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ONE OF A KIND

Marilyn L. Grady
Barbara Y. LaCost

As we prepare this issue for publication, the news of war with Iraq is dominant. A story aired by National Public Radio (NPR) focused on women in the war and noted that one in every seven members of the military personnel serving in Iraq is a woman (Morning Edition, April 2, 2003). Women in the War is a special segment of NBC's Today Show. Their report noted that 15,000 women are serving in Iraq (April 9, 2003).

As television and radio reports bombard us with a steady stream of information and analysis, the stories of women's experiences in Iraq as hostages, missing or dead, have received special notice. These reports belong in the "ONE OF A KIND" genre that permeates the stories of women and their accomplishments.

The focus on exceptional, ONE OF A KIND, women has been a constant in the research, writing, and reporting about women. Hamrick's article focuses on women who are exceptional because they hold the rank of full professor at a Research Extensive University.

Eckman provides profiles of eight women who are high school principals. These women are unique since the role of high school principal is most often held by men.

First describes the special role of women. In her manuscript, she notes that the beneficiaries of affirmative action have a duty to pass on the benefits they have received.

Uerling and Hall examine the legal issues germane to single sex schools. These institutions attract attention because of their uniqueness.

Each of the articles in this issue focuses on an aspect of the ONE OF A KIND uniqueness that characterizes the recounting of women in leadership roles and the issues that confront them. Together they reflect collective efforts to achieve equity for women.

“I Have Work to Do”

Work Roles and Affirming or Marginalizing Experiences Among Women at Professor Rank

Florence A. Hamrick

Abstract

This qualitative study of women at professor rank at a Research Extensive university explored work roles as well as occasions and events that signified affirmation or marginalization to respondents as they performed their work. Three primary work roles emerged: disciplinary expert, mentor or model, and advisor or change agent. Although all respondents clearly identified themselves as disciplinary experts, the other two roles were often more complex. Respondents generally experienced affirmation through student, collegial, and institutional recognitions of expertise and effectiveness. Marginalizing experiences included serving token roles on committees or other bodies and being a “lone voice” on issues of equity.

In terms of numbers as well as institutional climate and support, literature on female faculty reveals lingering uncertainties about women’s full membership. Demographic studies document some improvement yet consistent clustering of women in less prestigious disciplines (Moore & Sagaria, 1991) and in lower ranks as instructors and assistant professors at research universities (e.g., Finkelstein, Schuster, & Seals, 1996; Simeone, 1987). In 1983, although 26% of full-time faculty and 10% of full professors in four-year institutions were women, 6% of full professors in universities were women (Simeone, 1987). The proportion of women full professors at four-year institutions grew from 10% in 1983 to 16% in 1992 (The Nation, 1996), and to 18% in 1995 (Schneider, 1998). However, proportions of female full professors at research-oriented universities tend to be much lower than at smaller and less prestigious institutions (Moore & Sagaria, 1991). Although women accounted for 36.3% of all full time faculty members in 1998, almost half (49.9%) of public two-year college and 38.3% of public comprehensive university faculty members were women. These relatively large proportions are compared to public research institutions, where women comprised 29.5% of full time faculty members (Characteristics of Faculty Members, 2002).

Other studies have documented chilly climates for women in academe in terms of collegial relations and barriers to promotion (e.g., Hall & Sandler, 1983; Sandler, 1986) and explored how traditional academic norms and cultures are not inclusive of women (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988; Grumet, 1988). Recent site-level analyses of disproportionate laboratory resources and salaries have renewed attention on gender-related inequities and documented disparities not at entry levels but among senior faculty members at research-oriented institutions (e.g., Cox, 2001; Miller & Wilson, 1999). These analyses also focus attention on formulating appropriate institutional responses. Although the lack of female representation in senior faculty ranks is often attributed to external problems (such as pipeline supply) or individual choices (such as women’s differential career aspirations or career persistence), Park (1996) described culturally informed and systemic devaluation during promotion and tenure processes of women who disproportionately have been called on to perform the “women’s work” of a department (e.g.,

teaching and service). She also discussed how ascribed status that often accompanies earning senior rank for male faculty members is not concomitantly accorded female faculty members.

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyze the work roles of women who hold professor rank at a research-oriented institution and explore the affirming and marginalizing experiences that have accompanied their carrying out this work. The findings of this study shed light, not only on articulating and enacting a combination of work roles, but also on recognizing and addressing environmental factors that can stymie the pursuit of this work. Due to the historic and continuing under-representation of women in senior faculty ranks and relative under-representation in the literature of women's experiences as senior faculty members, this research was theoretically framed using women's standpoint epistemology (Harding, 1986, 1991). This choice was made in order to avoid over-reliance on comparatively situated men's experiences (Harding, 1993) and to explore the relatively silent or potentially silenced lives (McLaughlin & Tierney, 1993) of female professors. Due to adoption of this theoretical framework, a primary goal of the study was to collect, present, and analyze women's stories of their own experiences and the meanings associated with those experiences. The present study of women who have successfully achieved professor rank can provide information and guidance to aspiring faculty members as well as to persons concerned with creating equitable institutional climates.

Methods

Data Collection and Analysis

At the time of data collection for this study, female faculty at the selected institutional site, a research extensive university that included a land grant heritage, accounted for 28.7% of all full-time faculty and 10% of full professors. This 10% of professors at full rank equated to 70 individual faculty members. Informal gatherings of all female professors had been initiated the prior year, and one gathering included an announcement that an interview-based study of female professors was planned for the following term. All 70 individuals were invited in writing and by phone to participate in the study, and 26 consented to be interviewed.

The interviews were semi-structured and involved questions in four primary areas: (a) promotion and tenure experiences, (b) institutional citizenship and belonging, (c) intersections between professional and personal lives, and (d) stress. Through prompts and silence, opportunities for interviewee-guided talk were provided to encourage respondents to name and describe their own experiences, thoughts, and conclusions (Reinharz, 1992). The interviews ranged from 50 minutes in length to approximately 4 hours. All interviews were transcribed to facilitate systematic analysis. The constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used to identify common themes and concepts (Rubin & Rubin, 1995) across the interviews. To ensure trustworthiness of data and interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), probe questions and summarizing of responses were utilized during interviews, and all respondents received copies of their transcripts with a request to check for accuracy. Additionally, respondents were invited to attend one of two meetings to hear and respond to preliminary findings from the study. For respondents interested yet unable to attend one of the meetings, written drafts of findings were mailed to them. Two-thirds (18) of the respondent group participated in this post-interview member-checking.

The content analysis for this paper focused primarily on respondents' descriptions of their work roles and how their work has evolved since earning professor rank. Additionally, events or occasions that signaled affirmation or marginalization for the respondents were analyzed since these provide insight into the environments in which the respondents do their work and enact their work roles.

Site and Respondents

The selected institutional site is a Carnegie-classified Research Extensive, land grant university with emphases on sciences and applied sciences such as agriculture and engineering. Larger proportions of faculty members across campus are affiliated with science-related disciplines and fields; the 70 potential respondents and the 26 actual respondents were distributed across four broad disciplinary categories:

Table 1
Disciplinary Distributions Among Respondent Group and Population

	Population (N = 70)	Respondents (N = 26)
Arts and Humanities (AH)	26% (18)	19% (5)
Biological and Agricultural Sciences (BAS)	17% (12)	19% (5)
Physical and Mathematical Sciences & Engineering (PMSE)	(6%) (4)	4% (1)
Social Sciences and Education (SSE)	51% (36)	58% (15)

The respondent group was 37% of full professors and represented all discipline areas. However, arts and humanities faculty members were considerably under-represented in the respondent group as, to a lesser extent, were biological and agricultural science faculty. Social sciences and education faculty members were over-represented in the sample.

Although institutional data provided dates of institutional tenure and promotions, these data provide only partial demographic information since many in the target group and sample were tenured and/or promoted elsewhere. Some indication of career length can be ascertained, however, by examining dates of receipt of Ph.D. or other terminal degree. According to an analysis of institutional data, the group of female full professors at the university received their terminal degrees between 1950 and 1988. The mean completion date was 1975, the most frequently occurring date (mode) was 1981, and the middle date of the range (median) was 1976. Among respondents, the range was 1950-1986 with a mean of 1974, a mode of 1975, and a median of 1975, similar to the population of full professors at the university. However, more respondents earned their terminal degrees earlier than did women at full rank at the institution.

A caution associated with this research is that the following themes and discussion cannot fully characterize all female full professors' experiences or perceptions—much less the experiences of everyone in the respondent group. Not surprisingly, respondents did not speak with one voice or share all of the same perspectives. In the following analysis and discussion,

Frye's (1990) "prevailing winds" in the data are presented along with a variety of perspectives that also emerged.

Results

Work Roles

Respondents discussed three work roles: disciplinary experts, mentors or models, and advisors or change agents. As experts, their role is to advance knowledge in their respective fields. As mentors and models, they support new colleagues and prospective colleagues—often but not exclusively female colleagues. As advisors and/or change agents, they work to improve campus conditions and opportunities for women and persons from traditionally underrepresented or non-dominant groups within higher education or within their disciplines. These thematic roles are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Disciplinary expert. "That's my identity—has always been—to be a professor and a scholar," stated one Social Science and Education (SSE) respondent. A Biological and Agricultural Sciences (BAS) respondent noted: "Certainly being promoted to full professor and getting my first opportunity to function at a fairly high level in our national [professional] organization, I began to feel like, you know, this is where I belong, and people are recognizing my abilities." The role as disciplinary expert was overwhelmingly the central work role and identity discussed by respondents. In fact, as the two passages above indicate, the identity of disciplinary expert is an identity that faculty members had internalized much earlier in their careers. Certain milestones such as promotions, appointments, and recognitions perhaps had *affirmed* this expertise, but the milestone events were not perceived as *conferring* expertise.

Although some respondents recalled being somewhat tentative about their expertise, particularly earlier in their careers, more often the respondents' remarks about identity as a scholar and disciplinary expert echoed this passage from a BAS respondent: "I've been very comfortable, maybe arrogant, as some people might put it, but comfortable with what I think I could contribute and what I could do and what I was doing." Respondents consistently expressed confidence and comfort with their justifiable status as disciplinary experts and authorities.

Mentor or model. Most respondents spoke, sometimes at great length, about people who had encouraged, supported, and challenged them in their careers, although the word mentor was not often used. As one BAS respondent and longtime faculty member recalled:

I had graduated [with a B.S.] at the end of winter quarter, and I was working for one of the faculty members in the department, and I continued to work for him after I graduated. Our agreement was, you know, that I would work through that summer with him, or at least helping him out with laboratory and fieldwork. I was walking down the hall one day, and the department chair looked at me and said, "You weren't in class today." I said, "I'm not registered for any classes." He said, "Well, you're supposed to be in my graduate course." I said, "I'm not in graduate school." He said, "Well, go over and get into graduate school." So I went over and enrolled in graduate school and showed up at class the next day. . . . I had thought, "Well, you know, I'll just work for the spring quarter, sort of get my life together, and then decide what I wanted to do." I was thinking in terms of whatever change I would make, it would probably be in the fall, so it just got pushed forward a bit.

In most cases, respondents did not describe a kind of intrusive or formal relationship or systematic advising that can be associated with the term “mentoring.” Rather, they spoke of significant people they respected who had modeled key professional behaviors, opened doors, offered opportunities, or otherwise responded favorably to respondents’ inquiries and ambitions. Indeed, one SSE respondent described creating her own role model:

I’ve always been this incredibly ambitious person, so my goal was always to be a nationally recognized scholar. That’s what I shot for when I looked at models in terms of individuals. I was more abstract. I saw individuals, and there were pieces about those individuals that I liked, and I thought that’s what I want to be part of. So there’s not one individual in particular, but there are pieces of many individuals that I have admired over the years that I pulled together and created my own kind of model of what I was aspiring to.

Respondents in turn spoke of serving as mentors and models for students and new colleagues. Although mentoring students—and especially graduate students—is something they have regularly done in their careers, respondents reported that an increased focus on mentoring has accompanied their promotion to professor. For some, this has been explicitly asked of them, as was the case for one Physical and Mathematical Sciences & Engineering (PMSE) respondent who came to the university at professor rank. She said, “One of the things that the [former] dean said to me: ‘We’re hiring you as a full professor. I’d like you to mentor all the other women in the college.’ And he was serious.” More often, the increased mentoring of graduate students was internally motivated and constituted a heightened interest in “giving back” through nurturing future scholars and professionals. For a BAS respondent, these contributions were primarily focused on her discipline:

[Being a full professor] actually means a responsibility to me more than anything else. I have a lot of students come through, probably 50% of my students are female. I feel I have the same responsibility to females as the males, but it really is a responsibility to people. . . . It’s interesting because you don’t start out in science thinking that you’re going to be a people manager or a people developer, but that’s really what you are.

A PMSE respondent primarily directed her generative contributions to the institution and local individuals:

I feel a responsibility to be a role model for women in the department who are coming up and for other women who are in the department who are in other positions. I am the only [woman] in this department who is a tenured faculty member, which means that my position may be a little different from departments where there are other women who are in similar kinds of positions.

Respondents were particularly proud of their students’ accomplishments and their supportive role on behalf of the students, including one Arts and Humanities (AH) respondent who maintained: “There are clearly [graduate] students . . . who may not have fared as well or been as productive if they had not worked with me, so I feel good about that.”

With senior status in their respective fields and departments, respondents saw themselves as more involved and committed to encouraging new talent. In a few cases, however, faculty who

voiced this commitment were disappointed that they did not have more opportunities to work with graduate students. They had associated this opportunity with full professor rank, only to receive increased service commitments or, in some cases, an increased teaching load, instead of more graduate student teaching or contact. One SSE respondent characterized this particular disadvantage of her status as professor: "When you get in these higher ranks, especially if you're a woman, they want you to be on this, that, and the other thing, so there's a lot of this menial stuff. . . . I mean, it's like you're this little rat on these little treadmills." One of the major disappointments voiced by respondents was not being able to work more with graduate students once full professor rank had been achieved.

Advisor and change agent. One SSE respondent echoed many with her remark, "The department chair periodically will ask me questions of how I think about some procedure or something along that line." Although these consultations were often small in scope, having colleagues and administrators informally solicit their input and ask for their counsel was an occasion that signified being brought into a larger informational and influence "loop" out of respect for one's abilities, expertise, and judgment, or for one's status as a senior institutional member. Invitations for these informal consultations did not often happen at senior administrative levels, however. Another SSE respondent recalled:

My impression is that the engineering college or at least faculty in engineering get a lot of respect. And I know that individual faculty members have been called over to the president's office, or to the provost's office to consult about something, and I thought, "Wow, you know, people actually do that?" You know, I was amazed and thought, "I don't know anybody who ever gets called over to the provost's office." And so that was, I guess, an example of when I thought, "Oh, maybe [this department] really doesn't count very much."

According to this respondent, such informal consulting opportunities may have more to do with the prestige or perceived centrality of one's discipline to the institution. However, since larger numbers of women faculty at this university tend to be clustered in the less prestigious and less well-funded disciplines and units, as at many research-oriented universities, female faculty members are less likely to be among the ranks of those informally consulted.

Although respondents did not discuss many occasions in which senior institutional administrators informally solicited their input or perspectives, more formal and institutionalized opportunities for providing input, such as invitations to serve on committees or ad hoc groups, were abundant. Respondents discussed service on numerous college-wide and university-wide committees and representative bodies, and they were particularly pleased when the charges of the committee coincided with their own expertise and/or interests. For example, one SSE respondent attributed a key campus contribution to her committee involvement:

On a broader scope, when I did feel significant here, I think it began with getting out of the department and doing things I felt like really made a difference. With the athletic council, you know, female athletes have opportunities that wouldn't be there had we not fought so hard, so that was significant.

Another SSE respondent described her service on "the committee that developed the requirement for multicultural education and the international diversification of the curriculum. When I was on the committee, I felt the [Faculty] Senate valued input, and I had an area of

expertise . . . that was valued.” In fact, respondents often selected specific service opportunities that capitalized on their interests, expertise, and goals for change. The same SSE respondent indicated: “I think I try to do things that are associated with things I really care about, like this women professors group. . . . I’m hopeful that we can maybe collectively become a voice that can work for better opportunities for women on campus.” A PMSE respondent was invited to address a conference of young women in the state:

I was so impressed by these 400 girls from all over the state—9th through 12th graders. Nobody—no other place I had been was doing anything like that, and they asked me to speak on my personal reflections, and I kind of teared up at one time.

As an outcome of some respondents’ concerns about the campus climate for women and minorities, they have become more committed to being agents for change. One BAS respondent noted:

There was a young woman in the other day complaining of having gone to a meeting and some things that the men in the meeting were laughing at that she thought they shouldn’t have laughed at, and I think that every women in this whole organization—department, college, university—has a responsibility to make sure that women or minorities, people with different sexual preferences, or whatever, are treated with respect.

Other respondents have reflected on their own experiences with the promotion and tenure process and have lent this reflection to examining outcomes of these processes. An AH professor used the pipeline metaphor in a summary of her remarks before a group convened to study promotion and tenure:

You can’t say that women are in the pipeline and, put them in and they’ll turn out these full professors, because they don’t. That’s not what happens. They get stuck at associate, and they just sit there, and just putting them in pipelines is not enough, not unless you take some action to make sure that they get through.

For the majority of respondents, the three work roles were overlapping and the boundaries were often indistinct—particularly for the roles of disciplinary expert and mentor/model. Respondents described their participation in activities designed to recognize and enable new colleagues in much the same way as some of their senior colleagues had acknowledged them and contributed to their development. For most of the respondents, the role of advisor and change agent was not particularly distinct from the other two roles. Providing input and impacting change, however, most often occurred through their participation in formal institutional channels that were, in principle, available to all similarly situated faculty members. Although some of the respondents have adopted a more vocal and dissent-oriented presence on campus to address and challenge issues of diversity and equity, the majority of respondents have not.

