NAVIGATING THE EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP LABYRINTH IN HIGHER

EDUCATION:  EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN LEADERS WHO ATTAINED CAREER

ADVANCEMENT

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Sari Byerly

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## Authorization to Submit Dissertation

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**Abstract**

The ascension of women into executive level leadership exists, and research is critical to reveal the experiences, paths, choices, and successes from the perspective of the leaders themselves. The purpose of this study was to explore perspectives of women currently employed in executive level leadership and who had therefore successfully navigated the challenges, to gain insight into how career advancement took place, in particular, examining women working in the area of higher education student services. The study used a qualitative multiple case study approach, using multiple sources of information, which allowed for a triangulation of data and in-depth emersion into each case. The data provided a rich array of information examining the lives and institutions where each of the women worked throughout their careers. First, participants did not ascend the traditional ladder to their vice president/chancellor without movement to multiple universities. Second, when it comes to leadership style participants expressed their preference was to be true to themselves, empower others, stay student-centered, and continue to learn. Third, participants spent their careers working through the internal dialogue that occurs alongside their leadership decisions. The implication of the current study showed women can penetrate the glass ceiling and move into leadership positions, but it does require the alignment of many factors in order to reach the executive level suite.

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**Dedication**

This work is dedicated to the women in my life who supported and guided me through

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**CHAPTER 1**

**Introduction**

**Background to the Research**

Over the past 25 years, career advancement for women became likened to an unbreakable barrier coined the "glass ceiling," which has posed barriers to women gaining executive level positions (Barreto, Ryan, and Schmitt, 2009; Hymowitz and Schellhardt, 1986). A less restrictive metaphor describing women's career path could be a labyrinth (Eagly and Carli, 2007). The labyrinth explains those occurrences where women have and continue to take on leadership positions, but suggests no straightforward pathway. Both depictions suggest women do not receive the same straightforward career advancement opportunities as their male counterparts (Aisenberg and Harrington, 1988; Carli, 2006; Carli, LaFleur, and Loeber, 1995; Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia, Vanneman, 2001; Eagly and Carli, 2007; Eagly, 2013; Kleinman, 2007; Noonan and Corcoran, 2004). The intent of the current study was to explore women's experiences in higher education leadership and descriptively map the terrain women experience along their journey. The current study uses research aligning with feminist theory, transformational leadership[1], and the internal dialogue that may occur alongside women's leadership decisions to guide the research questions, theoretical framework, and data analysis process.

Data suggests the current research adds relevant information to the body of research available on women in leadership. According to the most recent census data, women in the United States hold 53 percent of all full and part-time jobs, 52 percent of

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[1]It is recognized that leadership style, type, and approach can be operational defined differently these terms are used interchangeably throughout the current study, with the primary focus on transformation leadership.

bachelor's degrees, 54 percent of master's degrees, 37 percent of doctoral degrees, and 39 percent of professional degrees (US Census, 2010; US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). The number of women gaining post-secondary education continues to increase; however, this does not translate into better career opportunities for them. Over time, gains for women occurred in lower- and middle-management positions, yet women still hold only 23 percent of organizational chief executive positions (Eagly and Carli, 2007; Eagly, 2013). Serious challenges remain for full and equal participation in senior decision-making leadership positions ("Progress for Women", 2014). Over the past six years, the effects of the Great Recession[2] have created even more economic questions for women. Employment statistics show that between June 2009 (the end of the recession) and January 2011, women lost 464,000 jobs, whereas men gained 294,000 jobs in the same time-period (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). Women are not entirely excluded from leadership positions, restrictions, barriers, and 'labyrinths' to leadership may be less obvious than they have been in the past.

Currently, the number of women aged 25-29 who are completing a bachelor's degree is 36 percent, compared to 28 percent of men (US Census, 2010). This is of particular interest because, while the highest predictor of annual income is years of education, the higher degree completion for women is not translating into higher paying jobs. Data suggests women make 80 cents to the dollar made by men ("Women's earnings and income," 2013). Educational growth for women does not translate into executive level jobs, higher incomes, and shared decision-making positions in the workforce (Bartky, 1990; Carli, 2006; Carli, LaFleur, and Loeber, 1995; Frye, 1983; hooks, 2000a; Kleinman, 2007; Kleinman, Copp, Sandstrom, 2006). What accounts for

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[2] The Great Recession is documented as starting in December 2007 (Albert, 2008).

the discrepancy?  The persistence of possible oppression and sexism in the workplace

provides a premise for research on contemporary women leaders' experiences.

**Women in Leadership Research**

Despite women completing postsecondary education at a higher percentage than

men, research using a critical feminist framework suggest women have continued to opt

out of high powered careers (Belkin, 2003; Bolton, 2008; Crittenden, 2010; Hoobler,

Lemmon, and Wayne, 2011; Jones, 2012; Kuperberg and Stone, 2008; Moe and Shandy,

2010; Stone, 2007).  Many have attributed opting out to women's lack of ambition,

unwillingness to work long hours, and possibly genetic inferiority (Hewlett, 2007).

Sylvia Ann Hewlett believes there is another explanation. Hewlett and her colleagues

have spent a decade researching why highly qualified women off-ramp their careers,

referring to voluntarily leaving their careers or taking on part-time work for a while.  The

estimated number of women who off-ramp is around 37 percent; the average amount of

time spent off-ramp is 2.2 years.  Once off-ramped, most women find it hard to re-enter

the pipeline because little value is given to family and childcare responsibilities, and

organizational values usually prohibit detours in a career track (Hewlett, 2007;

Wippermann, 2010).

According to Cohany and Sok (2007), the work force participation of college-

educated women fell from 71 percent in 1997, to 63 in 2005; Moe and Shandy's (2010)

research also suggests a continual decline.  The demands of family provide one

explanation why women may choose to off-ramp or opt out of high-powered careers.

Conversely, women report making the decision based on feelings of underutilization,

under-appreciation, and not being consulted or sought after for key assignments (Hewlett,

2007). The view of under-appreciation became apparent upon the discovery that 90 percent of women who choose to off-ramp one organization take on employment in another organization (Ryan, Haslam, Hersby, Kulich and Wilson-Kovacs, 2009). Hewlett, Luce, Shiller, and Southwell (2005) contend highly qualified women opting out could reflect the male-centered approach to the job market, with shortfalls in childcare, flexible work schedules, and barricading women into a competitive model.

Moe and Shandy (2010) wrote about the concept of a "maternal wall" in the form of bias against women who are pregnant or perceived as mothers in career advancement. The researchers pointed out employers perceive most women within a certain age range as potential mothers, which can lead to gender-based discrimination. Many women still report being "mommy tracked" because the contemporary workweek expects constant availability in extended hours, or they risk employers perceiving them not as fully committed to their organizations. Crittenden (2010) described the difference in salaries women make compared to those of men as the "mommy tax," which can even affect women without children because of motherhood-by-association. This so-called mommy tax can add up to nearly one million dollars throughout an individual's lifetime. Research suggests college-educated, high-achieving women are not opting out of the workplace voluntarily; instead, they are forced out or shut out (Stone, 2007; Stone and Hernandez, 2012), thus sending a message that gender-based obstacles set forth for women still exist (Crittenden, 2010; Sandberg, 2013).

Eagly (2013) explained that although most Americans reinforce the idea of equality, many employees do not accept a woman in authority over them. Eagly recognizes "even in female dominated organizations and professions, men ascend to

leadership positions faster than women" (Eagly, 2013, p. 192).  Researchers struggle to find answers by exploring the choices women make, the possibility of self-fulfilling prophecies, and the effects of gender stereotypes of women's career paths (Barreto, Ellemers, Cihangir, and Stroebe, 2009; Jones, 2012; Sandberg, 2013; Stone, 2007; Stone and Hernandez, 2012; Zhang, Schmader, and Forbes, 2009).  Despite these barriers, women continue to be successful in leadership.  The ascension of women into executive level leadership is occurring and research is critical to reveal the experiences, paths, choices and successes from the perspective of the leaders themselves. Eagly (2013) suggested styles of leadership, in particular transformational leadership, could help women navigate the unsure waters of leadership within their organizations. The experiences of women in executive level leadership positions has yet to be examined, and remain highly underutilized to inform university career advancement, policy, and practices.

Hochschild's (1989) work paints a portrait of women who complete a first shift at work, and then to come home to complete a second shift of housework, family duties, and childcare needs.  Moe and Shandy (2010) described a recent trend of professionals hiring housekeepers and in-home caregivers; however, women still tend to take on the burden of setting all of the home management pieces in motion.  Additionally, many organizations look to women to maintain the positive feelings of those around them, in addition to their own feelings. Women's work becomes the labor of "feeding egos and tending wounds" (p. 99), which may give women a feeling of personal power (Bartky, 1990). A concept Bolton (2000) and Kleinman (2007) call the "third shift." The third shift is a range of professional anxieties resulting from self-perceived ineptness (Bolton, 2000).

Researchers contend a higher level of second and third shift responsibilities become women's responsibility as opposed to their male counterparts (Hochschild, 1989; Bolton, 2000; Legerski and Cornwall, 2010; Coltrane, 2000). Stone (2007) recognized that the second and third shift might play a role in women feeling they have no choice except to exit the workplace. In *Women Who Opt-Out: The Debate over Working Mothers and Work-Life Balance*, Jones (2012) recaps one popular perception of third-wave feminists theory of choice feminism highlights the notion that women no longer experience overt discrimination, but rather find themselves in situations requiring countless choices, none of which appears to favor family and career advancement. Therefore, the more recent form of gender inequity is, if a woman chooses the option denying her opportunity for equality in the workforce then it is not considered discrimination, but rather is the result of her own personal choice. However, one could argue that men's and women's possibilities and choices are based on sexual discrimination and how they experience the world as that particular gender (Kaminer, 1990). If the presumption that women in the work place have reached equality, and if conventional wisdom does not recognize the void of women in leadership as an issue, then the voices of those women, who have chosen to remain in the workforce and advance in their careers, may need to become stronger and more robust. Gender equality research has brought and continues to bring understanding about the paths of women who have continued to move forward in their careers, in particular women in female dominated fields, such as education.

**Women Working in Educational Leadership**

One important set of choices women make is the type of career they pursue. Research suggests women tend to major in academic fields leading to lower paying jobs

(Hesse-Biber and Carter, 2005; U.S. National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). Gender socialization and stereotyping occurring within the context of family, the educational system, the peer group, and the popular media can factor into career decisions women make (Davies, Spencer, Quinn, and Gerhardstein, 2002; Heilman, 2001; Hesse-Biber and Carter, 2005; Zhang, Schmader, and Forbes, 2009). Conversely, even women working in the same fields as men cannot assume they will not experience discrimination in their pursuit of career advancements. In education, women make up 79 percent of the bachelor's degrees and 77 percent of master's degrees (U.S. National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). Education is among the top three majors for women, according to Forbes magazine (Tulshyan, 2010). Nonetheless, when examining the highest paid jobs in education, women are proportionately lower and earning 81 cents[3] to the dollar of their male counterparts (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). When examining the top positions in education, multiple possibilities exist for advancement. In the K-12 system, higher paid executive level and administrative positions available include the following: superintendents, assistant or associate superintendents, principals, vice principals, and deans. An examination of the highest positions in the K-12 system indicates that women hold 76 percent of the teaching positions; however, this does not translate into higher leadership roles, with few women holding superintendency positions in the United States (roughly 18-20 percent) (Brunner and Grogan, 2007; Lane-Washington and Wilson-Jones, 2010; US Department of Education, 2012). Researchers conducted and published their finding about women in

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[3] This statistic combines elementary, secondary, district level, state board, and postsecondary education administrators. It is important to note that a larger percentage of women are seen as elementary level administrators than other forms of administration (Young and McLeod, 2001; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2009).

the K-12 system and their journey to the superintendency and principalship (Brunner and Grogan, 2007; Gardiner, Enomoto, and Grogan, 2000; Grogan, 2003; Morrison, 2012; Robinson, in press; Scott, 2003; Skrla, 2003). In the field of higher education, Mertz's (2009) study of female professors of educational administration who first entered the previously all-male academic departments revealed difficult paths, complex choices, and successes in navigating the terrain. The study determined "sexism and inequities on the basis of gender continue to exist" in higher education (p. 196). Further research about women's career experiences in higher education needs to continue.

