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# We Are Our Mothers' Daughters?

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Marilyn L. Grady  
Barbara Y. LaCost

Writing that makes us think, writing that enriches our understanding of the past and present, that's what Cokie Roberts' book, *We Are Our Mothers' Daughters* provides, and that, too, is what the authors of this issue of the *Journal of Women in Educational Leadership* provide. Roberts' background as a news analyst covering politics, Congress and public policy, as well as her heritage as the daughter of Lindy Boggs, Congresswoman and Ambassador to the Vatican, inform her perspectives on women of the past and present.

A number of the observations and vignettes from Roberts' book offers perspective to the topics addressed by those who write for and read the *Journal of Women in Educational Leadership*. One is the reminder that "we are not alone." Roberts' noted that "We were the first women at almost everything we did, and most of us often had the experience of being the only women in the room" (p. 4). Or, she noted that "women have always played many roles at the same time" (p. 6). The word "multitasking" may be kitschy but hardly an original concept for women!

As we approach a national presidential election, let's give a nod of remembrance to Jeannette Rankin.

When the first woman, Republican Jeannette Rankin, was elected to Congress in 1917, she carried with her from the wilds of Montana a full bag of female concerns. Keep in mind, she was elected from one of the few states that allowed women to vote, so her first task, of course, was pushing for national suffrage. (p. 24)

In tribute to her pioneering role, may all eligible women vote in the elections!

In examining the ballots for the upcoming elections, we might consider Roberts' position on candidates' private lives.

A lot of people are sorry that we now know so much about a presidential candidate's private life. I'm not among them. I think character counts, especially for a president, who serves in a singular position, who does not

have the check of 99 other senators or 434 other members of the House. And I think that attitudes toward women and family contribute to the definition of character. (p. 124)

As we cast ballots, may we all be cognizant of attitudes toward women and families!

On principled behavior and the value of work, Clara Barton was distinguished according to Roberts' report.

One of those intrepid Massachusetts women, Clara Barton established a free school in New Jersey which grew from 6 to 600 students in one year. When the school hired a male principal, she quit and moved to Washington where she worked in the Patent Office. (p. 176)

The confidence and freedom to "move on" are priceless!

"Without work, Barton became 'sickly,' a pattern that repeated itself throughout her life" (p. 176). The women described in this issue of the *Journal of Women in Educational Leadership* do not appear to be "sickly" due to a lack of work!

Roberts points to a practice that certainly facilitated the work of women journalists. "By insisting that only women journalists could cover her press conferences, Eleanor Roosevelt did a lot to promote their positions" (p. 112). To what extent do we enable the work of other women?

As a guide to daily living, Roberts' offers the following.

By living on this earth long enough, I've learned that clichés are clichés because they are true. It's true that you'll only have one opportunity to witness your baby's first step, to hold your dying sister's hand, to see your mother credentialed by the Pope, to hold your mother-in-law as she learns of her husband's death, to celebrate thirty years with your husband. There will always be another job." (p. 194)

We are enriched by words that stimulate our thinking and give clarity to what is significant in our lives.

## References

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# ***Lawrence v. Texas*: Does This Mean Increased Privacy Rights for Gay and Lesbian Teachers?**

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Suzanne Eckes  
Martha McCarthy

This article addresses the Supreme Court's 2003 decision in *Lawrence v. Texas* and its implications for the rights of gay and lesbian public school teachers. The authors provide a context by reviewing the teacher role-model theory, traditional standards used in dismissals for immoral conduct, and pre-*Lawrence* cases regarding public employees' privacy rights. Then they analyze *Lawrence v. Texas*, which struck down a Texas law imposing criminal penalties for persons of the same sex engaging in certain sexual conduct. The final section explores implications of the expanded liberty right announced in *Lawrence* for public school teachers and their lifestyle choices.

## **Introduction**

There cannot be two sets of ethical principles, or two forms of ethical theory, one for life in the school and the other for life outside of the school, as conduct is one, the principles of conduct are also one. (Hooker, 1995, p. 3)

Throughout history, teachers have been dismissed for immoral conduct that occurs both in and out of school. In the past, school authorities tried to discharge teachers because of pregnancy or even divorce (*Littlejohn v. Rose*, 1985; *Ponton v. Newport*, 1986). School districts have also attempted to dismiss teachers because of their sexual orientation (*Gaylord v. Tacoma*, 1977; *Rowland v. Mad River School*, 1984). Most states have statutes regulating the grounds for teacher dismissal, under which teachers may be dismissed for "immorality" or for the conviction of a crime including "moral turpitude." To the extent these statutes attempt to regulate teachers' private conduct, however, some questions remain as to whether these statutes violate

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a teacher's constitutional right to privacy (Trebilcock, 2000). The Supreme Court's recent decision in *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003), although not specifically addressing the issue of teacher dismissal, may provide some insight and guidelines regarding a teacher's privacy rights.

This article addresses the potential impact of the *Lawrence v. Texas* decision on gay and lesbian public school teachers. First, it provides a brief overview of how public school teachers have been considered role models for students and thus could be disciplined or dismissed for immoral conduct. Next, the paper explores pre-*Lawrence* cases regarding public employees' right to privacy. Finally, the article provides an analysis of the *Lawrence v. Texas* decision and discusses implications the decision may have for public school teachers.

### The Teacher as a Role Model for Students

Throughout history, "the school teacher has traditionally been regarded as a moral example for the students" (*Board of Education v. Wood*, 1986, p. 839). One court noted that "We are aware of the special position occupied by a teacher in our society. As a consequence of that elevated stature, a

teacher's actions are subject to much greater scrutiny than that given to the activities of the average person" (*Chicago Board of Education v. Payne*, 1981, p. 748). As such, public school teachers are generally held to a higher standard of behavior than the general public because of their close relationships with students (*Adams v. State Professional Practices Council*, 1981). In 1979, the Supreme Court observed:

A teacher serves as a role model for his students, exerting a subtle but important influence over their perceptions and values. Thus, through both the presentation of course materials and the example he sets, a teacher has an opportunity to influence the attitudes of students toward government, the political process, and a citizen's social responsibilities. This influence is crucial to the continued good health of a democracy. (*Ambach v. Norwick*, 1979, p. 77)

The standards to judge a teacher's private behavior have always varied across jurisdictions. Courts have taken the position that, although schools are designed to prepare students to participate in the national political and democratic process, they should also be a reflection of their communities. That is, the values a school chooses to embrace may very well depict the community in which the school is situated. Of course, this means that there is no single standard for assessing teacher conduct. It is also important to note that a community's standard cannot violate an individual's constitutional rights (*Ambach v. Norwick*, 1979). In other words, while a public school teacher may serve as a role model, it is well-settled law that the government may not require a teacher to shed his or her constitutional rights to retain a government position (*Perry v. Sinderman*, 1972). Immorality is a legitimate cause for dismissing a teacher, and in the past, gay and lesbian teachers' conduct has been considered immoral under some community standards (Walden & Culverhouse, 1989).<sup>1</sup> The key issue in such cases is how far teachers' privacy rights extend.

### **The Right To Privacy**

The individual's right to privacy has been recognized as far back as 1890. Samuel Warren and Louis Brandeis acknowledged the existence of a right to privacy when they helped to establish that each individual has a cognizable legal interest in a private life. For example, while on the Supreme Court, Justice Brandeis argued that the Fourth Amendment insures that the government does not intrude into the "privacy of the individual" (Trebilcock, 2000, p. 450). Justice Brandeis consistently took

the position that one's private life should be free from government intrusion.

In addition to the Fourth Amendment argument supported by Justice Brandeis, the Fourteenth Amendment requires that "no person be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law" (U.S. Const. Amend. XIV, 1). Although the Constitution makes no direct reference to the existence of a right to privacy, it is a right implied in the concept of personal liberty embodied in the Fourteenth Amendment (*Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, 1992).<sup>2</sup> The Fourteenth Amendment Due Process Clause's substantive component derives mainly from the interpretation of the term "liberty." As a result, certain types of government limits on individual conduct have been held to unreasonably interfere with important individual rights to the extent that they amount to an unreasonable denial of "liberty." Accordingly, there are certain protected zones of privacy where the government should not interfere, regardless of the government interest asserted.

The U.S. Supreme Court has extended this zone of privacy in several cases. In 1965, the Court in *Griswold v. Connecticut* allowed married couples access to contraception, and in 1972 it extended the ruling to unmarried couples in *Eisenstadt v. Baird*. In both *Griswold* and *Eisenstadt*, the Court recognized constitutional protection of a privacy right in private sexual activity. In 1973, the right of privacy was also articulated to protect a woman's right to have an abortion in *Roe v. Wade*. In contrast, a 1986 decision, *Bowers v. Hardwick*, did not extend this privacy right to include all private sexual activity when the Supreme Court upheld a Georgia anti-sodomy statute.

Given this zone of privacy, the courts have attempted to balance the school board's interests in safeguarding the welfare of students and the teacher's right to privacy. For example, a teacher can be terminated based on evidence that would not be sufficient to support criminal charges, but teacher discipline or dismissal cannot occur solely because school officials disapprove of teachers' personal and private conduct (*Montefusco v. Nassau County*, 1999). Also, teachers cannot be dismissed for unsubstantiated rumors about their private activities (*Peaster Independent School District v. Glodfelty*, 2001). However, restrictions can be placed on unconventional behavior that is detrimental to job performance or harmful to students.

Despite the guidance provided by the Supreme Court regarding privacy rights, public school teachers' privacy rights have not been clearly delineated, so teacher lifestyle cases have been decided on a case-by-case

basis. As such, school boards have continued to discipline or dismiss teachers for actions pertaining to their lives outside of the classroom, and in response, teachers have challenged school officials' authority to restrict personal lifestyle choices.

### **Pre-Lawrence Decisions**

Prior to 2003, lower courts rendered a range of opinions regarding public employees' privacy rights. The recent trend has been to require a nexus between the lifestyle choice and ability to perform the job, but courts have differed in defining the type of nexus required.

### **Cases Regarding Marriage and Pregnancy**

Lower courts have been reluctant to support dismissal actions based on marital status and pregnancy. The courts' reluctance has been based on their recognition that decisions pertaining to marriage and parenthood involve constitutionally protected privacy rights. To illustrate, the Fifth Circuit found a Mississippi school district's rule of prohibiting the employment of unwed parents to promote a "properly moral scholastic environment" to be a violation of equal protection and due process despite the school district's argument that unwed parents were improper communal role models (*Andrews v. Drew*, 1975, p. 614). Similarly, compelled leaves of absence for pregnant, unmarried employees have been invalidated as violating constitutional privacy rights. For example, at least one court has held that offering a teacher parental leave without guarantee of her position upon return violates the teacher's constitutional and statutory rights (*Ponton v. Newport News School Board*, 1986).

Courts generally have also reasoned that public employees have a privacy right to engage in consenting sexual relationships regardless of their marital status; such relationships would have to impair teaching effectiveness to be the basis for dismissal. For example, the Supreme Court of Iowa held that a teacher's adulterous relationship provided insufficient grounds to justify revocation of his teaching certificate because the relationship did not severely impact his employment (*Erb v. Iowa*, 1974). The court noted that the mere fact that a teacher admitted adultery was not enough to prove his inability to teach. Specifically, the court reasoned that "the personal moral views of the board members cannot be relevant" (p. 343). Similarly, a Florida court overturned a school board's termination of a teacher for lacking good moral character based on a personal romantic relationship (*Sherburne v. School Board*, 1984). The court held that the



teacher's cohabitation did not have an adverse effect on her ability to teach. Also, the Sixth Circuit ruled that a school board's nonrenewal of a teacher's contract based on her involvement in a divorce violated her constitutional privacy rights (*Littlejohn v. Rose*, 1985). In this case, the court disagreed with the parents who argued that there was disruption because there were too many divorced teachers teaching in the public school. In finding for the teacher, the court relied on the constitutional right to privacy that precludes dismissal of a teacher seeking divorce.

Some courts, however, have upheld dismissals or other disciplinary actions based on public employees' adulterous relationships. In a nonschool case, the Fifth Circuit upheld disciplinary action against two police officers for their off-duty dating and alleged cohabitation (*Shawgo v. Spradlin*, 1983). The court reasoned that the officer's conduct could bring public attention that could result in unfavorable criticism of the police department. Also, the Texas Supreme Court held that constitutional rights were not violated when a police officer was denied promotion for having an affair with another officer's wife (*City of Sherman v. Henry*, 1996).

### **Cases Regarding Homosexuality**

When determining employment decisions based on a teacher's sexual orientation, the courts will generally consider the notoriety surrounding the conduct, whether the homosexual conduct was public or private in nature, and its overall impact on teaching abilities. Specifically, courts will require a nexus between private homosexuality and impaired teaching effectiveness in order to justify dismissal. Of course, if teachers engage in public sexual activity whether homosexual or heterosexual, they can be dismissed for immorality (*Morgan v. State Board of Education*, 2002).

Dismissals of public school employees based solely on sexual orientation, in the absence of criminal charges, have evoked a range of judicial interpretations (*Boy Scouts of America v. Dale*, 2000). The *Morrison v. Board of Education* (1969) and the *Gaylord v. Tacoma* (1977) decisions provide a particularly good illustration of the range of judicial interpretations in this area of law. In *Morrison*, a male teacher (Morrison) had a homosexual relationship with another public school teacher, Schneringer. A year after the consensual sexual relationship, Schneringer informed the district of their one-week long sexual relationship. Morrison resigned from his position and the State Board of Education later determined that the sexual incident "constituted immoral and unprofessional conduct, and an act involving moral turpitude, all of which warrant revocation of life diplomas" (p. 219). The Board's decision was

later overturned by the Supreme Court of California, which held that under the statute teachers could only be dismissed for immorality or moral turpitude if it rendered the individual unfit to teach. In so doing, the court ordered that Morrison's certificate be restored because the school board failed to demonstrate that Morrison was unfit to teach. The Supreme Court of California laid out the following set of guidelines to help determine when a teacher is unfit to teach:

1. The likelihood that the conduct would adversely affect students or fellow teachers;
2. The degree of such adversity anticipated;
3. The proximity or remoteness in time of the conduct;
4. The type of teaching certificate held by the party involved;
5. The extenuating circumstance surrounding the conduct;
6. The praiseworthiness or blameworthiness of the motives resulting in the conduct;
7. The likelihood of the recurrence of the conduct; and
8. The extent to which disciplinary action may inflict an adverse impact or chilling effect upon the constitutional rights of the teacher involved or other teachers.