One blurring of the roles that seemed particularly troubling for two respondents was the situation in which their disciplinary expertise involved concomitant expertise on issues of equity and diversity. According to one SSE respondent, the line between researching and proposing action based on one’s research is an especially tricky one to negotiate:

Sometimes some women who research in areas of diversity are not granted tenure because that's not viewed as authentic research, so in that sense I have been rewarded [in the promotion and tenure process] for what I do. I've walked a fine line, I guess, between doing just enough research and writing that is institutionally validated and that which I find is more transformative and critical of the institution, so I think I've balanced it out fairly well.

Similar to the status of a prophet in one's own country, however, these respondents indicated that they were well positioned to offer their expertise, but were not invited to do so. One individual said that her race precluded her from being taken seriously for her expertise. The SSE respondent continued:

Those of us in this college who have [multicultural] expertise—I mean, that's what we teach and do and research—are not asked or not included. Those of us who are white who have expertise and long years of knowledge and long years of service in this area are rarely recognized as multicultural experts and, now, that negates a feeling of having contributed here.

Not being able to offer their expertise to institutionally based committees or task forces, or having their expertise neutralized in the process, was a significant frustration for these respondents.

Experiences of Affirmation

As the respondents performed their work on campus, several experiences were noted as particularly affirming ones. These included acknowledgement of their accomplishments as faculty members—primarily recognitions of their research or teaching. Such recognitions most often took the form of formal awards and designations within the university or their respective disciplines. However, informal acknowledgment by students and former students (particularly graduate students) appeared to be the more powerfully felt affirmations. Collegial respect was also a key affirmation for respondents. Collegial respect was signified by, for example, representing one's department, unit, or discipline on influential committees, representative bodies, or disciplinary associations.

In terms of formal recognitions, many respondents had received teaching and research awards throughout their careers, and some respondents had been designated Distinguished Professor or University Professor in recognition of their noteworthy contributions. Respondents were proud of the formal awards and recognitions they had received. According to one SSE respondent: "I think that receiving the university teaching award early on in my career was a real boost. I got that in '74, and I just started working in '71. . . . I can still remember, for example, where my photo was taken, you know, so that says something." Another SSE professor remarked: "Being named a distinguished professor was part of what I was aspiring to, and that recognition by the university for all of your hard work that you've done felt very appreciated."

The majority of respondents also emphasized the affirmation and recognition they received from students and former students. One SSE respondent stated:

I think most of that [affirmation] I get from my students, you know. Like last week, I worked with this woman who I had been working with on and off for about three years, and she has

what I think would be fair to say is an abusive coach. . . . What she said to me was, “I could never have gotten through this without you. I couldn’t have, you know?” A lot of times in an educational setting, I get that, but I don’t get it quite so immediately. . . . I think most of the rewards that I get at this stage of my career that I value are from the students with whom I work. They’re not from the department or the college.

Collegial respect was also a strong affirmation for respondents. For one BAS respondent, this was associated with her colleagues’ solicitation of her to represent them: “I did also serve three years on the Faculty Senate. . . . some of the faculty in my department asked me if I would run, so they could elect me to represent them, and I did that.” Working collectively with colleagues to advance shared objectives—and being effective in that work—was also a personally affirming experience for respondents, as in the case of this AH professor:

I was one of the founding members of the representative assembly in the college that we set up, and helped bring about certain kinds of requirements, certain kinds of goals. And I think that would have taken a lot longer without my having been involved at that point in time, so that made me feel I made a difference.

And, as one SSE professor added:

You know, when somebody from the president’s office calls you and says, “Would you be on this committee?” I suppose to me that was an indication that they know who I am, and out of all the faculty members here, you know they’ve picked a handful of people. . . . You could look at it negatively, but assuming they wanted to have a good committee, it meant that they thought I would be a good person.

In the course of their careers, however, respondents had also had experiences that were marginalizing. These experiences are presented and discussed in the following section.

Marginalizing Experiences

Only a few respondents reported experiencing overtly hostile acts like verbal aggression or threats. Most of the negative episodes respondents reported were more subtle and had to do with serving as token women on committees, serving as a “designated hitter” to voice equity or fairness perspectives, and being asked to provide opinions and perspectives in situations where respondents felt that the decisions had already been made--rendering the request for their input perfunctory.

A BAS professor discussed her reactions to what she perceived as tokenism:

Occasionally an invitation [to serve on a committee] will come, and it’s just clear—or I think it’s clear to me—that it wasn’t really relevant to me, and sometimes I’ll explore the issue with the person giving the invitation, “Why are you asking me? I can’t see my connection to what you’re trying to fill.” And then the answer might come, “Well, we really needed a woman on that committee,” in which case I have sometimes volunteered my secretary to go. I say, “Well, she will fill just as well as I will, if that’s your criterion.” And when something like that happens, when I realize that they were looking at my involvement for something that I

was born with and not for something that I've achieved as a professional, then that becomes—I see that as a very disempowering type of a relationship to take place.

With so few women in the senior faculty ranks, many respondents spoke of being overwhelmed by committee, governance, and service work because there were so few female professors available to serve on committees restricted to members at professor rank. One SSE respondent discussed re-evaluating her service commitments:

A lot of things I've done out of my hide. So I think now I'm more apt to look at "Is this truly valued, or is it just somebody they need to do this?" What says to me "This is valued?" "What are they willing to put forward for this, or is it just me doing another task that needs to be done?" And I think a lot of times the women are in that role.

In many ways, the negative aspects of tokenism are related to the work role of disciplinary expert. Treating these individuals primarily as women and secondarily (if at all) as content experts minimized or ignored their roles as content experts, which is a core professional identity. The underutilization of their talent and expertise also meant that their input and influence in these service roles were curtailed due to their appointment without regard to demonstrated expertise. However, one BAS respondent, as she discussed serving on a key university committee, described an effective strategy that served to minimize feelings of tokenism or temptations to dismiss others' input:

It took me a long time there to get a voice. I was intimidated. There were definitely male professors, not the administrators, but male professors who were not at all interested in what I had to say and were really interested in gaining the floor and hearing themselves talk—a lot. And I thought [the chair] did a really good job. He began by having us go around, and every person had to talk. I had never been in a university meeting where that would happen, and many times what I found was at that level it would be women and students—if they were there—who were not talking, and there were male professors who were used to clearly having this voice and being in charge. . . . And what I learned from that was that there were many people who would have never said a word who had these valuable things to contribute, but then there were some people who really objected to that procedure, didn't like it at all.

Another type of negation was experienced when respondents were not invited to serve on committees or bodies that were clearly relevant to their expertise areas. One AH professor recalled:

The department was choosing to hire in [my specialty area] and didn't invite me even to be part of the search. . . . I thought, "Wow, you know, what have I been doing all these years?" You know, I have an international reputation in this field. I'm taken seriously all over the world, and within my own department, I'm not even consulted.

This respondent then proceeded to explain that her department was quite large, preventing broad awareness of departmental colleagues' expertise, but this episode nonetheless signified to her that her expertise was overlooked at a time when her input and guidance within her department could be pivotal.

Other respondents spoke of episodes in which they were (or in many cases, continue to be) a lone voice, out on a proverbial limb with respect to issues of equity, fairness, or new approaches or experiments. One BAS professor discussed: "sitting on a committee and having this really great idea, offering it, and it's passed over, and nobody pays any attention. . . . I think it's a fairly normal feeling that you're sort of out in left field and no one agrees with you." An AH respondent added: "Every time I've ever been on a university-wide committee, my sense is that I've always, always been on the periphery, not at the center, as far as most of what I thought was important to do is not what other people thought was important to do."

One SSE respondent added a special case of the lone voice—the role of "designated hitter" on issues of equity or fairness. She recalled touring campus recreation and athletic facilities with other members of the university's athletics board:

They showed us the locker rooms, and the men's baseball team had this big sauna thing, and the women's didn't. And so the men on [the campus athletics board] are going, "You're not going to let that go by, are you? I mean, you're not going to stand for that, are you?" So I said, "Well, where *is* the [women's sauna]?"

No one else in the group spoke up to question the disparity, but instead waited for her to raise these points—a tacit role assignment that angered but did not surprise her.

As may have been the case in the above situation, other respondents spoke of the tacit support they believed to exist for their efforts or for issues, even though the support was not publicly verbalized. One BAS respondent recalled her efforts to initiate an interdisciplinary program: "Let's put it this way. I think that in this department, as in many others, there's a big silent majority, and they support it but they don't really come out and say so, partly because the detractors are often very vocal."

Many respondents reported that they were tacitly assigned to address, or assumed by others to address, issues of equity, fairness, or new initiatives. This may constitute acknowledgment that as women they may be in a better position to perceive problematic issues and offer new perspectives. However, as the athletic facilities tour makes clear, assigning this responsibility to women faculty may also effectively remove responsibility from others on campus for perceiving, questioning, and addressing issues of equity or diversity.

An additional area that respondents characterized as marginalizing was administrators' soliciting faculty input despite the perception that a decision had already been made. An AH professor spoke of a senior level administrative staff member:

He's on every major university committee as an ad hoc person, and he's really running them all. And what he—does when you're on any of those committees—is he talks a great deal, and everybody goes to sleep, and in the end we do what he had planned to do anyway. I mean, well, what do you need faculty here for? I don't want to be part of that.

One SSE respondent characterized decision-making in her college as:

I feel like sometimes there's an agenda, and they [administrators] say, "Oh, well, do this because it is faculty stuff." And then you spin your wheels, and it doesn't really matter [because decisions have already been made]. . . . I just wish they'd tell me up front, because I have other things I would be doing with my time that I care more about.

In addition to the various experiences of tokenism described above, some respondents also discussed the hyper-visibility of women and minority faculty that accompanies their small numbers on the faculty and particularly within full professor rank. According to a BAS respondent:

So I think we're [women and minority faculty] kind of in a bind. It's kind of like this double, catch-22. You're very visible. . . . Sometimes [visibility's] good, but then it's a double-edged sword because it will highlight the good things you're doing, but if you ever, you know, aren't doing the good things or something is misconstrued, that also gets amplified, so you can't really go hide in a corner somewhere.

In addition to these experiences of tokenism and negation of expertise, a few respondents also discussed some freeing aspects that came with their marginal positioning, such as taking risks to surface their opinions and perspectives and persuading the majority to act—if not immediately, then eventually. One AH professor described such an experience with respect to curriculum change.

In the [faculty] senate I proposed that we put in a diversity requirement [to the undergraduate curriculum], and I was the only person who voted for it. . . . And even though I lost that particular time, two years later it did pass, and I didn't even have to be that involved two years later. I mean, I was involved in that I put up important motions on the floor, you know, that I think helped it pass. . . . So anyway, I think that it started the ball rolling, you know, and it made people maybe realize that things were not as good here.

One SSE respondent provided an example with respect to equity for varsity women athletes:

We had this data that showed that we [the university] were really biased against women in terms of the number of scholarships, the types of scholarships, the teaching limits of coaches, the perks that they had, and we just had a lot of stuff. And so I said to my little subcommittee, "Are we going to present it to the [athletics board], which has all the reporters?" So I said, "You know, maybe we should go see a university lawyer first just to apprise them of this." So he listened to us and looked at our little tables. . . . [By negotiating through the university lawyer], we got informal limits on out-of-state scholarships for women in softball. We got more release time for women coaches. We got more scholarships. I mean, we got quite a bit.

The centrality of the change agent role in the above episodes is apparent, although the changes were hard-won, requiring adoption of more overt political tactics in combination with directly addressing discomfiting and potentially embarrassing institutional issues.

Conclusions and Implications

In many ways, respondents' experiences of affirmation and marginalization on campus can be linked with the three work roles of disciplinary experts, mentors or models, and advisors or change agents. For example, many of the affirmations focused on one's expert status as

acknowledged by the institution and colleagues, and the senior rank brought with it a heightened emphasis on mentoring and modeling, which was acknowledged and affirmed in tributes from students and former students. Although the disciplinary expert role was clearly the central role identity among respondents, respondents also enacted variations of the other roles and these were perceived as legitimate faculty work responsibilities. Respondents described their own combinations and patterns of work focus and roles, and understood this work role identification to be, within reason, at their discretion. As an example, one BAS respondent remarked:

I guess I'm assuming they [the university] will trust me to evaluate what I think are significant things in my own professional areas and that are significant things for me to do in terms of my research areas and the general areas that are involved. . . . I do a fair amount of I-guess what would be called-extension-type things, . . . so that's not the thing which possibly would look like it would be part of my professional time, but it is, and it's a very interesting contact, and I think it's a useful contact for [the university].

However, when some respondents attempted to work on behalf of the institution to try to improve climate and circumstances, their offers of expertise were rebuffed and their contributions ignored, overlooked, or taken for granted. Although the idea of a change agent may connote an image of an external agitator, this was clearly not the case for most respondents. Most of the respondents instead used institutionally sanctioned, existing channels for faculty input as they adopted primarily an insider stance to effect change, with the primary motivation being improvement of the institution of which they consider themselves to be senior members.

Second, status appears to be affected by the respondents' particular choices or patterns of work emphasis. Respondents in this study have all achieved the formal rank designating full faculty membership, yet many also reported continuing instances in which their status among colleagues and within the institution is not concomitant with senior rank. Consistent with Park's (1996) work, although rank has been successfully achieved, women professors' prestige may be jeopardized at a research university when they deviate from a more or less exclusive emphasis on their role as disciplinary expert. A BAS respondent spoke more or less directly to this issue:

There really wasn't very much support for anything except go into the lab and do the research. Now, I was balancing those with other activities, and that was not—that's not the traditional way, and that was not very well accepted.

A SSE respondent also remarked:

You know, I do the publications and presentations, but I can still go after things I care about. I mean, I can work with the [students], even though I can't get a publication out of them, you know, because I value that. And I can try to do things to better women's opportunities on campus, and these women's groups—even though] that's not going to get me anywhere.

What may remain largely unexamined are the institutional benefits that could be realized through a multi-faceted faculty role with combinations of roles and role emphases to complement increasingly complex institutional mission statements and goals.

Finally, although many affirmations are strong and rewarding for these respondents, the marginalizing responses echo some much earlier work that identified elements of a chilly climate on campus for women (Hall & Sandler, 1983; Sandler, 1986). When faced with evidence of a chilly campus climate for women and other underrepresented persons, institutions can assume a responsibility for turning up a proverbial thermostat of affirmation and welcome. In these respondents' experiences, it has more often been the case that they individually have donned layers of proverbial sweaters to deal with an underlying chill as they pursue their work as experts, mentors or models, and advisors and/or change agents. Institutions – as personified by colleagues as well as administrators – could go far towards creating an inclusive campus climate by validating women's status as disciplinary experts, discovering and accepting diverse experiences among others, and affirming the various types of work they perform to benefit their institutions.

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Single-Sex Schools and Classroom: Is “Separate but Comparable” Legally Permissible?

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Abstract

Most public schools in the United States have been coeducational, based at least in part on a general belief that single-sex schools and classrooms were legally impermissible. Now the issue of single-sex education has been raised again by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which provides that federal funds may be made available to local education agencies for an array of innovative assistance programs, including programs to provide same-gender schools and classrooms. An analysis of applicable law, coupled with a review of the merits of single-sex schooling, suggests that “separate but comparable” single-sex public school education might be legally permissible.

Introduction

During the past several decades, most public elementary and secondary schools in the United States have been coeducational, based at least in part on a general belief that single-sex schools and classrooms were legally impermissible. Sadker and Sadker (1994) expressed a common point of view: “Today, single-sex schools are an endangered species; they are illegal in the public sector and vanishing rapidly from the private sector” (p. 232). The American Association of University Women (1998) raised a telling question: Should educators and researchers continue to invest their efforts in a strategy—single-sex education—that is of questionable legality?

Now the issue of single-sex education has been raised again by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which provides that federal funds may be made available to local education agencies for an array of innovative assistance programs, among which are included programs to provide same-gender schools and classrooms.

An analysis of applicable statutory and constitutional law reveals some commonly-held beliefs about single-sex schooling, and explores the circumstances under which “separate but comparable” single-sex education in public elementary and secondary schools might be legally permissible.

Title IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 provides that “[n]o person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal assistance” (20 U.S.C. § 1681(a), 2001). The federal regulations implementing Title IX state that no school receiving federal funds shall “provide any course or otherwise carry out any of its education activity separately on the basis of sex” 34 C.F.R. § 106.34 (2002). Reading these two provisions together could lead to a conclusion that no public school receiving federal funding is

allowed to offer a single-sex education program, whether it be an entire school or a single class within a coeducational (mixed gender) school. But contrary to popular belief, nothing in Title IX explicitly prohibits single-sex schools. In regard to admissions, the prohibition against discrimination based on sex exempts non-vocational elementary and secondary schools (see, 20 U.S.C. § 1681(a)(1), 2001).

The Code of Federal Regulations recites the rules promulgated by the U.S. Department of Education to carry out the provisions of Title IX. A pertinent provision in these regulations states that a local educational agency (LEA) may “exclude any person from admission” to a non-vocational elementary or secondary school “on the basis of sex” only if “such recipient otherwise makes available to such person, pursuant to the same policies and criteria of admission, courses, services, and facilities comparable to each course, service, and facility offered in or through such schools” (34 C.F.R. § 106.35(b), 2002). Thus, neither Title IX nor the implementing regulations prohibit school districts receiving federal funding from operating single-sex schools, but only if those districts provide schools with comparable programs for both sexes.

