernist Muslim scholars (Dzuhayatin & Edwards, 2010), only a few Islamic HEIs have elected female rectors. These exceptions include Novelti of Muhammadiyah University West Sumatra (2015-2019), Amany Lubis of Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (2019-2023), and Nyanyu Khodijah as the rector of Raden Fatah State Islamic University Palembang (2020-2024).

Aceh province, the only province in Indonesia that applies Sharia laws, has also seen progress in female academic careers. Marniati, the rector of the Ubudiyah Indonesia University, has been leading the institution since 2014. In 2015, Ar-Raniry Islamic State University appointed 37-year-old Eka

Srimulyani as a professor, making her the youngest female professor at the institution. In 2019, Islamic Higher Education Institution Meulaboh elected Inayatillah as its first female rector. Syiah Kuala University first appointed a female professor in 2011. As of 2019, 12 (16.7 percent) out of the 72 professors at the institution are female.

Addressing Barriers to Women's Careers

While Indonesia is still a long way from achieving gender equality in the workforce, it is important to acknowledge female leadership's progress in its HEIs. This progress is not just at religious HEIs, but also in secular institutions. In the late 2000s, Badia Perizade of Sriwijaya University and Tian Belawati of Open University were elected for two periods at their respective public universities. Being a rector does not mean that they were automatically accepted. According to Perizade (2015), she had to work hard to earn the trust of her staff. Her inclusive, communicative, and creative leadership, as well as her proven track record as a rector, were able to justify her second election.

Recently there are more women who have been elected as rectors at various public universities. For example:

- Agnes Kusmayati (Yogyakarta Institute of Arts, 2010-2014)
- Dwikorita Karnawati (Gadjah Mada University, 2014-2017)
- Ellen Kumaat (Universitas Sam Ratulangi, 2014-2022)
- Dwia Pulubuhu (Hasanudin University, 2018-2022)
- Rina Indiasuti (Padjajaran University, 2019-2024)
- Reini Wirahadikusumah (Bandung Institute of Technology, 2020-2025)
- Sri Mulyani (Singaperbangsa Karawang State University, 2020-2024)

A similar trend can also be seen in private HEIs. For example:

- Emmy Erwina (Harapan University Medan, 2019-2023)
- Harvard graduate Risa Santoso (Malang ASIA Institute of Technology and Business, 2019-2023) (who at the age of 27 became Indonesia's youngest rector)
- Meilinda Nurbanasari (National Institute of Technology, 2020-2025)

This progress can be attributed to the recent normalization of career women compared to twenty or thirty years ago. Society is now more open and supportive of the idea of working women. As a result, some women academics receive support to pursue their career from their family members

(Perizade, 2015) and their workplace (Perizade, 2015; Sakhiyya & Locke, 2019).

A number of initiatives have helped to make this change possible. For example, in 2015, the USAID Higher Education Leadership and Management project launched the Women's Leadership in Higher Education Special Initiative, which organized workshops, forums, courses, and research collaborations. It also led to the establishment of the Network of Women's Leadership in Indonesian Higher Education (USAID, 2016).

The Indonesian government has also included gender mainstreaming in its agenda since 2000, and since 2003 there has been a 30 percent female quota in the country's parliament, allowing females to voice their concerns on government policies. The government has also recently invested in higher education by offering various scholarships for academics (e.g., the Indonesian education endowment scholarship, or LPDP, which provides a specific full scholarship for academics to continue their PhD in Indonesian HEIs or abroad; Beasiswa 5000 Doktor Kemenag, which aims to create 5,000 PhDs among its Islamic HEIs). However, to date, there is no specific provision or quota for women to access this funding.

Affirmative action, such as a gender-specific budget to ensure that women are able to pursue PhD studies, would help to improve the current gender imbalance within the faculty ranks. There is also much more that Indonesian HEIs could do to more actively support female academics through gender-inclusive policies.