As such, the *Morrison* court held that when immorality is "used in a statute it is inseparable from 'conduct'" (p. 224) and that the conduct must adversely affect the teacher's fitness to perform.

Contrary to the Supreme Court of California's decision in *Morrison*, the Supreme Court of Washington upheld a dismissal of a homosexual teacher based on mere knowledge of the teacher's sexual orientation in *Gaylord v. Tacoma* (1977). Gaylord had been a teacher for 12 years in Tacoma where he had received superior teaching evaluations. After his homosexuality became public knowledge, the school board argued that the students' knowledge of his sexual orientation would impair his ability to teach. The school cited fear, confusion, suspicion, and parental concern as justification of the dismissal. The *Gaylord* court agreed, holding that school boards need not wait for "overt expressions of homosexual conduct before they act to prevent harm" (p. 1347). Although the school failed to provide any evidence that the teacher's homosexuality would be disruptive in the classroom, the court reasoned that homosexuality is inherently immoral. Based on this conclusion, the court reasoned that public knowledge of a teacher's homosexual conduct could lead to notoriety of such a nature that the teacher could no longer perform classroom activities.

Similar to *Gaylord*, other courts have upheld dismissals based on mere knowledge of a teacher's homosexuality, which suggests that such knowledge is sufficient to establish an impairment of teaching effectiveness that overrides any protected privacy interest. Specifically in Sixth Circuit and Ninth Circuit cases, sexual orientation appeared to be the reason public educators were dismissed, despite the inability to show the required nexus of notoriety and classroom disruption. In *Rowland v. Mad River Local School District* (1984), a guidance counselor's contract was not renewed after she revealed her sexual orientation to adult employees at the school. The Sixth Circuit found that because she did not have tenure, there was no expectancy of employment and her dismissal was upheld. In an earlier case, *Burton v. Cascade School District* (1975), a non-tenured teacher was dismissed after adult school employees learned of the teacher's sexual orientation. The Ninth Circuit did not reinstate Burton for the same reason mentioned in *Rowland*.

The Tenth Circuit upheld an Oklahoma statute that allowed school boards to terminate teachers for engaging in public homosexual activity (*National Gay Task Force v. Board of Education*, 1984). The court, however, did find the part of the statute that allowed "punishment" of teachers for public homosexual conduct to be unconstitutional. Additionally, the court struck down the portion of the law authorizing the dismissal or nonrenewal of teachers for *advocating* public or private homosexuality; this part of the statute was found overbroad because it sought to regulate free speech rights. Finally, the court noted that under the statute, the school district would be required to show a connection between the teacher's ability to teach and the teacher's speech. In another case, a New York federal court upheld the termination of a teacher for actively participating in the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), a group supporting consensual sexual activity between men and boys. The court reasoned that the teacher's activities in NAMBLA were likely to impair his effectiveness as a teacher and would cause internal disruption in the classroom (*Melzer v. Board of Education*, 2002).

Likewise, in other recent lower court cases, the judicial decisions have been mixed. For example, the Utah Federal District Court held that the community's negative reaction to a teacher's homosexuality did not justify the removal of the teacher as the girl's volleyball coach. The court also held that the school district could not instruct her not to mention her "homosexual orientation or lifestyle" to students, parents, or staff (*Weaver v. Nebo School District*, 1998, p. 1285). The Court noted that the teacher's homosexuality and the community's negative response to it did not furnish

a rational job-related basis for her removal. Also, when an Ohio federal court found that a teacher was not renewed because of his sexual orientation rather than for his teaching deficiencies as the school board asserted, the court awarded the teacher reinstatement, back pay, and damages (*Glover v. Williamsburg*, 1998).

In contrast, the Eleventh Circuit upheld revocation of a public employee's job offer after her employer, the Attorney General of the State of Georgia, learned of the employee's upcoming same-sex marriage. The employment action was based on her illegal wedding ceremony rather than the fact that she was a lesbian. The attorney general contended that the same-sex marriage would interfere with the inability to enforce the state's sodomy law and would create an appearance of conflicting interpretations of state law. The employee brought an action claiming violation of her rights of intimate and expressive association, freedom of religion, equal protection and substantive due process. The court found that the interests of the employer outweighed the employee's constitutional interests (*Shahar v. Bowers*, 1997). Specifically, the court reasoned that the position required that the attorney exercise good judgment and needed to maintain her employer's trust. The attorney general argued that the plaintiff's intimate associational rights were subordinate to the employer's interest in the effective functioning of the government office.

As mentioned, prior to 2003, the Supreme Court had rendered only one decision pertaining to private sexual activity involving sodomy. In *Bowers v. Hardwick* (1986), a Georgia law criminalizing public or private consensual sodomy resulted in a widely publicized decision. In this case, an individual challenged the law's constitutionality after being criminally charged for committing sodomy with an adult male in the privacy of his home. The Court in a five-to-four ruling found a rational basis in legislation reflecting the citizenry's view that sodomy is immoral and unacceptable. Declaring that homosexuals have no constitutional right to engage in sodomy, the Court majority focused its opinion on the homosexual nature of the conduct at issue, even though the law's prohibition applies to heterosexual sodomy as well. In upholding sodomy laws, the Court also noted that there is no American tradition of accepting homosexual conduct. In so doing, the Court did not hold that homosexuality was a crime or that homosexuality was immoral, only that the sexual conduct could be prohibited. Given this holding, states could continue to use certain conduct, such as sodomy, as a ground for dismissal of public employees, including teachers (Walden & Culverhouse, 1989).

This decision was relied on as precedent until 2003, even though criminal sanctions for private sodomy have not generally been enforced.

### ***Lawrence v. Texas*: Increased Privacy Rights for Homosexuals**

In 2003 the Supreme Court rendered a significant decision in *Lawrence v. Texas*, striking down a Texas law that imposed criminal penalties if two persons of the same sex engage in certain sexual conduct. The state appeals court had found *Bowers* controlling in rejecting a Fourteenth Amendment challenge to the law by two men who were arrested and convicted of deviate sexual intercourse in violation of the Texas law.

The Supreme Court reversed, reasoning that the law violated the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Disagreeing with the conclusion of the *Bowers* Court and its failure to comprehend the scope of the individual liberty interest involved, the *Lawrence* majority (2003) noted that the Texas law touches on the most private area of human behavior—sexual conduct—in the most private place, one's home. In overturning *Bowers*, the Court clearly enunciated that private, consensual sexual behavior in the privacy of the home is constitutionally protected and cannot be the basis for a crime. The Court found that "adults may choose to enter upon this relationship in the confines of their homes and their own private lives and still retain their dignity as free persons" (*Lawrence v. Texas*, 2003, p. 2478). The Court declared that "*Bowers* was not correct when it was decided, and it is not correct today" (p. 2484).

The Court majority reviewed the *Griswold*, *Eisenstadt*, and *Roe* cases which, as discussed, found protected liberty rights under the Due Process Clause in areas such as marriage, procreation, and child rearing. Specifically, the Court noted that the "pertinent beginning point" for its holding in *Lawrence* was *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965) and recognized that after *Griswold*, the right to make decisions regarding sexual conduct extends beyond the marital relationship. In discussing *Eisenhardt*, the Court reiterated that "if the right of privacy means anything, it is the right of the individual, married or single, to be free from unwarranted governmental intrusion into matters so fundamentally affecting a person as the decision whether to bear or beget a child" (*Lawrence v. Texas*, 2003, p. 2477). The *Lawrence* majority noted that these cases provided the context for the widely publicized decision legalizing abortions, *Roe v. Wade* (1973). The Court also cited its 1977 ruling striking down a New York law forbidding the distribution of contraceptives to persons under 16 years of

age as support for the principle that Fourteenth Amendment liberty rights extend beyond the rights of married adults (*Carey v. Population Services International*, 1977).

In 2003, only 13 states had laws criminalizing sodomy, whereas 25 states had such laws at the time of *Bowers*, and all 50 states outlawed sodomy as late as 1961 (*Lawrence v. Texas*, 2003, p. 2474). Yet, at the time of the *Lawrence* ruling, just four states enforced their laws solely against homosexual conduct.

The *Lawrence* majority cited two post-*Bowers* cases as eroding the foundation of the *Bowers* holding. Reaffirming the right to have an abortion, the Court observed in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992) that “matters involving the most intimate and personal choices a person may make in a lifetime . . . are central to the liberty protected by the Fourteenth Amendment” (p. 851). The Court subsequently struck down an amendment to Colorado’s Constitution that deprived a class of citizens who were homosexuals, lesbians, or bisexual any protections under state antidiscrimination laws (*Romer v. Evans*, 1996). The *Lawrence* majority also noted that the European Court of Human Rights had invalidated laws proscribing private, consensual homosexual conduct under the European Convention on Human Rights.

In addition to relying on prior case law regarding privacy rights, the Court also discussed the historical evolution of sodomy prohibitions when it overruled *Bowers*. In so doing, the *Lawrence* Court concluded that the Court in *Bowers* overstated the historical grounds for prohibiting homosexual conduct. The Court reasoned that there was no prohibition of sodomy during colonial times and that it was not until the late Nineteenth Century that the concept of homosexuality became a distinct category. From a historical perspective, American sodomy law was used to prohibit nonprocreative sexual activity generally rather than only homosexual activity. The Court further noted that laws prohibiting sodomy do not seem to have been enforced against consenting adults in private. This historical perspective is contrary to the *Bowers* holding, which indicated that there was no American tradition of accepting sodomy.

Justice O’Connor concurred that the Texas law should be invalidated, but she disagreed that *Bowers* should be overruled (*Lawrence v. Texas*, 2003). She based her conclusion that the Texas law should be struck down on the Equal Protection Clause, since the Texas law banned only same-sex sodomy. She concluded that moral disapproval is not a legitimate state interest to justify bans on homosexual, but not heterosexual, sodomy. Although indicating support for a “more searching form of rational basis

review” under the Equal Protection Clause, she found that the Texas law could not withstand scrutiny under the lenient rational basis standard (p. 2485). She noted that when the state criminalizes conduct that is part of the homosexual lifestyle, homosexual persons become vulnerable to government discrimination in all aspects of their lives. While the *Lawrence* majority recognized that the equal protection argument was tenable, it chose Due Process grounds. If the Court deemed homosexuality a suspect class, the protections would be very broad in that any governmental action based on an individual’s sexual orientation would be subject to the highest level of judicial scrutiny.

Justice Scalia, joined by Chief Justice Rehnquist and Justice Thomas, devoted much of his lengthy dissent to arguing that if the majority’s reasoning is valid in overturning *Bowers*—this justification should be applied to overturn *Roe v. Wade* as well. Indeed, he argued that overturning *Bowers* is a “massive disruption of the current social order,” whereas overruling *Roe* would not be as it would simply return the decision on legalizing abortions to the states where it was prior to *Roe* (*Lawrence v. Texas*, 2003, p. 2491). He further noted that all laws reflect essentially moral choices, and asserted that laws against bigamy, same-sex marriages, prostitution, and many other crimes would be vulnerable to attack under the majority’s reasoning. According to Justice Scalia, only fundamental rights “deeply rooted in the nation’s history and tradition” (p. 2489) should be subjected to more than rational basis scrutiny under the substantive due process doctrine. Like many other laws regulating sexual behavior, Justice Scalia argued that the Texas law had a rational basis and should have been upheld.

He contended that the *Lawrence* ruling cannot be reconciled with federal policy requiring the discharge of members of the armed forces that engage in homosexual acts or with the Supreme Court’s decision holding that the Boy Scouts have a constitutional right to prohibit homosexuals from becoming Scout leaders (10 U.S.C. § 654(b)(1), 2003; *Boy Scouts of American v. Dale*, 2000). Interestingly, in lamenting the far reaching implications of the *Lawrence* ruling, Justice Scalia built a strong case to support the future use of the majority’s rationale to legalize same-sex marriages. He asserted that if moral disapproval of homosexual conduct cannot justify the Texas law, then what justification could there possibly be for denying the benefits of marriage to homosexual couples exercising “the liberty protected by the Constitution” (p. 2498)?

Justice Thomas endorsed Justice Scalia’s dissent, but wrote separately. He felt that the Texas legislature should repeal the “silly” law (*Lawrence v.*

*Texas*, 2003, p. 2498). However, without such legislative action, he found nothing in the Constitution that created a general right of privacy that would invalidate the Texas law.

### Implications

The *Lawrence* decision has recognized a new zone of privacy. Before *Lawrence*, engaging in sodomy was illegal in some states, so arguably a teacher's conduct in this regard could be considered immoral. Thus, the most obvious implication of the *Lawrence* decision would be that because it is no longer illegal for consenting adults to engage privately in sodomy, teachers will no longer be dismissed for such "criminal conduct." Before *Lawrence*, schools would attempt to strike a balance between the teacher's privacy rights and the interests of the school. As such, a less obvious implication relates to the question of whether the employers' interests can outweigh constitutional privacy rights of homosexual employees after *Lawrence*?

In lower court teacher lifestyle cases, the courts have required schools to demonstrate a "nexus" in that the teacher's behavior must adversely affect the school or reduce teaching effectiveness in the classroom before sanctions can be imposed (*Golden v. Board of Education*, 1981; *Jefferson Union v. Jones*, 1972; *Waugh v. Board of Cabell County*, 1986). Courts have found a nexus to justify adverse action if the two following circumstances are met: (a) the conduct directly affects the performance of the responsibilities of the teacher; or (b) if, without contribution on the part of school officials, the conduct becomes the subject of such notoriety as to significantly impair the ability of the teacher to discharge the responsibilities of the teaching position (*Jerry v. Board of Education*, 1974). Under this standard, evidence of a substantial 'community outcry' can provide the required nexus to dismiss the teacher if the notoriety impacts teaching abilities (*Sullivan v. Meade*, 1976).

The *Lawrence* ruling raises questions about the continued vitality of these earlier decisions, given the Court's recognition of increased privacy rights. In other words, could a teacher still be dismissed if the school demonstrates this causal nexus? For example, if a teacher appears on a national talk show promoting her lesbian lifestyle and her community believes that she is unfit to teach because of her recent notoriety—what would be the result in light of *Lawrence*? Justice Kennedy wrote for the *Lawrence* majority that the "central holding in *Bowers* . . . demeans the lives of homosexual persons" (p. 2482). Arguably, after *Lawrence*, even if



a nexus exists, the teacher should not be dismissed in this situation, as it would demean the life a lesbian teacher and invade her privacy.

