

**REPORT ON: WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP AT THE UNIVERSITY OF
PITTSBURGH**

DATE: NOVEMBER 2008

**SUBMITTED BY: SENATE WORKING GROUP ON WOMEN AND
LEADERSHIP** (Part of the Senate Ad Hoc Committee on the
Promotion of Gender Equity headed by Irene Frieze)

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In the fall of 2007 Lucy Fischer was asked by Irene Frieze to take over the chair position of an extant group investigating the role of women and leadership at the University. The committee was initially formed because of the pervasive perception that there exists a gendered imbalance (favoring men) in leadership roles at Pitt. Three other members of the faculty (Kelly Otter, Kacey Marry and Lynne Conner [Theater Arts]) volunteered to serve on the committee. Conner has subsequently left the university to become a chair of Theater and Dance at Colby College.

We decided to take following initiatives:

- to speak informally to certain female administrators at the University to glean their informal impressions of the current state of affairs
- to gather a broader list of female administrators at the University to contact
- to design a survey to distribute to this broad list of women leaders
- to analyzes the results of the survey
- to learn about current initiatives at the University relating to the encouragement or training of female leaders
- to learn about initiatives outside the University relating to the encouragement or training of female leaders
- to make recommendations for encouraging the role of women in leadership at the University

The report which follows summarizes the findings of these various initiatives.

I. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

The survey (See *Appendix A* for cover letter and questions) submitted to 88 women administrators/leaders at the University invited anonymous feedback about this group's perceptions of the opportunities for women to assume leadership roles in the institution. Of the 30 respondents (about 30% of those surveyed), the overwhelming majority (28) indicated that they think women are underrepresented in leadership positions at Pitt. This small study captures a variety of views, many of which are consistent among the 30 respondents and specific examples of comments are cited below. As expected, the respondents do not suggest any single reason for the lack of women in leadership roles or any single solution, but rather, cite examples from personal experience, observations, and thoughtful reflections on the subject that reveal the complexity of the issue. This brief summary could ideally serve as a framework for a discussion that would allow some of the other insights to emerge and for general conclusions to be drawn.

The first question in the survey asked respondents to identify specific positions considered to be ones of leadership and a broad array of examples was provided:

- Department Chair
- Program Director
- Chaired Professor
- University Committee Chair
- Associate Dean
- Dean
- Vice Provost
- Provost
- Directors of programs or centers
- Director of Undergraduate Studies
- Vice Chancellor
- Chancellor
- Trustees
- President of the Alumni Council
- Senate Committees and offices
- Directors of degree and certificate programs
- Staff leadership positions
- Grant-writers and overseers
- Chairs University Advisory Committees

One individual commented that the positions that “count” are those that control significant resources of people and money (a statement with which most academics would agree). Another respondent (assuming a small representation of women in those roles), pointed out, however, that there can be “informal leaders whose roles have nothing to do with a name-able position,” and saw one of the goals of the survey as “figure[ing] out why more women who are informal leaders do not become formal leaders.”

The range of responses in this informal survey revealed two general explanations for the reasons for the lack of balance between men and women in leadership roles at the

University: (1) the particular nature and culture of the institution and (2) the nature of our society in which women continue to play traditional roles (due both to their own choice and other forces). We see these two areas, as interrelated since the University belongs to the broader culture but has a responsibility to address its limits and constraints.

EXPLANATIONS FOR PERCEIVED LEADERSHIP IMBALANCE

I. Institutional

The institutional culture and departmental politics are seen to reproduce the dominance of males in various leadership positions rather than create a system that actively identifies qualified women and promotes their advancement through recruitment and mentorship.