Within higher education networks, executive leadership positions span numerous areas, such as presidents, chancellors, vice presidents, provosts, vice chancellors, assistant or associate vice presidents/chancellors, deans, and directors. Unlike the K-12 system, where women hold the majority of the teaching positions, postsecondary institutions offer dimmer projections for women hoping for job security, indicating women hold only 35 percent of tenured or tenure-track teaching positions, despite receiving a majority of the PhDs. (Hoobler, Lemmon, and Wayne, 2011). Much of the research surrounding women in higher education revolve around the faculty tenure-track position. More than likely the focus is on these types of positions because these positions may lead to more prominent leadership roles through the postsecondary education pipeline (Glazer-Raymo, 2008; Mertz, 2009). Among leadership positions, 23 percent of women hold president positions, with the majority of women leading small, private, four-year institutions or community colleges, ("Benchmarking Women", 2009; Moltz, 2011; Wolverton, Boower, and Hyle, 2009;). The representation of women in a vice presidency role throughout higher education does not lend itself to an increased pipeline, with 28

percent of women holding these positions ("Benchmarking Women," 2009). Limited

research has been conducted investigating the experiences of women in executive level

leadership positions, i.e., vice president, vice chancellor, provost, chancellor, and

president positions (Bower and Wolverton, 2009; Wolverton, Bower, and Hyle, 2009). A

review of research about women in leadership indicated a predominant literature on

experiences from the academic side of higher education comprised of women who rose

by way of the administrative ranks through faculty, dean, academic affairs vice

presidents, and provost positions (Bower and Wolverton, 2009; Wolverton, Bower, and

Hyle, 2009). An analysis of higher education studies, which included 16 women

interviewed in the 2009 "Journey to Leadership Series," reflected that only five women

had acquired any experience working in the area of student affairs, while one out of those

five spent a substantial amount of her career working in student services. The majority of

women showcased in this series had an exclusive academic affairs career ladder to their

current executive level position (Bower and Wolverton, 2009; Wolverton, Bower, and

Hyle, 2009). Again, recent research examining women in leadership continues to focus

on academia and the private sector (Fochtman, 2011; Zweigenhaft and Domhoff, 2011).

Research is needed in the field of student services, an area historically shown as potential

for women to assume early leadership roles (Rhatigan, 2009; Wolverton, Bower, and

Hyle, 2009). According to Fochtman (2011), research is under-theorized and

underdeveloped concerning high-achieving women in higher education administration,

with limited research of women working in student affairs. This could be, in part,

because research follows line management positions, which are largely compiled of men

(Eagly, 2013). Eagly (2013) emphasizes women attain fewer line management positions

than their male counterparts, but hold more staff management positions. Aligning with the hierarchy of higher education, line management positions became considered those of Dean, Associate Vice President/Chancellor Academic Affairs, Vice President/Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Finance and Administration, or Vice President of Research Development. Staff management includes the area of Student Affairs. It appears, within higher education, staff management positions may also have an atypical line to the Presidency.

**Research Problem and Purpose of the Study**

The ascension of women into executive level leadership exists, and research is critical to reveal the experiences, paths, choices, and successes from the perspective of the leaders themselves. The purpose of this study was to explore perspectives of women currently employed in executive level leadership and who had therefore successfully navigated the challenges, to gain insight into how career advancement took place, in particular, examining women working in the area of higher education student services. Three decades have passed since women professionals began to see student affairs as an entryway into central administrative roles; however, a scarcity of data is available. To reveal women's in-depth experiences from their own perspectives, a qualitative multiple case study was selected as appropriate to the research problem and purpose. Study results create a working framework for future generations of women who wish to ascend to executive level leadership and create social awareness of the issues surrounding gender and leadership in higher education.

**Research Questions**

1. What path to career advancement did women take to reach their executive level leadership position?

2. Do women executive leaders have a preferred leadership style? Do they feel they can express their preferred leadership style and do they feel they have they been endorsed and nurtured in the institution? What other factors do women executive leaders feel played a role in their leadership development either as a support or a barrier?

3. What internal dialogue in their leadership narrative do women executives have as they make leadership decisions?

**Operational Definitions**

Double Bind Situation: "In which options are reduced to a very few and all of them expose one to penalty, censure, or deprivation" (p.4); the experience of being caught between "systematically related pressures" (Frye, 1983).

Executive Level: Generally applies to people holding specific positions at the top level of management. Within postsecondary education, these positions might include Vice Presidents, Vice Chancellors, Provosts, and Presidents.

Gender: Socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes a given society deems appropriate for men and women (Myers, 2009).

Glass Ceiling: An artificial and invisible obstacle which attitudinal and organizational bias established, currently present and continues to prevent qualified individuals from career advancement goals into upper level management positions (Hymowitz and Schellhardt, 1986; US Department of Labor, 1995).

Glass Cliff:  An invisible cliff, referencing precarious leadership positions with higher risk of failure because of leading organizational units in crisis or not given the resources and support necessary for success (Ryan and Haslam, 2007; Ryan, Haslam, Hersby, Kulich, and Wilson-Kovacs, 2009).

Institutional Discrimination:  An organization in which, due to its structure, may practice institutional discrimination.  Even if it is impossible to document individual instances, others might easily take note of the fact that a particular group is disproportionately absent from a pool of applicants (Feagin and Eckberg, 1980).

Intellectual Activism:  The ways people place the power of their ideas in service to social justice (Collins, 2013); the engagement necessary to raise awareness in order to change an unjust system.

Intersectionality:  A feminist sociological theory which studies how relationships among various socially and culturally constructed categories, such as race, gender, class, and other forms of identity, interact to contribute to social inequality (McCall, 2005; Walby, 2007; Segal and Chow, 2011).

Labyrinth:  Pathway to upper management positions which contain numerous obstructions, many obvious and others more subtle (Eagly and Carli, 2007).

Panopticon:  Bentham's 1791 design of the panopticon described as a model prison.  A circular structure bordered the prison, with a tower at the center where a guard sits, allowing the ability to witness any activity within the prison.  The effect of this was to create a sense of consciousness and permanent visibility within the inmates, thus creating an automatic function of power for the guard.

Michel Foucault (1995) has likened modern society to this image of a Panopticon; power has become anonymous, knowing one can be observed at any time, a person takes on the job of policing oneself.  The image of the panopticon was especially helpful to observe oppression (Bartky, 1990).

Oppression:  "confined and shaped by forces and barriers, which are not accidental or occasional and hence avoidable, but systematically related to each other" (Frye, 1983. p.4).  Do this in such a way as to restrict and penalize motion in any direction (Frye, 1983).

Prejudice:  An attitude (usually negative) toward members of a particular group and strictly based on their membership within that group (Myers, 2009).

Self-monitoring:  A theory of personality psychology, which refers to the process through which a person goes to regulate their own behavior in order to act appropriately, with the purpose that they will be favorably perceived (Myers, 2009).

Servant Leadership: Leadership focused on enriching the lives of individuals, building better organizations and ultimately creating a more just and caring world. This style of leadership is focused on being a servant-first, and the needs and goals outside of the leader (Greenleaf, 1977).

Sexism:  Prejudice based on gender (Myers, 2009).

Stereotype:  Cognitive framework constructed from knowledge and beliefs about specific social groups, whether real or perceived, (Myers, 2009).

Student Services:  Non-tenure track teaching positions, within a university's structure, more directly related to social, financial, and indirect support for

students in postsecondary education, and usually characterized by contributing to

student development outside the context of formal instruction. Many institutions

refer to student services as exempt or professional staff. Within this study, the

terms student support personnel, student affairs, and student services are used

interchangeably, all in reference to this definition.

Systematic Discrimination:  Habitual patterns, policies, or practices of

discrimination, that ultimately lead to broad impact on a particular industry,

profession, company, or geographic area (US EEOC, 2011).

Third Shift:  A range of internal anxieties to self-perceived ineptness. Bolton

(2000) described as mentally living each day twice, an emotional toll as the result

of extended responsibilities.

Transactional Leadership:  A form of social exchange between leaders and

followers (Burns, 1978; Bass and Riggio, 2006).

Transformational Leadership:  Stimulates and inspires followers to achieve

extraordinary outcomes, in this process their own leadership capacity is

strengthened.  Transformational leadership fosters growth in followers in order to

become leaders; this is done by paying attention to the needs and values of the

followers and empowering them to create change (Bass and Riggio, 2006).

**Summary**

The development of women's executive level leadership is necessary for the

sustainability of university leadership.  Highly-qualified women who are prepared for

leadership continue to be underutilized and excluded from executive level positions in

higher education.  The number of women gaining post-secondary education continues to

increase, yet this does not translate into advanced or increased career pathways for women, and serious challenges remain for equal participation in senior decision-making positions in higher education.  One explanation may be because of feelings of underutilization, under appreciation, and the male-centered approach to the job market, women themselves are opting out of executive level positions.  Another explanation may be gender socialization and stereotyping playing a role in the career decisions women make.  The purpose of this study was to explore perspectives of women currently employed in executive level leadership and who had therefore successfully navigated the challenges, to gain insight into how career advancement took place, in particular, examining women working in the area of higher education student services.  Three decades have passed since women professionals began to see student affairs as an entryway into central administrative roles; however, a scarcity of data is available and progress has been made which needs to be recorded and analyzed. Through a qualitative multiple case study, this research reveals women's leadership experiences at the executive level.

Chapter Two provides a review of the literature where historical and current research supports the rationale of this study.  Focusing on three levels of analysis, a review first of feminist theory and background surrounding gender and oppression.  The next level of analysis through the lens of leadership theory focused on transformational leadership theory.  The final level of analysis revolving around newer research on the internal process women may experience within their leadership positions. Chapter Three explains the methodology used throughout the research process.  Chapter Four and Five present the results of each case study and inspecting each research question in depth.

Chapter Six interprets the findings of the study, explaining the limitations and

boundaries, and provides a discussion of the study's significance and its implications for

future research.

**CHAPTER 2**

**Review of the Literature**

**Theoretical Framework**

Chapter Two provides a review of the literature where historical and current research supported the rationale of this study. The review focused on three levels of analysis, first a review of feminist theory and background surrounding gender and oppression. The next level of analysis allows the audience to view this information through the lens of leadership theory focusing on transformational leadership theory. The final level of analysis revolves around newer research on the internal process women may experience within their leadership positions.

**Feminist theory.**

Several different definitions of feminism based on varying social-political views throughout the civil rights and women's movement is acceptable among researchers. bell hooks' (2000a), most inclusive definition, illustrated feminism as the struggle to end sexist oppression. hooks (2000a) depiction does not privilege women over men, nor does it support domination of any one group over another, encompassing issues of racism and classism (hooks, 2000b). Frye (1983) goes further to differentiate between feminism and feminist theory, describing feminism as making "experiences and lives of women intelligible" (p.xi) and feminist theory as identifying forces affecting women as a group. With each theorist, the definition of feminism can be distilled into a sentence; nonetheless, theories behind those definitions are extremely different and complex. Numerous historical perspectives are available to describe the women's movement surrounding each wave of feminism. Bernie Jones' (2012) provided a significant legal

history of feminist theory as a lens through which to examine the impact feminism has

had on women in the workplace.