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- i The verse begins with "Men are qawwamun in relation to women". The word *qawwamun* comes from the root word *qawwam* means caretaker, guardian, protectors.
- ii The Hadith is the collected traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, based on his sayings and actions.
- iii A Hadith from Abu Bakrah mentioned "A nation that is led by a woman will not succeed".

Black Women and Intersectionality in US Higher Education

Ashley Gray

Since the inception of the "women's movement" in the United States, the experiences, needs and concerns of White women have been foregrounded and disproportionately represented, relegating the complex experiences of those with multiple marginalized identities to the sidelines. Higher education has been deeply implicated in this struggle from the outset – both due to its location as a "training ground" for women and those who identify as feminists and due to its own struggles with both gender and racial equality.

Intersectionality in the Lived Experiences of Black Women in the US

In 2020, the United States celebrated the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, the historic legislation that granted women the right to vote. Although this is, of course, an important milestone to celebrate, it does not represent a shared experience, as Black women were not able to access our newfound right to vote until the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Indeed, Black women were not even welcomed by the suffragette movement, despite attempts at participation by Black women, particularly Black women university students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), such as Howard University.

As a result, our Black women foremothers – educated within US institutions of higher education – were relegated to silence and invisibility within the history of the women's rights movement in this country, despite suffering both denigration by men, including those within the Black community, and state sanctioned violence at the hands of White vigilantes (women and men). This history reminds us of the tightrope that Black women face, as we struggle with the sense that we must choose between our race or gender (among other identities).

This tension between identities has been a focus of scholarship for well over a century (from Anna Julia Cooper's *A Voice from the South* in 1892 to The Combahee River Collective in 1977 (Combahee River Collective, 2015) to the more recent [*But Some of Us Are Brave* in 2015]). The concept highlighted by all of these important works – that of intersectionality – highlights the multiple oppressions faced when individuals have more than one historically minoritized identity.

While the term intersectionality has been applied widely, it is important to note that it was created explicitly to explore the lived experiences of Black women, living at the intersection of

gender, race and other identities. In her review of three legal cases, Crenshaw (1989) coined the term to describe her clear findings that single-issue analyses place Black women in either the category of woman or Black, thus not acknowledging how both identities (among others) create a dual oppression for Black women. More than 30 years later, Black women are still fighting to bring awareness to our experiences of gendered racism.

Implications for Higher Education

This fight continues, even within the very institutions that fostered the activism of early Black suffragettes, as Black women remain woefully underrepresented within the leadership of US institutions of higher education. As of 2021, only 30 percent of college presidents are women. That in itself is problematic, but when race is added as an intersectional category, the problem becomes much more stark, with only 5 percent of college presidents in the US being women of color (and a very small number of those being Black).

The figures are no better within the faculty ranks. In 2018, Black women held just 3 percent of all faculty roles and were most often represented in non-tenure positions. While in these academic roles, Black women are subjected to labor that does not translate to value for the tenure and promotion process. Black women are also more likely to serve in administrative roles. All of these trends relate to the overall figures on leadership, given that most university presidents obtain their positions by ascending through the traditional faculty pathway.

Other inequities also exist, alongside the limited opportunities for career advancement. For example, pay remains a major area of inequality, with Black women being paid on average 94 cents per every dollar that a White male makes. Black women are also the carriers of the largest bulk of student loan debt in the sector (AAUW, 2020a). This debt has been exacerbated by the global pandemic of COVID-19 which has disproportionately impacted all women, but with particular emphasis on Black women (AAUW, 2020b).

My own work with Black women in academia has also highlighted a number of psychological burdens, including frequently feeling isolated and invalidated within their roles and perceiving that any mistake would be magnified and exaggerated, as compared to mistakes made by others in similar roles. The implications of these trends are significant, for Black women students who lack role models, for the institutions that are failing to benefit from Black women's leadership, and for society, which deserves a higher education sector that privileges different priorities and foregrounds different values.