Although single-sex schools may be permissible under Title IX, most single-sex classes within coeducational public schools are not. The general prohibition of sex-based discrimination in the statute (see, 20 U.S.C. § 1681, 2001), is paralleled by language in the federal regulations, (see, 34 C.F.R. § 106.31(a), 2002). The regulations also include a more specific provision pertaining to access to course offerings.

A recipient shall not provide any course or otherwise carry out any of its education program or activity separately on the basis of sex, or require or refuse participation therein by any of its students on such basis, including health, physical education, industrial, business, vocational, technical, home economics, music, and adult education courses. (34 C.F.R. § 106.34, 2002)

But this section also includes exceptions that may lead to single-sex classes. Among the more important are those that permit grouping students in physical education classes and activities by ability (Id. at § 106.34(b), 2002), separating students by sex in physical education classes or sports where the purpose or major part involves bodily contact (Id. at 106.34(c), 2002), conducting separate sessions for boys and girls in portions of classes that deal exclusively with human sexuality (Id. § 106.34(e), 2002), and having requirements based on vocal range or quality that may result in choruses predominantly of one sex (Id. § 106.34(f), 2002).

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. One section in this massive piece of legislation provides that federal innovative assistance funds made available to local educational agencies may be used to support “[p]rograms to provide same-gender schools and classrooms (consistent with applicable law)” (Id. at § 5131(a)(23), 2001).

The Act also required the Secretary of Education to issue, within 120 days, guidelines for local education agencies seeking funding for programs described in subsection (a)(23) (Id. § 5131(c), 2001). As directed, the Office for Civil Rights, Department of Education,

published guidelines on current Title IX requirements related to single-sex classes and schools (67 Fed. Reg. 31102, May 8, 2002). These guidelines make clear that the Department believes that Title IX and its regulations permit certain kinds of single-sex classes in coeducational schools and, if certain conditions are met, single-sex schools within a school system. If a school district establishes a single-sex school for one sex to offer a particular program, then the other sex must also have access to a comparable school with that curriculum. And, the “comparable school” must also be single-sex.

On that same date, the Department of Education published in the Federal Register a “notice of intent to regulate,” (67 Fed. Reg. 31098, 2002), which gave notice that the Secretary of Education intends to propose amendments to the regulations implementing Title IX that would provide more flexibility for educators to establish single-sex classes and schools at the elementary and secondary level.

The purpose of the amendments would be to support efforts of school districts to improve educational outcomes for children and to provide public school parents with a diverse array of educational options that respond to the educational needs of their children, while at the same time ensuring appropriate safeguards against discrimination. (Id. at 31098, 2002)

The notice invited comments on whether, and under what circumstances, single-sex schools and classrooms should be permitted. As this article was being prepared, the Department was reviewing the many comments received.

The notice of intent to regulate stated that the proposed regulations would have to be consistent with both Title IX and the Constitution. The Department noted that the Supreme Court had decided two constitutional cases that specifically addressed single-sex education, *United States v. Virginia*, 518 U.S. 515 (1996), and *Mississippi University for Women v. Hogan*, 458 U.S. 718 (1982). These cases are discussed below.

Equal Protection Clause

The Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States provides that no States shall “deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” The Equal Protection Clause comes into play when some form of legislative classification is at issue. To analyze the constitutionality of such classifications, the Supreme Court has devised a three-tiered analysis, which it summarized in *Plyler v. Doe* (1982).

A legislature must have substantial latitude to establish classifications, and in applying the Equal Protection Clause to most forms of state action, the Court seeks only the assurance that the classification at issue bears some fair relationship to a legitimate public purpose (Id. at 216). This is the “rational basis” test, which imposes little difficulty on a government entity.

The Court treats as presumptively invidious those classifications that disadvantage a “suspect class” or that impinge on the exercise of a “fundamental right” for such classifications, the state must demonstrate that its classification has been precisely tailored to serve a compelling governmental interest (Id. at 216-17). This is the “strict scrutiny” test, which is extremely difficult for a government entity to satisfy.

In addition, certain forms of legislative classification, while not facially invidious, nonetheless give rise to recurring constitutional difficulties; in these limited circumstances the Court inquires whether the classification may fairly be viewed as furthering a substantial interest

of the state (Id. at 217-18). This is the intermediate-level “heightened scrutiny” test, which imposes a significant, but not impossible, burden of justification on a government entity.

For many years, classifications based on sex have been subject to scrutiny under the Equal Protection Clause, and state government entities that use such classifications have been required to satisfy the intermediate-level “heightened scrutiny” test (see e.g., *Craig v. Boren*, 1976; *Frontiero v. Richardson*, 1973). Thus, proponents of single-sex schools and classes in public school systems should be prepared to demonstrate an educationally sound justification for such an arrangement.

Single-Sex Education in the Courts

Higher Education

The United States Supreme Court has rendered two decisions dealing with single-sex education at the college level: *Mississippi University for Women v. Hogan* (1982), and *United States v. Virginia* (1996). These two cases offer some insight into the principles that probably would guide an equal protection analysis of gender-based classifications in K-12 schools.

In *Mississippi University for Women v. Hogan* (1982), a male student was excluded, solely on the basis of gender, from enrolling in the School of Nursing at the Mississippi University for Women. He sued the University, alleging a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

The Supreme Court began its analysis by stating that those seeking to uphold a statute classifying individuals on the basis of gender must carry the burden of showing an “exceedingly persuasive justification” for the classification, a burden that can be met only by showing at least that the classification serves important governmental objectives and that the discriminatory means employed are substantially related to the achievement of those objectives (Hogan at 724).

The University’s arguments for excluding men from the School of Nursing failed to satisfy either part of this Equal Protection test. First, the state made no showing that women lacked either training or leadership opportunities that needed to be remedied by excluding men; rather than compensating for any discriminatory barriers faced by women, the policy of excluding males tended to perpetuate the stereotyped view of nursing as exclusively a woman’s job. Second, the argument that women are adversely affected by the presence of men in the College of Nursing was undermined by the policy of permitting men to audit nursing classes. The Court held that excluding males from enrolling in the state-supported School of Nursing violated the Equal Protection Clause.

In *United States v. Virginia* (1996), the Virginia Military Institute (VMI), a prestigious all-male military college, came under fire for its policy of refusing admission to women. While at VMI, male students were engaged in military-type “adversative” training, which was meant to encourage them to be leaders in military and civilian life. Strong emphasis was placed on the cadet-style training, which included rigorous tests of physical and moral aptitude. The school’s mission was

to produce educated and honorable men, prepared for the varied work of civil life, imbued with love of learning, confident in the functions and attitudes of leadership, possessing a high

sense of public service, advocates of the American democracy and free enterprise system, and ready as citizen-soldiers to defend their country in time of national peril (Id. at 522).

Prompted by a complaint filed with the Attorney General by a female high school student seeking admission to VMI, the United States filed suit against the institution and the Commonwealth of Virginia, alleging that the male-only admissions requirement violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The District Court initially ruled in favor of VMI, noting that the government had met its burden of showing the government action based on sex met the “exceedingly persuasive justification” for the classification (Id. at 524). Studying the benefits of single-gender educational environments, the court reasoned that if having a male-only educational environment was central to the mission of the school, then the “only means of achieving the objective is to exclude women from the all-male institution—VMI” (Id.). The Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit disagreed, however, and vacated the lower court’s judgment. This court emphasized a nondiscrimination commitment undertaken by the Commonwealth of Virginia in a 1990 Report that stated, “It is extremely important that colleges and universities deal with faculty, staff, and students without regard to sex, race, or ethnic origin.” (Id. at 525). The Court of Appeals suggested three options for Virginia to consider as remedial actions: (a) admit women to VMI, (b) establish parallel institutions or programs, or (c) abandon state support, leaving VMI to function as a private institution existing on non-public funds.

Virginia chose the second option suggested by the Court of Appeals and established a parallel program at Mary Baldwin College, a private liberal arts school for women. This parallel program, Virginia Women’s Institute for Leadership (VWIL), shared much of VMI’s mission to produce ‘citizen-soldiers’; however, in many respects VWIL was much different from its male counterpart. Compared to VMI, VWIL was much smaller, enrolling around 25-30 students, maintained a less-prestigious faculty holding fewer Ph.D’s than that of VMI’s faculty, and offered fewer academic majors. Interestingly enough, a task force of Mary Baldwin faculty charged with designing the VWIL program decided that VMI’s military model of education would be “wholly inappropriate” for VWIL. The stringent adversative experience that bonded men on the VMI campus would not be part of the VWIL’s program; instead, the focus of instruction and training would favor a “cooperative method which reinforces self-esteem” (Id. at 527). Women at VWIL would participate in a less-stringent ROTC program, which the school admitted was “largely ceremonial,” and would learn many of the same skills taught through high-stress situations at VMI through guest speakers and service projects (Id.). There were also large differences in funding; VMI enjoyed an endowment of roughly \$131 million, compared to Mary Baldwin’s endowment of only \$19 million. Additionally, the court recognized the wide array of alumni contacts available to VMI graduates that helped with employment prospects and networking opportunities, both of which were unavailable to graduates of VWIL’s program (Id. at 748).

Virginia returned to the district court seeking approval of its proposed remedial plan. The district court decided that the plan satisfied the Equal Protection Clause, anticipating that the two schools would achieve substantially similar outcomes; a divided court of appeals affirmed, applying a “substantive comparability” test. The United States petitioned for a writ of certiorari, and the Supreme Court granted the writ, thus choosing to review the court of appeals decision.

In *United States v. Virginia* (1996) the Court confronted two basic issues: First, did Virginia’s exclusion of women from the unique opportunities offered by VMI deny them equal protection

of the law? Second, if exclusion from VMI offended the Constitution, what would be the remedial requirement?

The Court followed the analysis it had set out in *Hogan* for cases where there is a state government classification based on gender: focusing on the differential treatment or denial of opportunity, the reviewing court must determine whether the proffered justification is “exceedingly persuasive;” the burden of justification is demanding and it rests entirely on the state. The state must show at least that the classification serves important governmental interests and that the discriminatory means employed are substantially related to the achievement of those objectives. The Court noted that “[t]he justification must be genuine, not hypothesized or invented *post hoc* in response to litigation. And it must not rely on overbroad generalizations about the different talents, capacities, or preferences of males and females” (*Virginia* at 532-33).

The Court noted, however, that the heightened review standard

. . . does not make sex a proscribed classification. Supposed “inherent differences” are no longer accepted as a ground for race or national origin classification. [citation deleted]
Physical differences between men and women, however, are enduring: [T]he two sexes are not fungible; a community made up exclusively of one [sex] is different from a community composed of both.” [citation deleted] (*Id.* at 533).

Classifications based on sex may be used to remediate past wrongs against women, but may no longer be used “to create or perpetuate the legal, social, and economic inferiority of women” (*Id.* at 534).

The Supreme Court found that Virginia had shown no “exceedingly persuasive justification” for excluding women from admission to VMI and that the remedy proffered by Virginia—the Mary Baldwin VWIL program—did not cure the constitutional violation.

In addressing the first issue, the Court undertook a study of single-sex education and found that it does benefit some students. However, using the rationale presented in *Hogan*, the Court found no link between the goal of the institution and the actual purpose of the discrimination. That is, there was no connection between preparing students to enter the world as productive citizen-soldiers and the need to exclude women from that educational process. The opinion offered an historical summary of women’s education in the United States, noting that tradition at many colleges had been to discriminate against women. Some of the same arguments offered by Virginia had been offered in decades past, including the idea that women would disrupt the campus environment, standards would have to be lowered, and the reputation of the school would be tarnished. As early as 1970, however, a federal district court confirmed the necessity of admitting women to the University of Virginia. Taking the history of Virginia together with the state’s policy emphasizing diversity, the Court found no connection between the all-male admission policy of VMI and the desire of the state to promote diversity. The Court also noted that there were women who could meet the current admissions requirements at VMI, and thus in some instances, the only reason some women were denied admission was simply because of their gender, not because they could not meet the school’s strenuous demands.

Having found that the exclusion of women from VMI violated the Equal Protection Clause, the Court moved to determine what remedial action, if any, could satisfy the demands of the Constitution. The Court found major differences between the education offered to women at Virginia Women’s Institute for Leadership and that offered to male cadets at Virginia Military Institute. Most significant was that the state deliberately did not make VWIL a military-style

institution, which meant that the women at VWIL would not receive the same benefits of the adversative training offered at VMI.

Virginia offered a rationale for the different approaches to education at the two institutions, noting the methodology was “justified pedagogically based on important differences between men and women in learning and developmental needs, and psychological and sociological differences”(Id. at 549). Virginia relied on the educational judgment of the Mary Baldwin faculty that the adversative training offered at VMI was “wholly inappropriate for educating and training *most women*” (Id. at 549). The Court rejected this notion, stating that “generalizations about ‘the way women are’ . . . no longer justify denying opportunity to women whose talents and capacity place them outside the average description” (Id. at 550).

The Court found VWIL’s program to be unequal to VMI’s in a number of other respects. First-year students at VWIL scored an average of 100 points less on the SAT than students at VMI; the staff at VWIL held fewer Ph.D.s than their faculty counterparts at VMI; there were fewer curricular choices for students at VWIL than at VMI; there were fewer physical training facilities at VWIL than the expansive practice and training facilities at VMI; there was less financial support for students at VWIL than for those at VMI; and graduates of VWIL do not enjoy the prestige that goes with being a graduate of VMI (Id. at 551-52). The Court concluded by stating that “Virginia, in sum, while maintaining VMI for men only, has failed to provide any “comparable single-gender women’s institution . . . Instead, the Commonwealth has created a VWIL program fairly appraised as a “pale shadow” of VMI in terms of the range of curricular choices and faculty stature, funding, prestige, alumni support and influence” (Id. at 553).

The Court’s analysis in *United States v. Virginia* implies that when girls are educated apart from boys in state educational institutions “separate but comparable” might satisfy the constitutional standard. It must be noted, however, that the notion of constitutional “separate but comparable” in the context of segregation based on sex should not be confused with the unconstitutional “separate but equal” in the context of segregation based on race. The Supreme Court made it clear in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) that maintaining separate schools on the basis of race was inherently unconstitutional.

The Court addressed a straightforward issue in *Brown* (1954): “Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other “tangible” factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities?” (Id. at 493). The Court answered with a powerful statement: “To separate them from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone” (Id. at 494).

The evils of segregation based on race may raise concerns about segregation based on sex; however, separation based on sex does not impose the same stigma as does separation based on race. From a constitutional perspective the two forms of classification are fundamentally different. Simply put, there are no meaningful differences between the races, but there are meaningful differences between the sexes. The distinction is reflected in the Equal Protection Clause analysis, where classifications based on race are subjected to the very demanding strict scrutiny test, while classifications based on sex are subject to the less-demanding heightened scrutiny test.

The Court’s broad discussion in *United States v. Virginia* (1996) supports the proposition that “separate but comparable” in respect to separating students by sex would be constitutional if in fact the schools and programs provided to both were truly comparable. The Court had the

opportunity, as it did in *Brown*, to simply find that “separate but equal” was constitutionally impermissible, but it did not. Instead, after determining that excluding women from VMI violated the principles of Equal Protection, the Court engaged in a point-by-point comparison of VWIL and VMI and finally determined that because the two institutions were not comparable, excluding women from VMI was not permissible.

Had the Court found that VMIL provided opportunities for women comparable to those VMI provided for men, it may have concluded that the Constitutional requirements for equal protection had been met. If separation by sex is inherently unconstitutional, as is separation by race, the Court arguably would not have engaged in its lengthy point-by-point analysis comparing the two Virginia schools. But the Court did compare the two schools and their programs, thus opening the door to the possibility that “separate but comparable” in the context of single-sex schools and classrooms are constitutionally permissible.

K-12 Education

There have been few cases involving single-sex public elementary and secondary education, but two federal court decisions serve to illustrate the judicial approach to the issues involved. These two courts arrived at different results, but the cases involved different sets of pertinent facts.

The first case was *Vorchheimer v. School District of Philadelphia* (1976) and was decided by the Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. The court held that a school district board, in a system otherwise coeducational, could maintain a limited number of single-sex high schools in which enrollment was voluntary and the educational opportunities offered to girls and boys were essentially equal.

The plaintiff in *Vorchheimer* (1976) was a female student who alleged unconstitutional discrimination because she was denied admission into an all-male high school. Although she was eligible to attend Girls High, an all-girls college preparatory high school, the student decided she wanted to attend the all-male counterpart, Central High School. Both schools offered an equally stringent education, with comparable academic facilities, similar alumni achievements and historical connections, and similar rates of graduate placements into prestigious universities. The plaintiff presented no factual reasons for her desire to attend Central High School rather than Girls High, and she admitted that after her visit she simply did not like the impression that the all-girls school gave her. After trial, the district court found the gender-based classification at the two schools to lack a fair and substantial relationship to the board’s legitimate interest and enjoined the practice. The defendant school district appealed.

The court of appeals summarized the parties’ positions:

1. the school district had chosen to make available on a voluntary basis the time-honored alternative of single-sex high schools;
2. the schools for boys and girls were comparable in quality, academic standing, and prestige;
3. the plaintiff preferred to go to the boys’ school because of its academic reputation and her personal reaction to Central High School. She submitted no factual evidence that attendance at Girls High would constitute psychological or other injury;

4. the deprivation asserted is that of the opportunity to attend a specific school, not the deprivation of an opportunity to obtain an education at a school with comparable academic facilities, faculty, and prestige.

The court of appeals looked first to federal statutory law to determine if the issues could be resolved on that basis. The court found that Title IX excluded from its coverage the admission policies of secondary schools. The court also considered the implications of the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, but found that legislation to be equivocal. Concluding that no federal statutes authoritatively addressed the problem, the court turned to the constitutional issue that had prompted the federal court to order that qualified female students be admitted to the all-male high school.