Yet, the Court in *Lawrence* did not directly address the issue of a nexus and disruption in the workplace, so additional litigation will be necessary to identify the type of impact on teaching effectiveness and school operations necessary to justify disciplinary action. Despite this silence in *Lawrence*, perhaps lower courts will be reluctant to support dismissal actions based on notoriety involving sexual orientation in the same way the courts have been reluctant to support dismissal actions based on marital status and pregnancy. Gay and lesbian teachers are more optimistic than they were prior to *Lawrence* regarding the potential success of legal challenges to employment decisions based on their sexual orientation, but it remains to be seen how lower courts will interpret the scope of their constitutionally protected privacy rights.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> In a 1999 public opinion poll parents were asked if "school boards ought to have the right to fire teachers who are known homosexuals." Twenty percent of the parents completely agreed, 12% mostly agreed, 26% agreed, 36% completely disagreed, and 6% did not know (Public Opinion Online, 1999).
- <sup>2</sup> After *Casey*, a woman still has a constitutionally protected privacy interest in choosing to have an abortion; however, the state has the right to regulate the abortion process. Such regulations may not place an undue burden on the woman.

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# "A Singular Position:" Women Professors and Women's Community

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Twenty-six professors at a research intensive university participated in this study of senior women professors' career experiences and reflections. Themes surrounding community and collegiality with respect to disciplinary commitment, salience of gender to discipline, and the role of personal choices are identified and discussed. Resulting perspectives on "women's community" in academe are also developed. Respondents maintained close, long-standing supportive ties with women colleagues within their academic disciplines, particularly when women colleagues were scarce in their local departments. Respondents' principal affiliations were rooted in their disciplines, highlighting the influence of discipline in matters related to professional identity as well as community.

## Introduction

"Women faculty" is commonly a unit of analysis in studies of faculty members, such as composition of faculties (e.g., Glazer-Raymo, 1999; Moore & Sagaria, 1991; Sax, cited in Magner, 1999), promotion and tenure rates (e.g., Bernard, 1964; Glazer-Raymo, 1999), and academic culture (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988; Nerad, 1999; Pagano, 1990). Underlying these gender-based analyses are understandings that gender remains a policy-relevant consideration within studies of higher education. It is further assumed that stratification of data by gender will help reveal characteristic patterns in experiences and perspectives among women or men that will inform policy development and deepen understandings of academic work and the people who undertake academic work. However useful the comparative data are for many purposes, disaggregation by gender does not necessarily shed insights into the types and levels of shared experiences among women faculty members, the salience of gender identification among women faculty across a variety of disciplines, or the relative collegiality or community that women faculty members experience with women faculty from other academic areas.

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This study is an exploration of gender and women's community as represented on one campus, drawn from the perspectives of women at professor rank from a variety of academic disciplines and professional fields. Women from a variety of departments were included in the study to maximize the range of experiences and backgrounds among respondents and to explore the salience of gender within various disciplines. Against this backdrop, the notion of a "women's community" on the campus emerged as a complicated phenomenon. Resulting insights into academic women's community and community-building are also developed in this paper.

### Theoretical Framework

The images of relationships and community are found widely in literature on women and faculty. For example, a growing body of research has identified elements of socialization that disproportionately emphasize girls' development of relationality and care for self and others (c.f., Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988; Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1993; Noddings, 1984) within localized, real-world contexts in which individuals are interdependently linked. Recently, scholars have debated the value of gender difference theories in education (Martin, 2003; Thompson, 2003a, 2003b). At issue is whether gender difference theory represents an

essentialist view (reifying white middle-class values of “caring in context”) or a source of empowerment for women (Martin, 2003; Thompson, 2003a). Of particular importance to this study, socialization and gender difference theories continue to frame current conceptions of, and discussions around, gender in education.

In a somewhat different sense, the image of relationship is echoed in the concept of local or far-flung “communities of scholars” in which faculty members figuratively participate by virtue of their advanced study and expertise. A primary commitment to one’s discipline, or Gouldner’s (1957) cosmopolitan faculty orientation, is said to predominate at research universities where faculty allegiance is disproportionately directed to one’s discipline. Consequently, one’s primary academic community is less the local campus than the group of national and international colleagues who share the task of advancement of knowledge within that discipline.

Human development literature suggests that for women, interpersonal relationships often factor disproportionately into decision-making and knowledge construction processes (Baxter Magolda, 1992; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Gilligan, 1993). Collaborative approaches to knowledge work also have implications for definitions of collegiality, which involves more than simply disciplinary affiliation, according to Tierney and Bensimon (1996): “Collegiality [within departments] is far more likely to occur when there is a shared orientation to the discipline” (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996, p. 89). A “shared orientation” suggests similar or complementary approaches to creating and disseminating knowledge among a group of scholars within a field or discipline. However, much foundational literature on women faculty identifies “micro-inequities” (c.f., Sandler, 1986) to which women faculty members are subjected within departments and within institutions. These experiences tend to erode morale and motivation and result in less than full inclusion of women as fellow experts within academic communities. Additionally, differences in prevailing communication and work styles (e.g., Sandler, 1986) or adoption of publishing strategies that result in fewer overall numbers of scholarly products (Astin & Davis, 1985; Sandler, 1986) have also been cited as barriers to women faculty members’ perceived credibility as scholars and achievement of the full collegial inclusion that credibility is assumed to foster.

Other studies have concluded that these marginalizing environments are closely tied to larger institutional cultures and patterns of collective beliefs within and among departments that flourished and became normalized when women were not present in large numbers in higher

education. According to many feminist scholars, such belief systems remain largely intact and serve to exclude women from full participation in scholarly communities in their respective disciplines (Acker, 1990; Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988; Grumet, 1988; Pagano, 1990; Park, 1996). In short, this literature suggests that women faculty members are not full members of the academic communities that they ostensibly represent—in terms not only of representation of women within a particular area but also of perceived legitimacy of women as scholars. For example, with respect to the field of education, Pagano (1990) concluded that the very presence of women faculty members serves to highlight the relative absence of women's thought, language, and analysis, and positions women faculty members as "exiles" or outsiders in the same professional field they seek to advance and with which they identify as scholars.

The present study was theoretically framed using feminist standpoint epistemology (Harding, 1986, 1991; Hartsock, 1987) in order to explore the sense-making structures, perceptions, strategies, and inferences that emerged among respondents. For example, Smith (1987) and Collins (1986) have argued persuasively for acknowledgement of standpoint (e.g., gender) as a major element in identifying problems, collecting data, and formulating conclusions in the field of sociology. Based on prior data analyses (Hamrick, 2003a), the women in this study strongly identified themselves as disciplinary experts and held a primary identification with their respective disciplines and fields. They also frequently identified experiences of being dismissed or their contributions minimized because of their gender irrespective of discipline or field (Hamrick, 2003b). As women, these respondents represent a group that is traditionally and currently underrepresented in academe. Yet, as full professors, they also occupy positions of high rank and relative privilege as senior academics. These perspectives from combination outsider and insider standpoints (e.g. Collins, 1986) should serve to enlarge and complicate more traditional understandings of academic community among faculty members so situated.

The purpose of the overall study was to explore perspectives and experiences of women who had achieved tenure as well as professor rank. In the course of data collection, respondents were asked about their experiences related to academic community. Particular emphasis was given to the ways in which respondents' constructed, referenced, and construed both the nature of community in their professional lives as well as their roles in academic community as that concept was understood. We also sought respondents' perspectives on community with other women faculty

members from a variety of academic areas in order to determine whether and in what ways gender constituted a legitimate or sufficient referential basis for community among women faculty members at a single campus. The insights of these uniquely positioned "insider/outsider" respondents were systematically collected and analyzed as outlined below.

### Methods and Analysis

Each of the 70 women full professors at a research intensive institution (1,395 full-time faculty including 685 professors<sup>1</sup> at the time of data collection) was invited to participate in an interview study on the "Characteristics, Experiences, and Perceptions" of women full professors.<sup>2</sup> Twenty-six women full professors representing a variety of academic disciplines and fields agreed to participate in interviews and discuss issues such as career progress, institutional belonging, intersections of personal and professional experiences, and stress.<sup>3</sup> All respondents were white and non-Hispanic, as are approximately 88% of women full professors nationwide (Knopp, 1995). Years in rank were similar between the sample of 26 respondents and the group of 70 professors. The social science and education (SSE) areas were slightly over represented in the respondent group while the arts and humanities (AH) disciplines were slightly under represented (see Table 1).

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 (PMSE) & Engineering	6% (4)	4% (1)
Social Sciences and Education (SSE)	51% (36)	58% (15)

Interviews with each respondent ranged between 50 minutes to more than four hours. Using 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). All interviews were transcribed to facilitate systematic analysis through use of the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to identify common themes and concepts (Rubin & Rubin, 1995) across the interviews. To maximize descriptive and interpretive rigor, opportunities for clarification were presented during the interviews, and two forms of post-interview member-checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) were conducted.

In the discussion that follows, “discipline” is used when discussing academic discipline, professional field, or specialty in order to streamline the presentation. Additionally, respondents were assured anonymity with respect to specific departmental affiliation, so the four broad categories in Table 1 are used to characterize respondents’ academic backgrounds.

## Results

Four themes emerged from data analysis. They were: disciplinary commitment, salience of gender to discipline, role of personal choice, and experiences of women's community. Each of the four themes is discussed below.

### Disciplinary Commitment

A developing awareness of disciplinary focus and commitment began for respondents during their graduate education and continued throughout their careers. Respondents discussed training their attention to the discipline through their interactions with professors at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and respondents’ resulting knowledge of their academic discipline largely shaped their perceptions of the academic work that lay before them. These opportunities for early professional relationships, modeling, and affirmation were key for many respondents as they took early steps to joining a disciplinary community. A social sciences and education (SSE) respondent observed:

I worked for a [discipline-specific] professor, who really showed me a side of research in [the discipline] that was very exciting to me, that was beyond the classroom and the usual things you learned, because it was part of my job to collect data for him, and so forth. And those two things were very instrumental in moving me, then, to the next level, and then I was very fortunate to have a major professor for both my master’s and Ph.D. degree that was somebody who really challenged me and gave me lots of responsibility, and built my confidence, and so on, as I had that kind of modeling.



Respondents in this study frequently referenced their academic discipline and their contributions as experts to their respective disciplines. In describing their work commitments prior to promotion to professor, they clearly focused energy and time on disciplinary contributions and eliminated or minimized activities, whenever possible, that could derail their efforts to make these contributions. Moreover, most respondents could be classified among Gouldner's (1957) "cosmopolitan" faculty members who principally identify with the discipline and the department as local site of the discipline (as opposed to "locals" with primary commitments to the home institution). This disciplinary identification also influenced their descriptions of themselves as women within those disciplines. As one biological and agricultural sciences (BAS) respondent put it, "I am a [scientist], first and foremost."

Steadfast commitments first to discipline and then to departments as primary sites of professional identification were relatively consistent among respondents across disciplines. Respondents learned early in their careers to be sensitive to departmental and institutional expectations to achieve tenure and to be taken seriously as a scholar. The disciplinary commitment was to be a lived commitment, as a respondent in the BAS field said:

You have to be 100% dedicated. It's not a 9 to 5, and 8 to 6, or you know, a 9 to 8 job. It's a lot of your life, and you have to really love it, because if you don't, you won't want to put the time into it. And so it's really a commitment they [graduate students] have to make, and once they've made the commitment, the thing is to enjoy it.

Often respondents found they needed to engage in work that would be valued within their departments, even if they valued other projects more and believed this work was making a stronger contribution. This was the experience of one arts and humanities (AH) respondent:

After I was tenured, I worked on a computer project. And I thought it was quite an important project, and it seemed to be getting me an international reputation, and I was real pleased with it. And I thought when I first came up five years later, for my next review, I went, "Oh, boy. This is great. My stuff is being used at Harvard and Princeton and Yale, and, you know, this is super. I'm going to get promoted real fast." My department took one look at it and said, "What is she wasting her time on? . . . This isn't important." You know, "We don't support this at all." And so I wasn't even sent forward, and I was told that I should devote my time to things that had to do with [departmentally-valued] research and not

“computer stuff.” That was going to be counted as service, and that was not going to ever get me promoted.

A SSE respondent echoed a similar awareness of meeting disciplinary or departmental expectations. She said, “Sometimes some women who research in areas of diversity are not granted tenure because that’s not viewed as authentic research . . . 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.”

Respondents understood their disciplinary expectations as communicated by local colleagues, paired with their own choices among projects, to be a central decision in the development of their academic careers. A BAS respondent remarked that a graduate student colleague of hers was chosen over her for an assignment not due to gender bias but because “he was in a discipline that his mentor really wanted to strengthen . . . . It was the discipline. . . . And I don’t think you can attribute that to male, female, etc.” However, another BAS respondent noted that what “females experience differently is the general attitude towards them.” The experience of being regarded as different was generally shared among respondents, but experiences of differential regard varied. One way to explore these differences is by examining the perceived salience of gender to various disciplines.

### **Salience of Gender to Discipline**

Not surprisingly, a variety of perspectives emerged surrounding career experiences and the role that being a woman played in these experiences. However, in many ways these perspectives were also related to disciplinary affiliation. Within certain disciplinary groups, such as the humanities and social sciences, gender emerged as a more salient issue for scholarly attention, and respondents in these departments often drew upon a professional language and culture in which gender had, at some level and in some ways, become part of legitimate scholarly discourse.

For example, some AH and SSE respondents spoke of close personal and professional intersections, such as using their children and aspects of their family lives as classroom examples or as an impetus for research studies. One SSE respondent remarked:

I was able to have my daughter in that lab school [that I directed], which was wonderful in terms of having her on site and having her there and being able to go in at any time during the day and watch her, being able to have her in an older children’s lab school after school when she was in

elementary school, so that was really a nice merging. And also just being in the field of early childhood and then having a child provided me with unbelievable credible anecdotes to share in the classroom.

Upon further reflection, this respondent added, "I think the students have always responded that they really liked that personal side in that I would share my successes and failures, both in early childhood teaching but also as a parent." Another SSE respondent observed,

I think that my profession is so near and dear to the family life, what I'm learning and doing and the ability to learn from my profession and apply it to the family, but also my family has been a wonderful example of a living experience from my profession.

However, for respondents in BAS or Physical and Mathematical Sciences & Engineering (PMSE), gender was rarely viewed as a discourse category or a unit of analysis central to the pursuit of disciplinary knowledge. These different disciplinary perspectives and different gendered experiences of respondents also affected their perceptions of shared experiences with women faculty members in other disciplines. In these fields, being female and speaking of gender often served to place one outside the perceived core concerns of the discipline and symbolized instead a departure or distraction from one's role as content expert. Among respondents, issues of gender and their own status as women overlapped with professional interests and research agendas in some cases but not in others. More typically, the scientists in this study echoed the view that success as an academic, in the words of one BAS respondent, "has nothing to do with gender at all. It's just where you happen to be."