Much more needs to be done in order to rectify this imbalance. To start, we must learn to listen to Black women. It remains the case that the majority of research on women in higher education centers the experiences of women who self-identify as White. There is, therefore, a limited understanding of how best to address the various concerns of Black women in academia. While all women are impacted by systematic patriarchal oppression, our stories are not all the same. In addition to increasing the amount of research focused on this issue, it is imperative that the work that does exist reaches boards of trustees and other campus stakeholders that can make a difference.

Those currently in leadership positions must recognize the problem and also understand that there are some tangible ways to recruit, support and retain Black women, including creating early talent development programs for women of color, implementing rotational leadership opportunities which expose more women to different aspects of university leadership, revising institutional policies with an eye to increasing flexibility and family-friendly working patterns, and revisiting what "counts" in the tenure and promotions process.

Thinking about women's leadership in higher education through an intersectionality framework reminds us that we have a lot more work to do to ensure Black women can experience the best of higher education. This also means that allyship from non-Black women and men alike must be central to ensuring that Black women are safe in higher education. Crenshaw (1989) says it best when she explains that serving the most disadvantaged populations benefits everyone. By placing those on the margins in the center, we can make effective systematic change. Mitigating bias against Black women in the academy will significantly improve higher education for everybody. Our fight for equity in higher education continues.

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Leading with a View from Behind: A Personal Reflection

Lily S. Hsu

The past year has challenged all of us, regardless of our specific discipline or expertise, to take risks, be creative and foster greater humanity, as we address the COVID-19 pandemic and acts of violence, systemic racism and social injustice against people of color. In contrast to these events, the year 2020 concluded with the election of the first woman of color as vice president of the United States. These circumstances gave me an opportunity to examine how my knowledge and experiences are influencing my view of the world and actions as a leader.

I too am a woman of color, the first born daughter of Asian immigrants who came to this country to live the American dream, affording me the opportunity to fulfill my father's wish that I could be whatever I wanted to be. Like so many first generation children, I grew up feeling I was from two different worlds and did not belong to either. Rather than putting me at a disadvantage, those early years grounded me with values and habits that have led me to where I am today – serving as president of Labouré College of Healthcare, an independent institution of higher education in Boston, Massachusetts (USA).

Serving a Diverse, Healthcare Institution

In my capacity as Labouré's president, I am proud to lead over 1,200 adult learners who are enrolled in nursing and healthcare career education. Labouré is a culturally diverse institution of higher education. This year, the College will graduate the largest class of racially diverse nurses and healthcare professionals in the state – one that demographically mirrors the patient population of the city of Boston.

Our student body is 90 percent female, commensurate with the nursing profession. However, 65 percent of our nursing students are people of color. Many are immigrants who have come to this country seeking nursing education. Our students speak many languages. Forty-eight percent are raising young children and 50 percent live at or are approaching the poverty line. They exhibit resilience, hard-work, and determination – skills my parents and many immigrants to this country employed to realize a better life for themselves and their children. These skills also contribute to their professional success in serving patients.

The cultural diversity of our students helps us understand how connected we are globally to health needs around the world.

Between 2000 and 2018, the enrollment growth in higher education in the United States by immigrant and first generation students was 58 percent (Jenkins, 2020). It is predicted that greater than 50 percent of Americans will identify with a minority group by 2045 (Frey, 2018). The growing diversity among Labouré College nursing and healthcare students represents the future healthcare workforce. Global health initiatives like infectious disease, maternal and newborn health and health inequities no longer have geographic boundaries, as is evident from the infection rate and spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although understanding the science behind the disease is essential, an effective cure will benefit from nurses who share the cultural beliefs and characteristics of the patients they serve.