In addressing the Equal Protection Clause issue, the court of appeals noted that in each of the Supreme Court cases reviewed by the district court there was an actual deprivation of a benefit to a female that could not be obtained elsewhere; in none of these cases was there a situation in which equal opportunity was extended to each sex or in which the restriction applied to both. And, none had occurred in an educational setting.

The *Vorchheimer* (1977) court stated its view about the pertinent educational issue involved in the case:

Equal educational opportunities should be available to both sexes in any intellectual field. However, the special emotional problems of the adolescent years are matters of human experience and have led some educational experts to opt for one-sex high schools. While this policy has limited acceptance on its merits, it does have its basis in a theory of equal benefit and not discriminatory denial. (Id. at 887).

The court noted that the Supreme Court had ruled on one gender-based school admissions policy by affirming a district court decision that a state system including both co-educational and single-sex campuses for both men and women was permissible. Because this case was a summary affirmance of a three-judge district court, the court of appeals did not have the benefit of the Supreme Court's reasoning, but still gave the result precedential weight (*Vorchheimer* at 887).

The court of appeals summarized its reasoning:

The record does contain sufficient evidence to establish that a legitimate educational policy may be served by utilizing single-sex high schools. The primary aim of any school system must be to furnish an education of as high a quality as is feasible. Measures which would allow innovation in methods and techniques to achieve that goal have a high degree of relevance. Thus, given the objective of a quality education and a controverted, but respected theory that adolescents may study more effectively in single-sex schools, the policy of the school board here does bear a substantial relationship. (Id. at 887-88).

The court of appeals stated that it was not necessary to decide whether *Vorchheimer* required application of the rational basis test or the more demanding substantial relationship test, because under either test the result would have been the same. The court reversed and remanded, concluding that the board regulations establishing single-sex high schools did not offend the Equal Protection Clause.

The second case was *Garrett v. Board of Education of School District of Detroit* (1991), which was decided by a federal district court. The plaintiffs were girls and their parents seeking an injunction prohibiting the opening of all-male “Academies” established by the defendant Detroit Board of Education, alleging that the board’s action violated both their statutory and constitutional rights.

After struggling for many years with high rates of unemployment, school dropouts, and homicides among urban males, the board of education planned to open the Academies as a means of addressing some of these issues with different methods than those being used in the existing high schools. Male students in the Academies would study not only the traditional curriculum offered in coeducational high schools, but would also experience programs on career development, test-taking skills, and civic and social responsibilities. Students would also participate in a “Rites of Passage” curriculum intended to focus on male growth and esteem issues. The male students at these schools would benefit from extended school days, tutoring sessions, summer classes, and personal attention from mentors. Parents had to sign a “covenant of participation” promising to stay involved in their children’s education, and teachers received additional training beyond that normally offered within the school system.

The plaintiffs in *Garrett* (1991) prevailed on their allegations of violations of both the Equal Protection Clause and Title IX. Relying on *Hogan* (1982), the district court required the Board of Education to show that the sex-based classification serves “important governmental objectives and that the discriminatory means employed are substantially related to the achievement of those objectives” (Garrett at 1006). The Board’s reliance on excluding girls because the Academy’s were intended for “at-risk” students simply did not make sense. Categorically defining “at-risk” students as males did not acknowledge that similar at-risk situations existed for the female population. There was no evidence that the educational system was failing urban males because females attend schools with males. In fact, the educational system was also failing females. Thus, the district court concluded that the application of the second prong of the *Hogan* (1982) test to the facts at hand made it likely that the plaintiffs would succeed on the constitutional claim.

The Board attempted to defend against the Title IX (2001) complaint by arguing that Title IX excludes from its coverage the admission plans in kindergarten through grade twelve and that its legislative history recognized the need for continued experimentation with unique methods of education, such as the Academies. The court disagreed with the Board’s legislative interpretations, stating that the admission plans covered under the exclusion were for historically preexisting single sex schools, not newly created ones, such as the Academies. Also, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights (OCR) had offered an opinion that seemed to suggest that all-male public elementary and secondary schools would violate Title IX (2001). In this instance, the court took the OCR opinion to heart and concluded that Title IX prohibited the Academies.

The Title IX analysis in *Garrett* (1991) seems to be at odds with the language of the statute, (see, 20 U.S.C. 1681(a)(1)), the implementing regulations, (see, 34 C.F.R. 106.35(b), 2000), and the statement in the OCR guidelines (see, 67 Fed. Reg. 31102, May 8, 2002), that single-sex schools are permissible, if there is a comparable opportunity for the excluded sex. The district court noted that the school district had hinted that an academy for girls was in the works, but the court found that any later attempt to equalize opportunities for girls would not compensate for their lost opportunities to learn in the special environment of the academies.

The district court also addressed an allegation that the academies were prohibited by the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974. Because the only applicable case was easily

distinguished, the court found that the plaintiffs had not demonstrated probability of success on that claim.

The *Garrett* (1991) court also found that plaintiffs were likely to succeed on their claim that Michigan state law did not permit the creation of the academies. The impact of state law on the creation of single-sex schools and classrooms could be an important issue where state statutes are more prohibitive of any form of sex discrimination than is federal law.

The Concept of Single-Sex Education

Much of the impetus for single-sex schooling has originated from some general concerns that girls do not fare as well in coeducational settings as do their male peers. There have also been claims, however, that boys may do better in a single-sex setting.

Perceived Problem

Released in 1992, a report commissioned by the American Association of University Women Educational Foundation (AAUW), *How Schools Shortchange Girls*, presented a compilation of research showing that girls were receiving a much different education than boys in coeducational public schools. The authors found that girls received less attention than boys, girls received less constructive teacher feedback than boys, girls had fewer complex personal interactions with instructors, boys received more wait time for responses than girls, and gender bias was prevalent in subjects such as math and science. The AAUW authors suggested that current educational practices be reviewed in order to best meet the needs of both boys and girls and offered a set of recommendations to address what was seen as an inequitable situation.

A 1999 follow-up report, *Gender Gaps: Where Schools Still Fail Our Children*, again commissioned by the AAUW Educational Foundation, concluded that although improvements had been made in attempts to make education more equitable, coeducational public schools were still not best meeting the needs of both boys and girls. The number of girls taking math, science, and technology courses had increased, closing the gap between male and female enrollees. However, girls still outperformed boys on verbal measures in their early years, girls were still more adversely affected by dropping out of school, and sex roles and stereotypes were still promoted within the classroom.

Single-sex schools for girls have been proposed as a possible remedy. Sadker & Sadker (1994) reported that girls in single-sex schools enjoyed greater academic opportunities, including an increased sense of freedom, the encouragement of young women's voices, and a fostering of more confident and independent young women. Girls in single-sex schools also exhibited higher self-esteem, enrolled in more math and science courses, and pursued male-dominated career fields. "They are intellectually curious, serious about their studies, and achieve more" (p. 233).

Anecdotal research may shed insight into the personal nature and responses to single-sex education. Carstensen's (1999) qualitative research examined the experiences of both teachers and students in two private schools for girls in Honolulu. She reported through their own words the lack of fear and the ability to find a stronger, more independent voice, one that is often lost to the more aggressive nature of the boys in the classroom. She found a "female energy" that created an environment of excitement and exuberance and a sense of a cohesive community. Some teachers and students compared it to compassion and a sense of caring, describing the overwhelming feeling of freedom and the ability to express one's true self without having to

worry about the confines of society. One participant noted, “For me, I think that the female energy we see is the school offering the opportunity for the girls to find who they are and to find their own voice... You can be yourself. You don’t have to be that image you put on when you go to school” (Carstensen, 1999, p. 98).

But boys have their own set of problems in school. Sadker & Sadker (1994) found that boys received lower report card grades than girls, were nine times more likely to suffer higher academic stress levels, were more likely to be recommended to special education programs, and were more likely to be punished for misbehavior.

As noted in *Gender Gaps* (AAUW, 1999), boys were less likely than girls to enroll in fine arts, foreign languages, advanced English electives, and other humanities courses and when they did, they tended to underperform girls. Additionally, fewer boys than girls were involved in gifted programs.

Proposed Solution

Given the differences many studies have found between the educational needs of boys and girls, separation of the sexes would seem to be a logical solution. Caplice (1994) summarized some of the education policy arguments by identifying three primary state interests furthered by single-sex education: excellence in education, a self-confident citizenry with well-developed leadership skills, and system-wide diversity in education.

Gurian, Henley, and Trueman (2002), whose studies include research into how the brain functions, explained how boys and girls learn differently and what schools might do to create the ultimate classroom for both boys and girls. They proposed that, especially at the middle school level, separate-sex education offers one of a number of possibilities for educational improvement. This approach would not harm children, as they are already naturally inclined toward separating by sex and could potentially help children who are not learning as well as they might in the naturally gender-competitive environment of coeducation. Also, there are examples from schools where students are separated by sex in the lunchroom or during in-school suspension where educators have noted fewer behavior problems.

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (2001) expressed her belief in the merits of single-sex education. She stated that “[s]tudy after study has demonstrated that girls and boys in single-sex schools are academically more successful and ambitious than their co-educational counterparts” (p. 1076).

Hutchison (2001) also cited a newspaper column in which the columnist had noted that while the benefits of single-sex education for boys have been less well-documented, there is at least anecdotal evidence that boys’ schools in the inner cities, where discipline is stressed and positive male role models emphasized, may result in lower dropout rates and higher test scores.

Proponents of single-sex education have their own organization and website, the National Organization for Single-Sex Public Education, at <www.singlesexschools.org>. The view of this organization is that both boys and girls have special educational needs that may be best met in a single-sex educational environment.

Opposition

The enthusiasm for single-sex public school education has not been shared by all. The challenges to single-sex public education come from many sources: women’s groups,

educational organizations, parents, students, and lawyers. Stabiner (2002) noted the struggles of the New York Public School System to open the Young Women's Leadership School, which was committed to offering a demanding single-sex curriculum. But complaints came from the New York Civil Liberties Union, the New York Civil Rights Coalition, and the National Organization of Women, contending that any admission that girls may need to be educated in a different manner than boys would be detrimental to the women's rights movement and would hinder the cause of gender equality. The school did open as planned the fall of 1996.

Some opposition to single-sex education and to the proposed changes in the Title IX regulations come from unlikely sources. The National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education (2002) responded to the Secretary of Education's Notice of Intent to Regulate with a letter of opposition, citing a lack of clarity as to the rationale for the proposed changes. The Coalition argued that the research on single-sex education is "inconclusive, largely anecdotal, and based on private and parochial schools, not public schools." Additionally, it incorporated the findings in the AAUW 1998 report, *Separated by Sex*, which reported that single-sex education works for some students, but not for all, and that the long-term effects of single-sex education are simply unknown. The Coalition also stated that it "does not believe that Title IX should be altered in the name of developing an education program that may or may not be beneficial to students' ability to learn in public education" (National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education, 2002).

A result of roundtable discussion, *Separated by Sex* produced a mixed response about the merits of single-sex education. Researchers who had studied the issues came to a consensus on six points: (a) There is no conclusive evidence that single-sex education is better than coeducation; (b) Policymakers and educators need to continue working to define the parts of a "good education;" (c) Single-sex education does produce positive results for some students in some settings; (d) Long-term impact of single-sex education is unknown; (e) No education environment is a complete escape from sexism; and (f) Investigating single-sex programs requires consideration of outside factors that makes each single-sex situation unique, from the type of program, type of school, to type of students enrolled.

Thus, even the AAUW, an organization that early on promoted single-sex education, seemed to step back from its original stance and acknowledge that all students can benefit from education reform. The issue of improving education was not limited to helping only girls or only boys, but focused on an overall education reform that could benefit all students in all schools, whether coeducational or single-sex.

Caplice (1994) pointed out that the well-informed advocate of single-sex schooling should also consider common criticisms of this form of education such as:

1. While single-sex education may be an admirable and viable educational alternative to coeducation, the state should not pay for the option because it involves state-supported gender separation.
2. Single-sex schooling does not prepare students for a coeducational world.
3. If the market does not provide for this form of education, apparently there is no demand for it.
4. While single-sex education may be beneficial, it is only beneficial for women, not men.

Comparable or Equal

There is an important distinction between “comparable” and “equal.” Meg Moulton, Director of the National Coalition of Girls Schools, in a “thoughtful letter” (cited in Hutchison, 2001), explained the distinction. Regarding Hutchison’s effort to allow federal funds to be used for “comparable” single-sex programs for both boys and girls, Moulton wrote:

While the distinction [between “comparable” and “equal”] may be subtle, we feel the implications are profound, to the degree that the intent of this section of the bill would be virtually nullified if [equal] is adopted . . . at the very heart of the impetus to create single-sex schooling opportunities is the well-established fact that boys and girls often exhibit unique learning styles . . . To state that these settings must be equal in all respects is, simply put, illogical. (Hutchison, 2001, p. 1080)

Given the language in the Title IX regulations, (see, 34 C.F.R. 106.35(b), 2002), and the Court’s apparent search in *U.S. v. Virginia* (1996) for “comparability” in the programs offered by VWIL and VMI, the distinction between “comparable” and “equal” is indeed important. If all aspects of separate schools or classes for boys and girls are the same, the educational logic for the separation would rest only on the simple fact of keeping the sexes apart. The research suggests that there are meaningful differences between boys and girls that should be addressed by corresponding differences in the education that is provided.

The No Child Left Behind Act, Title IX, and the Equal Protection Clause: Uncharted Waters

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has opened the door for “innovative programs,” including single-sex schools and classrooms. Those who see such an arrangement as a promising educational option will now have the additional incentive of federal funding. As noted in the Act, however, such schools must be consistent with applicable law.

Neither Title IX nor current federal regulations and guidelines categorically prohibit single-sex schools and classrooms. Given the support of the Department of Education for the No Child Left Behind Act, If and when new Title IX regulations are promulgated, they are likely to clarify how single-sex schools and classrooms may be organized and operated so as to be consistent with the requirements of federal law.

The Constitution does not prohibit all classifications based on gender. But single-sex schools and classrooms would be subject to challenge under the Equal Protection Clause, and states and school districts may be called upon to justify keeping boys and girls apart. The state would be required to show that such a sex-based classification serves an important governmental purpose and that the discriminatory means employed are substantially related to the achievement of those objectives. Defendants could cite the research showing that single-sex schools and classrooms provide benefits for both boys and girls; plaintiffs could argue, however, that the research is inconclusive.

Those who would establish single-sex schools or classrooms may be confronted with legal challenges and should be prepared to testify about the educational rationale for such an arrangement. As in many areas of education law, courts generally look with favor upon educational policies and practices that are grounded in educational research and professional

judgement. If school officials can demonstrate that both boys and girls have comparable educational opportunities, then such single-sex educational settings should not run afoul of federal law.

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Seeking Justice For All: The Special Concerns Of Women School Administrators

Patricia F. First, J.D., Ed.D.

Abstract

In this article the belief that there are special responsibilities for women school administrators based upon gender and the racial divide in U.S. schools is explored. Justification for women's special responsibility is discussed and examples are given, including the new issue of justice in schooling and differences in access to cyberspace. How the caring women administrator can make a difference is described in the concluding remarks.

Introduction

I believe school administrators seek the best for all the children in their care. In this article I explore this belief and whether or not there is a special responsibility for women administrators in serving these children. Ethically there are issues that women school administrators need to give special attention to because of their gender.

The question of what really is best, or what is just and caring, for a child or a group of children is debatable. In faculty lounges, in school board meetings, in parent gatherings, and in the courts, wide ranges of opinion, legal interpretation, professional experience, and research are applied to the issues of the moment. The bottom line of these issues often amounts to ethical questions for leaders. Ethical questions for the principal or superintendent often present themselves and/or conceal themselves as legal questions embedded in gender and race (First, 2001). The challenge in handling these questions is to learn to understand the perspectives of those unlike ourselves. As Lorde (1995) reminded us:

There are very real differences between us of race, age, and sex. But it is not those differences between us that are separating us. It is rather our refusal to recognize those differences, and to examine the distortions that result from our misnaming them and their effects upon human behavior and expectations. (p.285)

By becoming aware of our history as women, our stories and the story of our gender, we can progress in understanding the perspective of others and do more to seek the best for all the children in our care.

Facing Race and Gender

Morally and legally, issues of equity and fairness are among the most critical in contemporary schooling (see, for example, Grant, 1995; Grogan, 1996; Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 1999; Nieto, 2000; The Civil Rights Project, 1996). Race and gender statistics from the professoriate provide just one example. McCarthy (1999) cited the increase in women in the educational leadership professoriate (to 20% in 1994 from 2% in 1970) and the more dismal

representation of people of color (11% in 1994). School leaders cannot ignore their obligation to face the challenges of assuring social justice and equitable learning environments for racial and ethnic minorities as well as for girls and women. Despite focus on such things as school reform models, governance systems (e.g., choice, charters), and high-stakes testing, school leaders may remain ill-equipped to successfully lead schools unless they are engaged in the schools that struggle to effectively serve all students (Ridenour, First, Lydon, & Partlow, 2001).

In schools, the organizational context within which these obligations are faced is itself a confounding factor. Schools are situated at the nexus of stronger, centralized accountability pressures and decentralized, more collaborative theories of organizational power and governance (James, 1991; Murphy, 1999). Both these dynamics challenge school leaders to be informed, sensitive, and mature managers of diverse school cultures so that schools can effectively serve all students. When administrators delve deeply into these issues, they will acquire more mature cultural identities. Such growth can lead to administrators who manage schools with care of all children central to their leadership, and prepare leaders for more racially and ethnically diverse schools that value the lives of women and men equally. Addressing issues of race, gender, ethnicity, physical and mental challenges, class, and sexual orientation would serve to fill a communication void between school and a diverse community.