A PMSE respondent said, "I have not found women faculty in other departments, you know, in other colleges outside of [my scientific discipline] to understand what we're going through here. It's a lot tougher, from anything I've heard expressed by any women at any of the universities I've taught at. . . ." This faculty member shared her conclusion that within the sciences, some fields were more open than others. "I mean, even physics has more women full professors than [my department], statistically, and so somehow, when I meet physics professors, somehow they're different than professors [in my specialty]. They tend to be more open to the world, politically more liberal."

Gender issues concerned respondents within the traditionally male science disciplines, and especially so with respect to career advancement and working conditions as a faculty member. The same PMSE respondent

noted that, due in part to her experience of an unsuccessful preliminary promotion and tenure review, she had come to view third year reviews as ways “that they can really weed out people.” This respondent, the sole woman professor in her department, noted that earlier in her career, “there were a lot of problems with women in the department, women students coming to me. I was the first and only woman they had ever had in that department.” This respondent spoke of paying a “cultural tax” (Padilla, cited in Tierney & Bensimon, 1996) in the form of extra attention to students. Other examples of this “tax” can include additional service work (often in areas related to diversity and equity) and public relations appearances on behalf of the university or department, all of which are expected but do not count towards tenure and promotion. Critically, although women and faculty members from other underrepresented groups are expected to perform these tasks on behalf of the department, this work is ultimately regarded as a distraction from one’s scholarship to advance the discipline, which is the work that is most valued in the tenure and promotion process.

One exception to the low to nonexistent salience of gender within the science disciplines was an interest in increasing the representation of women in science and applied science fields, including the professoriate. Respondents, however, did not tend to portray the working conditions—primarily the level of collegiality—as a feature of their work that would appeal to prospective women scientists. Among science respondents, for example, ignoring disrespectful incidents in their own careers and work circumstances was the preferred and most recommended strategy for the academic workplace. According to one BAS respondent:

I think one thing that females have to watch out for is becoming too sensitive to those things, because it can only hurt yourself. . . . I think that those people who—those females who have stayed in science have really ignored. They happen. You're not happy about it. They make a statement to you, but you just ignore [it] and go on.

For this respondent, too much sensitivity to the conditions or environment of one’s work diverts attention from what she regarded as most important—carrying out the work itself. However, if disrespectful or insensitive treatment is not addressed, it may well continue. The strategy of ignoring or dismissing disrespectful episodes appears to advantage individuals with the abilities to, as one respondent put it, “let it roll off my back.” Among these respondents—all of whom have achieved senior rank in the institution and demonstrated their abilities to work successfully

within their environments—experiences of disrespect have not been allowed to color their perceptions of the fundamental high quality of their work or the legitimacy of their presence.

The ability to, in the words of another respondent, “just ignore and go on” represented an important choice for several respondents. Personal choices related to priorities and time was also a theme among respondents with implications for community.

### **Role of Choices**

Primary manifestations of gender salience in many women’s lives are the choices they make about family and career, often with consequences in terms of time (e.g., Hothschild, 1990) and career advancement (e.g., Schwartz & Zimmerman, 1992) that have affected women professionals disproportionately. Respondents’ discussion of choices mostly involved time allocation, prioritizing, and timing. Many respondents cited careful attention to time and timing as an important consideration in making life decisions as well. A BAS faculty member felt personal choices were critical to her professional development; indeed, she saw the personal and professional as intrinsically connected:

To me, it has always seemed very arbitrary for people to say, “Well, you know, you shouldn’t have to put off child-bearing until you have tenure or until you have a good job or this or that,” and to me, it’s “Yes, you do. You need to have income. You need to be able to support [your children].” And so it’s really difficult or impossible to separate what you choose personally from what you’re doing professionally.

As this respondent clearly indicated, personal choices are often guided by external decisions and structures as well as received timeframes. Institutional structures and expectations often gave respondents clear messages about success that also truncated respondents’ perceived range of choices. “Write papers, write papers, write papers, write papers,” concluded another BAS respondent.

Choices cited by respondents also centered on decisions they made regarding family and handling disrespect or indifference. Some women postponed having children, but many chose to have children—even while going through tenure review. Such was the experience of one SSE respondent, who recalled, “I had my second child actually when I was going up for promotion here. . . . When I was putting my promotion package together, I was also buying layettes and whatnot.”

However, a BAS respondent recalled skepticism of life choices she made, beginning in graduate school:

The chair of the department, who I respected in many ways, in fact, but he said to me, "Why don't you go off and have your children first, and then come back and get your degree?" So that was the piece of encouragement I got. And so I decided not to do that, and they agreed reluctantly to take me on as a master's candidate, and so I came in as a master's candidate, and ended up getting my Ph.D. in three years, but they weren't willing to let me start out that way.

Often respondents' choices reflected adaptations to challenging academic expectations within a sometimes challenging, and for some, hostile, environment. Seen this way, respondents did what they believed they must do to succeed at a research university. However, it is critical to note that most respondents in this study adapted to the institutional research culture and found creative and personally meaningful ways to assert their expertise and thrive within the culture. A SSE respondent said, "I create my own aura of power and respect. I don't think the system works to produce that for a person. She or he has to create that. She has to create that for herself, that respect and status, and so forth, and sense of personal power, but the system works against that."

In general, respondents identified an institutional system that constrained choices, introduced a variety of time pressures, reinforced or rewarded community building in the form of disciplinary-specific collaborations within departments or colleges. Consequently, notions of interdisciplinary, cross-cutting "women's communities," while valued by most, did not fit comfortably into the perceived institutional structures and prevailing faculty climate. However, respondents also discussed other kinds of community that they maintained with women as well as the bases for these communities.

### **Women's Community**

Many respondents spoke of the relative absence of community among women faculty members on the campus. According to one SSE respondent, "It concerns me that I don't know very many women on campus, because every place I've been before, strong women's community has been really important." However, respondents still stressed the importance and value of their relationships with women. These relationships took many forms. For example, respondents spoke extensively about mentoring other women within their respective disciplines and encouraging women in their

disciplines and others to succeed, such as the SSE professor who remarked, "as a senior woman faculty member and one of not very many in my field, my job is to mentor women across the world."

Some respondents found supportive relationships with other women who were faculty members outside of their home departments, such as this SSE respondent:

I find I have an incredibly strong female support network with friends . . . who work in the university, but not in my department, and one who has been—who went through a divorce at the same time I did and [we] raised our kids together [but she has now moved away]. . . . Whenever I have something that I really need to get on the table or process, I will call all three of them.

A small number of respondents described close relationships with other women and men within their departments, such as the following AH respondent:

My husband also teaches in this department. Most of our friends are in this department—our friends here in town—so . . . it's our own little community now. A lot of them live in our neighborhood, even. . . . It's pleasant because, of course, those are people we share a lot with in terms of what we're interested in, what we think about. We complain about the same things.

For most respondents, however, the community of women they discussed was frequently discipline-related and also far-flung geographically. Respondents relished opportunities for contact with women colleagues from other institutions. These colleagues were often (but not exclusively) women with whom respondents went to graduate school and maintained strong connections through professional conference attendance and electronic mail. One BAS respondent felt "the only common experience I have is with my women colleagues in [her disciplinary field] across the country." A SSE respondent put it this way:

When I did my Ph.D., there were a large group of us, and those friends are now colleagues, they're all at different institutions across the country, but I think that group has always been—when we go to professional meetings, etc., there's that camaraderie and that support, the interest in each other and what we're doing and what, you know, idea sharing, and not so much collaboration in terms of doing research, but collaboration in terms of willingness to reflect in dialogue in relationship to ideas that we have.

An AH respondent added,

Really, most of the support that I had [at a particularly difficult time] was off campus, was within my professional organization, and almost all of the people that helped me intellectually to do the work I was doing were not here. They were elsewhere . . . they were all over the country and the world.

This widespread collection of friends and colleagues was the community most often referenced by respondents as a principal support or primary network. One AH respondent contrasted this to the lesser sense of connectedness she perceived locally: "I network with lots of women away from [this institution], and I have lots of women friends, here, you know, but there isn't such a thing as a real professional network."

For many respondents, their communities of women were comprised of disciplinary colleagues at other institutions, many of whom had been graduate school peers or colleagues, and with whom respondents had regular but infrequent opportunities for face-to-face contact—mostly at disciplinary conferences. Only a few respondents spoke of close relationships with women colleagues in their own departments (particularly in the two sciences-related categories of BAS and PMSE where respondents were the only women in their departments or one of very few women), but close contacts with women in far-flung disciplinary communities were fostered through communication technology—principally telephone and electronic mail.

In terms of a cross-disciplinary community on the home campus, respondents mentioned their contacts with other faculty members (women and men) as enjoyable and conducive to successful committee work and institutional governance participation. A SSE respondent said:

Support is through friends and community and a few in the university, collaboration with people on projects, and mostly outside this department and out of the college, but I find a lot of interest in friendship with people in other departments. You know, that is professional in the sense that it evolves usually out of serving on somebody's committee. You get to know people in other departments, so I've found a lot of commonality with people across campus, which I think is real satisfying and gives a sense that there's more to this enterprise than first meets the eye.

However, these relationships also had been exacted at a price of time—often time away from research and writing, which they perceived as having



little value for not only their scholarship but also their (now former) promotion and tenure cases. According to one SSE respondent, one's community also depends on one's priorities: "My friends are my colleagues. I have family and I have work. That's all I have time for now." As a group, the respondents focused on their independence and opportunities to make disciplinary contributions in their day-to-day work, and they were more likely to find community in their long-standing networks of women friends and colleagues at other campuses. By focusing on disciplinary (and departmental) expectations, respondents established themselves as experts within their respective disciplines, and their communities of friends were populated heavily but not exclusively by disciplinary colleagues as well.

Disciplinary expectations may also serve to hinder the development of local communities of women faculty members, due to workloads but also due to differential salience of gender and a questionable assumption that respondents' experiences of being women and faculty members are sufficiently similar to give rise to shared identification. Based on respondents' stories, the notion of a localized community of women, if premised on assumptions of women's (at least in this study, women in the senior faculty ranks) common experiential bases and expectations, became more complicated. Respondents' discussions of disciplinary differences were accompanied by emphases on women faculty members' differential experiences more so than potential similarities. One PMSE faculty member said:

When I'd go to these [feminist book discussion group] meetings, they're mostly [arts and humanities] professors there, but professors from [social sciences], too. I always think, "Wow, they really have a totally different world. They don't know what it's like." I really cannot express what it's like because it's different. It's certainly different from women who are in colleges like [SSE disciplines]. . . . Maybe [a professional school professor's] experience is somewhat like mine. I don't know, but I have not found women faculty in other departments, you know, in other colleges outside of [mine] to understand what we're going through here. It's a lot tougher, from anything I've heard expressed by any women at any of the universities I've taught at, and the only common experience I have is with my women colleagues in [my discipline] across the country.

Respondents identified differences not only in terms of disciplinary demands but also in terms of perceived philosophical differences. For example, as she discussed her perceptions of the experiences of women

faculty members in various disciplines, one SSE respondent observed: “I think [the mission of the science-related disciplines is] a little different than the mission viewed by someone in the liberal arts. That may have more of a teaching focus, but less focus on the mission of a land grant university.” Such broad emphases on identifying difference, distinction, or uniqueness may also serve to underpin the relative emphasis on differences among faculty members’ experiences than on similarities.

Expectations of establishing a “women’s community” premised on shared experiences seem to oversimplify the more complex dimensions and dynamics of gender and experiences within academic departments across campus and possibly also the larger academic forces that serve to emphasize differences and distinctions over commonalities. Further, expectations that women faculty members across campus have the same concerns, or common definitions of problems, or a single agenda, misrepresent—and severely underestimate—the power of the disciplinary focus among these respondents who have achieved full professorship. Given the disciplinary and academic contexts as perceived by respondents, the concept of “women’s community” is problematic at best and may serve to undermine the potentially valuable coalitions that could be built by acknowledging and exploring the relative differences among women professors’ experiences and perceptions.

### **Conclusions and Implications**

To summarize, respondents identified themselves primarily as scholars of their respective disciplines, and they were very aware of the high or low salience of gender as an issue within their disciplines. Respondents made choices—particularly with respect to scholarship they pursued—based at least partly on these understandings and their perceptions of academic success within a research university framework. Finally, respondents identified strong and sustaining women’s communities of which they are part, yet most of the identified communities were not local to this university or with other members of the targeted group of women professors. Rather, their communities of women tended to be collections of long-term colleagues, now friends, with whom they kept in contact via phone, e-mail, and periodic visits—often at academic conferences.

Respondents in this study placed a premium on their disciplinary work and, for most, on their accomplishments as researchers and contributors to their disciplines. However, with respect to institutional rewards for faculty who make disciplinary contributions, Smart (1991) showed that one’s

gender is more closely related to rank and salary than one's scholarly contributions. Even if gender appears to be a less salient topic in the academic discourse of certain disciplines, gender remains a highly salient factor in explaining an institution's material valuing of faculty members across academic disciplines.

Although feminist scholarship has gained status in academe, such scholarship presents dilemmas for scholars. For example, in her study of myths surrounding the conditions and progress of women faculty, Glazer-Raymo (1999) discussed a dilemma faced by women law school faculty. Although the crux of legal scholarship is studying the application of laws to specific peoples and situations, when women law school faculty study the situations of women, their scholarly focus on women is considered less compatible with the norms of legal scholarship. This study provides more evidence of the slow rate of change and the resistance faced by women scholars who identify strongly with their disciplines and at the same time seek to make original contributions to advance their disciplines in terms of scholarship related to gender.

Most of the women full professors in this study described their achievement of success in terms of embracing disciplinary values and focusing on demands characteristic of their respective disciplines. Consistent with this perception, individual choices are made about how to allocate time and where to put effort, but significant constraints on choices are apparent as well and are acknowledged. These respondents also expressed relative acceptance of, on balance, the expectations related to academic success; recommended ignoring or dismissing derogatory or sexist messages; and learned to do their best work within the system as they perceived and understood it. However, this does not mean that the respondents saw no flaws in institutional structures or did not challenge unfair decisions and processes (including some respondents' successful challenges to their own promotion and tenure bids that were initially rejected).