*Table 2.1*

*Significant Legal History of Feminist Theory*

| Feminist Theories-Simplified | Examples | Supporter Views |
| --- | --- | --- |
| First Wave Feminism | | |
| Equal Treatment Theory-Suffrage Movement (Nineteenth Century -1920s) | Declaration of Sentiments (1848); Married Women's Property Acts; Women's Suffrage; Nineteenth Amendment. | Women had the right (and responsibility) to participate in the public sphere of work and politics, to represent their needs and interests to improve society. |
| Second Wave Feminism | | |
| Equal Treatment Theory (1960s – today) | Equal Pay Act (1963); Equal Rights Amendment (proposed); Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; National Organization for Women; Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act (2009). | In law and policy, treat women exactly the same way men are treated; change the laws that deny women access and which result in inequality. Implement policies that can ensure women can become equal to men. |
| Cultural/Difference Theory (1970s – today) | Pregnancy Discrimination Act; Family Medical Leave Act; EEOC v. Sears. | Under equal treatment, women are treated equally only when they reject their difference from men. Use the law to protect women's differences and thus enable them to become equal. |
| Dominance Theory (1970s – today) | Catherine McKinnon, criticism of domestic violence, rape and pornography; Linda R. | Social, cultural, legal institutions all support patriarchy and contribute to women's subordination, if |

| | Hirshman's take on the opt-out revolution. | not their indoctrination; once these institutions are changed, women's status will change. |
|---|---|---|

Third Wave Feminism

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Pragmatic Feminism (1990s – today) | Margaret Jane Radin approach to property law; Catherine Pierce Wells; Title IX; | With the rise of fragmentation in feminism, there are various forms of feminisms look for a realistic, situational approach. Advocates an approach that will hinder empowerment the least and further it the most, negating the necessity of a double-bind situation. |
| Choice Feminism (1990s – today) | Naomi Wolf (1994) Lisa Belkin perspective of the opt-out revolution (2003). | Choice feminism rejects orthodox views of equal treatment, dominance, and cultural/difference feminism. Rejects the notion of "woman as victim" and claims instead that "whatever makes an individual woman feel empowered is feminist." |
| Conservative Feminism (1990s – today) | The Independent Women's Forum; free-market conservatives who believe feminist policies lead to bureaucracy, higher taxes, and government control. | The law has removed official barriers to access, they argue women are not victims as much as they make choices that lead to inequality and thus make it appear they are being discriminated against. |

Note: Adapted from B. Jones, Women Who Opt-Out: The Debate over Working Mothers and Work-Family Balance, New York University Press, 2012.


Similar to Audre Lorde's (1984) contention that true liberation of one oppressed group cannot happen without the liberation of all oppressed people, the theory of inter-

sectionality maintains it is impossible to tease out the experiences of one's race and sex—they are intertwined.  Inter-sectionality, first brought forth by Kimberle Williams Crenshaw in 1989, with underpinnings in critical race theory, expands to cover multiple inequalities and exclusions (Collins, 2012; Crenshaw, 1989; Feree, 2011; Feree, Lorber, and Hess, 1998). The dimensions of inequality become dynamic, mutually changing relationships that cannot be disentangled (Feree, 2011; Glenn, 2002; Walby, 2011).  In addition to the theories presented in Table 2.1, three theories of feminism inspect how race, nationality, class, and sexuality can intertwine with gender inequality (Table 2.2).

*Table 2.2*

*Additional Feminist Theories*

| Feminist Theories- Simplified | Examples | Supporter Views |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | Second Wave Feminism | |
| Critical Race Feminism (1980s – today) | Audre Lorde; Kimberle Williams Crenshaw theory of inter-sectionality; bell hooks. | Race and the law issues presuppose a black male norm; gender and law issues presuppose a white female norm. As a result, women of color experience inequality. Supporters may choose equal treatment, cultural/ difference, or dominance within the second wave of feminism, but what is important is that laws and policies address race in combination with gender, and often, class. |
| Global Feminist Theory (1990s – today) | Issues surrounding female genital mutilation; Religious practice (i.e. Muslim, Orthodox Jewish); Adrien Wing. | Apply feminism to issues women face internationally, and address the ways women's status in society is affected by globalization. |
| Lesbian Feminism (1970s – today) | Mary Eaton; issues surrounding Defense Against Marriage Act (1996) and California Proposition 8 (2008). | Consider the ways in which lesbians' interests in equality coincide with, or differ from, heterosexual women's interests. |

Note: Adapted from B. Jones, Women Who Opt-Out: The Debate over Working Mothers and Work-Family Balance, New York University Press, 2012.

The entanglement of inequalities can fall across issues of race, class, sexuality, nationality, education, and upbringing (Buono and Kamm, 1983; Collins, 2013; Feree, 2011; hooks, 2000a, 2000b). All of these identities can marginalize an individual. A

critical part of any feminist theory should take into account the intersection of one's identity. Similar to the theoretical underpinnings of Gestalt theory; the whole person becomes perceptually different if all identities are taken into account (Myers, 2009). "The intersection between feminist theory and the historical, social, professional, and institutional contexts of higher education sheds light on the educational process and how it frequently tracks, underserves, or discriminates against women" (Glazer-Raymo, Bensimon, and Townsend, 1993, p.22). With the underpinnings of second-wave feminism, third-wave feminists expands feminism through inclusiveness. Third –wave feminism "respects not only differences between women based on race, ethnicity, religion, and economic standing but also make allowances for different identities within a single person" (Heywood, 2006, p.xx). Multiple identities complicates feminist analysis, but it is a critical next step to avoid one's identity pitting female against male, black against white, oppressed against oppressor. Breaking away from this rigid analysis creates inclusion for transgender, bisexual, and interracial identities (Walker, 2006).

Simone de Beauvoir (1973) claims "one is not born a woman, but, rather, becomes one." To her, gender is constructed and one could, in essence, take on another gender or definition. How have issues surrounding race, class, gender, sexuality been socially constructed to create a system of oppression? Is it possible to minimize one's experiences down to a series of personal choices? Frye (1983) considered this type of thought process a trap. Kleinman (2007) maintained women feel that if they only work hard enough oppressive forces will not affect them. As with a bird in a cage, if one is only looking at one side of the bird's situation, one might only see a couple of wires and wonder why the bird does not fly around the obstruction. It is only when one steps away

from the situation and looks at the big picture, they are able to see the systematic forms of

oppression that, as a whole, make up the cage trapping the bird in place (Frye, 1983).

In today's society, the statement of oppression with regard to women in the

workplace is met with anger and denial by both men and women (Aronson, 2003; Hall

and Salupo, 2003). The post-Civil Rights era insists it is not fashionable for women to

discuss a system that victimizes (Collins, 2013; Jones, 2012; Kleinman, 2007).  It is more

appropriate to think that if one perseveres as individuals, they can conquer all obstacles in

their path. Leading many white, middle-class women to focus on hard work, optimism,

and the belief that gender inequality barely exists (Bartky, 1990; Kleinman, Copp,

Sandstrom, 2006). It is easy for women who do not "feel" oppressed to assume

oppression in the form of sexism does not exist, or that it does not apply to the

companies, organizations, or systems they work and participate in (Titus, 2000).

Systematic oppression, and institutional denial of oppression in the workplace,

creates a hardship on researchers hoping to investigate the experiences of women who

have obtained decision-making power within a male-dominated system (Kleinman, Copp

and Sandstrom, 2006).  It is difficult to remove the insinuation of evil or vindictiveness in

an oppressive system.  "Much of sexism is not a product of a male conspiracy; rather,

sexist practices that continue simply by women and men doing business as usual"

(Kleinman, Copp and Sandstrom, 2006, p. 133).  Consistent with the theoretical work of

Sandra Bartky (1990), power has become anonymous. Bartky revived Foucault's

description of the Panopticon[4], where power becomes invisible, because knowing one

---

[4] Bentham's 1791 design of the Panopticon is described as a model prison. A circular structure borders the prison, and there is a tower at the center with wide windows, where a guard sits, allowing the ability to witness any activity within the prison. The effect of this is to create a sense of consciousness and permanent visibility within the inmates, thus creating an automatic function of power for the guard.

may be observed at any time individuals take over the job of policing themselves (Bartky, 1990). As a woman, censure can come from a number of places at any given moment. Women in leadership can become larger targets, as their actions are on display throughout the organization.

In 2005, a controversial speech by Larry Summers, then President of Harvard University, revisited the concept of women's biological inferiority when accounting for top positions in science and engineering (Jaschik, 2005). Ryan, Haslam, Hersby, Kulich, and Wilson-Kovacs (2009) suggest an alternative explanation, that women voluntarily decide to opt out of certain positions as a "strategic reaction to discrimination or an attempt to avoid the negative cost of challenging discrimination" (p.154). Women choose not to fit into the man's world. Both Summers' and Ryan et al.'s approach is dangerous because it downplays the effect of systematic and institutional forms of gender discrimination. A popular perception of third-wave feminists theory of choice feminism highlights the notion that women no longer experience overt discrimination, but rather find themselves in situations requiring countless choices, none of which appears to favor family and career advancement. Therefore, the more recent form of gender inequity is, if a woman chooses the option denying her opportunity for equality in the workforce then it is not considered discrimination, but rather is the result of her own personal choice. However, one could argue that men's and women's possibilities and choices are based on sexual discrimination and how they experience the world as that particular gender (Kaminer, 1990).

Sylvia Ann Hewlett and her colleagues have spent a decade looking at why highly-qualified women off-ramp their careers. According to Cohany and Sok (2007),

the work force participation of college-educated women fell from 71 percent in 1997, to

63 percent in 2005; a follow-up by Moe and Shandy (2010) suggest a continual decline.

The demands of family provide one explanation for why women may choose to off-ramp

or opt out of high powered careers.  Conversely, women report making the decision based

on feelings of underutilization, under-appreciation, and not being consulted or sought

after for key assignments (Hewlett, 2007).  Hewlett, Luce, Shiller, and Southwell (2005)

contend highly qualified women opting out appear as a reflection of the male-centered

approach to the job market, with shortfalls in childcare, flexible work schedules, and

barricading women into a competitive model.

The concept of a "maternal wall" in the form of bias against women who are

pregnant or perceived as mothers, in career advancement, was presented by Moe and

Shandy (2010).  Researchers point out most women within a certain age range can be

seen as potential mothers, which can lead to gender-based discrimination. Crittenden

(2010) described the difference in salary women make compared to men as the "mommy

tax," which can even affect women without children because of motherhood-by-

association.  This so-called mommy tax can add up to almost one million dollars

throughout an individual's lifetime. Byerly (2011) interviewed eight female directors

working in higher education and found women in their mid-thirties did experience overt

gender discrimination.  One participant shared a situation in which her boss placed her on

the "mommy track."  She said

> I kind of felt I had to work just a little harder or do a little more. And he
>
> legitimately put me on the mommy track. He outright told me.  He was a friend
>
> too.  We were talking in a one-on-one, and I told him things were getting rough at

home.  I told him I think I need to take a break from school and let my husband

finish. And he told me I was in no hurry and he didn't see me as the next Director

anyway. And he said I didn't really want it and I said "why do you think I'm in a

master's program?" He said "you have kids, you don't want it." He had kids too

though. It was a long heart-to-heart. I don't know that we ever came to a

conclusion on it. (p.17)

Eagly (2013) explained that, although most Americans reinforce the idea of

equality, many employees do not accept a woman in authority over them.  Eagly

contends, "even in female dominated organizations and professions, men ascend to

leadership positions faster than women" (Eagly, 2013, p. 192).  Education is among the

top three majors for women, according to Forbes magazine (Tulshyan, 2010). In

education, women make up 79 percent of the bachelor's degrees and 77 percent of

master's degrees (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009).  When looking at the

top positions in education, multiple possibilities exist for advancement.  In the K-12

system, higher paid executive level and administrative positions available consist of

Superintendents, Assistant or Associate Superintendents, Principals, Vice Principals, and

Deans.  An examination of the highest positions in the K-12 system indicates women

hold 76 percent of teaching positions; nevertheless, this does not translate into higher

leadership roles, with few superintendent positions in the United States (roughly 18-20

percent) going to women (Brunner and Grogan, 2007; Lane-Washington and Wilson-

Jones, 2010, US Department of Education, 2012).  Postsecondary institutions offer

dimmer projections for women hoping for job security, indicating women hold only 35

percent of tenured or tenure-track teaching positions, despite receiving a majority of the

PhDs (Hoobler, Lemmon and Wayne, 2011). In researching top administrative positions, statistics reveal 28 percent of women holding Vice Presidency positions and 23 percent of women holding college presidencies (White House Report, 2009).