We bring our personal perspectives as women to those interpretations. Though we may bring common racial and gender identities, we bring widely different personal biographies. Alone, each leader's narrative tells one perspective, but from our collective story, that perspective becomes much more powerful. From the stories emerges a richer meaning of leadership in an increasingly diverse world. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) related the value of "social actors" telling their stories as a method of inquiry. They maintained, for example:

Social actors organize their lives and experiences through stories and in doing so make sense of them...How social actors retell their life experiences as stories can provide insight into the characters, events, and happenings central to those experiences. How the chronicle is told and how it is structured can also provide information about the perspectives of the individual in relation to the wider social grouping or cultural setting to which that individual belongs. (p. 68)

Stories can inform the work of educational administrators. These perspectives are important intersections to examine. Children and parents too often encounter an assumption of white rightness in a "dynamic of dominance" (Howard, 1999, p. 50). School leaders need to confront racism, sexism, and class bias that children encounter every day (Ridenour et al., 2001). If schools are to change, then those who lead and teach in schools need to change their thinking and attitudes and develop specific knowledge and skills about those different from themselves. Two questions arise: How do we effectively and meaningfully connect one's knowledge base with personal metamorphosis? How do we help teachers and administrators in one's organization to do the same?

Finding Our Stories in Leadership Classes

Gender issues often surface in classes in educational leadership. One student wrote:

I had a professor a few quarters back who spent a great deal of time poking fun at the “battle of the sexes.” “Why couldn’t women just give it a rest?” he would say. Even though he was kidding, I think several women took offense at his comments. I wasn’t there yet, but I guess I learned that “deep down” many men of his generation truly believe these close-minded views to be OK. I hope my own three sons see the world differently in this regard someday.

She indicated that as she worked her way through the readings and assignments for the week, she realized that rather than just hoping that her sons would see the world differently, her position as a teacher required that she take concrete steps to make certain that the sons of all women view the world differently. In other words, gender questions and issues are part of teaching, and changes in curriculum are necessary if we are to address and transform attitudes and beliefs about gender (Ridenour et al., 2001). Gender questions and issues are also a component of administration and leadership. Issues based on race are also frequently expressed. Another student wrote:

I’m disturbed by the lack of African-Americans on our National Honor Society and the high rate of failures for our black children on the state proficiency tests. Perhaps our minority students feel left out, or, because of their culture, need to be educated somewhat differently? I’m deeply concerned and angry that most of our teaching and administrative staff don’t seem concerned or to even notice. When I bring up the topic of our black students, I am either stared at as an alien or defensive, ambiguous, denying comments are made.

Parks (1999) addressed the issue of racism in schools. She called on educators to carry out some of the most difficult human activities . . . willingness “to examine unconscious, often deeply held assumptions; to acknowledge their own privilege or resentments; and to recognize how their own values, priorities, and attitudes, and those of others of different ethnic or cultural groups, are expressed in community life and in school” (p. 14). Examining the unconscious is difficult enough, but perhaps, with enough tolerance and hard work, doable. Willingness is often the barrier. Advocates for antiracist schooling claim that the first step to bringing anti-discrimination and appreciation for multiculturalism to schools is for people making decisions in those schools to understand who they are.

Activities related to helping future leaders understand who they are from gender and racial points of view have been used in educational leadership classes (Ridenour et al., 2001). A few women in the classes were in their 40s and 50s. They had an awareness of discrimination against women in the job market that the younger teachers, both male and female, did not have. The classes discussed research findings related to gender differences and similarities in schools, including the lack of women at the highest levels of administrative influence, curriculum gaps in addressing women’s experiences, the absence of voices of black women and black men, personnel decisions related to gender, extracurricular activities, and achievement differences between males and females. Not only are girls and women ill-served by stereotypical expectations, boys can be restricted by stereotypes of masculinity. Bullying, violence, and body image problems were among the gender and racial issues that students in the classes openly discussed.

A problem surfaces in the lack of awareness and understanding of younger leadership students about the differences in opportunities and the blatant discrimination against women. Women’s history is lost. They are unaware of this history and not sensitized to the continued

presence of vestigial discrimination. This loss surfaces through discussing teacher-student interaction in the classroom. Boys are given more opportunities to talk, asked more questions, and given more substantive feedback (American Association of University Women Educational Foundation, 1995, 1999, Sadker & Sadker, 1986, 1994). After discussing this research in class, students who were teachers later reported that they paid special attention to their own questioning patterns and were surprised to find that they do favor the boys.

Readings and discussions about white privilege engender much discomfort in educational leadership classes. McIntosh's essay about unpacking whiteness (1989), McIntyre's *The Meaning of Whiteness* (1997) and Delpit's *Other People's Children* (1995) elicit energetic discussion and much protest. With the discomfort comes reflection and growth that leads to better leadership. Institutions must become comfortable about their own and other people's discomfort about race. "Learning to face racism and to talk about it transformatively with others requires compassion toward oneself and others and sufficient intellectual character to not abandon the effort as it becomes distressing" (Parks, 1999, p. 18).

An Issue of Justice: The Digital Divide

Equity issues surface in evolving cyberspace law. The "digital divide" is the new measure separating society into "haves" and "have-nots" (First & Hart, 2002). The "digital divide," as used here, is the separation of members of United States society into those with, and without, access to computers and the internet. In addition to opportunity for access, lack of opportunity to learn the skills to make use of this portal to the world is the reality for large numbers of the poor and the educationally underserved (Taglang, 2002). The groups most affected by the digital divide parallel those groups who have fought for civil rights in other areas of society: racial minorities, the disabled, those for whom English is a second language, the homeless, and those with low incomes (First & Hart, 2002).

People with a disability are half as likely to have access to the internet as those without a disability: 21.6% compared to 42.1%. Only 23.6% of Hispanic households have access to the internet compared with 41.5% of households nationally. Only 23.5% of Black households have access to the internet (Secretary of Commerce, 2000). Also increasingly separated from the larger society, and even from activity in their own communities, by the digital divide are those over the age of 50. As access to cyberspace is surveyed each year the gaps between groups are growing larger though the number of individuals gaining access to cyberspace increases each year across all groups (Secretary of Commerce, 2000). Justice for children requires that schools and educators take a positive stance in applying the principles of federal and state constitutional provisions, statutes and cases to cyberspace access. There are social and economic reasons as well as reasons related to justice for the schools to do so.

Support for the saliency of race and ethnicity exists. The 2000 report found that differences in income and education do not fully account for race and ethnicity differences in the digital divide. Regardless of education or income level, African-Americans and Hispanics had lower rates of access and use. In 2000, when about a third of the United States population used the internet at home, only 18.9% of African-Americans and 16.1% of Hispanics used the internet from the home.

The rates of personal internet use at any location provide a similar picture. The internet use rate for whites was 50.3%, African-Americans 29.3%, and Hispanics 23.7%. The internet use

patterns for children 3 to 8 years old were as follows: whites 18.5%, African-Americans 10.2%, and Hispanics 8.7%. For those 9 to 17 years of age, the internet use rates were: whites 63.1%, African-Americans 34.2%, and Hispanics 31.4%.

Almost 60% of people with a disability have never used a computer while only 25% of people without a disability have never used a computer. In terms of internet access, 26.1% of people with a disability have access to the internet while 42.1% of those without disabilities have access. The type of disability also makes a difference. Those with impaired vision and manual dexterity problems have lower rates of internet access and are less likely to use a computer than those who have hearing difficulties.

The data show the disadvantage African-American and Hispanic students face in terms of access to the internet. The problem, however, is not only access. It is also that the technology is not handled equally well by all educators and is not equally useful to everyone in education as it is presently structured. Another problem is related to a lack of identification with the digital future among most minority members. Education's response to the digital divide will either bridge the gaps or make them larger. Technology touches education at its core because it is inextricably connected with the primary goals of education. For decades one common purpose of education was the preparation of an educated citizenry. Technological literacy is key to functioning and participating in democracy (First & Hart, 2002).

Handling the Legal/Ethical Questions

Given that ethical questions for the school administrator often present themselves as legal questions, what can the women administrator do to alleviate the problem and the pain? In the midst of an upsetting incident or a real crisis, a family can be confronted with legal jargon and offensive posturing in defense of the district unless the administrator acts with sensitivity and knowledge of others.

If administrators conceptualize the issue, decide the answer to the problem, and communicate the districts' stances in a legalistic way, they are then bound to positions that may need defending all the way to the Supreme Court. As a dispute proceeds, central aspects of a school's operation can be affected in many ways. Lawyers may ignore the educational dimensions of a legal dispute, even though they may be as important as its legal aspects (Heubert, 1999). No matter who eventually wins, the needs of the child and family have not been met, the administrator's time and the district's money is committed for years to confrontations that could be avoided by a transformed attitude toward children and their families and a transformed conceptualization of these problems.

An example of the consequences of taking the antagonistic, legalistic stance is found in *Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education* (1999). When a parent asked to have her daughter's seat changed to remove her from the easy reach of a teasing (later harassing) classmate, three teachers and a principal backed by the superintendent refused to do so, making their stand a legalistic one of not being required to make such a change. A parental request ballooned to become a peer sexual harassment case heard before the Supreme Court. The implications of the decision for both children and schools are still being analyzed. There are many such school law cases. Only a small percentage of filed cases go to the appeals court level and even fewer are heard by the United States Supreme Court (*Judicial Business of the United States Courts*, 1998). The cases that reach the appeals courts indicate the extent of these problems in the schools.

Where The Difficulty Lies

In a busy superintendent's day, choices must be made about what is important—what is worth the superintendent's time and attention. A school administrator needs practical wisdom to make these decisions for the good of children.

Practical wisdom—the ability to know the right thing to do—has two indispensable functions. First, it enables us to know not only the *means* to certain desired ends but also which *ends* are worthy of desire . . . Second, practical wisdom enables us to exercise those virtues we need to exercise in order to attain both the *specific good* internal to any worthy practice and the *general good* toward which all worthy practices tend . . . (Tong, 1993, p.27).

The effective school administrator transforms the school district into a place where decisions to treat children well are made with practical wisdom.

Most educators see the kind of incidents that become court cases as internal to the life of the school as challenges to their rules and authority. They do not see them as symptoms of deeper issues outside the school (Gordon, 1998). Thus, educators do not see or appreciate the general good to which their responses and their work can contribute. There is too often an inability, even an unwillingness, by teachers to see the larger context of children's lives (Denscombe, 1985; Gordon, 1998, 1991; Noddings, 1984). In too many instances, children and families are not treated with respect in schools. But effective school administrators can see the general good as well as the specific good for treating children and families involved in incidents with justice and care. They can make decisions that keep educational problems out of the courts.

A case like *Davis* (1999), both in the substance of the harassment and the process of not working with the parent and child, does not represent an unusual or isolated instance in the schools. Only a tiny percentage of problems go to courts at all and a minuscule number go to the Supreme Court (*Judicial Business of the United States Courts*, 1998). Given examples like *Davis* (1999), we know that teachers and administrators often take a legal stance when their methods and/or authority are questioned. But there are other models of behavior and ideals to which school administrators can strive.

School administrators, though powerful in their own systems and communities, can feel (and be) just as powerless as everyone else when dealing with multistructural government and rigid bureaucracy (Carter & Cunningham, 1997). Other pressures make it difficult for administrators to provide the transformational leadership needed to provide other than legalistic responses. Those who have a different conception of leadership may try to force administrators to behave according to their expectations (Regan & Brooks, 1995). The pressure can be intense. In a study by Grogan (1996), participating superintendents mentioned many occasions when they had experienced a dissonance between who they were and the kind of leader they were expected to be as superintendents. Resisting the pressure is crucial because it is integrity to one's own beliefs and style that makes a superintendent visionary or transformative. "It was only when their style met strategy, that is, when their actions became consistent with their beliefs, that they emerged as visionary leaders" (Regan & Brooks, 1995, p. 37).

How To Do It Better and Differently

Havel (1997), writing about political leadership, called it “the art of the impossible, namely, the art of improving ourselves and the world” (p. 8). The leadership provided by the school administrator is equally important and it often looks impossible. School leaders are some of our most important societal leaders.

To correct the ills of sexism, racism and cultural insensitivity, school administrators must change how their institutions function. Such fundamental change requires the reexamination of the ethical structure under which these leaders have been operating. New concepts of family involvement with the schools and of the leaders interaction with families are required. School leaders must change their approach and recapture the spirit of family involvement and partnership with the schools.

Care orientation in conjunction with a justice orientation has been discussed by educators. The cases that go to court and the pyramid of behavior underlying them give evidence that the care orientation has not spread in schooling. The concept of an orientation of care provides a checkpoint for behavior and decision-making useful for the school administrator.

According to Rawls (1991), justice is the set of principles that all rational human beings would select to govern social behavior if they knew that the rules could potentially apply to themselves. Although the “. . . justice orientation focused on identifying and prioritizing conflicting rights or claims” (Gilligan, Ward, & Taylor, 1988, xxi), the care orientation focuses on “. . . identifying needs and creating a solution responsive to the needs of all involved” (Gilligan, 1982). Think how differently the story of *Davis* (1999) would have turned out if the school administrator had focused on creating a solution that responded to the needs of all when the problem reached the administrator’s desk.

The concept of care needs to include an emphasis on “. . . concern and connectedness” (Martin, 1992). Justice entitles each child to care, concern and connection in a supportive environment. Each child is entitled to an adequate education in the presence of this care, concern, and connection. These are the important rights of students and their families, the ones to which administrators should strive. These are the rights worthy of the ethical attention of the school administrator.

At times, an educational leader’s personal preference conflicts with what society has deemed acceptable ethics for the profession. For example, racial discrimination toward any child is not legally (rights denied), ethically (justice denied), or morally (care and concern denied) defensible in a school no matter what personal beliefs any teacher, principal or superintendent may hold. Yet the system tolerates both subtle and blatant examples of such prejudice within the school rooms and halls. Such discrimination raises the question of institutional ethics and the moral responsibility of the principals who lead the schools, of the superintendents who lead the school districts, and of the local school board members who provide legal guardianship for the children’s schools (First & Walberg, 1992).

The Unthinkable at School

There are horror stories from the court records of school cases. There is the case of Christine Frankline, repeatedly taken from her class and raped at school by a coach and teacher, with the documented awareness of school officials (*Franklin v. Gwinnett County Public Schools*, 1992). There is the Doe case of a high school freshman who was one in a long line of girls molested by

a biology teacher. There had been reports of these molestations to the principal (*Doe v. Taylor Independent School District*, 1994). How can these things happen to children at school? And, since court records document that these things do happen, that these cases are not isolated instances, do we not as women administrators have a special obligation to change things?

I used to think that horror stories such as these could at least be understood, while certainly not accepted, by such organizational and political theories as “the problem of many hands” (Thompson, 1987). Thompson described hierarchical and collective models as the conventional ways of ascribing responsibility in politics. These are also the ways responsibility is usually ascribed in schools.

In the hierarchical model, responsibility is expected to fall on the person in the highest position in the formal or informal chain of command. But in the real world, acceptance of responsibility is mitigated by the fact that implementation and further decision-making is passed through many levels up and down the chain of command. Under the collective responsibility model, outcomes are the product of the actions of many different people.

These two models taken together help us understand how educators, who may as individuals decry the kind of immoral situations we have been discussing, allow such situations to occur in their own schools and classrooms (First, 1995). Educators are kind, humane people who enter the profession because they like kids. They must be powerless within their organizations or they would not let these things happen. They do not know what to do to change things for children. Such explanation is no longer acceptable to me to any degree. As Dewey wrote,

Less and less do men accept for others or for themselves ignorance as an excuse for bad consequences, when the ignorance itself flows from character. Our chief moral business is to become acquainted with consequences . . . Our freedom lies in the capacity to alter our mode of action, through having our ignorance enlightened by being held accountable for the neglected consequences when brought to accountability by others, or by holding ourselves accountable in subsequent reflection. (Dewey & Tufts, 1908, p. 464)

I ask the women school administrator not to leave her values of justice and care, concern and connection for every child on her doorstep when she goes to work each morning. I ask her to hold herself accountable. In 1938, Virginia Woolf invited us to stand with her on a bridge and watch the procession of men that moved from private home to public world each morning and back again each night. In 2003, if we focused on school administrators, we would watch both men and women leaving their private worlds each morning. But the kinds of questions Woolf asked as she watched the procession are the same kinds of questions we should ask today about the women and men leading the schools. On what terms do they join the public world each morning? As they cross the bridge do they remain “civilized human beings?” Do they bring with them the private world values of care, concern and connection (Martin, 1992), or do they enter today’s “real world” of possessiveness, jealousy, pugnacity, and greed, a world where the children in their care have become their enemy? Do they feel powerless about such immense problems because of the hierarchical establishment they face and the tradition of collective responsibility in our profession? School administrators must bring along private world values even if the work world does not support them. Individual responsibility can play a giant role in changing climate and attitudes in the schools. School administrators are not powerless and need not feel powerless.

The school administrator crosses the bridge each morning to lead an institution erected for children, an institution entrusted with children's care and education and growth. The school administrator of character will not allow the problem of many hands to take charge in the schoolhouse. Thompson (1987) argued that the conventional hierarchical and collective-responsibility models, "are not satisfactory responses to the problem of many hands; and that personal responsibility, properly interpreted, can be imputed to officials more often than these models imply" (p. 40). School administrators must face the problem of many hands and assign individual educators the expectation and responsibility of doing what is right for the child.

The Women Administrator Can Transform the System

If we do not keep stressing care for the children, educational leaders can slide into a perverse pride in protecting the institution instead of the children. They may celebrate winning a challenge from a parent, rather than cooperating with the parent to do what is best for the child. The woman administrator can lead a change in school culture to one of more respect for children's families that includes acceptance rather than condemnation of families different from us on any dimension. Pestalozzi (1885) wrote, "You should do for your children what their parents failed to do for them." But while doing so we must demonstrate respect and acceptance of the child's loved ones.