Selected Respondents' Comments:

University Atmosphere/Culture

- The University does not have the same serious commitment to the professional advancement of women ...that is prevalent at other universities of similar stature and size (See *Appendix B*)
- Women should be invited to serve in leadership roles
- The Pitt culture is male dominated at the senior level and superiors are not advancing women to leadership roles
- Pitt is a conservative institution; it functions on a relationship model, and if you are not in the position to have relationships with those at the top, there are limited opportunities to advance
- There must be equal pay for men and women
- Internal politics (at the departmental level) prevent women from advancing
- Gender discrimination
- The drive to put Pitt in the top 25 research institutions has exacerbated the problem/made Pitt more risk averse/tends toward judgments about who is more valuable to the institution and who has more political capital
- The combative behavior of men is taken for granted but there is little tolerance for women who are assertive
- More insidious than discrimination is the lack of women in visible leadership positions
- I do not think that an analysis at the level of climate and individual opinion is rigorous enough to get at the understanding of how the internal politics of specific disciplines are also involved in the problem
- I have been told that women should not be in such positions
- I don't think women need to be encouraged to enter leadership here. I think the current leadership needs to see that not having women in leadership is problematic and have the determination to change it
- Pitt has a strong tendency toward "insider culture"

Lack of University Initiatives

Several respondents noted that programs to cultivate leadership qualities in women through mentorship and leadership seminars/workshops are scarce or nonexistent at Pitt.

The survey asked if there were programs in place to encourage women and leadership and most of the respondents (21/9) were not aware of any; five who were aware of such programs had participated and three who were aware had not.

One respondent remarked that Pitt is unusual among high-level universities for not having such programs in place for women (See *Appendix B* for programs at other universities).

II. Societal

While universities are special types of communities (with their own values, ethics, and protocols), they are also part of society at large and are affected by its broader attitudes. Here, respondents observed that there remains a tendency (reinforced by society at large) for women to choose and assume roles that do not lead to leadership positions.

Selected Respondents' Comments:

General

- Women are reluctant to *seek* leadership roles
- Some women are hesitant to *accept* leadership positions
- Women do not [learn how to] negotiate good leadership positions or get the titles for the work they already do
- Women devote efforts to other activities rather than leadership roles – either by choice or specific direction of superiors
- Women need to network with senior women leaders AND senior male leaders; women need to be more proactive in making others aware of their skills and expertise and where they want to go in their careers; expressing early on your leadership goals
- US culture as a whole has not overcome problems with gender...Academics may like to think they're ahead of the game...but we're struggling too.

Career/Family Balance

It is no secret that, despite gains won by the feminist movement, women still bear the greater burden in our society for care of the young, the elderly and for responding to family crises. It is felt that, to encourage more women in leadership positions, the University should strive to become a more supportive, family-friendly community.

Selected Respondents' Comments:

- If women are to become leaders at this institution, the university must become a family-friendly place to work (See the Senate's recent report on child care)
- Domestic responsibilities still fall disproportionately to women/the institution does not provide day care or support for women with young children
- Once I had children, I had substantially less time to devote to committees and need[ed] to focus limited time on scholarship
- Balancing a career and family is difficult: once a woman has a family she is less available for committee work; there is no child care available at Pitt.
- The University should provide high-quality day care

SUGGESTIONS AND SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM

In addition to commenting on perceived explanations for the gendered imbalance in leadership at the University, respondents also commented on possible solutions.

Since the survey specifically asked about leadership training seminars, several respondents voiced opinions on this issue. In general, they fell into two camps: (1) those who felt such programs were useful and (2) those that felt such programs were unnecessary (since men were not, necessarily, seen to need them) and since providing them might give the mistaken impression that women do not already know how to lead.

I. Leadership Training

Pro:

- [We need] internal leadership programs
- Establish opportunities for internal...programs to provide opportunities for women to develop leadership skills.
- Sponsor women to attend summer [leadership] seminars

Con:

- It would be counterproductive to simply institute workshops on leadership for women on campus; this would reduce the problem to one that essentially blames women for a problem that is institutional and cultural
- If the survey ends up promoting the finding that women at Pitt need to spend lots of time taking leadership seminars to remedy their perceived difficulties as potential leaders, we're sunk.
- We do not want to signal to women that they simply need to do more work to become leaders

II. Other Suggestions

- Seeing [more] women in leadership positions
- Put more women on search committees

- A political culture with more transparency would also help to bring women...into leadership because it would mean there are fewer things about Pitt that you can only know through insider circuits.
- Networking/Mentoring: having the few senior female leaders work with mid-level and junior faculty to get them into leadership positions.
- Help from men in leadership positions
- When leadership positions open up, attempt to think of women who might be good for these jobs.
- Just ask women to serve

II. LEADERSHIP SEMINARS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

A. Health Sciences

The only leadership seminars that we found at the university dedicated to women were those in the area of the Health Sciences (and organized by Joan Lakoski of Med-Pharmacology & Chem Bio). Many programs are offered by the Office of Academic Career Development (OACD) in the Health Sciences. These include: SunRise Series for Women Faculty and an annual Women in Science and Medicine Reception. All current formal programs can be accessed at <http://www.oacd.health.pitt.edu/programs.html> (See listing on far right.) OACD sponsors two programs dedicated specifically to women-related issues, but they also provide a variety of opportunities to male and female faculty to enhance their professional growth and leadership skills.