What then are the experiences of women who persevere? As previously mentioned, women in leadership can become larger targets, as their actions are displayed throughout the organization (Ryan, Haslam, Hersby, Kulich and Wilson-Kovacs, 2009). Women are more likely to be confronted with a new barrier, the glass cliff (Ryan and Haslam, 2007; Ryan, Haslam, Hersby, Kulich, and Wilson-Kovacs, 2009). The glass cliff refers to precarious leadership positions that have a higher risk of failure because of leading organizational units in crisis or not given the resources and support needed for success (Ryan and Haslam, 2007; Ryan, Haslam, Hersby, Kulich, and Wilson-Kovacs, 2009). Haslam and Ryan (2005) study looked at the top 100 capitalized companies on the London Stock Exchange and found women appointed to board positions found themselves in different circumstances than did their male counterparts. Individuals who occupy glass-cliff positions take on a disproportionate share of the blame when results do not meet hidden expectations and are held accountable for events set in motion long before they were in the picture. Across several research studies Ryan et al (2009) indicated female candidates were selected over male candidates when the position is in an organizational unit in crisis. The glass cliff creates a Panopticon with a higher risk of failure, criticism, and censure. Regrettably, research suggests women may have little access to other, less risky leadership opportunities (Haslam and Ryan, 2008).

Women continue to be successful in leadership despite these barriers. The ascension of women into executive level leadership is occurring and research is critical to

reveal the experiences, paths, choices and successes from the perspective of the leaders themselves. Eagly (2013) suggested particular styles of leadership that could help women navigate the unsure waters of leadership within their organizations?  One style may be through transformational leadership (Antonakis, Avolio and Sivasubramaniam, 2003; Bass and Riggio 2006; Eagly and Carli, 2007; Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt and van Engen, 2003; Vinkenburg, van Engen, Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2011; Yoder, 2001).

**Transformational leadership.**

In 1990, Sally Helgesen proclaimed an end to the warrior age of leadership in her book *The Female Advantage*.  Helgesen wrote:

Every one of our public fields of endeavor—business, government, medicine, law, technology, urban design–has been shaped by the ideals, images, values, and language of the Warrior.  The Warrior is the traditional male hero, who charges in to the battle with the aim of dominating and winning. (p.253)

The integration of fostering, nurturing, mentoring decreases the emphasis on winning and opens up a new form of leadership, one that is not intent on dominating.  According to Marie Wilson (2004), White House Project Founder/President, this creates an opening for women since women may prefer to lead differently.  She asserted that admitting women lead differently sends fear through the ranks of women, because "different from" may morph into "less than."  This fear helps create the double bind for women in leadership roles they take (Carli and Eagly, 2007; Eagly and Carli, 2004, 2007).

In the area of social psychology, it is believed attitudes toward social groups are a primary cause of discrimination (Fiske, 1998).  Studies looking at college students, show

gender as one of the first noticeable attributes given to person, it exceeds race, age, sexuality and occupation (Fiske, Haslam, and Fiske 1991; Ito and Urland, 2003). Classifying a person as male or female induces stereotypes of masculine and feminine characteristics (Banaji and Hardin, 1996). <u>Communal</u> qualities of affectionate, helpful, kind, sympathetic, interpersonally sensitive, and soft-spoken are associated with women, whereas <u>agentic</u> qualities of aggression, control, ambition, dominance, self-confidence, self-reliance, and forcefulness are associated with men (Cikara and Fiske, 2009; Deaux and Lewis, 1984). Traditionally, stereotypes about leaders have aligned with agentic characteristics and, therefore, the concept of "think-manager –think-male" (Eagly and Carli, 2007; Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell and Ristikari, 2011; Schein, 2001; Sczesny, 2003). These agentic qualities also elicit the old warrior virtues of competition and dominance suggested by Hegelson (1990).

Women in leadership generally attract attention, and this attention can play a role in how a women proceeds in her leadership role. "When observing leaders, people wonder, 'how does *she* do it?' more often than, how does *he* do it?" (Eagly and Carli, 2007, p.120). Carli Fiorina, former CEO of Hewlett Packard, Patricia Schroeder, 1988 Presidential candidate, and Elizabeth Dole, 1999 Presidential candidate, have all asked the question of why disproportionate attention revolves around their leadership style, personality traits, appearance, family life and gender. Winning the race for the highest office in America has continued to elude women. The 2008 presidential race put women at the forefront of the media with Hillary Clinton running in the Democratic primary race and Sarah Palin as Republican nominee for Vice President. Neither woman achieved an elected spot in the White House. Researchers have found when confronted with an

increased fear and uncertainty about the future, people look for the strong, heroic leader

to save the day and, in most cases, this leader has the face of a man (Cohen, Solomon,

Maxfield, Pyszczynski and Greenberg, 2004; Landau et al., 2004; Lawless, 2004).

Women must balance the communal qualities expected of them as women, but also

demonstrate independent, firm qualities people expect from a leader (Eagly and Carli,

2007; Eagly and Sczesny, 2009).  One possible solution for women may come in the

form of transformational leadership (Vikenburg, van Engen, Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt,

2011).

James MacGregor Burns (1978) presented transformational leaders as those who

establish themselves as role models by gaining trust and confidence from their followers.

A transformational leader can play a critical role in social change.  The leader helps guide

the followers by comprehending their needs and stimulating additional motivations and

aspirations (Burns, 1978).  Later scholars (Antonakis, Avolio and Sivasubramaniam,

2003; Antonakis and House, 2013; Avolio, Bass and Jung, 1999; Avolio and Yammarino,

2013; Bass and Avolio, 1994; Bass and Riggio, 2006) have created a lifetime of work on

the subject of transformational leadership.  Transformational leadership involves

"inspiring followers to commit to a shared vision and goals for an organization or unit,"

(Bass and Riggio, 2006, p.4).  According to Bass and Riggio (2006), transformational

leaders can be either task-oriented or people-oriented; the key is working to develop

followers by using coaching and mentoring.  Transformational leadership is comprised of

four components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation,

and individualized consideration (Table 2.3).  A perfect level of each component is not

important, but rather a balance between the different areas. The scores in the different

areas are captured using a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) created by

Bernard Bass and his research associates (Bass and Riggio, 2006).

*Table 2.3*

*Transformational Leadership Components*

| Component | Definition | Sample Item from MLQ |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Idealized Influence | Leadership behavior where the leader behaves in such a way followers seeks to emulate with their own actions. | My leader specifies the importance of having a strong sense of purpose. |
| Inspirational Motivation | Leader provides meaning and context to the work to followers. | My leader articulates a compelling vision of the future. |
| Intellectual Stimulation | Leader keeps followers focused on the task at hand by asking questions and solving problems. | My leader seeks differing perspectives when solving problems. |
| Individualized Consideration | Leader pays special attention to the needs and problems of each individual person. | My leader spends time teaching and coaching. |

It is important to distinguish transformational leadership from other styles of

leadership (Table 2.4), in particular two commonly known leadership styles, transactional

and charismatic.  Transactional leadership revolves around an exchange relationship

between the leader and the follower; although it can be effective, it holds no enduring

purpose to keep groups together and does not create organizational or societal change

(Burns, 1978; Bass and Avolio, 1994).  Charismatic leadership is a style of leadership

commonly mistaken for transformational leadership.  While transformational leaders can

be charismatic, this charisma is produced by articulating a vision and creating strong

relationships.  These elements become aligned with followers' values and help followers

meet their needs.  Charismatic leadership, on the other hand, articulates a vision and

establishes strong bonds with followers in order to meet the leaders own needs (Avolio

and Yammarino, 2013; Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy, 2009; Yukl, 2012).

Another style of leadership with similar characteristics is servant leadership

(Smith, Montagno, Kuzmenko, 2004). Servant leaders begin with the natural inclination

of service toward others, which comes before the consciousness of being a leader

(Greenleaf, 1977).

*Table 2.4*

*Styles of Leadership*

| Style  of Leadership | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| Transformational Leadership | Leadership focused on how leaders can transform their followers positively, and how followers can do the same for the leader. The relationship is reciprocal. |
| Transactional Leadership | Leadership that sets clear goals and objectives for followers and initiates the use of punishment or rewards in order to encourage compliance. |
| Charismatic Leadership | Leadership focused on the leaders own abilities as a charismatic leader to formulate, articulate, and motivate followers to join with him or her in fulfilling the vision. The relationship is focused on development of the leader and reaching the goal set out by the leader and is not a reciprocal relationship. |
| Servant Leadership | Leadership focused on enriching the lives of individuals, building better organizations and ultimately creating a more caring world. This style of leadership is focused on being a servant-first, and the needs and goals outside of the leader. |

It is important to see the distinction between the different styles of leadership. Recent qualitative studies create a lens through which to observe executive level women and their leadership styles (Barsh and Cranston, 2009; Bower and Wolverton, 2009; Fochtman, 2011; Haslam, Reicher and Platow, 2011; Morrison, 2012; Nielsen, Yarker, Randall and Munir, 2009; Sandberg, 2013; Vikenburg, van Engen, Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, 2011; Wolverton, Bower and Hyle, 2009).  Bass and Riggio (2006) stress the role transformational leaders play on employee empowerment, self-efficacy, commitment, and overall job satisfaction.  They suggest women may be more prone to displaying forms of transformational leadership than men.  However, organizational culture may play a huge role, not all organizations foster leaders who are transformational and more collaborative (Eagly and Carli, 2007; Vikenburg, van Engen and Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, 2011).

Williams (2000) and Eagly and Carli (2007) suggest an implicit model of the ideal employee.  It is presumed the ideal employee has minimal outside work obligations, is continuously on call, and makes significant personal sacrifices; the person who best matches this model is someone who has minimal family obligations.  Williams (2000) expanded this philosophy and suggested that married men with families fit this model because the woman in the relationship absorbs many duties. Recent research by Legerski and Cornwall (2010) corroborated this presumption.  Although not all men and women have family obligations, women are less likely to appear as ideal employees because leadership perceive them as potential mothers (Williams, 2000).  Additionally, promotion by merit is not a neutral process, but based on the implicit ideal employee as defined by the dominant group in leadership, typically a group of men (Burton, 1987).  In

postsecondary education, looking at age, rank, degree attainment, journal articles

published, and length of service, women hold consistently lower rank then men of

comparable age, service, degree, and publications (Everett, 1994). When women in a

health care profession were asked to respond to the comment, "I feel discriminated

against in obtaining a better position because of my gender" (p.21), thirty-five percent of

women responded in the affirmative, and several women believed "something is there"

even if they are not willing to describe it as discrimination (Robinson-Walker, 1999).