Petersen (1999), studying five successful instructionally-focused California superintendents, found that they articulated a personal vision for the education of children and through different leadership styles successfully wove that vision into the mission of their districts. By making careful personal decisions and operating through shared decision-making they were able to create an organizational structure that supported that vision. They used a variety of hard and soft indicators in assessing progress toward their goals. These successful superintendents had taken on as personal responsibilities, rather than delegating them, the establishment of an instructional vision, risk taking, being highly visible, modeling and signaling examples of district-valued behavior and acting as a district cheerleader.

The woman administrator can lead educators in the district to expand concepts of family and to indicate respect for the variety of family forms from which the children come. Educators must accept and work with a broad array of family types (such as blended families, extended families, adoptive families, arrangements of guardianship and fostering, chosen families, and all other supportive kinship systems) if they are to provide justice and care for all children.

The woman school administrator can formally work with the staff in staff development for ethical decision-making for children at all levels of the organization. The administrator must back the teacher who makes a decision for the child, especially when the choice becomes child or institution/district. Good staff development programs can help people to learn moral reasoning and to recognize when to apply it. Good programs can help people recognize the ethical dilemmas of their society and consider how schools and educators can contribute to the solutions.

. . . it is crucial that people be able to reflect ethically on their choices and their actions. This is especially important when individuals have power and influence over the lives of others. We can think of few areas where it is more important than in the administration of schools. (Strike, Haller, & Soltis, 1988, p. 6)

The timing is right for the woman administrator to do what must be done to transform the schools into welcoming places that are respectful of children and their families; that operate from a relational ethic where “deliberations focus on the human beings involved in the situation under consideration and their relations to each other” (Noddings, 1988, 218). Society as a whole and its organizations are in the middle of a shift from the bureaucratic to the democratic ethos. The difficulty of today’s ethical questions is not an issue unique to our field.

Concluding Thoughts

A change to the care orientation can change the school administrator’s attitude and behavior toward children and families. The spirit of caring can lead the school administrator to bring the true meaning of students rights, both legal and ethical, to all children.

On sunny days, I am hopeful about possibilities for using law to redress historic oppression and mistreatment of disempowered groups . . . On rainy days, I see retrenchment in civil rights, rising antigay legal and political activities, and defunding of services for people with disabilities, and of legal services generally. I see the real problems in legal remedies that were supposed to be successes. (Minnow, 1997, p. 82)

May the woman school administrator and leader use the law wisely and well, with both justice and care, to bring more sunny days to our school systems. May she lead us to assume responsibility for an adequate education for all children. We must face the fact that many people, acting via their state governments, do not want to assume responsibility to provide an adequate education for all of our children. What Charles Black (1997) wrote about hunger is equally applicable to education: “‘How much?’ or ‘Where will you draw the line?’ (So many people are more anxious about ‘drawing the line’ than about getting food out to hungry children.)” (p. 136).

There are formidable obstacles facing those who challenge the status quo in the improvement of schools. But there are many who recognize the immense value of education (Galbraith, 1996). We can only keep working toward the changes and the political action that the good society demands. There will always be something more immediate, but there will never be anything more important than providing an adequate education for all children (Verstegen, 1998).

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Voices of Women High School Principals

Ellen Wexler Eckman, Ph.D.

Abstract

This study presents the challenges women face in educational administration from the perspective of female high school principals. Eight women high school principals participated in the qualitative study that focused on their careers, the conflicts between their personal and professional roles, and the impact of gender on the high school principalship. The participants acknowledged the importance of encouragement and mentoring in their decisions to become high school principals. They continued to be affected by the male image of the high school principal. They sought support from other female leaders as well as offered mentoring to women aspiring to administrative positions. The participants recognized that role conflict was a factor contributing to whether or not women would pursue the high school principalship.

Introduction

The disproportionately low representation of women in the public high school principalship is a problem that has persisted (Bell & Chase, 1993; Mertz & McNeely, 1990; Porat, 1985; Schneider, 1986). In a study of three Midwestern states, only 15% of the high school principals were female, whereas 48% of the high school teachers were female (Eckman, 2002). These data indicate that the under-representation of women in the public high school principalship continues (Table 1).

Table 1

Women High School Principals in Three States by Number and Percentage of Total

	Number of High School Principals	Percent of High School Principals Female
Illinois	673	18.3
Minnesota	422	17.1
Wisconsin	458	9.2
Total	1553	15.2

By listening to women high school principals describe their careers, the conflicts between their personal and professional roles, and the impact of gender on the high school principalship, the challenges women experience becoming and serving as high school principals emerged. The findings are useful to other women educators who might consider the high school principalship as a career choice. As one participant commented, "to encourage more women to pursue the principalship, we need to put the whole gender issue more clearly on the table and work with women in terms of the differences that exist, and help them better understand what they're going to face ahead of time."

Method

All of the female principals (N = 237) in Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin were asked to participate in a survey designed to gather demographic data and to assess levels of role conflict, role commitment, and job satisfaction. The instruments used in the survey were the *Role Conflict Questionnaire* (Nevill & Damico, 1974), the *Role Commitment Question* (Napholz, 1995), and the *Job Satisfaction Survey* (Mendenhall, 1977, revised Schneider, 1984). The names of the women high school principals were obtained from the State Boards of Education in each of the three states. Of the 237 survey packets mailed, 164 were returned for a return rate of 69.2%.

The participants for this study were selected from 164 women high school principals who responded to the above described survey. In order to hear a variety of women's voices, women with both high and low scores on the survey instruments of role conflict, role commitment, and job satisfaction, were purposefully selected to participate in structured interviews. The selection process included principals from urban, suburban, and rural school districts. Eight women agreed to participate in open-ended interviews that were structured to allow them to describe their career paths and aspirations, to expand on their perspectives about role conflicts, articulate their leadership style and to discuss the impact of gender on the high school principalship. A follow-up phone interview to each participant was conducted to document reactions and allow for further clarification. These comments were included as part of the data collected for the study. A draft copy of the findings was sent to each of the participants for their final comments and feedback.

Participants

The eight women principals in this study have been given pseudonyms and the names of their schools and communities have been omitted. The personal and professional attributes of the participants vary. Their ages ranged from 49 to 53. Seven of the 8 were married, and 3 of the 8 had children at home. The women, 7 Caucasian and 1 African-American, had from 1 to 8 years of experience in the principalship, and the buildings administered had from approximately 100 students to 2,000 students. Seven of the eight had been in more than one principal position; all but one had had previous experience as an administrator. These eight women represented urban, suburban, and rural communities. Their paths to the principalship differed, but all indicated that entry into the position was made after multiple years of teaching and after the age of 35. Seven of the eight have no aspirations to become a superintendent, and the 8th participant was somewhat ambivalent about such a move. Each female principal is presented individually based on data provided by the interviews and field notes.

Diane

At the time of the study, Diane had been a principal for three years at a traditional suburban high school with 1,323 students. The career path that Diane followed to the high school principalship involved several administrative positions that required her to change school districts and move to new communities.

Diane began her career as a high school English teacher and then worked for ten years as a high school guidance counselor. She only considered becoming an administrator when the female superintendent of her school district encouraged her to take some administrative courses.

Her first administrative position was as a principal/counselor in the same district where she had been working. For the next 13 years she held a variety of administrative positions in that district's alternative high school programs.

At that point Diane decided to make a career change. She wanted to be the principal of a comprehensive high school, rather than continue to work in the alternative high school setting. She applied for a number of high school principal positions, but felt that her applications were not considered because her position as the district coordinator of alternative high school programs was not viewed as "real principal" work. As she said, "Well, let's just look at the reality. If I want to get back into a regular setting, what do I have to do? And I did it." She applied for an assistant high school principal position that had become available in the middle of the academic year in a different community. A few months after she was hired, the principalship position became available; Diane applied and became the high school principal.

Diane held administrative licenses as a secondary school principal and as a director of pupil services. Despite having earned many credits beyond her Master's degree, Diane had made a conscious decision not to pursue a doctoral degree. She expressed no regrets about that decision, though she recognized that the lack of a Ph.D. might have been detrimental when she was first pursuing a principalship position. "I don't know if it closed some doors, because you never know, when you send papers anywhere, you never know why you don't get an interview or a bite or anything."

Diane was 50 years old, European-American, had never been married, and had no children. She expressed no interest in becoming a superintendent, "I like working in the buildings. I like being right where the kids are." Her aspiration was to finishing her career as a high school principal.

Karen

Karen's traditional suburban high school of 1,120 students was the only one in her school district. When she was hired she was told that "they were really taking a chance on having a woman as the high school principal." At the time of the study she was in her third year as the high school principal.

Karen described her career path as one where she had "zigged and zagged and gone all over." She spent the first 12 years of her career as a special education teacher and supervisor. Her next position was as an assistant professor in a school of education at a small college. Karen explained the reason she decided to become a principal, "I watched the principals I worked with and I said I could do that." She spent the next 12 years as an assistant principal, a high school principal and then an elementary school principal, all within the same urban school district. Karen then accepted the position of assistant superintendent in a different urban school district. Her husband was not able to transfer his job to the new community and she was required to live in the district as a condition of her employment. After two years of maintaining two households, Karen again changed jobs and accepted the position of high school principal.

Though Karen recognized that she might change her job again, she did not have any specific career plan for the next five years. "I have no idea. I could be here . . . it just depends upon what happens and timing." The superintendent in the district would be retiring soon. She said she would leave the district if the new superintendent was difficult. Otherwise she might remain in the high school principalship for five more years, until her retirement.

Karen expressed no aspirations to become a superintendent. Her experiences as an assistant

superintendent made her understand how far removed she would be from students. "I need to be around students, whether they're big ones or little ones." She described the superintendent's role as basically one of "managing a school board" and dealing with the politics that surround school board operations.

Karen had a Ph.D. degree and held the following administrative licenses: superintendent, principal, director of curriculum, and director of special education/pupil services. She was 40 years old when she took her first position as a principal and was 53 at the time of the interview. She was European-American, married, and had adult children.

Sandra

Sandra had been a high school principal for five years. Her high school had 788 students and was located in a rural community. Sandra had always been employed at that high school, first as a teacher, then as an assistant principal, and finally as the principal.

Sandra never developed a career plan to become a high school principal. When the school district created a new assistant high school principalship position, she was encouraged by her principal to apply. It was only after becoming an assistant principal that Sandra even began to take courses to be certified as a principal. Seven years later, when her principal neared retirement, he encouraged Sandra to consider applying for the principalship.

I didn't know if I really wanted to take on the high school position. And then the more I thought about it, do I want some young guy coming in here and setting the stage for what we've got going here? Or do I want to have the opportunity to make an impact on the direction we move?

Sandra was hired for that principalship, which was the only principal position for which she ever applied.

Sandra was not interested in pursuing a Ph.D. degree. She had completed the courses for the superintendent's license, and had made one, unsuccessful, bid for a superintendent position in a neighboring school district. The superintendent in her present district was to retire shortly and he had been encouraging her to consider applying for his position. Sandra expressed some apprehension about such a career move.

I don't know if I want to do the superintendency because that would require me moving and making some big changes, and I don't know that I'm willing to make that change at this point in my life. I can retire in five years. I don't know if I think of myself retiring, but what would I be doing the superintendency for? I mean, I have enough money. I have credibility, if that's significant. I know I can do it if I wanted to, so why would I do it?

Sandra was European-American, married and had one child in high school and one child in college. She was 49 years old at the time of her interview.

Linda

Linda was in her second year as the head of an alternative charter high school. Her school of 94 students was one of four high schools in the school district. Linda had been an English teacher

and the coordinator of the at-risk program at the high school for 10 years. Her career path to the principalship was unplanned. When a grant Linda wrote to create an alternative charter school was funded, she was asked to take on the position of the director/principal of the new school. Linda admitted, "I just developed into the principalship. It wasn't something that I was actually looking for, but in order to run the school, we needed a principal."

The move to the position of principal had not been easy for Linda. She felt that as the principal she was more removed from her original program and her students. She was also painfully aware that the three male high school principals were receiving far more compensation than she was. She felt that the salary differential placed her at a disadvantage in her district; she saw her work as being less valued than that of the male high school principals.

Linda completed two Master's degrees—one in administration and one as a K-12 reading specialist. She was not involved in any additional education or certification programs at the time of the study. Linda was not interested in becoming a superintendent and was unsure of her future career direction. She was 43 years old, European-American, married and had three children, who were 15, 13, and 7 years old at the time of the study.

Lauren

Lauren had been the principal of a high school with more than 2,028 students for 8 years. Her high school was one of five in an urban school district. Lauren's career path included working in several different teaching and administrative positions in the school district. She had been a music teacher, an assistant middle school principal, the district-wide fine arts coordinator, an elementary school principal and, finally, a high school principal. Lauren had actually been recruited for her present high school principalship by the faculty members of the school based on her strong background in the fine arts.

Lauren had no specific career aspirations, although she had begun thinking about new directions. "I do feel that it might be fun to explore some other stuff. I'm 45 years old and so I need at least another 10 to 12 years before I would be eligible to retire. But I don't think I could last another ten or twelve years in a principalship." Lauren had a license as a principal and as a director of curriculum. She was not pursuing any additional degrees or certifications. Lauren was married, European-American and had three children, only one still living at home.

Barbara

Barbara was in the second year of her principalship at a suburban high school of 1,483 students. Barbara actually served as a co-principal. According to Barbara, this unusual administrative structure had not reduced the workload of either co-principal. Indeed, the arrangement had created some conflicts and Barbara expressed some desire to leave the position. She had never planned on becoming a high school principal and was not sure how long she would remain in the position.

Barbara began her career in a southern state where she worked for 18 years as a high school teacher and guidance counselor. A female colleague of hers, who eventually became her mentor, recruited her for an assistant high school principalship in a midwestern state. Accepting this position meant a move for Barbara and her family. As Barbara recalled, her mentor said, "You've got to do this . . . I'm going to pay for you to come here, and I'm going to move you here." Barbara agreed and then worked in several administrative positions in this suburban

school district, moving from the assistant principal position to the chair of the guidance department and finally to the district's director of pupil services. Once again, Barbara was recruited by her mentor. This time she was asked to join her mentor as the director of the guidance department in a different suburban community in the same state. Within a few months of Barbara's move to that high school, she was appointed by her mentor to the position of assistant principal and shortly thereafter she became a co-principal.

Barbara expressed some concerns about her career changes. The position of director of pupil services had been a district-level administrative position that was at a different, and higher, administrative level than her current principalship. "I had been doing all the work an assistant superintendent would do, but I never knew that because I never was at the principalship level. I never understood that level." At the time of the study Barbara expressed no interest in becoming a superintendent.

Barbara held administrative licenses as a principal and director of pupil services. She was pursuing a Ph.D. degree in administrative leadership. She was 54 years old, African-American, married, and had two adult children.

Paula

Paula's career path was different than the other participants. She taught school for only two years before entering a Masters program in school counseling that led her to positions in state government as a school-counseling consultant and then as the pupil services sections chief. Paula had also been the mayor of a small rural community and reported enjoying that managerial and leadership experience. In order to combine her interests in education and her experiences as a leader in the public sector, she entered a doctoral program in administrative leadership to prepare for a position as a public school superintendent. However, one of her professors pointed out that the traditional career path to the superintendency was from the high school principalship and that as a woman she would have to "jump through every hoop" in order to be considered a viable candidate for a superintendency. It was for that reason that Paula began looking for positions in high school administration.

Paula applied for an assistant principalship position, convinced that her lack of experience in a high school would be a major obstacle in her career path. She credited the high school principal for taking a chance on her. "There was a woman principal and she was gutsy enough to take a chance because . . . I mean, I really had only this bureaucratic background." Paula served as assistant principal for six years and then became the high school principal for a nearby school district. Two years later the faculty of the high school where she had been the assistant principal recruited her to return as their principal. She was in her second year of that principalship at the time of the study. Her high school of 2000 students was one of five in an urban school district.

An assistant superintendent position had just become available in her school district and Paula was being encouraged by the superintendent to consider applying for that position. Paula was conflicted because it was only her second year at the high school and she wanted to stay there for several more years before moving. She indicated that though she might consider an assistant superintendent position, the longer she studied the superintendent's role, the less certain she had become about that position. "It (the superintendency) strikes me as so much hand-holding with the board . . . a lot of playing with the guys out in the field. I don't know if that's me. I'm terribly hands on and I really do value my relationships with people. . . ." Paula was 51 years old, European-American, married, and had two adult children.

Carol

Carol was in the third year as high school principal. She had been hired to open a new public magnet high school for an urban school district that had four other high schools. The school had 750 students but was expected to enroll 1,000 students when at full capacity.

Carol taught social studies for 20 years and then was encouraged by the only woman in the central office in her school district to become the coordinator of staff development. As Carol said, "I never saw myself moving into administration until this woman suggested something for me." She had, though, been taking courses in administrative leadership because she wanted to have some options. The position as coordinator of staff development led Carol to other district-wide coordinator positions.

Carol then decided to change the direction of her career and left central office administration. She became an assistant high school principal. "I felt that, especially with women, if you don't have one of the bases covered, you have to go back and get that base covered." From the assistant principal position, Carol moved onto a middle school principalship and then to her current position as a high school principal.

Carol was licensed as a director of curriculum and as a principal and had her Master's degree in administrative leadership. One of her professional regrets was that she had not completed a Ph.D. degree. Carol expressed no interest in becoming a superintendent. "I was in central administration for about three years, and I'm glad I did that, but I don't think I want to go back and do that again." She was committed to working at the high school for three to five more years. After that she had no specific career plans, other than possible retirement. Carol was 52 years old, European-American, married and had one adult child.