Based on the results of this study, women faculty members across a variety of disciplines seem to highlight differences more often than common ground with other faculty women as academics. Two examples of these differences are their perceptions that their concerns and pressures are not the same as faculty members and women in other departments, and that they do not speak similar disciplinary languages with respect to the role and salience of gender. Respondents perceived that they faced very different sorts of challenges, experiences, and obligations that would not be the same in other disciplines. The same might be said for women from

different cultural backgrounds: That, in many ways, women of color speak a different language than the language of white middle-class women (Thompson, 2003a) that is predominantly represented in this study. In light of the portrait that emerged of well-integrated disciplinary experts who represented a variety of specialties and affiliated with their disciplines more often than with the home institution, the notion of an interdisciplinary women's community should not be a simplistic conception that assumes shared experiences and meanings held by a broad range of women faculty members. Future studies on the experiences of women professors who are also women of color may further problematize and enrich concepts of commonality and experiences of difference.

A wide variety of work environments exists across any one campus, characterized by departmental and/or program character, local history, and countless other factors. Delamont, Atkinson, and Parry (1997) described development of the crucial knowledge of how disciplinary judgments are made and of helping aspiring faculty who may otherwise be "cue-deaf" (p. 105) to prevailing expectations and standards characteristic of the discipline. The professors in this study possessed keen understandings of their disciplinary environments, including content mastery as well as the differential salience of gender. These understandings—plus their primary professional identities as disciplinary experts—undoubtedly shaped what kinds of cross-disciplinary, local women's communities are possible. As women faculty are socialized into their respective disciplines, they may also perceive less commonality or solidarity with other women faculty members with whom they share the status of being female and being a nondominant person on the campus largely because they do not perceive sharing similar disciplinary meaning-making structures or similar sets of discriminatory or isolating experiences.

Tierney's (1993) "communities of difference" offers a more complicated alternative for envisioning interdisciplinary communities among women faculty members. Communities of difference presume common ground to be not commonality of experience but instead a shared opportunity to understand and appreciate complex and multiple dynamics experienced and articulated by others. In this case, a cross-disciplinary women's community premised on difference may well yield greater awareness of the range of gendered dynamics at a single campus and within various disciplines and their respective discourses. Such discussion and dialogue on differences may lead to a more satisfying sense of community where women's experiences need not be identical but where multiple perspectives are assumed, valued, and explored. Pagano (1990)

also emphasized this potential of community when she concluded that women, through speaking together, can realize that “We are connected and we are different” (p. 156). Such communities premised on difference may also hold potential for strategies to pursue change on campuses. Emphasizing the priorities on scholarship for academics, Glazer-Raymo (1999) suggested that women faculty on a given campus may be more constructively thought of as a “loosely-connected polity rather than a unified organization of activists. Academic priorities preoccupy their energies and deter their involvement in potentially intrusive policy debates” (p. 205).

Finally, this study also has implications for mentoring and socialization of aspiring women professors or faculty members who aspire to senior rank. These implications include the primacy of developing one’s disciplinary expertise and the cultivation of one’s community of graduate student peers as the important beginnings of one’s own community of women. Martin (2003) has called for feminist scholars to engage in a collective enterprise embodying a welcoming spirit for all women. However, academic socialization, concurrent with one’s development of disciplinary specialization, also may work against cross-disciplinary scholarly collaborations by faculty members that are regarded as desirable on some campuses. In many ways, this study has affirmed the strength and enduring power—as well as the perhaps unanticipated consequences—of the cosmopolitan faculty role and the power of the discipline as a socializing factor and a central element in one’s professional identity. In light of this socialization and identification, one’s energies are appropriately devoted to advancement of the discipline and less toward attending to local campus-level problems, participating in formal or informal campus governance processes, and working towards community with other women faculty members. In joining scholarly communities and focusing on disciplinary demands, women professors run the risk of reinforcing gender-biased structures that have served as barriers to women in the past. At the same time, experiences of women professors offer a glimpse of what it might be like for women to experience themselves as players within the most senior academic ranks.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> “Professor” is used throughout the manuscript to indicate the senior professorial rank. When discussing other faculty ranks, appropriate modifiers (e.g., “assistant” professor) will be used.

- <sup>2</sup> The adjective “full” was often used in describing the study to potential respondents and within the interviews to emphasize the research interest in respondents’ senior faculty status as opposed to the generic descriptor “professor” as synonymous for all faculty members.
- <sup>3</sup> The researchers wish to acknowledge Dr. Mary Huba’s central role in project development and her work in conducting approximately half of the interviews. Ms. Karen Zunkel arranged the interview appointments and contributed insights to developing the project.

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# Successful Women in Leadership: Portrait of a Gentle Warrior

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Deborah E. Stine

This paper paints a portrait of successful leadership that was built through the directorship and ethic of caring of a female site administrator. The paper addresses the major question, "What major principles need to be incorporated into the daily life of those in leadership positions to assist in their success?" The study is framed through the work of Starratt (1993), who described leadership through the metaphor of drama, with the leader serving as the caring director, involving playing the drama with "greater risk, with greater intelligence and imagination and with greater dedication to making the drama work" (p. 41), and that of Carlos Castaneda (1967), who described the path of a warrior in metaphorical terms through seven principles of power. These are: (a) knowing the battleground, (b) discarding the unnecessary, (c) choosing battles, (d) taking risks, (e) seeking retreat, (f) compressing time, and (g) exercising power. These are then applied to the narrative of a site principal, and are modified to provide the reader with a guiding list of emerging administrators. This study adds to the knowledge base, broadening the use of the principles with the addition of the elements of drama and caring, clarifying why the application is particularly useful to explain success in leadership roles.

The historical movement and the struggle of women provide a foundation for understanding of their survival in leadership positions. In the early bureaucratization of schools, men were promoted to the management of schools. The suffrage movement in the United States, however, set the stage for an eventual increase in the number of women in school administration positions. A setback was seen in the movement for equal pay and the economic depression of the 1930s, decreasing the number of women in leadership positions. More jobs were available for women in World War II and the number decreased in the post-war era when the G.I. Bill allowed



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more men to enter school administration. The Cold War precipitated a panic that called for more preparation of students in math and science and drew men into both teaching and administration. Societal expectations are in conflict with roles of women as leaders. The increase in career options for women has drawn women away from careers in education. However, many have persevered.

Starratt (1993) described leadership through the metaphor of drama, with the leader serving as the caring director, involving playing the drama with "greater risk, with greater intelligence and imagination and with greater dedication to making the drama work" (p. 41). Carlos Castaneda (1967) described the path of a warrior in metaphorical terms through seven principles of power. These principals include: (a) knowing the battleground, (b) discarding the unnecessary, (c) choosing battles, (d) taking risks, (e) seeking retreat, (f) compressing time, and (g) exercising power. For one to be a successful warrior, these strengths must then be applied to "The Riddle of the Heart" (as described by Castaneda, 1967), and include the ability to: (a) laugh at oneself, (b) have patience without fretting, and (c) incorporate the principle of improvisation while thinking on one's feet.

Castaneda's (1981) *Principles of Power* (here utilized as the *Principles of Leadership*), provided a metaphoric frame for interpreting and understanding leadership. Estes (1992) addressed the use of metaphors from data, organized and categorized to advance understanding, when she said, "this work is to show . . . what we have received through our sudden knowings from story, from body, from dreams and journeys of all sorts" (p. 33).

Carlos Castaneda's anthropological studies focused on a Yaqui Indian from northern Mexico, Don Juan Matus. According to Castaneda in the *Eagle's Gift* (1981), Don Juan possessed ancient knowledge, which in our time is commonly known as . . . "psychological science, but which in fact is a tradition of extremely self-disciplined practitioners and extremely sophisticated praxes" (p. 1). Castaneda became an apprentice to Don Juan who taught him about the multiplicities of the natural world. Castaneda learned disciplines that exist in the world of the "seer," a type of visionary who combines intuitive "knowings" and rational sense with disciplined systems for success and survival. These multiplicities and "knowings" are useful for active or emerging administrators. Brunner (2000) examined the daily engagements of women superintendents, applying Castaneda's seven principles of power.

Brunner (2000) provided a model that adapted Castaneda's system to help turn insights from data into useful information. Castaneda's (year) system provided disciplines for living "impeccably" in a world of multiple realities, something that is a part of the world of every new administrator. Use of this system with women superintendents helped Brunner (2000) see a pattern in intangible data. This manuscript extends the work of Castaneda (year) and Brunner (2000) by suggesting a guiding list for women leaders.

In *The Power of Silence: Further Lessons of Don Juan*, Castaneda (1987) related Don Juan's sacred training for spiritual leaders. His system incorporated the use of seven Principles of Power. These principles may be used to measure success in school site leadership. Successful warriors, or leaders, embody these principles in their daily lives through an ethic of caring.

The first principle of power is knowing the battleground. "Warriors choose their battleground, a warrior never goes into battle without knowing what the surroundings are" (Castaneda, 1981, p. 278). Like this first principle, most of the mainstream literature on leadership advises leaders to know their surroundings, to know the culture (Bolman & Deal, 1991). Castaneda (1981) emphasized that knowing how to survive the battleground is knowing how to communicate in terms established by the surroundings. Learning to communicate effectively required a warrior's skills. Leader must know constituents and opponents, the factual basis of encounters, and where to find out details.

Castaneda (1981) described the second principle, "Discarding the Unnecessary." He said dependency on what we think is necessary makes us weaker, "This is not meant to imply that interdependency weakens us; it

is just to give the message that warriors must be strong" (p. 278). Leaders do not bring excesses into a situation, and they listen carefully.

The third principle of power is "Choosing Battles." Castaneda (1981) stated,

Aim at being simple. Apply all the concentration you have to decide whether or not to enter into battle, for any battle is a battle for one's life. . . . A warrior must be willing and ready to make his last stand here and now. But not in a helter-skelter way." (p. 280)

Castaneda (1981) conveyed that complications may draw us from the central purpose and leave us confused. Leaders in schools must choose battles and must recognize that it is not possible to pursue all battles—prioritization is important—planning is essential.

The fourth principle of power is "Taking Risks." Castaneda (1981) admonished "relax, abandon yourself, fear nothing" (p. 280). Castaneda recalled a moment when he could not organize his thoughts. Because of this, he took deep breaths to relax. Don Juan praised him and reminded him of the fourth principle. Castaneda came to understand that unless we could move into a state of relaxation in which he feared nothing, he would not be able to move in the direction of the unknown; he would not be able to take a risk. According to Cantor and Bernay (1992), "Risk taking is a critical factor of successful leadership" (p. 158). Bennis (1989) agreed. At the top of the list of characteristics of future leaders is "willing to take risks" (p. 41).

As Don Juan said in Castaneda's (1967) book *Journey to Ixtlan: The Teachings of Don Juan*, "The basic difference between an ordinary [person] and a warrior is that a warrior takes everything as a challenge while an ordinary [person] takes everything as either a blessing or a curse" (Fields, 1994, p. 3). Brunner (2000) showed that the women superintendents understood that courage is not evident unless difficulty or adversity is present. The women had courage to be self-reflective—a necessity for leaders in determining next actions.

The fifth principle of power is "Seeking Retreat." Castaneda (1981) stated, "When faced with odds that cannot be dealt with, warriors retreat for a moment. They let their minds meander. They occupy their time with something else. Anything would do" (p. 281). Castaneda wrote that at one point in his warrior training he could not focus on a particular topic. He began examining the furniture in the room and even the buff-colored tiles that made up the floor. One of his trainers praised him for retreating for a

moment by letting his mind meander. Site leaders value the importance of reflection and know that it is essential to success.

Castaneda (1981) related that warriors are often confronted with so much new or confusing information that retreat is critical, much like the life of practicing administrators. In times of retreat, warriors do anything that takes their minds away from the confusion of the moment. After taking respites, warriors are ready to move quickly with sureness; they have regained their sense of purpose and self. Medical science reminds us to take care of our bodies as well as our minds; Castaneda reminds us that we think more clearly when we take care of both. Further, retreat is a part of the warrior's training. It must be practiced along with the other principles or the warrior never reaches a state of impeccable practice, solving the "riddle of the heart," which is guided by three actions for people who live the principles.

The sixth principle is "Compressing Time." "Warriors compress time; even an instant counts. In a battle for life, a second is an eternity; and an eternity that may decide the outcome. Warriors aim at succeeding, therefore, they compress time. Warriors do not waste an instant" . For an administrator, knowing how to prioritize and schedule time is essential.

Brunner (2000) indicted that women superintendents compressed time by:

1. Doing more than one thing at a time.
2. Thinking about more than one thing at a time.
3. Viewing the role as one relational thing to do.
4. Understanding the patterns of uncertainty and ambiguity.

The seventh principle is "Exercising Power." Power and the exercise of power are at the heart of a warrior's social role and are at the heart of the school leaders role. Castaneda's (1981) trainer was most impressed with this principle. In the application of power, the differences in outcomes are discerned between "power over" and "power with." Castaneda pointed to situations when power was given away and people became all they could be and deserved credit for their successes. As the internal and external environments are addressed in this model of "power with" followers, this collaborative model of power is emphasized as a model for success. Castaneda's model dealt with perceptions of individuals within a particular context. Castaneda then "filters" the seven principles of power through the "riddle of the heart," stating that apprentice warriors must be schooled in

three areas of expertise: the mastery of awareness, the mastery of intent, and the art of stalking. He stated that:

[t]hese three areas of expertise are the three riddles [warriors] encounter in their search for knowledge. The mastery of awareness is the riddle of the mind. . . . The mastery of intent is the riddle of the spirit, or the paradox of the abstract. . . . The art of stalking is the riddle of the heart; it is the puzzlement [warriors] feel upon becoming aware of two things: first that the world appears to us to be unalterably objective and factual because of peculiarities of our awareness and perception; [and] second, that if different peculiarities come into play, the very things about the world that seem so unalterably objective and factual change. (Castaneda, 1981, p. 14-15)

### **Application**

Leadership is a challenge for those who are brave enough to weather the battlefield. Leaders can learn from the themes of warrior and director, as framed through the work of Castaneda, Brunner, and Starratt, and this knowledge may contribute to their success. Castaneda (year) wrote about what he learned from the warrior, Don Juan, a Yaqui Indian from northern Mexico. The seven principles of power for Yaqui warriors outlined through his work could equally be termed “principle of educational leadership.”

Don Juan’s system offers guidance for living in a world of multiple realities, shifting perceptions, and changing paradigms. Its blend of intuitive leaps, rational “sense” and disciplined systems can help individuals survive in leadership positions. Its applications school leaders are:

- Know your battleground.  
According to Don Juan, “A warrior never goes into battle without knowing what the surroundings are.” As an educational leader, learn all you can about your surroundings so you can choose the time and place for action.
  - Communication is paramount—“insiders” (to the organization) are important, but it is equally important to include “outsiders,” the community, the media and service organizations to accentuate and build the positive culture of your school.