  Johnson (2005) identified several transformational leadership attributes identified

within women in leadership; one important attribute listed is the tendency to be at the

center of the organization, rather than at the top as the traditional hierarchical approach

depicts. Johnson (2005) cautioned it was not about setting one gender up against another,

on the contrary, it is a chance to bring value to what women bring to leadership. The

overall goal of reviewing stereotypes in leadership is to generate a more inclusive

definition of a leader (Pittinsky, Bacon, and Welle 2007). Transformational leadership

seems to allow an opportunity to shatter the implicit model of the ideal employee.

Creating value for another way of leading brings women closer to a form of true

leadership, one that allows them to feel utilized, fulfilled and satisfied within the

organizations where they work. Changes in the definition of leadership incorporating

communal and agentic characteristics may allow the stereotypes surrounding "think-

manager- think-male" to change (Eagly and Sczesny, 2009). Harper (2012) brought a

refreshing image of the corporate world with a meta-analysis showing organizations are

choosing to add value with the adoption of leadership coaching endorsing a multi-style

leader including transformational leadership qualities. Women can have the edge by

showing individualized consideration and inspirational motivation, using many of the

communal qualities by adopting a more democratic and participative style of leadership

(Eagly, 2013; Vikenburg, van Engen, Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2011).  Eagly's

(2013) research shows women are generally more transformational in their leadership

style than are their male counterparts; however, she warned the effectiveness of this

leadership style because it is not completely embraced by followers when the leader is a

woman.  This inconsistency can be internally challenging for women and can result in

women opting out of leadership roles, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Eagly (2013)

argued the pressures of conforming and monitoring one's leadership has a tremendous

impact on women in the workplace.  Bolton (2000) research suggests this impact comes

in the form of a "third shift."

**Third Shift.**

Many organizations look to women to maintain the positive feelings of those

around them, in addition to their own feelings. Women's work becomes the labor of

"feeding egos and tending wounds" (p. 99), which may give women a feeling of personal

power (Bartky, 1990). A concept Bolton (2000) and Kleinman (2007) call the "third

shift."

All working-women and men perform a first shift at work based on the duties

defined in their job description.  A second shift performed at home with domestic

responsibilities, i.e. cooking, cleaning, walking the dog, and/or childcare responsibilities

(Hochschild, 1989).  The third shift is a range of professional anxieties resulting from

self-perceived ineptness (Bolton, 2000).  Researchers contend a higher level of second

and third shift responsibilities become women's responsibility as opposed to their male

counterparts (Hochschild, 1989; Bolton, 2000; Legerski and Cornwall, 2010; Coltrane, 2000).  Bolton (2000) described the third shift as living each day twice, performing psychological duties while driving in the car, in the shower, or before falling asleep at night.  The third shift revolves around three critical challenges.  The first is *the identity challenge,* identified as being authentic, rather than trying to be someone others will accept.  The second is *the task challenge,* described as the battle between '"getting the job done" (p.8) versus worrying about how everyone feels.  The third is *the balance challenge,* defined by expending energy on one's own achievements as opposed to service to others (Bolton, 2000).

Kleinman (2002; 2007) argued the third shift is one of the wires of oppression women experience in Frye's (1983) metaphor of a birdcage. Frye (1983) refers to ego service, which involves encouragement, support, praise, and attention to others.  She believed women in each race and class level serve men in a way that men do not serve women. Frye (1983) defined ego service as a "women's sphere" (p. 10), understood to be the service sector.  This ego service or third shift became expected of women, both by women themselves and by others.  And consequences remain for women who do not live up to those expectations. The panopticon again has revitalized into society.  Critics of feminist theories on oppression cite innate biological differences as reasons for those expected to do what, typically leaving the "innate" nurturing *(third shift)* work to women, even within leadership positions (Carli, 2001; Eagly, Karau, and Makhijani, 1995; Griffiths, 2009; Nieva and Gutek, 1981).

Despite the publication of Bolton's book in early 2000, little research on the theory of the third shift is available. Nonetheless, many terms within social science

research may find their roots in this concept, which are worth noting and including in the theoretical framework of the third shift. According to Kawakami, White, and Langer (2000), female leaders face an internal struggle between emulating a masculine leadership role in which people will dislike them, or a stereotypical feminine style where their peers will not respect them. The solution is a woman who shows masculine leadership characteristics, but is mindful (Kawakami, White, and Langer, 2000). Kawakami, White, and Langer's (2000) definition of mindful is weak, but can be linked to Yammarino's (1994) work addressing indirect transformational leadership which contends leaders must consider the behaviors and actions they display with their associates and how those behaviors or actions are interpreted by others of subsequently lower, lateral, or sometimes higher organizational levels. The work of Kawakami, White, and Langer (2000) and Yammarino (1994), resonated with both the identity and task challenge described within Bolton's (2000) third shift.

Additional research in social psychology used the term self-monitoring as a way to describe "self-observation and self-control guided by situational cues to social appropriateness" (Snyder, 1974, p.526). Self-monitoring likens social interaction to a theatrical performance of verbal and nonverbal behaviors, a performance that changes based on the situation, requiring an awareness of the interpretations others place on one's behavior (Snyder, 1974). An individual who rates high on a self-monitoring scale is particularly sensitive to others in social situations. High self-monitors guide their behavior by situational cues, and a follower may depend upon the leader's appraisal for effective job performance (Anderson and Tolson, 1989). Individuals rating low in self-monitoring guide their behavior by monitoring internal cues, paying less attention to the

leader's appraisal (Anderson and Tolson, 1989). The construct of self-monitoring plays a role in all three third shift challenges (Bolton, 2000). The concept of self-monitoring links to research about transformational leaders. Bass and Riggio (2006) presented conflicting evidence of transformational leaders as being both high and low self-monitors. Unsure as to why these results might be conflicting, Bass and Riggio (2006) make the presumption that transformational leaders should be low self-monitors. Taking into account the theory of the third shift issues surrounding gender may play a role in Bass and Riggio's analysis of transformational leadership.

Gupton and Slick (1996) determined that several factors played a role in the development of women in leadership. Women do not lack the aspirations to gain executive administrative positions in education, but rather, they need concrete support systems created around the understanding of the obstacles women face. An understanding of the third shift could create many avenues to answering timely and important questions about women in leadership and future leaders. The study in this manuscript adds to the theoretical framework of the third shift.

**Women in Higher Education**

Serious challenges remain for full and equal participation in senior decision-making leadership decisions ("Progress for Women", 2014). Ironically, the bias in favor of male leadership extends into female dominated fields, showing that men advance more quickly than women (Eagly and Sczesny, 2009). This is noticeable when looking at the executive level of educational institutions within the K-12 and postsecondary system. Critical analysis is needed because the absence of women in educational leadership influences more than the institutions themselves, but reaches into all industries and career

paths (White House Report, 2009). Once more, it is troubling that women's salaries in academia not only lag behind men's, but have actually lost ground since the seventies (White House Report, 2009). An explanation for this loss might be the shift institutions of higher education have begun to make from a "public good knowledge/learning regime to a knowledge regime attuned to the market" (Metcalfe and Slaughter, 2008, p.80). In contrast to a public knowledge institution, a regime attuned to the market is one preferring students who are able to pay high tuition, departments and colleges with high-end markets, and research partnering with private industry. The concept of public good in this type of institution was redefined to be what is in the best interest for economic development (Metcalfe and Slaughter, 2008). Metcalfe and Slaughter (2008) argued that academic capitalism has helped men recapture much of their historic privilege within higher education. The shift to academic capitalism has caused academia to follow preferred markets, with higher rewards given to male dominated fields over female dominated fields (Levin, 2001). Although this shift may serve as a vehicle to advancement for women, using the means of competition prevents the concept of equity (Metcalfe and Slaughter, 2008). Gupton and Slick (1996) contend the ultimate shift in educational administration is not access for women, but equity.

The journey for men and women working in higher education begins before their careers actually begin, usually in graduate school. A study of two thousand PhD students, tracking them five years after receiving their PhDs, provided evidence that for many women problems arise initially with insufficient supervisory support and receiving significantly less encouragement in building their academic careers, publishing their work, preparing funding proposals, giving conference presentations, and developing

professional relationships (Wilson, Marks, Noone, Hamilton-MacKenzie, 2010). Although this may seem like a short-term pitfall, Wilson et al. (2010) concluded "graduates whose supervisors mentored them extensively and graduates who participated in networking activities [subsequently] earned more than those with less engaged supervisors" (p.451). Even though this study was performed in the area of faculty positions, it is possible the same results could appear in careers of student services.

Organizational cultures are not blind to factors of gender, race, ethnicity, class, or multiple group identities (Ropers-Huilman, 2008). Tomas, Lavie, del Mar Duran, Guillamon (2010), found women in administrative leadership positions had been "subject to processes of evaluation and promotion developed according to male norms that openly discriminated against them" (p.492). Many of the women expressed one of the strongest barriers was performance, with worth judged according to male standards, with the assumption a professional career is of lesser importance to a women than it is for a man. Executive level positions in academia can be a lonely world due to the lack of support from the top of the organization, and in hard economic times women can take on the lion's share of the work, as resources shrink and staffing is stretched (Griffiths, 2009). Change from the top seems fundamental; unfortunately, as we proceed up the ladder of post-secondary institutions, the likelihood of a female leader lessens (Bornstein, 2008). The presumption women in the workplace have reached equality does not recognize the void of women in leadership as an issue, then the voices of those women who have made choices for career advancement and who remain in the work place may need to become stronger and more robust.

A mere 23 percent of college and university presidents are women, a statistic that has remained steady for the past 10 years.  Bornstein (2008) proposed many female candidates are overlooked because of non-traditional career tracks, and the most direct pipeline to becoming a president is to currently being in a presidential position. Furthermore, the representation of women in a vice president role throughout higher education does not lend itself to an increased pipeline, with 28 percent of women holding these positions (White House Report, 2009).  Women in executive level leadership positions, in large part remain underutilized to inform university career advancement, policy, and practices.  Much of the research surrounding women in higher education focuses on faculty tenure-track positions (Glazer-Raymo, 2008; Mertz, 2009).  Limited research has been conducted investigating the experiences of women in executive level leadership positions, i.e. vice president, vice chancellor, provost, chancellor, and president positions (Bower and Wolverton, 2009; Wolverton, Bower, and Hyle, 2009).  A review of women in leadership shows a predominant literature on experiences from the academic side of higher education comprised of women who have risen through the administrative ranks through faculty, dean, academic affairs vice presidents, and provost positions (Bower and Wolverton, 2009; Wolverton, Bower, and Hyle, 2009).  An analysis of the higher education studies that included 16 women interviewed in the 2009 "Journey to Leadership Series," showed only five women possessed any experience working in the area of student affairs and one out of those five spent a substantial amount of her career working in student services.  The majority of the women showcased in this series had an exclusive academic affairs career ladder to their current executive level position (Bower and Wolverton, 2009; Wolverton, Bower, and Hyle, 2009).  Suggesting employees within

student services may not always have a direct pipeline to the presidency, with a large

percentage of presidential positions going to individuals within the area of academic

affairs (White House Project, 2009).  Aligning with the theory of academia as a form of

capitalism, as suggested by Metcalfe and Slaughter (2008), little market value is in

providing student services, it is faculty who produce the knowledge (and research grants)

necessary for students to enter the marketplace.

**Historical Background to Student Affairs Division in Higher Education**

The beginning of student affairs or student services began in the colonial period

and is seen globally as an American invention. Significant elements came into place

throughout the nineteenth century with universal education continuing into college, and

the idea of higher education as the right of all citizens (Leonard, 1956). Through the late

nineteenth and twentieth century several factors influenced the development of student

support personnel including: the rise of co-education, student populations beginning to

include women, the introduction of an elective system, and the emphasis on

vocationalism as opposed to the traditional liberal arts education (Rhatigan, 2009). Early

higher education had student service staff living in the dormitories, which served to

control students *in loco parentis*--in place of parent (Leonard, 1956).