Findings

A number of themes emerged from the data. Personal attributes will be discussed first, followed by professional issues and role conflict. Finally, the themes dealing with gender issues in the high school principalship will be presented.

Personal Attributes

Age. Six of the eight women in this study first became high school principals when they were in their mid 40s. All of the participants, except Lauren and Linda, were serving as high school principals within five years of possible retirement dates. Proximity to retirement age may explain why the majority of the participants expressed few career aspirations. When asked what aspirations she had for her career Karen, who was 53, responded, "I don't know. I know what I want to do when I retire in terms of my next life, and I'm probably about five years away from that." This was repeated by Carol who, at age 52, commented, "I wanted to commit three to five years in getting this school off and running, and after that we'll see. It may be time for retirement." Lauren, who was 45 at the time of the study, noted that she had 10 to 12 more years before she would be eligible to retire and that she did not think she could work another ten years as a high school principal. Diane, at age 50, was more specific about the impact of age on her principalship. "I feel like you do reach a point in your age where you begin to wonder if you're connecting with the kids properly. I haven't reached that yet."

Family support. “I couldn’t have done it all alone.” This comment by Lauren articulated the theme of support from husbands, parents, and other relatives, that all of the participants recognized as an important element for their career development. Linda, in commenting on her husband’s support for her career, noted “we juggle things around between his schedule and mine; we have to be very organized. Try to plan weekdays for who’s got what.” Diane reported that it was her sister who provided support. Diane knew that without her sister she could not have balanced her role as a principal with the needs of her aging parents.

Despite having support from their families, the women still experienced conflicts between their personal and professional roles. Carol said she had not taken a “high powered” administrative position until her only child was in high school. Linda admitted that she would not attend professional conferences that took her away over night because of childcare demands. Barbara explained, “I go to work all the time and anytime, and if I had a husband who didn’t understand or some younger children of any age that really needed me, it never could have happened.”

Interestingly, Sandra said that it was not just support from families but also the perceptions that men held of their wives working that impacted the career paths that women followed. Sandra credited her mother-in-law, who had worked outside the home and attended college late in life, with being a role model for her son. “My husband grew up realizing that women can do anything.” Sandra indicated that her husband accepted her status as the high school principal and was not threatened by her position because of the attitudes and beliefs instilled by his mother. She expressed concern that this level of support and understanding were not always available for women and that conflicts can exist when women have a higher status position than their husbands.

Professional Issues

Mentors and mentoring. Researchers have recognized the importance of mentors in furthering women’s careers in educational administration by providing support, encouragement and networking opportunities (Cohn, 1989; Grogan, 1996; Mertz, 1987). In particular, women in educational administration were found to have benefited from having women as their mentors because female mentors could explain the unwritten rules of the organization and identify the informal networks (Fleming, 1991; Hill & Ragland, 1995). Seven of the eight women in this study said that mentors had helped them in their careers. Five of the participants indicated that it had been female administrators who had encouraged them to apply for administrative positions, to enroll in administrative certification programs, and who hired them for their first principalships. Only two women indicated that their mentors were men.

Carol’s mentor was the “token woman in the district . . . she was, of course, like many women who first got into higher level positions, superbly competent.” It was her mentor who first encouraged Carol to leave the classroom for a staff development position. Carol also said that her mentor had groomed her for other administrative positions. Diane had been encouraged to take her first courses in educational administration by a female administrator. Barbara’s female mentor had recruited and hired her for several administrative positions—from assistant principal, to guidance director, to co-principal. For Paula, it was a female high school principal who made it possible for her to move directly from a state department bureaucratic position to an assistant high school principalship. Lauren reported that she had been fortunate to have several female mentors who helped her “understand a lot of the gender games that are being played.” In

particular, a female high school principal who mentored Lauren would tell her, "You stick to your guns. You're doing the right thing! And you're going to make it."

Karen and Sandra reported that men had served as their mentors. "I think that what you do is you just find people you can trust," was the way Karen described developing a mentor relationship. She had a male mentor that she had turned to for advice in solving problems throughout her career. Sandra had been encouraged by the male principal in her school to consider administrative positions. She continued to rely on him as a mentor because, as she put it, "he knows the ropes at the next level."

The women in this study were mentored by women and in turn were actively mentoring other women for positions in educational administration. Diane's words reflected the responses of most of the participants, "I feel that it's important to mentor women who I work with, who might, with some encouragement, be interested (in the high school principalship)." Paula agreed that part of a principal's job "is going out there and tapping people on the shoulder and saying, 'Have you thought about going into administration? I've noticed that you do X, Y, Z really well.'" She found that women were very surprised when she noticed their leadership capabilities. Karen encouraged women by urging them to take leadership roles at the building and district level. Sandra encouraged two women at her high school to go into administration and was continuing to mentor them in their new positions in different school districts.

The participants also recognized that they served as role models for female students and teachers. As Diane noted, "I am very proud of being a high school principal. I'm very aware when I walk down the halls of being a role model for the girls." Sandra indicated that there were more women faculty members aspiring for leadership positions in her school now that they had a female principal, then when there had been a male principal. She was also aware of the positive effect that she had on both her female and male students. "I think it's good for our kids that someone like myself is here, so they can see that women can do a variety of things without standing there saying 'I can do this,' but just by virtue of doing it."

Encouragement from other sources. Researchers have reported the importance of encouragement from university professors and leadership training programs in the development of career aspirations for women (Gotwalt & Towns, 1986; Grady, 1992; Grady, Carlson & Brock, 1992). All of the participants in this study had been involved in programs in educational administration. However, they received inconsistent levels of support from their professors in educational administration. Carol noted that she received no encouragement from the faculty in her educational administration program to apply for administrative positions. Sandra was critical of some of the materials in her educational administration courses, "my thoughts as I read through it, they kept talking about men, men, men and I didn't fit in the style that men used, and as I read it, I felt incompetent." Paula was the only participant to mention that she had received support from her professors in the form of teaching assistantships and invitations to participate with faculty members in other university-related activities such as research projects and conferences.

Despite this support, Paula was critical of the educational administration programs at the university because they did not provide future principals with skills in conferencing, public speaking, facilitation and leadership. "I certainly think that there are things within the preparation program itself that could be more helpful . . . more practical things. My guess is that the great business schools that train CEOs don't leave them without tools. I think there is a lot of attention paid in business schools to presentation, not only oral, but also physical. That should be a part of it, because that's what we are! We're CEOs."

Both Karen and Sandra noted that their participation in leadership assessment centers had been one of the most helpful programs in terms of encouraging them to become principals. Karen noted "I got a very thorough report when I was done about what I was good at and what I needed some work on, and that was the best feedback I think I've ever gotten." Sandra found the assessment center was helpful even though "at first I didn't really like the results . . . it was like a good awakening to me in terms of some things to work on."

Networks and support for women principals. The "good old boy's network" has been recognized as a barrier for women in developing careers in educational administration (Grogan, 1996). The women in this study acknowledged that the "old boy's network" was alive and well. Sandra reported that the male principals in her athletic conference called each other for advice. "I don't think they intentionally don't call me. I just think they don't think of it. I mean, we're colleagues and we talk and we visit, but as far as calling for any suggestions—No."

A response to the "good old boy's network" has been for professional women to form their own networks to support each other in their careers (Johnson, 1991; Pancrazio, 1991; Schmuck, 1986). The women high school principals in this study reported varying degrees of success for such endeavors. Paula thought it would be seen as a sign of weakness to get support from workshops created specifically for women. Sandra recognized that there was a need to have professional women to talk with; "it's different having a woman to talk to than having a guy to talk to. Now I bond a lot with our curriculum person (a woman), and that's real important. But as far as outside of this building, boy, it's all men." Linda did not attend the monthly meetings for women administrators that her district held because of the demands on her time.

Diane had participated with a group of women who tried to develop a support group for women administrators within the state's association of school administrators. They wanted to have "women come together to talk about their mutual concerns." They felt that their concerns were different than those of the male administrators in terms of needing "people to talk to and mentors and all the family things, family responsibilities." At the time the state association did not support their efforts and the group "fell by the wayside." She said that recent efforts to provide support for women administrators through leadership workshop was motivated more by a concern over a shortage of administrators than a genuine concern for women's issues.

Both Carol and Lauren found support from women outside of their buildings. Lauren received support from a group of women who held leadership positions in local, county and state government. According to Lauren, this group of women "really wanted to see other women succeed." Carol met regularly with women principals from neighboring districts; "We still see each other for 'girl's night out,' about once every two or three months. And then, you know, we can sit and talk."

Role Conflict and Role Balance

Researchers have documented that women educational administrators experience role conflict as they work to balance their home and family responsibilities with their professional roles (Edson, 1988; Erickson, 1985; Goeller, 1995; Pavan, 1991; Shakeshaft, 1989). Women principals have indicated that they must be "superwomen" in order to balance the enormous workload with the demands of their personal lives (Curcio, Morsink & Bridges, 1989; Kochan, Spencer & Mathews, 2000). Linda summarized the conflicts created by the demands of personal and professional roles, "I would have to say the number one issue is the time commitment. Because no matter how much we say our husbands are helpful . . . Mom is usually the nurturer

and the caregiver and the worrywart. You know, you're the organizational person. I mean, it's stressful! It's stressful!"

One of the themes that emerged from the interviews was the incredible time demand the women faced as high school principals. Carol was quite clear about the hours involved in her position, "I work seventy hours every week. There is never a week I work less than seventy hours. It's a minimum of a twelve-hour day, and its very often fifteen hours and it's another eight hours on the weekends." Diane worked "two, three nights a week, 60-hour work weeks." Paula said, "I know that I can stay here 'til nine o'clock every night." In addition, she was aware that absences from work would not be tolerated. "People can be nice and understanding, but the reality is 'We want you here. You've got to be here.'"

Several of the women high school principals had directly confronted the extensive time demands of their positions. Karen was "very purposeful about balancing, trying to keep a focus. I do what I can. And beyond that I've got a family and I've got things that I'd like to do." Diane told her faculty that "I will not be the first person to arrive in the morning and I will not be the last one out every night. Some nights I will be." Paula reported, "I will attend as many activities as I can, but I don't . . . sometimes I don't stay for the entire thing. I'll go to a concert . . . sort of a high visibility thing."

The participants used different ways to relieve the stress resulting from their work schedules. The most common strategy was to get involved in exercise. Lauren walked at least two times a week; Paula belonged to a health club and took spur of the moment trips; and Karen swam and lifted weights. Barbara, on the other hand, brought balance to her life through her continued involvement in her church activities. "I really try not to compromise on church activities. I try to participate in Sunday school teaching, just as I've always done, because those things mean a lot to me. And they are the things that keep me centered." Diane explained in detail how she resolved the role conflicts presented by the demands of the principalship.

The primary way that I do it is I work very, very hard when I'm here in the building and I do my best to not take my work home. I rarely will take any work home during the week. That's one of the balances. I also take my vacations and I don't apologize for that. And when I do, I don't call in, unless there is something that I know is brewing to begin with . . . I do work very hard at keeping those separate (work and home), and I'm not afraid to take a sick day, which means I probably take three a year.

Carol had not been as successful as the other women in finding a healthy way to balance the demands of the principalship. She noted "my health has not been as good as I want it to be. I've gained weight in the three years that I've had this position. I stopped exercising, because I don't have time to do it. I get more colds and flu. . . . If I had to do this for a long, long time, I think that it would definitely have a more detrimental effect on my health." Linda was similarly concerned about the negative impact on her health created by the time demands of her position. "I look at the number of administrators lately who've had cancer and all this, and so I just want to make sure I'm not getting stressed out."

The women clearly articulated their personal struggles to prioritize work and family commitments. Carol had resolved the struggle by dividing up the week. "I'd say Monday through Friday, it's work first. On Saturday, it's family first. On Sunday, it's half-and-half. I'm able to do that because I'm at an age where I have an empty nest so I think that allows me some leeway. Until my child was a junior in high school, family came first." Sandra commented "I like to work

and I like to get things done . . . I guess I'm learning to let work—not slide, but take a backseat to some personal kinds of things. It's hard to do because I feel a commitment to both, a tremendous commitment." Karen said that "as a parent you're constantly torn between the job and your family. So, how do you balance that? Work your way through it the best you can. To me, family is the most important thing."

The struggle between family responsibilities and the work of the high school principal was also seen as being dependent on experience in the position. Lauren explained, "When you're new on a job, you have to prove yourself. There's no two ways about it. You have to sort of establish yourself. . . . The more self-confidence you have, I think you tend to sort of put things in balance." Paula agreed, "New principals tend to feel like they really do need to be everywhere all the time. If they're not here long after the parking lot is empty, it feels strange." Sandra recognized that after five years in her position she was finally "getting to the point where I'm more able to do the personal commitment kinds of things." Additionally, Barbara noted that "as the (academic) year progresses there's sometimes when it has to be work first, and sometimes when it's an option. . . . But sometimes there is no option. . . . You just make it happen and fit it around your life, fit it around your children. That's how it is."

The participants recognized that the struggle over role commitment was a factor contributing to whether or not women pursued the high school principalship. Karen said that it "has to do with the pull between families. Women feel it more than men do. The pull between family and your job." Barbara summarized the dilemma facing women in pursuing the high school principalship. "I think that for the most part, being away from home and doing all these things and being everything to everybody except your own children is something that moves a lot of professionals ahead and I can do that now, because I don't have children at home. But I wasn't willing to do that at the time that I had children at home."

Gender Issues

Image of the High School Principalship. Diane expressed a common frustration over the negative role gender had played on the participants' career paths. "There is no doubt in my mind that my gender was affecting my career path, because I was interested in high school positions . . . I have no proof of this, but I sensed there have been two stacks of applications. I think they were just looking for men. Of course, they would never say that . . . I think token interviews have definitely happened." Carol, one of the finalists for a high school principal position in which the male candidate was hired, said, "I know he was far beneath my qualifications and experience. But I think they perceived that they needed somebody to come in there and take control, and they thought that would be a man." She noted that the people who hire high school principals "don't see a woman as capable of doing the job . . . They see the high school principalship as somebody who manages the building and deals with discipline. And they feel that men are better at that."

Karen agreed, "In high schools you tend to get this belief that you have to have the building under control. Control is linked to being a man. Men can control things better than women can. And so, if you're a woman, that building may get out of control." Sandra thought that the image of the male in the high school principal's office was related to the importance of athletics in the high schools, noting that men were high school principals because "they were the coaches, and the coaches become the leaders."

The women reported confronting a general perception that women have trouble handling discipline issues. What Paula noticed regarding her discipline style was that “most of the reactions I got were that I was a lot tougher than they ever thought I would be.” She commented that people assume women will “go for the easier way or the softer way.” According to Carol, school board members and superintendents did not understand that discipline can be a “little softer and more indirect.” Barbara argued that female high school principals handle discipline matters differently and actually more effectively than do men. “I mean, we just don’t necessarily get so bent out of shape about what kids do and don’t do. It’s not generally a power issue . . . it’s always a much kinder, gentler approach to discipline.” Sandra described her style of discipline as “killing them with kindness.” The way the participants handled discipline issues is consistent with research on assistant high school principals, whose major function is to control discipline. Female assistant high school principals handled discipline problems as well as male assistant high school principals did and the women assistant high school principals more frequently used the discipline encounter as a learning experience (Marshall & Mitchell 1989).

The women in the study realized that they had been socialized in ways that hindered their career development. Diane voiced this concern, “I was not raised to be the center of attention.” Lauren also spoke about the “pain” associated with being at the center of attention, particularly “when you start getting that really personal criticism . . . when the newspaper article calls you ‘authoritarian’ . . . when the play is so dirty.” Diane noted, “You have to have a thick skin. And you can’t worry about the fact that they talk about you. ‘Cause they’re going to.” Sandra said that she had taken things more personally at the beginning of her tenure as a high school principal and later recognized that “we’ve got to train ourselves as ‘reculturing agents,’ because then I think you don’t take things as personally. But it takes awhile to recognize that.” Lauren noted that she was often accused of personalizing issues. “I was so pissed off! Typical males, you know! Oh, yeah, I’m too sensitive. I was so mad about that and I argued back.” During her eight years as high school principal she came to understand that “You can’t be fragile. You do have to have a sort of toughness of spirit, while retaining your sensitivity.”

However, Karen cautioned about placing too much emphasis on gender specific characterizations.

I think there are certain traits that do go along with your gender. But I think what’s a more powerful kind of thing is the perception on the part of the other people in terms of what goes along with your gender. So, it’s the perception part of it more so than the reality part of it. People think that women will act a certain way or react a certain way in some situations.

Leadership styles. The women referred to themselves as leaders who were collaborative, less directive, more collegial, shared in decision-making, and were concerned with family issues. These were the same terms and phrases found in the literature on feminine leadership styles (Brunner, 1997; Conner & Sharp, 1992; Erickson, 1985; Frasher & Frasher, 1979; Hurty, 1995; Roesner, 1990; Sherman & Repa, 1994). The women worked for and knew many male administrators and indicated that they had a different or more feminine style of leadership. Lauren was interested in “team building . . . I’ve put a lot of thought into how we operate as an administrative team . . . We’re very site-based here in our decision making, consensus, the whole deal.” Diane commented, “I do my best to be as collaborative as I possibly can be. We have a steering committee that we take some decisions to. . . . I really do view myself as much less directive and much less having to feel like I’m in control.” Sandra used the term “participatory”

when describing her leadership style. "I try to get people involved in what's going on so they understand . . . so then they support the direction we are moving."

Carol saw the difference in male and female leadership styles in terms of roles.

I try and lead by being a leader with instruction and curriculum. And many of the males that I work with and have worked with in the past were hired as principals who were managers. So their role had been very different. . . . They were very good managers. But my role is probably a lot different from that. It's much more instructional and it's much more consensus building and it's much more inter-personal relationship based.