OACD has the capability to customize professional development programs upon demand for schools, departments, centers, or other units within the Schools of the Health Sciences. We have frequently designed mentoring-related programs for targeted groups of faculty. But there is one limitation – OACD is funded by the Senior Vice Chancellor of the Health Sciences (Dr. Levine) so their services are limited to the six Schools of the Health Sciences (Dental Medicine, Health & Rehab, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Public Health).

Also provided for faculty, in general, are: a Course in Scientific Management and Leadership, a Series for Health Sciences Faculty (<http://www.oacd.health.pitt.edu/leadershipcourse>), RCR and Career Development Symposium for Postdocs, K series and more.

Also provided are: one-on-one coaching and career counseling services as well as a host of training programs on mentoring.

In summary, OACD sponsors two programs dedicated specifically to women-related issues, but we provide a variety of opportunities to male and female faculty to enhance their professional growth and leadership skills.

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B. Human Resources

The LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT workshops are designed for supervisors and administrators who want to maximize their leadership potential and effectiveness. The workshops combine knowledge and skill-building to help participants learn the essentials of effective leadership and skills for building and maintaining a high-performing team as well as key employment principles and policies, and the role they play in managing day-to-day HR issues for their departments.

Topics Include:

- Feedback; An Essential Leadership Skill
- Getting Started as a New Leader
- Making Meetings Work
- Performance Management
- Strategies for Resolving Conflict
- The Respectful Workplace

Leadership programs are also available to individual departments. Please contact Organization Development (412.624.8044) to discuss further.
<http://www.hr.pitt.edu/orgdev/ld.htm>

III. EXTERNAL LEADERSHIP SEMINARS FOR ACADEMICS

HERS (Higher Education Resource Services) is an educational non-profit providing leadership and management development for women in higher education administration. Since 1972 HERS has served the higher education community through the preparation of more than 3,000 women leaders attending HERS Institutes and participating in a variety of HERS Activities.

HERS offer intensive residential professional development experiences for women in mid- and senior-level positions in higher education administration. Offered in both a month-long summer program and in multiple weekend series during the academic year, the HERS Institutes provide participants with opportunities to learn from senior women leaders and higher education scholars. The curriculum prepares participants for institutional leadership roles with knowledge, skills and perspectives for achieving institutional priorities and maximizing institutional resources. In addition, HERS Institute participants work with HERS Faculty and HERS Alumnae to develop the professional skills and networks needed for advancing as leaders in higher education administration.
<http://hersnet.org/HERSHistoryHERSHigherEducationResourceServices.asp>

ELAM: Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine Program for Women The Hedwig van Ameringen Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine (ELAM) Program for Women is the nation's only in-depth program focused on preparing senior women faculty at schools of medicine, dentistry and public health to move into positions of institutional leadership where they can effect positive change.

Established in 1995, ELAM offers an intensive one-year program of leadership training, with extensive coaching, networking, and mentoring opportunities, aimed at expanding the national pool of qualified women candidates for leadership in academic medicine, dentistry, and public health.

Acceptance into ELAM is determined through an annual competitive selection process, in which approximately 48 candidates are chosen each year. With rare exceptions, candidates must be at the associate professor level or higher and hold a faculty position at either a U.S. or Canadian medical, dental, or public health school. They must be nominated by either the Dean of their medical, dental or public health school or the CEO of their academic health center.

ELAM's program fee is \$10,495, which covers 23 days in session, course materials, faculty, conference site expenses, continuing education fees, special events, first-year membership in SELAM International, and most meals for the Fellows. (ELAM's endowment covers 20% of program costs.)