The establishment of Johns Hopkins University in 1876 created a need for

scholars interested in research.  The result became a rigid model of education that ignored

student issues outside the classroom and diverted the President's efforts to problems of

finance, capital construction, faculty recruitment, and the politics of growth (Rhatigan,

2009). The field of Student Affairs developed from these building blocks by serving the

needs institutions had pushed to the periphery, the institutional commitment to the

wholeness of a student, the *alma mater* portraying the institution as a nurturing mother, a living being (Rhatigan, 2009). Through the creation of a student services division, staff were made available to reduce the academic affairs "burden" of managing students and performing the "unpleasant duties" focused on student and staff management, creating a clear divide between academic affairs and student affairs (Barr and Desler, 2000; Hamrick, Evans, Schuh, 2002).

During the 1960s the need for a growing acceptance of student affairs as a major division of higher education institutions began, due to influx of students produced by the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Women's movement. The result was the executive role Vice President of Student Affairs (Hamrick, Evans, Schuh, 2002; Rhatigan, 2009). Along with the development of an executive role, researchers began to investigate interpersonal and intrapersonal changes of students while in college. Chickering (1969) studied the identity of a student through the lens of higher education. Chickering's research became a backbone of the contemporary postsecondary education model with the inclusion of student affairs. Through the late 1960s and into the 1970s other foundational research flourished in the area of student development, giving substance to the area of student affairs (Hamrick, Evans, Schuh, 2002). In 1993, Chickering and Reisser built on and revised Chickering's original theory of student development to take into account all factors of the higher education institution, together with social, emotional and intellectual characteristics of the student. They reviewed seven aspects of the college environment that influence student development: institutional objectives, institutional size, faculty-student interaction, curriculum, teaching practices, diverse student communities, and student affairs services (Chickering and Reisser, 1993).

In the 1980s and '90s, women professionals began to see student affairs as an entryway into central administrative roles within higher education (Rhatigan, 2009).

This entryway has not been without barriers. In the introduction of *Empowering Women in Higher Education and Student Affairs*, Linda Pax (2011) recounts an experience she had with a campus administrator.  Pax recounts the overt and subtle barriers constraining women's advancement in higher education and received the comment, "you mean, that still happens".  In the same way, many women and men throughout education may feel advancement is hindered only by individual choices, not by institutions created around systematic oppression. According to Fochtman (2011), research is under theorized and underdeveloped concerning high-achieving women in higher education administration, with limited research on women working in student affairs.  The ascension of women into executive level leadership is occurring, and research is critical to reveal the experiences, paths, choices and successes from the perspective of the leaders themselves.

**Summary**

Chapter Two provided a review of the literature to support the rationale of this study.  Focus was placed on three levels of analysis, a review first of feminist theory and background surrounding gender and oppression.  A review through the lens of leadership theory focusing on transformational leadership theory, and an analysis of the internal process women may experience within their leadership positions.

A review of feminist theory shows systematic oppression, and institutional denial of oppression in the workplace, creating a hardship on researchers hoping to investigate the experiences of women who have obtained decision-making power.  Women may feel

that if they only work hard enough, they might escape oppressive forces. The post-Civil Rights era insists it is not fashionable for women to discuss a system that victimizes (Collins, 2013; Jones, 2012; Kleinman, 2007). It is more appropriate to think that, if one perseveres as individuals, they can accomplish what they desire. This leads many white, middle-class women to focus on hard work, optimism, and the belief that gender inequality barely exists (Bartky, 1990; Kleinman, Copp, Sandstrom, 2006). It is easy for women who do not "feel" oppressed to assume oppression in the form of sexism does not exist, or it does not apply to the companies, organizations, or systems they work and participate in (Titus, 2000). Women continue to be successful in leadership despite these barriers. The ascension of women into executive level leadership is occurring and research is critical to reveal the experiences, paths, choices, and successes from the perspective of the leaders themselves.

The next level of analysis through the lens of leadership theory explores a way to combat systematic and institutionalized forms of discrimination may be through transformational leadership. Traditionally, stereotypes about leaders have aligned with agentic characteristics, and therefore the concept of "think-manager-think-male." However, transformational leadership involves a more communal approach, one wherein followers are inspired to commit to a shared vision for the organization. Transformational leadership may bring a chance to value what women bring to leadership, not by creating a polarized gender view, but rather by generating a more inclusive definition of a leader.

The final analysis explores the impact pressures of conforming and monitoring ones leadership style has on women, placing an additional third shift to their already

assigned job duties. The third shift, described as a range of professional anxiety related to self-perceived ineptness, such as living each day twice. The three areas of research described within this chapter weave together a theoretical framework looking into issues surrounding women in leadership, particularly women at the top of the management pyramid. It takes into account what might impede women from moving through the executive pipeline. Organizational change cannot occur by remaining blind to the multiple identities brought into the pipeline. The current study adds to the limited exploration of women currently in executive level leadership positions within student services. Chapter Three provides the detailed description of the research method used in the study.

**CHAPTER 3**

**Research Methods**

**Purpose of the study**

The ascension of women into executive level leadership exists, and research is critical to

reveal the experiences, paths, choices, and successes from the perspective of the leaders

themselves.  The purpose of this study was to explore perspectives of women currently

employed in executive level leadership and who had therefore successfully navigated the

challenges, to gain insight into how career advancement took place, in particular,

examining women working in the area of higher education student services.  Three

decades have passed since women professionals began to see student affairs as an

entryway into central administrative roles; however, a scarcity of data is available and

progress has been made which needs to be recorded and analyzed. Through a qualitative

multiple case study, this research reveals women's leadership experiences at the

executive level.

**Research Questions**

1.  What path to career advancement did women take to reach their executive level
    leadership position?

2.  Do women executive leaders have a preferred leadership style?  Do they feel they
    can express their preferred leadership style, and do they feel they have been
    endorsed and nurtured in the institution?  What other factors do women executive
    leaders feel played a role in their leadership development, either as a support or as
    a barrier?

3. What internal dialogue in their leadership narrative do women executives have as they make leadership decisions?

**Research Design**

The research questions were answered using a qualitative multiple case study design. Miles and Huberman (2014, p. 11) articulates qualitative methodology as "well-suited for locating the meaning people place on the events, processes, and structures of their lives and for connecting these meanings to the social world around them." This allows the researcher the ability to describe the ways people come to understand and manage their day-to-day situations. Yin (2013) defined a case study in two parts, first looking at a phenomenon in its "real-world context" and second, looking at multiple points of data, such as how the data triangulates. A case study can include quantitative and qualitative data and can include a single case or multiple cases. Creswell (2012) defined a case study as a bounded system(s) studied over time through detailed data collection involving multiple sources of information. According to Yin (2003, 2013), the case study method is appropriate when a researcher wishes to define a topic broadly instead of narrowly and to cover complex multivariate conditions, not isolated variables.

This study encompassed Yin's (2003, 2013) and Creswell's (2012) definition of a case study. In particular, the study used an embedded multiple case study approach, because each woman interviewed represented one bounded case. As suggested in the theoretical framework, women may have an intersection of issues surrounding their specific life experiences, institution, and position. The researcher was interested in examining the multiple complexities in each individual case, allowing each to stand-alone. Multiple sources of information: interviews, organizational charts, mission

statements, letters, journals, curriculum vitae and speeches allowed for a triangulation of data and in-depth emersion into each case.  The study included five separate case studies, allowing for the replication of variables present in a single-case (Yin, 2013).

Case studies are commonplace for both traditional and practice-oriented fields; a case study is considered the preferred design method if a study's overarching research question is investigating the "how" and "why" of a phenomenon occurring within a real life situation (Yin, 2013).  As suggested by the theoretical framework the boundaries of how a woman experiences is indistinguishable from the context in which she serves as a leader.  Using a case study, allows both to be observed through various sources of data. Additionally, the theoretical framework describes the prior development of theories that guided the researcher in data collection and analysis (Yin, 2013).  Human experience can be seen as the basis for theory-building, especially feminist theories, providing explanations of various intersections of social identities (Davis, 2008). According to Ravitch and Riggan (2012), the theoretical framework is a sib-component of the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework is made of three primary areas: the personal interest and background of the researcher, the relevant research surrounding the topic being investigated, and the theoretical framework. Ravitch and Riggan (2012) draw on constructivist theory in their definition of conceptual framework, placing an emphasis on researchers using past knowledge as a way to build new knowledge. Figure 3.1 helps to illustrate the overall research design using Maxwell (2013) interactive approach to qualitative research design.

**Figure 3.1    Interactive Model of Research Design**

**Goals**

Understand how women in executive leadership lead and the path they take towards leadership; create more networks for future women to aspire towards executive level leadership.

**Conceptual Framework**

Personal Interests Broader Research, Theoretical Framework (Feminist Theory, Leadership Theory, Literature on the Third Shift) Ravitch and Riggan, 2012

**Research Questions**

What path to career advancement did women take to reach their executive level leadership position? Do women executive leaders have a preferred leadership style? Do they feel they can express their preferred leadership style and do they feel they have they been endorsed and nurtured in the institution? What other factors do women executive leaders feel played a role in their leadership development either as a support or a barrier? What internal dialogue in their leadership narrative do women executives have as they make leadership decisions?

**Method**

Three types of sources: 1) interviews, 2) vitas, mission statements, organizational charts, letters, 3) journals, speeches.

**Validity**

Triangulation of sources, discrepant data, comparison with literature, conceptual framework.

**Participants**

Participants were five executive level leaders at 4-year public, post-secondary institutions throughout 12 of the 13 states making up the Western United States (as defined by the United States Census Bureau). The researcher selected the participants because they held vice president or vice chancellor positions in the area of student services at a 4-year public University. The researcher used nonprobability sampling, in particular a method called purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002; Merriam, 2009), to select the women who participated in the study. Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the researcher must choose a sample from which he or she may gain particular insight and understanding (Merriam, 2009). The researcher located a list of all the public four-year postsecondary institutions located across the 13 Western states. Using that list the researcher looked up the gender of the Vice President/Chancellor of Student Affairs at each institution by looking at the schools website. Table 3.1 breaks down the number of female Vice President/Chancellor's present in each Western state at public four-year postsecondary institutions and how many were contacted by the researcher. The list of women to contact was generated based on the possibility of traveling to interview women in-person. All twenty-two women received individualized emails sent to their work email within days of each other. A total of three emails were sent to the women over the course of six months to solicit participation. The women who responded were included in the study. The original plan was to interview these women in-person, as discussed later in Chapter six in the limitations of the study the busy schedules of the women and the likelihood of last minute cancellations made in-person interviews impossible, except for in one fortuitous case.

*Table 3.1*

*Breakdown of State and Number of Female Vice Presidents of Student Affairs*

| State | Number of Female Vice President/Chancellors | Number of women contacted by the researcher in that state |
|---|---|---|
| Alaska | 0 | 0 |
| Arizona | 1 | 1 |
| California | 10 | 3 |
| Colorado | 2 | 2 |
| Hawaii | 2 | 0 |
| Idaho | 2 | 2 |
| Montana | 2 | 2 |
| Nevada | 2 | 2 |
| New Mexico | 1 | 1 |
| Oregon | 3 | 3 |
| Utah | 3 | 3 |
| Washington | 2 | 2 |
| Wyoming | 1 | 1 |
| **Total** | **31** | **22** |

Once the researcher had five women willing to participate, she stopped recruiting for the study; however, it is important to note the researcher did not turn anyone away. Recruiting for this study was extremely difficult because of the intensity of the project and the limited time women in the role of Vice President have available.

