

ILA Launches New Book Series

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Despite lots of talk about having a shared commitment to advancing more women into senior-level leadership across all types of organizations and institutions, progress has been discouragingly slow. In a new book series, “Women and Leadership: Research, Theory, and Practice,” launched by the International Leadership Association in concert with Information Age Publishing, provocative questions are being asked about the status quo, encouragers and discouragers to women’s leadership advancement, what strategies are working, and whether or not the “pipeline” is a helpful metaphor for addressing the challenges that still confront high-potential women.

This series and the five books currently under contract emerged, in part, from collaborations established through ILA’s Women and Leadership Affinity Group, a network that currently includes nearly 1,000 members. We have the privilege of working with series co-editor Faith Ngunjiri (Concordia College, MN) to shape and guide the development of books across an array of topics such as women and global leadership, advancing women in leadership through applied theory building, and (mis) representations of women leaders and managers in the media. The first book in the series, *Women & Leadership in Higher Education*, has the distinction of having a Foreword written by Warren Bennis, perhaps one of this leadership guru’s final contributions prior to his death in 2014. His words express the timeliness and the potential of this first book, and the series as a whole:

In reading these chapters I found myself thinking that, for too long, we have assumed that the male-normed models of leadership development would work to inspire and prepare high-potential women to move into institutional leadership roles. Simply put, our attempts to put new “wine” into “old wineskins” has not worked.... As a leadership scholar who has had a front row seat to the evolution of the leadership field for more than 50 years, I want to say ‘thank you’ to the International Leadership Association for supporting this new “Women and Leadership” book series.

In introducing the series to the ILA membership, this article provides an overview of the first volume, which intentionally targeted the crucially important topic of leadership in the field of higher education. As Bennis observed in his Foreword, “The focus on higher education in launching the series is both timely and critical. Those involved in

A Volume in the International Leadership Association Series

**Women and Leadership:
Research, Theory, and Practice**



Women & Leadership in Higher Education

Karen A. Longman and Susan R. Madsen, Editors

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higher education, and particularly those who lead institutions of higher education, shape the future in ways that directly influence the vitality and well-being of the United States and our world.”

Our goal in this first volume, and throughout the series, has been to lay out the current realities facing women in leadership across a variety of sectors and spheres of influence, while also offering fresh perspectives and strategies for diversifying the leadership of organizations and institutions worldwide. Clearly, too many women who could develop into highly talented leaders find their potential dampened by an array of internal and external factors. Much work remains to be done, but it must be done by informed scholars and practitioners who think creatively, no longer bound by male-normed assumptions and programming.

Drawing together such fresh thinking and building upon the work of well-respected research, *Women & Leadership in Higher Education* focuses particular attention on the status of women in college and university leadership in North America. Given that the majority of students at all levels—from associate degrees through doctorates—are female in this region, it is important that all students have role models in senior-level leadership, and that our institutional decision-making benefit from having diverse perspectives around the senior leadership table. Thus, various chapters describe the experiences and contributions of women in those leadership roles, offering strategies and best practices for opening more doors for women to serve in positions of influence across all sectors of higher education.

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Women & Leadership in Higher Education is divided into four sections as described below, each of which offers distinctive contributions to move the agenda of constructively advancing more women into leadership. In short, we believe that the status quo is unacceptable, that organizations and institutions lose when high-potential women are not encouraged, prepared, and supported regarding leadership advancement, and that fresh thinking as well as new strategies are needed in order to move organizations and our world forward in healthier ways.

Part I: The State of Women and Leadership in Higher Education

As widely-respected business leader Max DePree has advocated, the first job of any leader is to define reality. The first section of *Women & Leadership in Higher Education* contains three provocative chapters designed to do just that, establishing the current demographics, trends, and areas of concern. In recent years, many of us have cited gender-related data from the 2009 report titled *The White House Project: Benchmarking Women's Leadership*, which overviewed the demographics of women in leadership across ten sectors of U.S. society. Authored by University of Denver scholars Lynn M. Gangone and Tiffani Lennon, the opening chapter of *Women & Leadership in Higher Education* provides an updated (2013) snapshot of the demographic realities of leadership in U.S. higher education in a chapter titled *Benchmarking Women's Leadership in Academia and Beyond*.

The book then moves into two additional insightful chapters. The second chapter, authored by Barbara Kellerman (Harvard Kennedy School) and Deborah L. Rhode (Stanford Law School), is titled *Women at the Top: The Pipeline Reconsidered*. This chapter offers a “sobering assessment” of the underrepresentation of women in higher education leadership. In short, although the pipeline metaphor has been the assumed solution to expanding the number of women in leadership, the pipeline has proven to be a “pipe dream.” Because the playing field continues to be far from level, fresh thinking must be taken including challenging the gender stereotypes, in-group favoritism, and unequal domestic roles that continue to keep women from realizing their full potential.