Nurses advocate care for those who are unable to care for themselves. They fulfill this purpose by contributing to public health, policy, research and education, while espousing accountability, integrity and excellence. As the largest segment among the healthcare professions and a profession recognized around the world, the education of a diverse workforce remains critical to serving the needs of an ever-growing and diverse patient population. Labouré College's purpose to provide nursing and healthcare career education allows us to focus on excellence in this area. Our mission, to serve underserved populations, refines our focus even further.

I often think about what the events of 2020 will mean for our students and the College as we plan for the future. How do I ensure the success of our students during these difficult times? How do I best lead this institution in growth and excellence while creating greater visibility for our graduates who are desperately needed by the healthcare industry?

Leadership

Leadership has many definitions. There is much consensus about what a good, moral, and strong leader is – but the question that is often unanswered is what combination of characteristics matches the needs of a particular organization. In choosing the "right" leader for an organization, should characteristics such as background, culture, and life experiences factor into consideration? How important is it that a leader relate to the population they serve?

The American Council on Education (ACE) established the Office for Women in Higher Education in 1977. It has studied the rise of women and minorities in the position of CEO/president in higher education for some time. In 2016, ACE's presidential survey reported that only five percent of college presidents were women of color (Gray, 2018). Although the number of women and diverse presidents is growing, their rate of growth in leadership positions is slow.

The traits that characterize an effective leader are consistently identified as visionary, strategic, and decisive – none of which is specific to gender or ethnicity. Studies have demonstrated that certain styles of leadership are more prevalent among women than men (Eagly, 1992). Women tend to be more collaborative and democratic, whereas men tend to be more autocratic (Gardner, 2019). The differences in leadership styles are small, but the traits found more often in women also happen to be the ones that demonstrate greater productivity. Specifically, a collaborative leadership style that builds trust among its employees and is linked to greater sustainability and growth. Ethnically diverse companies are 54 percent more likely to outperform their industry peer medians and gender diverse companies are 15 percent more likely to outperform their peer medians as well (Hunt et al., 2015).

Although these trends in leadership give some insight into how men and women lead stylistically, they do not predict success. Ultimately the values and experiences of a president and their “fit” with the institution establish the foundation of their leadership. The success of that relationship is measured in many ways. Clearly, tangible metrics like enrollment, financial stability and brand excellence demonstrate success, but other less measurable metrics like trust, collaboration, and being people-centered are also important. These intangible metrics are being recognized as ones that are aiding institutions to stay strong, especially through the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic downturn.

Research tells us that having more women and diversity among presidents and senior level staff is good for business and higher education. Further, as the demographic make-up of our communities becomes more diverse, leadership must reflect the voices of those served. If we are to make an impact on our communities, the responsibility to foster diversity, equity and inclusion must be embraced by all of us.

Leading Labouré College of Healthcare

I benefit from being a leader who has the knowledge and expertise to be a CEO, along with shared life experiences with the majority of Labouré students. Each one of us shares a bond of knowing what it is to be from two different worlds, one you may have left behind – geographically or socioeconomically – and another that is not always welcoming or understanding. Because of these experiences, my presence tells each student that we share common knowledge and experiences and that, like me, they can succeed.

As leaders, we analyze data, seek advice from our team, and ultimately make decisions that affect many people. Often, in the end, we draw on our own intuition and life experiences. I

am a woman of color and daughter of immigrants. That is the lens through which I confront issues and make decisions for a diverse student body. I lead from a place of understanding.

Conclusion

Women in leadership roles at institutions that enroll mostly women and students of color are role models who are constantly on display. We must be transformative leaders who emphasize teamwork, integrity, active listening and commitment to the personal development of our students, faculty and staff. The power and influence of the CEO can be both measurable and immeasurable and that may take a lifetime to realize.

As a student, faculty member, provost and now college president, I continue to learn how to be true to who I am while coping with other people’s perceptions of who I should be. In 2020, the unthinkable occurred: a pandemic crippled the world, and the United States elected a woman of color as vice president. I can hear my father say, “Yes, you can.”