- Networking is essential to success—a leader must identify key educational leaders within and outside of the school, and rely on their strengths.
- Understand the culture and the community standards—don't try to reinvent the wheel.
- Know your opponents, or enemy. And knowing the enemy, keep him/her close to you. You never know when listening might happen—with the outcome being success.
- Know the contract. The contract and the past practices of the school and district will be invaluable in conflict management and consensus building.
- Mentors and Mentoring . . . Don't Go It Alone. Researchers have reported 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). Research concludes that women in educational administration benefit from having women as their mentors because they could explain the unwritten rules of the organization and identify the informal networks (Fleming, 1991; Hill & Ragland, 1995).
- Discard the Unnecessary  
Be willing to let go of what no longer serves your purpose. The dependency that makes you hold on too long can weaken your leadership.
  - Focus on the Mission and Vision.
  - Delegate to the lowest responsible level.
  - Interdependency can be good—but be able to recognize when the school and its children are not being served through its continuance.
  - Learn what is working, and what is not. If it is working, don't try to fix it.
- Choose your Battles  
Don Juan advises warriors to keep it simple; apply your concentration to deciding whether to enter a particular battle. It is important for leaders to stay focused on their central purpose and keep their priorities clear.
  - Leaders must be aware of their personal and professional commitments. Once the leader understands his/her role as principal, goal setting and team planning can occur with

success. With these structures in place, leaders can more easily “choose their battles.”

- Determine the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and follow up on those issues that can be resolved.
- Leaders in schools must choose battles and must recognize that it is not possible to pursue all battles—prioritization is important—planning is essential.

- **Take Risks**

Deep breathing in the face of fear can help you relax enough to organize your thoughts. It is useful to frame a problem as a challenge instead of a curse; risk and adversity give your courage a chance to shine.

- Be self-reflective—this is a necessity for leaders to determine their next actions.
- Be open to new ideas and change. Don’t say, or stay with something because it is just “comfortable.” There will always be faculty who say, “but this is the way it has always been done.” There is value in this, but be open to considering alternatives.
- After considering the adverse consequences, take risks realizing the positive possibilities.

- **Seek Retreat**

When things get overwhelming, take a break and let your mind meander. Do something physical. “We think clearer when we take care of our bodies as well as our minds.”

- Measure your emotion and your energy. Periods of reflection can be beneficial. Site leaders value the importance of reflection and know that it is essential to success.
- Before making a major decision, take at the very minimum several minutes; close your door to the world. . . . Then move forward. Your focus is essential.

- **Compress Time**

Every moment counts, in administration as well as battle. Compress time by doing and thinking about more than one thing at a time.

- Understand the patterns of uncertainty and ambiguity.
- Only touch a piece of paper once; return phone calls as soon as possible—problems get bigger when they are put off.

- Wait efficiently. Bring reading, work, etc. You will be amazed at how you can accomplish more and arrive less stressed!
- Exercise Power
  - A successful leader refers continually to the meaning and purpose of the drama itself, while encouraging the players to express the drama in their own terms.
  - Leadership needs to be *empowering*; it is the ability to admit and even to celebrate that others have the ability and skills to carry on the job with excellence in the absence of the leader.
  - It takes more time at the beginning to discover the strengths and interests of others—but once they are discovered, these individuals can be involved in streamlining site processes: the mission, the budget, and staff and community functions. Bring these people to the decision table and involve them.
  - A collaborative model of “power with” will serve you better than “power over.”
  - Sharing power in a caring leader-follower relationship is a model for leadership success.

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# **The Changing Face of Higher Education: Why More Administrators are Wearing Lipstick**

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Barbara R. Jones & Ronda O. Credille

During the 150 years women have participated in higher education, they have made tremendous strides. At many postsecondary institutions, women were not accepted as students until the second half of the 20th century. In 2004, women serve in the upper echelons of power at some of the nation's oldest and most prestigious universities. This inquiry examines the history of women's participation in higher education, including their entry into leadership positions within the academy and the barriers and facilitators they experienced. The leadership models and the career development of women are also examined. The results of interviews with eight women administrators at postsecondary institutions in different states are discussed and compared. Challenges women face in the areas of socialization, leadership, and work-life balance are considered. The experiences and insights of women who have achieved leadership posts are also reviewed. Strategies and recommendations for women preparing to pursue higher education leadership positions are provided.

Women have been striving for equality in business, education, politics, society, and life for generations. The roles of women have expanded. Education and training have opened the door to numerous career fields. Although women have experienced significant gains in the workforce, they continue to face barriers and obstacles to advancement in management. In like manner, women in higher education have also experienced impediments to employment and advancement opportunities.

This inquiry examines the history of women's participation in higher education, including their entry into leadership positions within the academy and the barriers and facilitators they experienced. The leadership models and

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the career development of women are also examined. The study includes interviews with eight women administrators at postsecondary institutions in different states. Their responses to a specific set of questions are discussed and compared.

Women continue to face challenges in the areas of socialization, leadership, and work-life balance. Despite the many obstacles in their paths, an increasing number of women are earning positions at or near the pinnacle of their institutions. The experiences and insights that these women have gleaned as they have risen to various leadership posts may benefit their colleagues who have similar talents and aspirations. One way to foster the continued increase in women in higher education leadership positions is to motivate female academicians to prepare themselves for and then pursue such positions.

## Review of the Literature

### Historical Background

Higher education for women has only been available for about 150 years. Prior to the mid-1800s, higher education was available only to men. At the turn of the 20th century, most of the colleges that admitted women were single-sex institutions. As the 20th century progressed, more colleges opened to women, and more women attended college. Traditionally male-only colleges began opening enrollment to women in the 1950s and 1960s (Chamberlain, 1988).

In the early part of the 20th century, women who attended college commonly completed programs in teaching, nursing, or secretarial training (Hanmer, 1996). Through the 1960s, women majored primarily in service-oriented fields such as psychology, sociology, education, home economics, library science, or social work. Men dominated the fields of business,

medicine, law, political science, and economics. The proportion of bachelor or professional degrees awarded to women varied throughout the first half of the century from a low of 19% in 1900, to a high of 41% in 1940, and back down again to 24% in 1950 (Chamberlain, 1988). Educational opportunities for women increased significantly during the 1960s and 1970s. By the late 1980s, however, women represented the majority of students who enrolled in higher education. The number of women enrolled in graduate schools has exceeded the number of men since 1984 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2001). In 1986, women earned 56% of associate degrees, 51% of bachelor's degrees, 50% of master's degrees, and 35% of doctorates (Touchton & Davis, 1991). By 1999, these percentages had shifted further in favor of women, who earned 60% of the associate degrees, 57% of the bachelor's degrees, 58% of the master's degrees and 44% of the doctor's degrees (NCES, 2001).

The 1960s brought rapid and significant social and legal changes. Major legislation that significantly impacted the social, economic and political opportunities for minorities and women included the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Education Amendments of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (which passed in 1972), and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1988. Title IX of the Civil Rights Act prohibited discrimination based on sex in educational institutions (Chamberlain, 1988; Hanmer, 1996).

### **Women in Higher Education**

The number of women faculty in higher education institutions has grown during the past 100 years. Women comprised about 20% of the college faculty at the turn of the 20th century (Chamberlain, 1988). Milem and Astin (1993) reported that women faculty in all institutional types increased by seven percentage points between 1972 (21%) and 1989 (28%). At this rate of increase, women faculty will not comprise 50% of the faculty in all institution types until 2042. A review of institution types revealed that women have seen increases of 9% in public four-year institutions, 3% in private four-year institutions, and 14% in public two-year institutions. Chamberlain (1988) noted that women faculty are more abundant at lower ranks and at less prestigious institutions. Milem and Astin (1993) affirmed that women are not as well represented at each rank, but have shown gains since 1972. Touchton and Davis (1991) reported that the proportion of women faculty at the rank of assistant professor has experienced the most significant gain: from 24% in 1972 to 38% in 1985. They also stated that women are tenured at lower rates than men. Hensel (1991) noted that although doctoral program enrollments are declining, the

percentages of women earning doctorates have increased from 11% in 1965 to 36% in 1988. By 1999, women earned 44% of the doctor's degrees awarded in the United States (NCES, 2001). Despite this encouraging finding, women faculty are not hired at a proportionate rate. Hensel (1991) noted out that with a pending faculty shortage, higher education should increase the hiring of women and minorities to solve both faculty shortages and diversity issues. Hensel's findings also indicated that women in higher education experience greater attrition and slower career mobility.

**Leadership positions.** Although women have gradually progressed into higher education leadership positions, men continue their domination of the academy in terms of policies, evaluations, interactions, practices, and management (Hensel, 1991). Chamberlain (1988) reported that women have infrequently held important positions in higher education administration, with the exception at women's colleges. She stated that the typical positions held by women were dean or director of: women, library services, home economics, or nursing. Touchton and Davis (1991) noted that in 1985, 35% of executives, managers, or administrators in higher education institutions were women. Their 1991 report stated that women tend to be administrators in student affairs or external affairs as opposed to academic or administrative areas. In 1995, the American Council on Education, however, reported that the number of women chief executive officers (CEO) on higher education campuses more than tripled from 5% in 1975 to 16% in 1995. The greatest proportion of women CEOs was found in 2-year independent institutions (27%).

**Hiring and compensation.** Gender equity continues to be a concern, especially in the areas of hiring and compensation. Moses' (1997) review of the 1997 salary data released by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) revealed that pay inequities persisted for women in academe almost 30 years after the passage of the Equal Pay Act of 1963. Moses further indicated that, based on rank and academic discipline, women continue to earn 4 to 15% less than men do. Smallwood (2001) reported that a committee at the University of Maine, which examined the salaries of professors at seven campuses, found inequities between the salaries of male and female professors. The committee used statistical analysis considering longevity, rank, discipline, and academic degree to determine that 199 of 451 female professors were underpaid by an average of two percent or more. During the course of a career, even a small discrepancy in pay can have significant consequences. According to a study conducted at the State University of New York, a \$1,000 difference in annual salary, based on a modest 3.5% cost-of-living adjustment adds up

to a difference of more than \$84,000 in 40 years (Moses, 1997). When a nominal 5% rate of return is applied to this amount, the disparity grows to more than \$210,000.

For most positions in higher education administration, women earn less than men in similar posts (Touchton & Davis, 1991). Moses (1997) stated that the pay inequities for academic administrators are generally greater than for faculty. The Women in Higher Education website lists the "Gender Differences in 1998-1999 Administrative Salaries" as determined by the College and University Personnel Association (CUPA) annual survey. Fifty-three administrative position salaries are listed by gender and type of institution in the survey report. The salaries of women exceeded men in only 28 of the 212 salaries listed (13%). Touchton and Davis (1991) and the 1998-1999 CUPA survey disclosed that the median salaries for chief academic officers are almost the same at all types of public institutions. The greatest disparities were in the positions of Chief Executive Officer, Assistant to the President, Executive Vice President, Chief Business Officer, and Deans at doctoral, comprehensive, and baccalaureate four-year institutions.

Milem and Astin's (1993) examination of trends in faculty hiring and rank by gender, race and institutional type from 1972 and 1989 revealed a significant increase in newly hired women faculty: from 20.5% in 1972 to 38.6% in 1989. Their research also indicated an increase in women full professors from 9.2% to 14%, with the most significant increases found at associate professor (7.2%) and assistant professor (11.5%) levels. The increased level of assistant professors may reflect the significant increase in newly hired women faculty. Condoleezza Rice, the National Security Director for the Bush administration and a former Stanford provost, has compared this situation to a pyramid (Lively, 2000). An increased number of women in the academic pipeline will result in a larger pool of potential candidates for future upper-level administrative positions. Evidence of the fulfillment of Rice's prediction can be seen on the campuses of major universities. As of July 2000, four of the eight Ivy League institutions had women in the position of provost (Lively, 2000). This trend may be the precursor to a greater number of women CEOs. Nancy Cantor, Provost at the University of Michigan, has said with regard to her duties, "everything in the institution at some time walks through these offices" (Lively, 2000). Kuhnle estimated that once a woman has served three years as a provost without initiating a serious controversy, she is poised for consideration in presidential searches (Lively, 2000).

Blum (1991) reported that in the 1990s, institutions were again appointing special committees and panels to assess the employment situation for women because many equity issues identified in the 1960s and 1970s had yet to be resolved. Blum indicated that one university system was examining hiring and retention statistics for female and minority faculty. Although the institution had hired a large number of women faculty members in a nine-year period, 75% of this number left the system during the same timeframe. Institutional leaders were becoming more aware and more sensitive to the issues of diversity and pay equity as a result of education, laws, legal battles, and societal pressures. An increasing number of leaders recognized that hiring practices and salary determinations, that consider qualifications, market demand, and experience, should be used.

### **Barriers to Career Advancement**

Barriers and obstacles to career mobility can be either real or perceived. Some barriers are ones that involve choices in lifestyle or priorities. Research by Rouse (1999) examined career paths of female administrators in community colleges. Rouse identified the most significant barriers to advancement as being “the ‘old boys network,’ college politics, and family/spouse commitments.” Qualitative research by Gatteau (2000) of female presidents at selected higher education institutions found that these women followed a faculty/professor career path a minimum of 15 years, followed by administrative positions. The female presidents identified some of the challenges they faced as lack of female colleagues, sexist remarks, and community/faculty negativity and skepticism (§ 3). Women, in another study, cited imbalances with family and work, pay inequities, and the lack of support from supervisors for advancement opportunities as barriers to career mobility (Campbell, 1999).

**Organization structure.** Rouse’s (1999) study of Mississippi community colleges demonstrated that the organizational structure of the institution has a bearing on the numbers of females in administrative positions. Rouse’s report confirmed the findings of Touchton and Davis (1991) that most female administrators were clustered at the bottom of the career ladder, primarily in director positions. As Evans (2000) stated,

Large numbers of women dot the current workplace, but like trees on a mountain, you’ll see fewer and fewer of them as you climb higher in the executive landscape, until you reach a kind of timber line where you’ll find about as many women as you’ll find magnolias. (p. 10)

A study of women chief academic officers (CAO) in public community colleges discovered that their career paths began as faculty members (McKenney, 2000). They had held other administrative positions prior to serving as a CAO. The research revealed that the career paths of women CAOs in public community colleges was not influenced by gender, and women were moving faster in their career paths than their male counterparts.