If the pipeline metaphor is not working for women, what’s wrong with that model? Nannerl O. Keohane, former president of Wellesley College and Duke University, addresses that challenge in the book’s third chapter, *Leadership Out Front and Behind the Scenes: Young Women's Ambitions for Leadership Today*. Keohane explores the attitudes toward leadership of contemporary female undergraduates, drawing from the results of a 2011 study she chaired at Princeton University. She found that Princeton students preferred “high impact” rather than “high profile” jobs, resulting in the recommendation that a more capacious understanding of leadership is needed.

Part II: Strategies for Women's Leadership Development

Three informative chapters then summarize the learning gained by some of the best-established women's leadership development programming in the U.S., offering counsel to others who are working on the same agenda at the institutional, state, regional, or national level. The first chapter, authored by Leah Witcher Jackson Teague (Associate Dean of the Baylor Law School) and Kim Bobby (Director of the Inclusive Excellence Group at the American Council on Education), is titled *American Council on Education's IDEALS for Women Leaders: Identify, Develop, Encourage, Advance, Link, and Support*. These co-authors provide an overview of programming offered through ACE and discuss the comprehensive *Moving the Needle Initiative*, a collaborative effort to raise national awareness of the importance of gender parity and to establish a blueprint for achieving gender parity throughout higher education.

The findings of comprehensive assessments of women's leadership development programming offered to more than 5,000 women through the Higher Education Resource System (HERS) are described in a chapter by Judith White, Executive Director of HERS. Titled *HERS at 50: Curriculum and Connections for Empowering the Next Generation of Women Leaders in Higher Education*, this insightful chapter includes guidance on curricular and pedagogical approaches that will best prepare women to lead effectively in future years. Similarly, a chapter authored by Lorri Sulpizio, coordinator of the Women's Leadership Academy (WLA) in the School of Leadership at the University

of San Diego, and titled *Developing Women's Leadership: An Innovative and Unique Approach to Raising Leadership Capacity*, offers fresh thinking on what women need to understand (e.g., the distinction between leadership and authority) and embrace (e.g., finding a balance between feminine and masculine expression) as they consider moving into leadership roles. The innovative *and* unique approach to leadership development taken by the WLA programming has important implications for anyone designing or implementing leadership training for women.

PART III: Women's Experiences and Contributions in Higher Education Leadership

Highly-regarded leadership scholar Adrianna Kezar, from the University of Southern California, provides a service to the field in her chapter titled *Women's Contributions to Leadership and the Road Ahead*. Drawing from her extensive knowledge of the literature, these pages offer a compelling argument for the importance of leadership that reflects mutual power and influence processes, attention to relationships and tasks, and democratic and participatory forms of decision-making. Kezar notes that the pressures currently facing higher education result in institutional environments being increasingly corporate and market-driven, and thus not particularly receptive to the important leadership approaches typical of women.

In addition to offering Kezar's excellent summary of the literature regarding women's contributions to leadership, three chapters summarize recent dissertation research about the experiences that women face in higher education leadership. Amy Diehl, from Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania, authored a chapter titled *Approaches of Women Leaders in Higher Education: Navigating Adversity, Barriers, and Obstacles*. Based on interviews with 26 women in senior leadership roles in higher education, this chapter presents Diehl's findings to the research question: "How do women leaders in higher education make meaning of adversity?" Another chapter drawn from dissertation research, authored by Rita Gardiner from the University of Western Ontario, is titled *Women Leaders, Authenticity, and Higher Education: Convictions and Contradictions*. Gardiner's fresh thinking explores the interconnections among women's leadership experiences in higher education, authenticity, and an ethic of care. The final chapter in this section also explores the lived experiences of female presidents at doctoral-granting universities. Titled *Madame President: Gender's Impact in the Presidential Suite*, author Mary L. Bucklin from Northern Kentucky University found that these leaders experienced their work in ways different than men due to role incongruity. In short, these university presidents indicated that they continued to be judged—but took intentional steps to lessen the impact of that judgment—against the stereotypical model of how women should look, speak, and behave.

Part IV: Lessons from the Trenches: Perspectives from Female Presidents

Five former or current college and university presidents round out the book by offering honest and compelling insights about their leadership experiences. Current and aspiring leaders—within higher education and beyond—can gain much from the reflections of these seasoned role models. The breadth of perspectives offered from their presidential experiences, from the University of Arizona, Rollins College, the University of Texas-Brownsville, the University of South Florida, The Ohio State University, and the University of Massachusetts-Boston, offer readers a treasure-trove of sound advice and inspiration.

Conclusion:

Given the state of the world, new models for leadership are needed now more than ever before. Women's approaches to leadership have much to offer, yet too often women have not been at the table to bring the diversity of perspective that contributes to sound decision-making. Those who have invested in this publishing project are hopeful that having the facts presented, respecting the best of what women have to offer, and identifying thoughtful models for leadership development will contribute to a more sane and constructive future for this generation and those to come.

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