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Striving to Achieve the “Unfinished Business” of Gender Equality: The Case of Women’s Leadership in Higher Education

Tessa DeLaquil

The themes that have consistently emerged across this International Brief on women’s leadership in higher education reveal the “unfinished business” that is achieving gender equality at institutional, national, and international levels. The successful rise in the overall access of women to higher education as students over the past decades in many (though not all) regions is to be celebrated. However, the country cases in this Brief make clear that this movement is not paralleled in positions of leadership and decision-making in higher education, let alone the upper echelons of institutional administration. The causes of this failure to achieve gender equality in higher education are multiplex and vary by social and historical context. As asserted by Regulska within this Brief, addressing each of these causes and ensuring this human right is met and provided will require individual and collective action.

Women & Leadership in Global Higher Education

In this Brief, Cheung identifies the significant divergence between the rise in the enrollment of female students in universities and the limited representation of women in leadership in higher education as a possible cause for the misconception that gender equality in higher education has already been achieved.

The country cases presented in this Brief clearly illustrate the paucity of women in leadership in higher education. The proportion of women in positions of senior leadership in the contexts represented here range from practically non-existent participation of women in leadership in higher education institutions in Ghana and public universities in Hong Kong; to a small number of female leaders in Indonesian public and Islamic higher education institutions; to 10 percent of Malaysian public universities; to 18 percent of a sample of Latin American and Caribbean universities; to 19.5 percent for South African public universities; to 24 percent of Kazakhstani higher education institutions; and to 28 percent (of vice-chancellor positions) in Australian higher education institutions.

The underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in higher education is worse at highly ranked institutions: as of

2019, only 19.5 percent of the top 200 higher education institutions ranked by *Times Higher Education* were led by women (Bothwell, 2020). This also varies regionally, with more female leaders in Scandinavian countries, Australia, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, and fewer female leaders in Arab countries, as well as in China, and none in Hong Kong, Korea or Japan.

The statistics also vary significantly when other markers of marginalization are involved. As highlighted in a number of contributions, particularly those by Gray and Hsu, women from minority populations in any given society are even less likely to achieve positions of higher education leadership, despite the fact that student populations within higher education institutions are diversifying around the world.

These trends have unfortunately been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, such that some hard-earned gains in gender equality may have now been lost. The precarity of such gains and the persistence of gender inequality, in terms of domestic work and family care, are reflected in the decrease in the number of manuscripts submitted by women during this period.

This period has also given rise to discussion of the “glass cliff” in higher education, a term used to describe the overrepresentation of women advanced to leadership positions during periods of institutional crisis (Ross, 2021). Many women have taken on leadership responsibilities during the pandemic period, although this may ultimately prove to be a setback, rather than of a step forward. Not only are these positions precarious, but the conditions of these positions may discourage other women to pursue advancement to academic leadership positions in the future.

Barriers and Supports

The contributions to this Brief have outlined a number of common barriers affecting aspiring female leaders around the world. These include the gender pay gap, gender roles identified culturally and societally, cultural standards and religious beliefs, the division of domestic labor, gendered stereotypes of leadership competency, the gendered process of informal decision-making within certain cultures, stereotypes within organizational culture, sexual harassment within higher education and society, the lack of recognition of intersectionality, the leaky pipeline (particularly through the fraught pathway of the professoriate), hiring biases, tokenism in organizational culture, the consequences of ongoing underrepresentation in leadership and decision-making, and the lack of sex-disaggregated data to support policy decision-making.

Of course, many of these barriers pervade all aspects of society and are not specific to higher education. As has been

made clear throughout this Brief, national and cultural factors embedded in our communities hold significant sway in achieving gender equality. As such, it must be acknowledged that institutions of higher education cannot address all causes of gender imbalance in their leadership. However, institutions are also not powerless. The glass ceiling is maintained, at least in part, by a level of structural and cultural complacency within higher education organizations and the academic community at large.