**Social consequences.** Women who are promoted to senior administrative positions may experience some degree of social isolation from female peers. Matthews (1999), Vice-President for Academic Affairs at Marywood University, related the case of one woman whom she encouraged to apply for a deanship. Upon receiving the promotion, the woman appeared to be very successful in the position. Most of her colleagues were thus quite surprised when the new dean resigned at the end of the term. She was a single woman whose circle of close friends primarily included her previous female peers. Her promotion proved to be an irreconcilable interference to those relationships, prompting her to move on to a new institution.

Even starting fresh at a new institution may not eliminate all of the social hindrances for women administrators. Matthews (1999) and Becker (2002) asserted that part of the challenge women face is bridling their feminine socialization. From childhood, females are encouraged to cultivate such traits as benevolence, consideration, and understanding. Deciding on a course of action that may not yield a win-win situation for all involved is therefore quite uncomfortable for many women leaders. The command of social skills may also predispose women to service-oriented occupations (Matthews, 1999). The affirmation women in these roles receive may become almost a necessity to their self-esteem. Top administrators are often far removed from the one-to-one relationships that produce this affirmation, making the positions less attractive to some women.

**Career versus family.** A prerequisite for faculty members desiring most promotions to administrative positions is the achievement of the rank of full-professor (Wilson, 2001). This criterion is an impediment to many women. By the time a woman has earned tenure and been promoted to associate professor, she may be ready to have her first or an additional child. According to Joan Williams, director of the Program on Gender, Work, and Family at American University, herein is the source of potential conflicts for faculty members who are mothers: the concepts of tenure and promotion were developed at a time when virtually all faculty members

were men; if they had children, their wives bore the responsibilities of rearing the children as well as managing the household (Wilson, 2001). Thus, the duties of faculty evolved to the extent that Williams refers to their jobs as “oversized.” Women often plateau at the level of associate professor because the multitude of demands on their time and energy prohibits them from pursuing the volume or quality of research necessary to earn the next promotion. Iris Molotsky, spokeswoman for the AAUP, acknowledged that women are disproportionately affected by the need to sacrifice research and service opportunities to care for children and/or parents (Nann, 2000). This trade-off produces negative consequences for the career advancement of women.

### **Facilitators to Career Advancement**

Research by Rouse (1999) examining the career paths of female administrators in community colleges cited “formal education, willingness to take risks, [and] prior administrative experience” (§ 5) as the most important contributors to career progress. These women also mention that increased job responsibilities, or new departments and assignments that require learning new skills, help to facilitate career mobility.

### **Leadership Characteristics**

Uhlir (1989, p. 28) defined leadership as “the process of causing action through the orchestration of human talent” and as a method of inspiring people to contribute to the achievement of the organization’s goals through creative means. Uhlir suggested that it takes an “androgynous” person, one who uses behaviors considered both feminine and masculine, to be a good leader. Androgynous leaders choose from a spectrum of desirable behaviors—including “nurturance, assertiveness, courage, empathy, confidence, sensitivity, deference, [and] dominance”—depending on the circumstances to be addressed (p. 34). Female presidents, in a study by Gatteau (2000), reflected leadership qualities that included “developing a vision, serving as a symbol and role model, working collaboratively, fostering open communication, building community, delegating responsibility, taking risks, and maintaining perspective.” Gorenflo’s (1999) research on women deans found that these women practice a “supportive” leadership style.

Rosener (1990) grouped leadership styles into two categories: “command-and-control leadership or transactional” and “interactive or transformational leadership” (p. 120). Men tended to use the power and authority of their position to conduct transactions with their employees;



achievement is rewarded and incompetence is punished. The leadership behaviors of men can be described by terms such as competitive, strong, tough, and decisive. According to Carol Becker, Vice President for Academic Affairs at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, one common leadership pitfall for women is becoming "more stereotypically male than men" (Becker, 2002). Becker asserted that this approach may do more harm than good to the cause of women administrators. Not only does a woman fail to employ her unique skills and abilities, but she also runs the risk of provoking increased opposition or resistance to female leaders in general.

In general, women lead employees by using interpersonal communication skills, sharing power, and encouraging the involvement and participation of their employees. Rosener (1990) explained that behaviors that are natural to women, such as cooperation, support, and understanding, are among the most successful approaches used in management. The results of a survey of the subordinates of male and female managers disclosed that female managers may be more capable than male managers in managing people and tasks, attaining high-quality results, communicating performance standards, promoting teamwork, seeing possibilities, respecting abilities of staff, and balancing work with needs of employees (Mize, 1992).

Tedrow and Rhoads' (1999) analysis of data collected from female community college administrators identified three categories of leaders: adapters, reconcilers and resisters. The adapters duplicated the men's behavior with a strong authority image and a depersonalized communication style. The reconcilers combined the typical leadership behaviors of women and men, depending on the situation. The reconcilers viewed themselves as goal-oriented and perfectionists, yet caring and inclusive. The resisters displayed behaviors that are relational, stressing teamwork and empowerment of employees. Tedrow and Rhoads inferred that these behaviors are women's reaction to a male-dominated organizational structure.

Ainsenberg and Harrington (1988) asserted that women work in a different system of social order. This order puts less emphasis on chain-of-command; is more inclusive, diverse, and collegial; prefers decentralized decision-making; and encourages individuality. Women's leadership strengths, according to Phifer (2000), included analyzing problems, communicating in writing, and fostering cultural values. In general, areas that might need improvement were the delegation to and development of staff, allocating resources, and collecting information. The findings of this

research are especially significant because Sanchez (1993) reported that institutions that embrace diversity in leadership also tend to be more flexible, innovative and responsive to student and community needs.

### **Career Development**

Tedrow and Rhoads' (1999) findings indicated that changes in the college environment must occur to enable the increased advancement of women into higher education leadership positions. They recommended that professional development programs should be designed to identify policies that inhibit female leadership and determine ways to correct and improve the situation. Eaton (1984) suggested that administrators can facilitate the advancement of women by offering career development opportunities such as cross training, internal sabbaticals, and providing education/training support. Eaton also stated that, when empowering women as leaders, administrators as well as fellow employees need to become more familiar with women's operational styles. Tedrow and Rhoads (1999) agreed with Eaton (1984) and advocated educating all employees on the behavioral and communication differences between men and women to enhance the understanding of and respect for these differences.

**Training.** The number of women faculty and administrators is increasing; however, the proportion of women in these positions is not consistent with the number of graduates (Kaye & Scheele, 1975). Though women are being *educated*, they are not necessarily being *trained* to move into leadership positions. Chamberlain (1988) noted that while the business, government, and military sectors spend significant time and funds to educate their administrative staffs, higher education institutions do not. This deficiency is not because formal training venues are unavailable. A number of leadership training programs or academies have been developed in the United States. One of the most recognized higher education leadership training programs for women is the Summer Institute for Women in Higher Education Administration at Bryn Mawr University. The institute's curriculum includes traditional higher education administrative training in governance, finance, and management, as well as emphasis on career development and networking (Chamberlain, 1988; Secor, 1984). Women need not only education and training, but also opportunities to improve their skills to be prepared for upper-level administrative positions. A study of female presidents at four-year independent colleges reported that national professional development programs were extremely beneficial in fulfilling their career aspirations (Brown, 2000).

Women presidents of community colleges (Ballentine, 2001) viewed the doctorate as a necessary credential to progress to the senior administrative level. However, Ph.D. programs may not facilitate the development of leadership skills. Frye (1984) supported leadership development training as a component of graduate programs. He suggested ten areas of leadership study including organizational behavior, higher education law, effective human resource practices, financial management, and planning techniques. LeCroy (1984) added to Frye's (1984) suggestions by stating that postsecondary employers must provide in-house professional training, such as experiential leadership opportunities, in order to prepare potential leaders in higher education. Higher education administrators should identify potential women leaders and assist them in developing leadership skills. Kaye and Scheele (1975) suggested that leadership training for women should include management and organizational competencies, as well as training in negotiating and problem solving. A combination of mentoring, earning a doctorate, and gaining experience in administration assist in preparing women to be administrative leaders. Leadership is not a trait or characteristic, but a learned behavior developed over time involving education, training, experience, and opportunity.

**Mentoring.** For women to move into higher education leadership positions, mentors are invaluable. Lively (2000) reported that women provosts at prestigious research universities had mentors who provided advice and opportunities for experiences throughout their careers. In the study of women deans, Gorenflo (1999) reported that these women received professional support in their positions and had several informal mentors in their careers. Ballentine's (2001) research on women community college presidents found that they each had at least one mentor. The women explained that most mentors were male because few female administrative mentors were available, and that the mentoring relationships helped their professional development both directly and indirectly. Ragins and Scandura's (1994) study revealed that executive women are just as likely as men to serve as mentors, although women executives mentor women protégés more frequently than do men. Ragins and Scandura advised women who move into higher management positions to serve as mentors in order to facilitate women's career advancement opportunities. Although Cook's (1999) research indicated that men and women mentors offer similar mentoring functions, women mentors are able to offer gender-related career advice because they have frequently experienced similar barriers and struggles in their careers and lives (Saltzman, 1996).

According to the literature, some institutions and organizations have established formal mentoring programs (Rowe, 1993; Saltzman, 1996). Mentoring encourages the professional growth of both the mentor and protégé, and is therefore advantageous to the organization. The protégé receives encouragement, empowerment, and opportunities. The mentor renews and revives knowledge and remains current on new activities. Mentoring programs assist in relieving tensions between various levels of administrators and also provide opportunities for sharing. When institutions encourage mentoring, the number of mentoring relationships is likely to increase (LeCroy, 1984). A study of higher education administrators by Hytrek (2000) indicated that most of their mentoring relationships began in the first seven years of their administrative careers. This fact suggests that institutions should encourage mentoring relationships early in an administrator's career.

**Networking.** Women seeking career advancement opportunities may find support and encouragement through networking. Both formal and informal networks are helpful to career advancement. Organizations have been founded to assist in the development and employment of women in higher education. One of the earliest of these organizations is the Higher Education Research Services (HERS), which was founded in 1972. This organization was established by women administrators in order to offer services that included a talent bank, academic/career advising, and training (Chamberlain, 1988). The American Council on Education (ACE) established an Office of Women in Higher Education (OWHE); consequently, in 1977 the ACE/OWHE created the National Identification Program (NIP) for the Advancement of Women in Higher Education Administration (Shavlik & Touchton, 1984). ACE/NIP was designed to identify capable women, enhance their leadership skills and increase their opportunities for advancement.

Other associations that work to improve the equity of women in higher education include Women in Higher Education; American Association for Women in Community Colleges; American Association of University Women; and National Association of Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors (Kaplan, Secor & Tinsley, 1984). Informal networking occurs as well through state meetings, conferences, or on-campus groups, in which women work together to assist each other in moving up the career ladder.

## Interview Study

In order to gain a better understanding of women in higher education administration, women administrators from eight states (Kansas, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Jersey, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Tennessee) were interviewed (see Appendix). These women had diverse undergraduate educational backgrounds (e.g., Biology, English, Health and Physical Education, Home Economics, Literature, and Music), with advanced degrees of MS, MBA, Ed.D., and Ph.D. They varied in age from 50-67 years. One administrator was at a community college; each of the others served at a four-year institution. These women served in the following capacities: president (1); vice president (4); associate provost (2); and director of an administrative department (1). Their experiences in higher education ranged from 22-26 years. They previously served as department chairs, directors, or deans. In their higher education careers, two had strictly served as administrators; the other women came up through the faculty ranks.

### Participant Responses

The motivation to move into administrative positions was not originally a conscious one for the women interviewed. They described their moves into administration as being based on opportunity, timing, encouragement from others, salary, and availability. They all indicated that higher education courses and degrees, as well as in-service training courses aided their transitions into higher education administration. Also mentioned as assisting their career development were: belonging to professional organizations, counsel and support of colleagues, and experiential training. All participants indicated that they faced some type of barrier or obstacle to career advancement, but they were not unanimous in attributing the barriers to the fact that they were women. Respondents did note that there were still chauvinist males *and* females and that the "good old boy" method of advancement was still present in higher education. While noting that the administration of higher education in most institutions is still dominated by men, they felt that situations have improved and that women are moving into well-deserved positions of leadership.

**Mentoring.** Nearly all respondents indicated that they had been mentored (either formally or informally) as they advanced in their careers. All noted that they had been assisted, guided, or counseled by senior administrators, colleagues, and professional friends in their progress up the

career ladder. Most stated that they have mentored other women in higher education administration.

**Facilitation.** When asked what could have facilitated their progress in higher education administration, the women suggested that they should have set goals earlier or received training and preparation for administrative positions sooner. The women indicated that career advancement was not a priority early in their career.

**Colleague interactions.** The questions concerning daily interaction with male and female administrators elicited upbeat and interesting responses. All participants indicated that their interactions were positive with both men and women. Although all of the women seemed comfortable with the communications, they did express some reservations. One woman said she was usually accepted as “one of the boys” after a while, but worked hard to gain the men’s trust. Another woman indicated that her interactions with male colleagues were minimal because of differing job responsibilities, but that she was not a part of the male *clique* and had a significantly different management style from her male counterparts. Another woman expressed that some men still have a problem accepting her role and responsibilities at the university. Interactions with other women were expressed as more positive and accepting, although they noted that they had few female peers.

**Comparisons.** The women higher education administrators interviewed were candid and forthcoming with their responses. Although they shared some common experiences and opinions, alternate perspectives were also revealed. For instance, several women indicated that they thought the “glass ceiling” to higher education administration had been broken, but others disagreed. One woman stated that in her estimation, the proverbial barrier has barely been “cracked,” given the preponderance of men in the upper echelons of academe. Many women identified specific mentors who had assisted their trek along the career path. Conversely, one participant indicated that she had neither been mentored nor sought an opportunity to serve as a mentor herself.

### Recent Accomplishments

Women now serve as presidents at several major universities. Included in this category are the Universities of Illinois, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin (Kantrowitz, 2002). Additionally, women have been named to the CEO positions at Princeton, Duke, and Brown Universities. At Princeton, a woman is also the second in command at the

position of provost. Five of the nine vice presidents at Brown are women. Women executives are also gaining ground in the area of compensation. Three women were listed among the highest-paid presidents in U.S. academe in 2002.

These women have found a sense of humor an invaluable ally. For instance, one newly-promoted CAO (provost) was stopped by campus security because she had parked in the space reserved for the university's provost (Lively, 2000). Another woman noted that it took about two years for her male colleagues to stop introducing her as the "woman" provost."