Paula noted that she relied "more on relationships than the men I've worked for. I spend a lot more time listening than I do pontificating, and I think that's a female characteristic. . . . I use a lot more feeling words and terms and strategies."

The women said that they brought a different perspective to the principalship that was advantageous to their students, teachers, parents and communities. Linda found the advantage of being a female leader was that she had "a real relationship with the majority of my staff . . . being a woman. It's that nurturing, empathetic side." Barbara said that "there's a nuance that females bring to leadership that really understands family and the commitment to family." Both she and Karen noted that working for a female leader meant that family needs would be addressed. Karen told her staff, "if you've got an issue where you've got to go deal with something with your family, that's a priority. Go do it, because you won't be effective unless you are dealing with that."

The women reported that they defined and used power as high school principals differently than did male high school principals. Karen noted that "women are much less concerned about power and who's looking good or who is not looking good. They have less of that kind of ego connected to it [than men]." Diane commented, "I try not to operate from a perspective of my power by virtue of this office. . . . It's the title and I accept that, and I use it where I have to, but I don't use it because I believe I'm powerful." Several of the participants defined power in terms of developing personal relationships. Sandra noted, "power is relationships with people because you've got to have those trust relationships." Carol talked of using her power "gently, earning my people's respect . . . power emanates from that." Barbara described her power in terms of the "degree of confidence that people place in my ability to do what I do . . . I don't mind sharing power at all, because I think that when we go to the table together, it kind of makes it much better."

Carol summarized the difference a feminine leadership style can have on the high school principalship,

I think it's a real different position for a woman than it is for a man because she brings a different set of techniques with her. The job still has to get done, and I don't think that you could make a blanket statement and say the majority of women will bring one type of style, because it's going to be as varied as their personalities. But we do bring a female perspective and we have a little bit different approach often, but not always.

Discussion

Encouraging more women to pursue the high school principalship as a career goal is one way to address the under-representation of women in that position. Several important factors must be considered to make the high school principalship more attractive as a career goal for women. These factors include: (a) mentoring, encouragement and recruiting, (b) role responsibilities and the need for role balance, and (c) the impact of gender.

Mentoring, Encouragement and Recruitment

There is strong evidence of the importance of mentoring and, in particular, the importance of female mentors for women high school principals. The participants in this study discussed the value of their female mentors for their career development as well as a source of support for them in their roles as principals.

Schneider (1986) and Tonnsen and Truesdale (1993) called for an increased role for school district administrators in encouraging women to become high school principals as long ago as 1986. The women in this study acknowledged that they would never have considered the high school principalship if they had not been recruited and encouraged by educational administrators in their districts to apply for the position of high school principal. They said it was their responsibility to encourage women to become administrators in order to address the continued under-representation of women in the position. In the future, if more women attain the role of high school principal, it may mean that younger women will find more networks and support from women mentors. Until that time, male administrators may need to assume more responsibility for mentoring women and encouraging them to become high school principals.

The women in this study noted that the textbooks and readings in their graduate courses did not present information on the special challenges facing women in educational leadership positions. One participant reported that in her university course work she had not read anything that spoke directly to her experiences as a woman high school principal until Grogan's (1996) *Voices of Women Aspiring to the Superintendency* was required for a course in her administrative leadership coursework. She commented, "This book offered me one of my first strong affirmations of normalcy." Interestingly the professor for that course was a woman who had been a school administrator. Materials and textbooks that balance "the perspectives and voices of white males with perspectives and voices that have traditionally been silenced or marginalized" need to be published and used in principal preparation programs (Gosetti & Rusch, 1995, p. 24). A single chapter or subsection on women and minorities does not provide the type of balance that is needed (Gosetti & Rusch, 1995).

Role Responsibilities and Role Balance

The participants acknowledged that there was an incompatibility between their personal lives and their lives as high school principals. They commented about the role conflicts caused by the struggle between the needs of their families and the time demands imposed on them as high school principals. Some of the women had even delayed considering being a high school principal until their children were older. These types of role conflicts make the high school principalship a difficult career choice for younger women.

High school principals today hold an arduous position as they face increasingly complex demands from school board members, parent groups, community members, and students and staff (Fenwick & Pierce, 2001; Houston, 2001; Kochan et al., 2000). This is a demanding job for both men and women. Calls for restructuring the high school principalship have included increasing the support staff, rewriting the job description to emphasize more instructional leadership, and increasing the compensation (Cooley & Shen, 2000). Further research is needed to determine if these suggestions for restructuring the high school principalship will make it a more attractive position for women.

Most of the women in this study became high school principals in their late forties or fifties. Entering the high school principalship at that age may have altered their career aspirations. They discussed their future plans not in terms of aspiring for the superintendency or other administrative positions, but rather in terms of considering retirement. This finding is problematic because there is a need to attract more women to the position of superintendent, where they are also under-represented (Blount, 1998; Brunner, 1997; Grogan, 1996).

Tenure as a high school principal is another factor that impacts on role conflict (Eckman, 2002). When the women first became high school principals they indicated that they had to prove themselves and would choose their work first. Those women who had been in the position for more than three years explained that their self-confidence increased and their level of role conflict decreased during their tenure in their positions. They recognized that the longer they served as principals the more they knew what was important in their lives and the easier it became to balance the expectations of their family with the expectations of their positions as high school principals. Though this is not a surprising finding, it is an important reminder to school board members and superintendents that high school principals need time to adjust to the demands of their position. Further research on the high school principalship might reveal whether women need more time to adjust to the demands of the position than do men.

Impact of Gender

The women reported the impact of the “old boy’s network.” Despite being qualified and experienced, they continued to face the perception that there should be a man in the principal’s office. The women said they brought another perspective to the role of the high school principal, approaching the position in a different way than did most of the male high school principals for whom they worked. Unfortunately, they reported that their male colleagues often chose not to consult with them and did not recognize and use their expertise. They noted that when they attended meetings and conferences they were often the only women high school principals present and that conversations frequently changed as they arrived. This chilly environment toward women as high school principals must be changed for the position to be one for which women will aspire.

In describing their style of leadership and their use of power, the women used terms and phrases associated with a feminine style of leadership (Brunner, 1997; Hurty, 1995; Roesner, 1990; Shakeshaft, 1989). The concept of a feminine leadership style developed from feminist theory that states that women have a different approach to leadership and management. Some researchers have argued that there is no distinct feminine leadership style that differs from that of male leadership (Eagly, Karau & Johnson, 1992; Epstein, 1991; Klenke, 1996; Mansbridge, 1991). In particular, Klenke (1996) claimed that leadership styles are directly related to the political, social and historical context within which leaders operate. The women high school

principals recognized the significance of the political and social context of their school districts as they discussed finding schools that would “match” their personal and professional attributes. Two participants described operating as high school principals in a political and social context that accepted and valued women in leadership positions. In their community, women had been elected as local, state and national officers. Further research is needed on the leadership styles of high school principals. Are female and male high school principals different in how they lead high schools? Or is the way principals lead high schools more closely related to the political, social and historical context of the school district? Is there a leadership style that is more effective for high school principals and one that is used more frequently by women?

Conclusion

The representation of women in the high school principalship will not improve unless there is a concerted effort to encourage women to consider careers in educational administration. Female teachers who exhibit a potential for administration need to be identified early by administrators in their buildings and offered leadership experiences and mentoring so that they might begin to consider becoming high school principals. School administrators, school board members and professors of educational administration must consider that women educators consider role conflicts and role responsibilities when making decisions regarding the desirability of the high school principalship as a career goal. To increase the number of women in the high school principalship attention must be paid to the impact of these issues as well as to the negative effect gender has on the career paths of women. Having more women high school principals will demonstrate to teachers and students alike that educational administration is a career choice that is available for both women and men. The high school need not continue to be a place where women teach and men lead.

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Book Review

Jean Haar

***REINVENTING FUNDRAISING: REALIZING THE POTENTIAL OF WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPY.* Sondra C. Shaw and Martha A. Taylor. San Francisco. 1995. 257 pages**

Studies of women note the unique nature of female leadership (Aburdene & Naisbitt, 1992; Helgeson, 1995; Sergiovanni, 1995). As women's leadership roles in the workforce increase (Helgeson, 1995; Ruderman & Ohlott, 2002), the potential for women's leadership in philanthropy is acknowledged. In *Reinventing Fundraising: Realizing the Potential of Women's Philanthropy*, Shaw and Taylor address the potential of women philanthropists—and make special note that, whether women inherit, earn or marry money, they are becoming a powerful financial force. Lederer (1991) and Taylor (1998) emphasized that American women now control 60% of the nation's investment wealth and constitute 43% of the nation's wealthiest individuals. Some of these women are using their financial resources to exert an influence on society. Furthermore, while women are building fortunes and developing financial skills, they “have not forsaken their commitment to a better world, and some have taken the lead in transforming philanthropy” (Shaw & Taylor, 1995, p. 3).

Overview

Reinventing Fundraising: Realizing the Potential of Women's Philanthropy increases readers' knowledge about philanthropy, philanthropic leadership, and the empowerment of women. The authors stated, “It became clear to us that previous studies in philanthropy and fundraising spoke only to the ways in which men give and that women give for different reasons—reasons based on their experiences as women” (p. xii). The book was written with three goals:

- To identify the reasons why women have not been taken seriously as philanthropists, even though historically their contributions have significantly influenced our nation's human services, cultural, and educational institutions
- To document the growth of women's potential for giving, the experiences of women philanthropists, and model programs focusing on women's giving that have already been developed by certain nonprofit organizations and institutions
- To develop new conceptual program models for institutions and organizations to follow as they initiate programs tailored for their own female constituents. (p. xiii)

Shaw and Taylor conducted their study in 1991. Data were collected through interviews, focus groups, and discussions with “more than 150 women philanthropists and scores of development professionals to discuss women and philanthropy” (p. xiii). Based on their findings, Shaw and Taylor rejected the notion that women give less to charity because they are unenlightened philanthropists. Instead, after exploring the history of American women's

philanthropy and identifying contemporary women's motivations for giving, Shaw and Taylor contend that women are aware of their potential to give. Shaw and Taylor use this awareness to share a new approach to fundraising—an approach focused on women's giving.

In this review, philanthropy and the differences in women and men's approaches to philanthropy are addressed. Then, changes occurring in fundraising and philanthropy and philanthropic leadership are discussed. The review concludes by focusing on women's characteristics with giving as well as their motivation to give.

Philanthropy

One dictionary definition of philanthropy is that it is “goodwill toward all people.” This definition applies to both women and men philanthropists. However, while both give to improve society, women and men's approaches are different (Conroy, 1998; Herman & Associates, 1994; Kirstein, 1975). Shaw and Taylor (1995) note, “Women prefer to think of their philanthropy as selfless and involving a high measure of fellowship, obligation, and the ability to make a difference” (p. 86). Responses from women philanthropists “indicate altruism accompanied by a sense of self-employment and the reward of feeling part of a larger community—an association that can improve the present and influence the future” (p. 86).

Kirstein (1975) described philanthropy as “one method of coping with the shortcomings of modern society, while furnishing a convenient recipient for people's various compulsions to give” (p. 1). Kirstein noted that men give because of religious and social responsibility; feelings of indebtedness, fear, or recognition; or for tax advantages.

Change

“Few themes are as prominent in contemporary fundraising today as that of transition . . . Change is omnipresent, and how to cope with it, manage it, anticipate it, and, ultimately, conquer it is the topic of the hour” (Conroy, 1998, p.1). Fullan (2001) noted, “Change is a double-edge sword. Its relentless pace these days runs us off our feet. Yet when things are unsettled, we can find new ways to move ahead and to create breakthroughs not possible in stagnant societies” (p. 1).

According to Conroy (1998), there have been “changes in regulation, technology, demographics, volunteerism, and donor behaviors” (p. 1) in the area of fundraising and philanthropy. Conroy stated,

Within the last decade alone, one of the most striking changes in fundraising has been the composition of the workforce itself—the dramatic increase in the numbers of women choosing and pursuing fundraising careers. Women now make up the majority of membership (roughly 52 to 60 percent) in the three major professional organizations representing fundraising: the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), the National Society of Fund Raising Executives (NSFRE), and the Association for Healthcare Philanthropy (AHP). (p. 1)

Shaw and Taylor's work demonstrates an understanding of the changes occurring in philanthropy work, the important role women are playing with the changes, and what those

involved with philanthropic endeavors must do to make the most of those changes. More specifically, Shaw and Taylor describe in detail the history of women philanthropists and the influence these women have had on society; they provide insight into the philanthropic work of contemporary women, and they provide a conceptual program model for involving women in all aspects of philanthropic work.

Leadership

Shaw and Taylor's observations about women and philanthropy leadership also demonstrate an understanding of the context of philanthropy. This understanding is important as "productive leadership . . . depends on recognizing and responding to the unique challenges and features presented by particular types of organizational contexts" (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999, p. 23).

Philanthropic leadership is similar to Bolman and Deal's (1995) concept of "leading with soul." Bolman and Deal stated that, "Leading with soul requires giving gifts from the heart that breathe spirit and passion into your life and organization" (p. 12). Leading with soul also depicts women's methods of leading. Sergiovanni (1992) noted, "Women...tend to emphasize successful relationships, affiliation, power as a means to achieve shared goals, connectedness, authenticity, and personal creativity" (p. 136).

Leadership methods pioneered by women include (a) inclusive organizational forms that celebrate points of contact among people from all organizational levels, (b) communication, methods that are driven by personality, not only mission and (c) recognition of employee relationships as familial more than hierarchical (Helgeson, 1995). These leadership methods are mirrored in Shaw and Taylor's design for campaigns:

Campaigns are about people, not about buildings or endowments. They are about people caring, people asking, and people giving. The most successful capital campaigns will be those that involve the most people at all levels and phases.

Campaigns are about relationships. They are about developing and maintaining connections between our institutions and constituencies.

Campaigns are about communicating and listening to what people say. They are about understanding and assimilating messages and knowing whom we are talking to and why. Our messages must be relevant, persuasive, and imaginative. (p. 186-7)

Characteristics of Women Philanthropists

An awareness of women's characteristics can assist with comprehending what it is that encourages women to give. According to Aburdene and Naisbitt (1992), characteristics attributed to women leaders include trust, compassion, empowerment, and understanding. Astin and Leland (1991) used such words as inventive, creative, and risk-taking. Women philanthropists demonstrate characteristics similar to these descriptions. The women philanthropists interviewed by Shaw and Taylor are described as "unique to each and common to them all. All are accessible, intelligent, warm, and innovative, and they have a great passion for life, change, giving, and making a difference" (1995, p. 45).

Women's characteristics also mesh with the general philosophy of philanthropy. Conroy (1998) noted that women are naturally drawn to the values inherent in the nonprofit sector:

“altruism, relationship-centered work, service to society and affiliation with mission-centered organizations” (p. 2). Many women have a deep commitment to the public good (Shaw & Taylor, 1995, p. 5).

The stories of eight contemporary women are shared in *Reinventing Fundraising: Realizing the Potential of Women's Philanthropy*. Shaw and Taylor's summary of the women's potential influence depict their characteristic qualities.

Each woman has created something unique to her individual needs and lifestyle. Each has found a way to integrate her values into her philanthropy. Each is giving money, doing good, and having fun. We are in awe of their confidence and their sense of inner power and competence. Women like these are the role models for a whole new generation of good works. (p. 79)

Motivation

Motivation is another key issue to consider in connection with women and giving. “The ability to bring about change and make a difference ranks number one as a motivation for women's giving . . . For women, making a difference means making a change, rather than preserving the status quo” (Shaw & Taylor, 1995, p. 88).

Besides the desire to change, women's motivation to give is summed up by Shaw and Taylor in the following categories: create, connect, commit, collaborate, and celebrate. Shaw and Taylor noted, “Women have a predisposition to make connections in a humane way that can live on after their lives are over. If they are allowed involvement in the creative process of developing philanthropic innovations, not Band-Aid solutions, they are very likely to create things that will live on far beyond their lifetimes” (p. 90).

In connection with collaboration, Shaw and Taylor said, “To juggle the complex roles of wife, mother, daughter and worker, women have to be able to negotiate, mediate, and adapt . . . Consequently, women should be in a unique position to understand the necessity and economic advantages of developing unity and working with others to solve problems” (p. 95). This collaboration can create partnership and connections for women.

And, finally, celebration can motivate women. Shaw and Taylor state that fundraising and giving can be fun through celebrations. They report that celebration can “overcome resistance” to give so that “both asking and contributing can become more than an obligation or a responsibility” (p. 95).

Overall, when considering motivation factors, it is not enough to appeal to women's emotions. Women want facts before they give. An awareness and understanding of women's motives for giving is crucial for improving contributions. Shaw and Taylor state, “[By] reviewing women's motivations for giving, we see that by helping them establish their priorities and create and nurture programs that serve their priorities, we are assisting them in carrying out their philanthropic intent through their considerable means” (p. 100).

Conclusion

Shaw and Taylor refer to philanthropy as the next frontier for women. *Reinventing Fundraising: Realizing the Potential of Women's Philanthropy* provides the reader with the knowledge base and the tools to enter this frontier—a frontier that offers hope and opportunity to

improve society. Shaw and Taylor note, "This is not the first time that women will improve society while crossing a frontier in their own liberation...As women realize their potential as philanthropists, they will again improve society while they themselves benefit from the joy that they derive from giving" (p. 257). Women represent a powerful force for change, and it is women who can lead the transformation of the philanthropic community.

As women's opportunities for growth in their professions have strengthened so can their opportunities to take an active role in shaping and improving society. Shaw and Taylor have provided a strong argument for supporting women and their philanthropic endeavors. Their book is a sound resource as well as a solid reference.

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