Issues such as underrepresentation in research, the gender pay gap, stereotypical perceptions of leadership and the consequences of hiring bias, and the persistence of sexual harassment within universities can and must be addressed within higher education itself. The first steps towards making the necessary changes in leadership in higher education, therefore, must be made in-house, via intentional action to achieve gender equality through structural and cultural change. This, in turn, requires recognizing the particular ways that these barriers manifest within the unique culture and structure of higher education.

At the same time, the influence of colleges and universities on national policy should also not be underestimated. As key stakeholders, leaders within the academic community may also work to influence societal change for the public good. Dedicated work with institutions to systematically break down structural and cultural obstacles to the achievement of gender equality in their leadership might go some small way towards addressing such concerns in the broader society.

The authors across the Brief reiterated a number of basic actions that could be taken in order to support the drive towards gender equality in higher education leadership. These include strengthening national level policies to support gender equality, putting institutional policies into place that can better support women (for example, with regards to parental leave, workload expectations that better acknowledge family responsibilities, and recruitment, hiring, and academic promotion practices), developing targeted programs for women's leadership development, establishing mentoring programs, and providing gender equity education for all institutional stakeholders.

In addition, the development and/or expansion of both formal and informal inter-institutional networks to find, mentor, and train women in higher education leadership in their professional advancement, as mentioned by multiple authors in this Brief, appears to be a highly effective mechanism for supporting women's leadership development, outside of national and institutional structures. Additionally, multiple authors raised the urgent need for sex-disaggregated data collection, both

institutionally and publicly, in order to support policy decision-making nationally and institutionally. A commitment to data collection would also support much-needed research into this issue.

Conclusion

Two contributions to this Brief offer a fitting conclusion to this collected work: one offers a hopeful vision that might help to guide future work in this area, while the other offers an important warning that all interested in the cause of gender equality in higher education might heed.

In her contribution, Renn highlights the ways in which women's colleges and universities provide a "countercultural" space, in which organizational structures and cultures are intentionally built to support and invest in women as leaders in higher education. This example provides a vision for what the higher education sector could be if we were willing to tackle the structural and cultural barriers that currently limit opportunities for women. At the same time, the cautionary tale of women leaders in higher education in Finland, contributed by Nokkala, offers both hope and warning. The Finnish case demonstrates that success, while possible, may be fleeting, if we do not recognize that changes in context and conditions create new challenges in realizing gender equality.

Ultimately, the most significant barrier to women's equality in higher education is a tenacious complacency that has allowed for stagnation in moving past gains in student enrolment to addressing more persistent imbalances at the faculty and leadership levels. By leveraging the evidence that we have about what makes a difference to women aspiring to be leaders in higher education, we might finally be able to achieve true gender equality within our sector – and, building on that, take some significant steps beyond higher education to our communities, our nations, and our world.

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American Council on Education (ACE)

Founded in 1918, the American Council on Education (ACE) is the only higher education organization that represents presidents and chancellors of all types of US accredited, degree-granting institutions: community colleges and four-year institutions, private and public universities, and nonprofit and for-profit colleges. ACE represents the interests of more than 1,700 campus executives, as well as 200 leaders of higher education-related associations and organizations. Together, ACE member institutions serve 80 percent of US college and university students.

ACE provides in-depth analysis of critical international education issues and administers programs and services to support higher education institutions' internationalization and global engagement strategies. In doing so, ACE seeks to foster greater collaboration and new partnerships within and outside the higher education community to help colleges and universities anticipate and address the challenges of the 21st century and contribute to a stronger nation and better world.

The Center for International Higher Education (CIHE)

The Boston College Center for International Higher Education brings an international and comparative perspective to the analysis of higher education. It is the conviction of the Center's staff that an international perspective will contribute to enlightened policy and practice. To serve this goal, the Center publishes *International Higher Education* quarterly, a book series and other publications, sponsors conferences, and welcomes visiting scholars.

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