**Data Collection**

Five executive level women in student services were included as participants in

the study. The definition of executive level leadership was limited to women holding the

title of Vice President or Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs/Services. Women were

contacted by email asking for their participation in the study. Data included two[5] semi-

structured interviews at least 45 days apart (Appendix A and B), an electronic journal

following the interviews, a demographic survey completed at the conclusion of the study

(Appendix C), curriculum vitas, copies of recent speeches, mission statements,

organizational charts, and letters, to create a context for each bounded case. The wealth

of data collected helped create a triangulation of data and adequate engagement in the

data collection process (Merriam, 2009).

After the completion of participant recruitment, participants chose the phone

number they wished to be called on, in an effort to make them as comfortable as possible.

The day of the scheduled interview, the researcher called each participant at the number

specified, and explained the purpose of the study to each participant.  They read and

signed an informed consent form, which the researcher received through scanned copy

via email (Appendix D).  A copy of the questions provided to each participant allowed

them to observe throughout the interview.  The researcher established a code name for

each participant in order to maintain confidentiality.  In order to increase security of

confidentiality, informed consent forms were not stored in the same locked cabinet as the

raw data with listed code names.  Due to fortuitous circumstances, one participant was

available to be interviewed in-person.  The researcher carefully reviewed the data

collected for each participant to determine if more in-depth data collection was present

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[5] Due to scheduling, one participant had to answer all the questions in one longer interview session.

with this one in-person interview over the others, but discernible difference in the depth of information presented between participants did not emerged.  Research suggests rich data can be gathered using face-to-face, electronic, or telephone interviews (Sturges and Hanrahan, 2004; Stacey and Vincent, 2011).

      Multiple steps ensured the study was carried out with rigor and professional integrity.  Patton (2002) suggested the largest part of creating reliable and credible results is the professional ethics of the researcher.  Ethical dilemmas are likely to emerge within qualitative studies because of the researcher-participant relationship (Merriam, 2009).  To reduce the impact of ethical dilemmas, Patton (2002) identified best practices to consider when conducting qualitative research.  Best practices include explaining purpose and methods of study to participants, assessing the risk for the participant, keeping all records confidential, obtaining informed consent and institution human subject's approval, clearness about reciprocity within the researcher-participant relationship, and the establishment of a confidant to discuss ethical concerns.  Reliability and validity in qualitative research can be defined differently than in quantitative research, but the end result of credible conclusions is the same.  The key concept in qualitative research is "whether the results are consistent with the data collected" (Merriam, 2009, p.221).  This can be achieved through trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, and consistency. Table 3.2 shows how each area will be addressed in the data collection and analysis process.

*Table 3.2*

*Qualitative Research Measures*

| Quantitative term | Qualitative term | How researcher will address |
|---|---|---|
| Internal Validity | credibility (Lincoln and Guba, 2013; Deutsch, 2004; Maxwell, 2013; Merriam, 2009) | *Triangulation:* using multiple sources of data. *Member checks*: checking data and interpretations with participants and asking for their feedback. *Saturation of data*: spending adequate time collecting data in order for the results to become repetitive or the finding of new data without changing the scope of the study is present. *Reflexivity:* self-conscious inquiry of the impact of the participant as researcher may have on the overall study. |
| External Validity | transferability (Maxwell, 2013; Merriam, 2009) | Provide *thick, rich description* of the context in order for the reader to have the potential to come to similar conclusions as the researcher. |
| Reliability | consistency (Lincoln and Guba, 2013; Maxwell, 2013; Merriam, 2009) | *Peer examination:* discussion with professional colleagues as themes emerge and making tentative interpretations. *Researcher role*: disclosing researcher world view and biases that they brought into the study. *Audit trail*: detailed notes of methods, procedures, decisions made throughout the study, researcher thoughts. |

**Data Analysis**

When pulling all the aspects of qualitative research together, there is no one

prescribed model to follow (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 2012; Crotty, 1998;

Maxwell, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Miles and Huberman, 2014, Saldana, 2009).  This holds

true for fieldworkers attempting to work within a critical feminist methodology and

analysis (Devault, 2004; Lykke, 2010).  Yin (2013) defined five components of a case

study research design.  The first three[6] have been discussed in the previous section of this

chapter, and the last two have been increasingly better developed within the field of case

studies over the past decade. These final two components include linking data to

propositions and creating criteria for interpreting the study's findings.  Yin (2013)

described linking data to propositions as a way to foreshadow the data analysis steps

because once patterns begin to emerge findings can be interpreted in terms of comparing

them to rival theoretical propositions, building an explanation about a case, building a

logic model, or in a multiple-case study (such as the one proposed) provide cross-case

synthesis.  A cross-case synthesis provides the likelihood of more robust, compelling

findings than a single-case study.

During the data analysis process, all interviews and diaries of the participants

were transcribed into password protected Microsoft Word documents.  Throughout the

course of the study, the researcher read and analyzed raw data of transcribed interviews,

field notes, audit trail, and reflexivity journal, as is the common practice of qualitative

research (Merriam, 2009; Miles and Huberman, 2014).  According to Miles and

Huberman (2014), data consolidation occurs continuously throughout the life of any

qualitative study. Figure 3.2 provides an interactive model for this study of the

components of data analysis, as suggested by Miles and Huberman (2014).

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[6] The first three Yin (2013) lists are: research questions, propositions, and the unit of analysis.

**Figure 3.2      Interactive Model of Data Analysis**
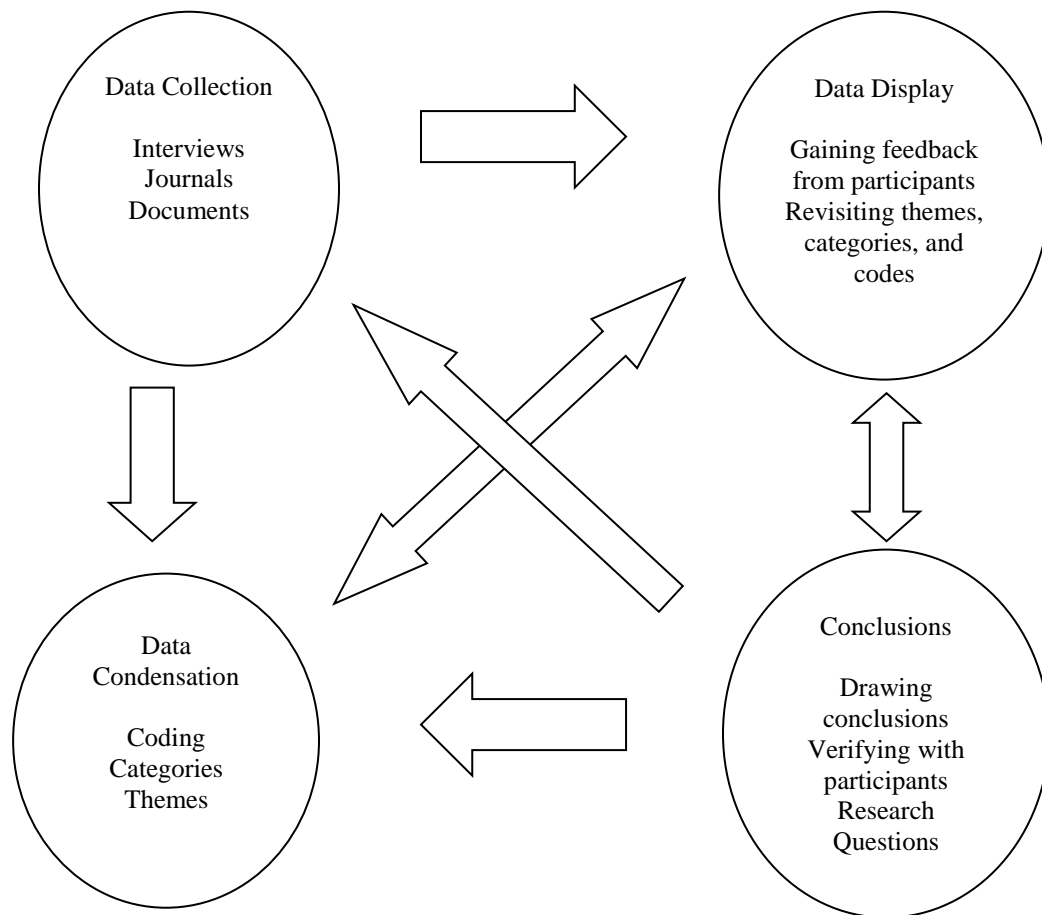


The cases of Dr. Emerson and Dr. Morrison were analyzed, first in their entirety

(interviews, documents, speeches, journals), due to the order of the scheduled interviews.

Researcher notes and comments were placed down the right hand column of the

transcript, a practice Merriam (2009) referred to as open coding.  Using these notes,

several categories were brainstormed that could be seen as responsive to my original

research questions and the overall purpose of the study.  The following three cases were

then open coded in the same manner as the first two.  Open coding, where the

researcher's notes and comments were placed down the right hand column of the

transcript, helped the researcher go through large amounts of data (Saldana, 2009).  Open

coding pattern matching was used to create several categories that fed into the research questions and theoretical framework (Yin, 2013; Merriam, 2009). Once all five cases were coded, the researcher placed the open codes into exhaustive and mutually congruent categories. As the process took shape, categories were placed together to form one specific category, for example, many codes and categories made up the student-centered theme. Others separated to form two separate categories, for example, leadership style and process of developing leadership. Through the process of sifting through codes and placing into categories, the research questions posed were revisited to see how they connected to the categories produced; this reduced the number of categories to twenty-four. The final step determined five major themes (Appendix E), by examining the frequency and interrelationship of categories, the attitudes and convictions of the participant's words, the uniqueness, and the relationship to previous theoretical research (Creswell, 2012; Lincoln and Guba 2013; Merriam, 2009).

Divergent evidence was reviewed when building evidence about each case; cross-case synthesis took place throughout the research process. Divergent evidence led to the theme of student-centered leadership, rather than the initial theme of transformational leadership, suggested by the theoretical framework. Although the qualities of transformational leadership were present, the data showed it was more accurate to establish the theme as student-centered leadership. As data was collected and themes arose, the researcher brought them up to participants to see what they thought of emerging ideas and concepts. Emerging ideas and concepts were also discussed with other professional colleagues. Transcripts and evolving themes were emailed to each participant. Three participants responded with words of encouragement for the research.

A copy of the final write-up was given to each participant to provide feedback and the opportunity to voice discrepancies with results.  Feedback was solicited from participants to ensure trustworthiness, confirmability, and consistency (Creswell, 2012; Maxwell, 2013; Merriam, 2009).

During this process, several decisions were made and noted in the audit trail.  The first was the discovery it would be harder to recruit individuals to participate in the study. After two failed attempts for responses from women to participate in two one-hour, in-person interviews, I went back to the drawing board and looked into research on telephone versus in-person interviews.  Upon finding research to suggest the depth of information would be similar, I moved forward allowing participants to complete phone interviews (Sturges and Hanrahan, 2004; Stacey and Vincent, 2011).  This helped elicit a better response to participate in the study.  A few times, the researcher had to reschedule phone interviews, due to last minute meetings participants had to attend, but the phone interview allowed them more flexibility in changing meeting times when needed. Another needed change was the participant journal.  The first intention was for participants to journal between the first and second interviews. Due to the women's busy schedules this was not possible.  In order to still gather this information, participants were given a longer, more flexible timeline for completing journals.  They turned them in whenever they could; most completed them over the semester breaks when they had less hectic schedules.  All the participants were able to complete journals using this process, except one, whose schedule was too busy to allow her to complete the journals.  In addition to the gathering the journals, participant vitas and speeches were gathered. Mission statements, letters to students, value and principle statements, presentations, and

articles written by participants were gathered using public information available on the internet. One of the limitations, which will be discussed further in Chapter Six, was that no in-person observation of participants were scheduled. However, by gathering speeches, journals, and articles available on the internet, it can be argued that this part of a case study has been explored in a more nontraditional manner. Bligh and Riggio (2013) argued that, in the current global society, information gathering and leadership have taken on a new face, one that allows the far to become near through technology and the internet. Information that used to be available only through careful in-person observation is now available to be seen at a distance.