### **Strategies and Recommendations**

Based on the literature and the interviews, we offer the following advice to women considering the pursuit of a position in higher education leadership. Several interview participants advocated setting goals early in one's career. Another insight offered was the value of seeking leadership opportunities, such as chairing important committees or directing significant projects. Exploring the possibilities of leadership training, either internal or external to the institution, was also recommended.

Becker (2002) counseled women to find a balance—between their personal and private lives; between their female and male leadership traits; between the compassionate and assertive aspects of their personalities—with which they can be comfortable. She also advised developing a "public self" to handle criticism and make tough decisions, thus protecting the "private self" from becoming too vulnerable. Kathryn Mohrman (2001), as president of Colorado College, advocated women surrounding themselves with expert advisers who will serve dual functions: encourage them to succeed, while remaining objective in their advice.

### **Conclusion**

The progress that women have made in higher education leadership has been slow, incremental, and arduous. Women have yet to be represented according to their availability at all levels of higher education, from faculty to CEO. Gains in equity may be attributed to affirmative action regulations and laws; career development and graduate programs; mentoring programs and networking; as well as increased gender awareness and acceptance of women in the academy and higher education administration.

Senior administrators must continue to encourage and expand the opportunities for women in higher education leadership. Career

development programs should be modified to be more accessible to women. These programs should include training in higher education policies and practices, leadership, diversity, and mentoring.

One means of achieving greater parity in the ranks of higher education leadership is for increased numbers of women to be placed in those positions in order to become role models and mentors to junior administrators and women faculty. A prerequisite is the acceptance and acknowledgment by both men *and* women of women's ability to succeed in leadership positions.

At the current rate of progress, it will take many years to reach the point where hiring and compensation decisions are made based solely on qualifications, ability, and experience, *and* where the higher education environment mirrors the students served. Organizations, government, institutions, and individuals must continue their efforts to encourage diversity at all levels of higher education. Although significant gains have been made in the advancement of women in higher education leadership, even greater progress is required.

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## Appendix

### Interview of Women in Higher Education Leadership

#### *Demographic Information:*

Name: _____	Number of years a faculty: _____
Title(s): _____	Number of years as admin in HE: _____
Institution Name: _____	Highest Earned Degree: _____
Level of Institution: _____	Highest Academic Rank: _____
Age: _____	Administrative Positions Held: _____
Major Academic Field: _____	_____

#### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What motivated you to move into administrative positions?
2. What experiences, education, or training assisted your move into administration?
3. Did anyone assist (mentor) you in your progress up the career ladder in higher education? How?
4. Did you experience any barriers, obstacles, or problems moving up the career ladder in higher education because you are a woman?
5. Did you experience any opportunities moving up the career ladder in higher education because you are a woman?
6. Do you feel women have broken the "glass ceiling" of administration in higher education or do you feel it is still dominated by men?
7. Have you mentored other women in higher education administration?
8. What could have facilitated your progress?
9. How would you describe your daily interaction with male administrators at your institution?
10. How would you describe your daily interaction with female administrators at your institution?

# Book Review

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Yuankun Yao

## **WOMEN'S ORAL HISTORY: THE FRONTIERS READER.**

**Edited by Susan H. Armitage with Patricia Hart and Karen Wathermon. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.**

### **Introduction**

Oral history, as a unique way for people to learn about past events and experiences (Wood, 1994), has been widely used in women's gender equity studies (Irwin, 1992; Siler, 1996; Sullivan & Bueler, 1988). The need to use oral history to address traditional history's neglect of women was recognized as early as the 1970s (e.g., Lehane & Goldman, 1976). Based on stories told by ordinary women such as ranch women, labor activists, and women of ethnic backgrounds (Armitage, 1996), such studies attempt to demonstrate that history does not happen to men only but also to women, and that history can be made in places like the home, the community, factories, offices, and fields (Stern, 2002).

*The Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* is one of the earliest journals about women's scholarship. The journal launched its first issue about women's oral history in 1977, two years after its establishment. Edited by Gluck and Jensen, this landmark issue provided the then-much-needed guide for people interested in oral history and women. A follow-up issue was published in 1983, when support for large scale oral history projects was replaced by a need for an in-depth approach to individual interviews. The two issues had established the journal as a front-runner in women's oral history. In 1998, the journal produced two more issues to make women's oral history current.

### **Overview**

*Women's Oral History: The Frontiers Reader* is a collection of 21 journal articles. Edited by Susan H. Armitage, with Patricia Hart and Karen Weatherman, the book chronicles the evolution of women's oral history from its beginning in the 1970s to the present. The book documents how oral

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history provides an alternative perspective on history by uncovering important roles ordinary women have played—roles that have been typically ignored by mainstream history (Clegg, Miller, & Vanderhoof, 1995; Singleton, 1990).

*Women's Oral History: The Frontiers Reader* has three sections. Section One, "Basic Approaches," consisted of articles that appeared in *The Frontiers*' 1977 issue. Section Two, "Oral History Applications," and Section Three, "Oral History Discoveries and Insights," presented articles that appeared in the journal from 1977 to 2001. Section One focused on different formats used to present women's oral history, and Sections Two and Three focused on the hidden meanings and insights that oral history may reveal about women and their history. Despite the different emphases, the majority of the articles in the book discussed interview techniques and gave a rich account of the life experiences of women.

#### Basic Approaches

Gluck's "What's So Special About Women," the introductory article for the 1977 issue of *The Frontiers* also introduced Section One. The article provided a rationale for the women's oral history method and discussed the techniques needed at that time. Gluck justified the potential that women's oral history had to fill the gap in written information about women. Oral history was considered instrumental in reconstructing women's pasts by "challenging the traditional concepts of history" (p. 3). Gluck noted the need for the interview (a) to make successful initial contact with the interviewee(s), (b) to remain sensitive and non-intrusive during the interview process, and (c) to process the interview based on the time and resources available. Gluck observed that the oral history interview processes involved the reconstruction of the interviewee's life through the experience and perspective of the interviewer, thus distinguishing itself from the self-recorded memoir. A second article by Gluck, "Women's Oral History Resource Section," was a topical guide for oral history interviews with women. A selection of questions is provided in the guide, under such

topics as family history, education, and work experience. In the third article, "Doing Oral History as an Outsider." Strobel, drawing on her experience in interviewing women in Kenya, discussed both the challenges and benefits of using an outside interviewer.

Thomas' "Digging Beneath the Surface: Oral History Techniques" was based on the author's experience making a long cross-country trip to interview American farmwomen. Thomas found that, contrary to cultural expectations, the farmwomen she interviewed were not mere farm wives who just helped out, as they often described themselves; they were actually women farmers who performed essential functions on the farm for the survival of the family and the farm. The experience also made clear to her that when an interviewer asked a "stupid question" or presented her as "antagonistic" (p. 57), a better quality of responses may be illicit from the interviewee. Thomas suggested the need for the interviewer to become "invisible" (p. 58) during an interview process and emphasized the need to use "special marks" when transcribing interviews to preserve the reality of the interview experience.

Armitage's "The Next Step," an introductory article for the 1983 women's oral history issue of *The Frontier* pointed out the need to push women's oral history beyond the discovery stage to that of "analysis" and "intent" (p. 61). According to Armitage, when conducting women's oral history, one should not stop at discovery and exploration, instead one needs to "step back and ask questions about meanings, about comparability, about context" (p. 63).

"Reflections on Women's Oral History: An Exchange" was an exchange of views between Armitage and Gluck in 1998. The exchange centered around two questions raised by Armitage about the need for "collaborative meaning making" (p. 82) and for "generalization" or "search for patterns" (p. 82). Affirming the need for dialogue in constructing meaning and for generalization, Gluck also pointed out the need to "historicize" or "contextualize" (pp. 84-85) the narratives in oral history projects.

The last article in the section was Yung's "Giving Voice to Chinese American Women." Drawing on her experience researching the life stories of Chinese women, the results of which were summarized in *Unbound Feet* (1995) and *Unbound Voices* (1999), Yung mentioned the need for archival historical data as a supplement to oral history to provide context and meaning to the stories. Her interviews made her aware of her misconceptions about discrimination. The article ended with a touching story of Kwong Kim You, a Chinese woman who was married to a

Chinese-American who immigrated alone to San Francisco. For most of her life, You lived like a virtual widow in a Chinese village, even after she learned her husband had remarried in America.

### **Oral History Applications**

Wagner wrote the first article in Section Two, "Oral History as a Biographical Tool." Based on a granddaughter's account of the life stories of an early women's movement activist, Matilda Joslyn Gage, Wagner demonstrated how oral history in the form of family stories can be used to reveal family and personal dynamics and the implications of personal dynamics for political interaction. According to Wagner, the use of family stories by different family members added to "the richness of perspective" (p. 121).

"I Give the Best Part of My Life to the Mill: An Oral History of Icy Norman" was written by Murphy. Unlike the Wagner article, the Icy Norman story was told by Icy herself, who had spent nearly 50 years working at Burlington Industries, the world's largest textile factory. The image of family bonds, beyond the notion of blood kin, was vividly conveyed through the first person narration. A third article, "Looking Inward, Looking Backward: Reminiscence and the Life Review," written by Wrye and Churilla, demonstrated how a life review can serve a positive and even therapeutic, function for the aging and aged. The article emphasized how practitioners and researchers in the field of gerontology can learn from the life reviews of the elderly.

"Good Work, Sister! The Making of an Oral History Production," written by Kesselman, Tau, and Wickre, demonstrated how the results of a large oral history project may be presented in an effective public slide-tape show. Based on the experiences of women who were employed in the shipbuilding industry during World War II and who later were forced from the workforce when the soldiers returned at the end of the war, the article is both a celebration of the work of the narrators and the work of the interviewers.

"Filming Nana: Some Dilemmas of Oral History on Film," an article written by Broughton, gave an account of the challenges faced when trying to put oral history on film. Broughton described the challenges she faced in the process of filming the history of the mining town Burke, Idaho. The story was told through the voice of her grandmother. Broughton struggled with the issue of objectivity and the competing demands of filmmaking and history writing. Marchant's "Treading the Traces of Discarded History: Oral History Installations," demonstrated how women's oral

history can be turned into multimedia installations. Through such installations, Marchant was able to give voice to the women mill workers whose stories have often been “distorted, stereotyped, and fragmented” (p. 183). The last article in Section Two was “Patching the Past: Students and Oral History,” by Butler and Sorenson. they described how oral history class projects helped students in a history class learn from life histories of older women. The projects not only narrowed the distance between the students and their interviewees, many of whom were close relatives or acquaintances of the students, but also made them reconsider their own lives and discover the “parallel themes and personal potential” (p. 208). The group project in which Sorenson served as the student leader illustrated how the oral history project helped the students come together and patch the pieces into one colorful “quilt” (p. 208).

### **Oral History, Discoveries and Insights**

“Using Oral History to Chart the Course of Illegal Abortions in Montana,” an article by Sands, introduced Section Three. Using oral history as well as traditional research methods in an area traditionally considered a private sphere and outside of the history process, Sands learned that having an abortion did not put excessive guilt on a woman, that a respectable and highly qualified doctor could be an abortionist, and that people in the local community tended to turn a deaf ear to the existence of illegal abortions. “Grassroots Leadership Reconceptualized: Chicana Oral Histories and the 1968 East Los Angeles School Blowouts,” by Bernal, was an alternative perspective on the history of the 1968 walkouts of mostly Chicano schools in East Los Angeles through a cooperative leadership paradigm. Based on individual and focus group interviews with eight women participants in the Blowouts, Bernal identified the different dimensions of grassroots leadership that characterized women’s activist leadership.

Jake, James, and Bunte, who interviewed two old Southern Paiute women, wrote “The Southern Paiute Women in a Changing Society.” The oral histories of the two women documented the traditional ways of the Southern Paiute women and the subsequent changes in their lives that occurred with the arrivals of the Mormons and the Navajos. Another article highlighting insights about life changes was Grim’s “From the Yazoo Mississippi Delta to the Urban Communities of the Midwest: Conversations with Rural African American Women.” Grim, who interviewed 37 rural American women, provided an account of the feelings, hopes and hardships of the African American women migrants



who left the cotton fields of the agricultural South for the industrialized Northern cities, where there were opportunities as well as challenges.

"Domestic Violence and Poverty: The Narratives of Homeless Women," written by Williams, provided insights about the complex connection between seemingly unrelated life experiences: domestic violence and poverty. In-depth interviews with 33 homeless women and participant observation in several homeless and battered women's shelters in Phoenix, Arizona, provided the detail for the article. "Gender, Sexuality, and Class in National Narrations: Palestinian Camp Women Tell Their Lives," was written by Sayigh. The article, based on the life stories of three Palestinian campus women, illustrated how national struggles in third world countries "inspired, mobilized, and constrained women's movements in culturally and historically specific ways" (p. 317). The final article in Section Three, "Women of the British Coalfields on Strike in 1926 and 1984: Documenting Lives Using Oral History and Photography" was written by Gier-Viskovatoff and Porter. Using oral history and photography to explore the history of the British mining community women, they revealed surprising parallels between the women's protests during the Great Lockout of 1926 and those during the Great Miners' Strike of 1984-85.

### Discussion

Women's oral history may be used for two related yet distinct purposes: (a) the promotion of women's equity issues in the form of the feminist movement, and (b) the study of women's history as an academic discipline. The different purposes may have different implications for the oral history method. Some authors emphasized the need for researchers to be aware of biases, and the need to remain non-intrusive during the interview process, typical advice found in qualitative research. Others, however, emphasized the need for collaborative meaning-making by introducing the interviewer's agenda and perspective into the interview and interpretation phases. Many present day women's oral history workers are feminist scholars (Safarik, 2000), who have both the sensitivity of the researcher and the perspective of a feminist and can balance them in their work.

Women's oral history workers struggled over the issues of methodology, the use and interpretation of data. Taken as a whole, *Women's Oral History: The Frontiers Reader* is a celebration of the achievements of women's oral history. Because of such achievement, oral history has become a respectable research tool in historical studies, and is perceived to be an effective research method in women's studies. The

insights and messages derived from the studies are encouraging, liberating, and through provoking, especially for those who are interested in using oral history to promote equity issues. The stories are enchanting and even heart breaking.

Those interested in oral history method as a general research tool will find this book to be a useful guide and resource. Even though the topic is focused on women's equity issues, the methodology may be applied to any endeavor that involves the use of oral history or qualitative research in general. Methodological insights and suggestions can be found throughout the book. For instance, questions about the issues of generalization and context raised by Armitage and Gluck are reflective of those promoted in qualitative research and method (Peshkin, 1993; Simons, 1996; Stainback & Stainback, 1988).

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