<http://www.drexelmed.edu/elam/home.html>

ACE (AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION)/ Office of Women in Higher Education

http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ProgramsServices/Leadership/Leadership_ACE.htm

Since 1973, the Office of Women in Higher Education (OWHE) of the American Council on Education has provided national leadership in the advancement of women into executive positions and campus presidencies.

Their mission is to:

IDENTIFY women leaders.

DEVELOP their leadership abilities.

ENCOURAGE the use of those abilities.

ADVANCE women's careers.

LINK them to other women and mentors.

SUPPORT women in mid- and executive-level positions throughout their careers.

Program Initiatives

Leadership Forums

ACE State Network Executive Board

ACE State Network

Commission on Women in Higher Education
Women of Color Summit (2008)
Women of Color Summit-2006 (2006 WOC Blog)
Summit for Women Presidents

FRYE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE (For men and women)

www.fryeinstitute.org

The Frye Leadership Institute is designed to develop the next generation of higher education leaders emerging from IT and library backgrounds. Although many Frye graduates become Chief Information Officers or Directors of Libraries, some change fields (e.g., moving into academic affairs) and others choose to lead more aggressively from their current position. Frye helps participants develop:

- Habits of mind that help them think strategically and communicate clearly with diverse audiences
- A broad perspective on higher education, its values, issues, and challenges
- Confidence in their ability to address complex issues
- A strong network of colleagues and friends

Participants begin their Frye experience on their home campus with discussions involving the president, provost, CFO, CIO, and dean of libraries, providing important context for their residential experience. From May 31 – June 11, 2009 participants will gather at Emory University for an intensive residential experience that exposes them to higher education leaders and luminaries from around the country. A significant amount of personal and professional growth results from the networking and group exercises that bring a diverse set of international participants together to share, explore, and learn. Presentations are intermixed with case studies, brainstorming, role-playing, problem-solving, and reflecting.

After the Institute concludes, graduates have the opportunity to participate in follow-up activities that will help them put their lessons-learned into perspective. These online gatherings also will provide the opportunity for 2009 graduates to contribute to a stronger program in 2010.

The Institute is led by Chuck Henry (President, CLIR) and Diana Oblinger (President, EDUCAUSE). A wide range of higher education leaders explore topics such as:

- Perspectives of executive leaders in higher education
- Public policy and government relations
- Organizational change and leadership
- Teamwork
- E-research and E-scholarship
- Scholarly communication
- Communicating and marketing the institution's messages

Exercises encourage participants to put their learning into context, team with others, and test leadership approaches in a supportive environment. Rather than learning by being told, participants learn from experience, from each other, and from reflection.

The Frye Leadership Institute is renowned for helping shape a new generation of campus leaders who will motivate, inspire, and demonstrate the ability to transform information resources in the twenty-first century.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We recommend that present administrators (e.g. deans, chairs and program heads) be required to take cognizance of the gender balance (or imbalance) in administrative positions they supervise and to establish a priority for appointing qualified women to posts that need to be filled.
2. Additionally, present administrators should consider, in advance, those women in their academic area who may not yet have served in leadership positions but who show skills for so doing and encourage and mentor them toward future administrative service.
3. Funds should be provided by the University for women, identified as future leaders, to attend external seminars on women and leadership should they so desire.
4. The University should consider contracting with established academic leadership training organizations for women to provide short-term, on-campus seminars (if there is demonstrated interest in this option).
5. The University should host a panel or symposium event inviting established female academic leaders (external and/or internal) to speak and to facilitate further conversation on this topic. The purpose of this event would be to give visibility to the issue and to identify women interested in academic leadership. If successful, events like this should be regularly scheduled.
6. Given that women in our culture are more likely to bear an extra burden in relation to familial care (thus making their assumption of leadership positions especially difficult), it is important that the University address outstanding issues concerning the availability of child care on or near campus.

APPENDIX A (Survey Cover Letter and Questions)

Cover Letter

Dear Pitt Female Faculty Member and/or Administrator:

We are members of a Faculty Senate “Working Group” on Women and Leadership (a branch of the Senate’s Ad Hoc Committee on the Promotion of Gender Equity, chaired by Irene Frieze). We are contacting you because we know that you are a woman who is or has been involved in leadership at the University of Pittsburgh. The charge of our working group is to assess the state of women’s leadership at Pitt and to try to formulate suggestions for its nurturance and growth.

As part of this fact-finding effort, we have decided to do an informal, anonymous, survey of women whom we know to be in leadership roles at the University. The results of the survey will go only to our group (whose members are listed below) and not to any “official” office. We will then survey the results for common themes that arise in the responses we receive from women across schools.

At the end of our work (most likely the Fall of 2008), we will submit a report to the Senate Ad Hoc Committee on the Promotion of Gender Equity. It will contain not only the digested results of this survey but other information (e.g. mention of leadership training initiatives already going on at Pitt, a list of external academic leadership training venues, and ideas for promoting women’s participation in campus leadership).

We know that you are very busy (as are we), but this survey should take no more than 5-10 minutes. We hope that you will fill it out and help contribute to the fostering of leadership roles for women on the Pitt campus.

Meanwhile, if any of you want to contact us personally or are interested in working on our subcommittee feel free to be in touch.

Sincerely,

Lucy Fischer (Chair) Distinguished Professor, English and Film Studies
(lfischer@pitt.edu)

Lynne Conner, Associate Professor, Theater Arts (Lynne Conner [conlyn+@pitt.edu])

Kacey Marra, Assistant Professor, Depts. of Surgery & Bioengineering
(marrkx@upmc.edu)

Kelly Otter, Associate Dean, College of General Studies (otter@cgs.pitt.edu)

Sabine Deitrick, Associate Professor, GSPIA (sdeitrick@ucsur.pitt.edu)

Survey Questions

What kinds of positions do you consider ones of "leadership" at the University? Please be as broad as possible in your answer, going beyond the most commonly cited ones (e.g. dean or dept. chair).

If so, please specify the program and school.

Did you participate in the program?

Was it useful?

If not, would you like to participate in an external (off-campus) leadership seminar for women?

Do you think women at Pitt are underrepresented in leadership roles?

If women are underrepresented on campus leadership, what do you see as the reasons for this?

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What do you envision as the best strategies for encouraging women to enter leadership on campus?

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In your own leadership experience, have you encountered any disadvantages or advantages that you feel pertain especially to gender?

If so, what were they?

If so, what were they?

Additional Comments?

APPENDIX B (Women and Leadership at some Benchmark Institutions)

The following information was collected by Kacey Marra:

Indiana University has an Office for Women's Affairs (<http://www.indiana.edu/~owa/>). The mission of the Office for Women's Affairs is to promote and further gender equity and personal security on the Indiana University campus. We do this by offering a variety of services to students, staff, and faculty.

IU is currently advertising for a Dean for Women's Affairs (<http://www.indiana.edu/~deanss/>).

The University of Delaware also has an Office of Women's Affairs (<http://www.udel.edu/OWA/>). Mission: The Office of Women's Affairs, serving UD since 1978, advocates for equality by offering confidential support services, providing resources on women's issues, and presenting and celebrating the contributions and perspectives of women on- and off-campus.

Auburn University hosts a Women's Leadership Institute (<http://www.auburn.edu/outreach/womenleaders/>). The goal of this enriching five-day residential program at Auburn University is to prepare a new generation of women leaders with vision and courage, who will go on to participate effectively in the decision-making spheres in business, politics, and the professions. Also on the Auburn site: a 2008 report entitled "Developing the Next Generation of Women Leaders." (http://www.auburn.edu/outreach/womenleaders/documents/report08_final_pb.pdf). This is a census of women business leaders in Alabama.

Michigan State University has a Women's Resource Center, which is hosting its 6th Annual "Women's Leadership Conference" this year. (<http://wrc.msu.edu/>)

Texas A&M has a Women's Resource Center which holds Women's Leadership Forums annually. (<http://studentaffairs.tamu.edu/womensresourcecenter/womensleadershipforum.htm>) "The Forum provides the University community an opportunity to reflect on the progress made to advance women, to discuss the challenges facing women in present-day society, and to consider future step."

UCSF has an office that hosts: "Women Leaders: A Symposium for Women in University Settings." This conference has been held every other year since 1998. It was developed to give women, particularly from the University of California, an opportunity to come together to discuss and officially examine where women are today in gaining access to positions of leadership in higher education. (the office is the Center for Gender Equity). (<http://ucsfcge.org/cge/wg/programs/wls/index.html>)