**Researcher Role**

Yin (2013) described a well-done case study by asking questions in which interpretations can be made, being an excellent listener who is not trapped by preconceptions, adaptive to the data being presented, having a strong theoretical background on the issue(s) being studied, and being responsive to contradictory evidence. As a way to encompass the criteria of a "good case study" (Yin, 2013), qualitative research offers the concept of reflexivity as a way to enhance rigor and show where the researcher can contribute to research development (Merriam, 2009). The researcher's worldview as a feminist affects her experience as a qualitative researcher; it affects the language used and the inclusion of multiple forms of information while "listening" to women's stories with a feminist understanding (Devault, 2004, p. 233). The work of Sheryl Kleinman (2007) allows an identity as a feminist to shape research in a helpful way. Kleinman (2007, p.2) struggled with this issue, especially when she was told by a non-feminist colleague that being a feminist researcher meant she had an agenda.

However, this assumes that other researchers do not "knowingly or ignorantly, express a perspective." Not only do other researchers take a perspective into their research, this viewpoint shapes the product of both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Journaling and continued self-reflection throughout the research process allowed the researcher to make sure she was displaying the words of the women in the study authentically, and showing insights generated from her own experiences.

**Summary**

The purpose of this study was to explore perspectives of women currently employed in executive level leadership and who had therefore successfully navigated the challenges, to gain insight into how career advancement took place, in particular, examining women working in the area of higher education student services. The current study used a qualitative, multiple case study approach. A case study is described as a qualitative approach where a bounded system(s) is studied over time, through detailed data collection, involving multiple sources of information. As suggested in the theoretical framework women may have an intersection of identities that play a role in life experiences, institutions, and leadership position. The researcher of the current study was interested in examining the multiple complexities that arose in each individual case, allowing each case to stand alone. In order to provide more robust, compelling findings, multiple case studies were included, adding a deeper analysis of the experiences of women in higher education. This study used multiple sources of information including interviews, institutional policies, journals, letters, organizational charts, vitas, and speeches to create an in-depth emersion into each case.

# CHAPTER 4

## Results Women Executives Leadership Path and Focus

**Introduction**

The study took place in the fall of 2012 and spring/summer of 2013, with the purpose of exploring perspectives of women currently employed in executive level leadership, who had therefore successfully navigated the challenges, to gain insight into how career advancement took place, in particular, examining women working in the area of higher education student services.  The research included five extraordinary women holding Vice President/Chancellor of Student Affairs positions, using a multiple case study design. The study addressed three primary research questions:

1.  What path to career advancement did women take to reach their executive level leadership position?

2.  Do women executive leaders have a preferred leadership style?  Do they feel they can express their preferred leadership style, and do they feel they have been endorsed and nurtured in the institution?  What other factors do women executive leaders feel played a role in their leadership development either as a support or a barrier?

3.  What internal dialogue in their leadership narrative do women executives have as they make leadership decisions?

Chapter One created a background for the study, emphasizing the development of women into executive level leadership is critical.  Chapter Two provided a theoretical framework focused on three bodies of research literature: gender and oppression research, transformational leadership research, and research on an internal process referred to as

the Third Shift.  Chapter Three created the context of the multiple case study design of the study, emphasizing details of participant selection, data collection, methods of data analysis, details of the audit trail, and the role of the researcher.  Chapter Four introduces the demographics of the women in the study and provides a separate analysis for participant's personal journey and an analysis of their leadership style within their current organizations.  Chapter Five provides compiled results focusing on what internal dialogue in their leadership narrative women executives have as they make leadership decisions and other factors women executive leaders felt played a role in their leadership development, either as a support or a barrier.  Chapter Six provides an analysis, limitations, and implication drawn from the study.

An overview of the women in the study illustrates a median age of the women in the study was 59 years old and an ethnicity/racial background breakdown of four White and one Hispanic.  The family status of each woman varied, presented in Table 4.1.

*Table 4.1*

*Marital and Family Situation of Participants*

| Participant | Marital Status | Children Status |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Participant #1 | Married | 1 grown child |
| Participant #2 | Married | 2 grown children |
| Participant #3 | Divorced | 1 grown child |
| Participant #4 | Married | 2 grown step-children (married after children grown) |
| Participant #5 | Married | No children |

The number of divisions supervised by the participants in the study ranged from 12 to 27, with as many as 12 direct reports and 61 average hours worked per week. The Chronicles of Higher Education (2012) places the national median income of vice president of student affairs for males and females at $194,056, for individuals with a doctoral degree, and at $129,600, for individuals with a master's degree.  The median income of the women interviewed for this study was $160,000. In the study, two women received a higher salary than the median specified in the Chronicles of Higher Education, one of whom was the vice president with a master's degree, who placed below the amount made for individuals with a doctorate, but higher than those with a master's degree.  None of the women reported outside supplemental income for teaching or community work related to their job.

**Exploring the Labyrinths**

The first research question asked what path to career advancement women took to reach their executive level leadership position.  Each woman represented attests a woman can attain an executive level leadership position.  The data showed a diversity of different positions and different experiences, both inside and outside the University, prior to becoming the Vice President of Student Affairs. Table 4.2 demonstrates an overview of the participant pseudonyms, age, size of institution, and number of divisions they currently supervise.

*Table 4.2*

*Demographics of Participants*

| Participant | Age | Institutional Name and Size | # of Divisions |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Vice President Emerson | 60 | Square University 14,000 students | 12 |
| Vice President Morrison | 55 | Circle University 14,000 students | 13 |
| Vice President Dickinson | 65 | Triangle University 42,000 students | 25 |
| Vice President Callcott | 58 | Diamond University 30,000 students | 24 |
| Vice President Woolf | 59 | Rectangle University 24,000 students | 27 |

**Square University, Vice President Emerson Case Study.**

Vice President Emerson holds a Doctor of Education degree. Dr. Emerson has been working in higher education since she was 22 years old. Her path toward education started with an undergraduate degree in elementary education, with little idea her journey would lead to a job in Student Affairs. She did not originally see herself taking on an executive level leadership role. Her first position in the University Foundation office led the way for her entry into Student Affairs *(interview and curriculum vita)*.

> I was working for the VP for the Foundation, and we had students that
>
> would wander in looking for the administration building and most of
>
> the time they were lost . . . they would wander in and I would help
>
> them. *(interview)*

After realizing what she loved most about her job was helping the students when they were lost, she discovered she could complete a Master's degree focusing on student personnel services. Within student affairs, she began as the administrative assistant for the vice president of the university foundation office and vice president of student affairs, moving next into assistant to the vice president of student affairs, then assistant vice president of student affairs, then associate VP and dean of students, and finally vice president of student affairs, a position she has served in at three institutions. *(vita)* Square University is one of the smallest institutions she has worked for.

> My job involves supervising all the co-curricular and out of class experiences of students. . . my day is very diverse. Today I have talked to a faculty member about a student of concern, I've attended a dean's council meeting, and I've met with the director of recruitment and orientation. I've answered an email from a faculty member about academic dishonesty and plagiarism, and I have read a public safety incident report, I've worked with my assistant on survey research of students who registered for the fall and, when their registration was canceled for non-payment, they didn't re-register, so we called all those students. *(interview)*

Dr. Emerson has served in the role of Vice President of Student Affairs for 15 years at three different institutions, including the university where she currently serves as vice president. Dr. Emerson indicated her background in student affairs is unique in that she has never held a director position. She began working in the office of student affairs, and moved up within the positions directly located in the office of student affairs. The

many years in higher education and the multiple university background helps her feel prepared to hold a vice president of student affairs position. *(interview and journal)*

### Circle University, Vice President Morrison Case Study

Vice President Morrison holds a Doctor of Education. Dr. Morrison attributes her pathway in Student Affairs to being at the right place at the right time. Her career developed in the area of enrollment management. Part of Dr. Morrison's career was a departure from the traditional higher education career path with her employment as a city manager for a number of years. In her position as a city manager, she had a mentor, whom she described as extremely beneficial for management opportunities, exposure to city governments, management structures, budget development, grantsmanship, and believing in her capabilities.  Dr. Morrison's first position at her current institution was as associate vice president of enrollment management.  After seven years serving in that position, she had the opportunity to serve as interim vice president of student affairs before taking on the position full-time. *(interview and vita)*

> I served as Interim Vice President of Student Affairs, and then I threw
> my hat in the ring.  I was successful in the national search and I think
> largely because this institution's primary focus of student affairs is
> around enrollment management.  But we have expanded to so many
> other areas, but I felt prepared, and I think it's because I understood
> the organization. *(interview)*

Dr. Morrison feels it is important to remember the most important mission at the institution is the academic mission and that her role in student affairs is to support the students, both inside and outside the classroom, to help them be successful. *(letter)*

I don't have a strong development background, so I did pursue a

doctorate program in adult learning . . . I do think that helped round

out my background. But the most important move I made, I think, was

the organizational structure within student affairs, and the hiring of an

outstanding associate vice president, who is also the dean of students,

and who has an extremely strong student development background, so

that sort of filled in the gaps where my background was limited.

*(interview)*

Dr. Morrison has served in the role of Vice President of Student Affairs for six

years. Although she did not originally see herself in the role of vice president of student

affairs, she felt prepared. Her average day consists of many different tasks with no two

days looking alike.

I do a lot of meetings, lots of email, and I try to have a lot of action.

My role is to support the division in terms of resources and also to

know what's going on. I try to stay out of the **way** of all our

competent directors. We've got a great leadership team and I think it's

best if I just support them . . . higher ed has certainly taken a new shift

around safety the past six to seven years. So during the time I've been

vice president, there's no question that I would guess that 40 percent

of my job is focused on security and safety and making sure students

are safe, and that they have the kind of support services available not

only for recruitment and retention but also life safety concerns.

*(interview)*

**Triangle University, Vice President Dickinson Case Study**

Vice President Dickinson holds a Doctor of Philosophy. Dr. Dickinson's pathway to higher education began in Academic Affairs, as an assistant professor at a Liberal Arts College before moving into administration as the assistant dean of the college, associate dean of the college, dean of academics, and finally, dean of the college. Dr. Dickinson made her transition into student life as the dean of student life at a large institution, overseeing athletics programs, intramural recreation, first-year programs for students, and a handful of other programs. Dr. Dickinson's next step several years later moved her into the role of vice president of student services, adding the experience of administering student service programs, such as admissions and financial aid. *(interview and vita)*

> Well, I think that I've come to believe that it is very important for people in student affairs to develop expertise along multiple lines. I was very, very fortunate in my…at the beginning of my work, that I worked in an office, in a dean of the college officially, where essentially every year there were modifications to our portfolio. That comes from the fact of being in a relatively small college where you could, for example, this year I was the dean of the freshman class, but next year, I was the dean of the sophomore class. I would keep the same students that I would deal with on different issues, or I would be the liaison to the Residential Program, or I would be involved with International students. So there was enough overlap, and enough, I would say, ongoing professional development that really got me to touch every part of the enterprise. *(interview)*

Dr. Dickinson has served in the capacity of vice president of student affairs at two institutions for a total of 12 years. Similar to Dr. Morrison, her average day consists of many different tasks with no two days looking alike.

> Well, I'm responsible for the depth of services and programs that support student success, that are not strictly related to the academic program... one could easily say that there's no such thing as a normal day.  I will have a variety of things going on from issues having to do with personnel, planning, budget, one-on-one meetings with my senior people, vice presidents, executive committee meetings.  I will have meetings with say, the student government, or student groups . A fair amount of interruptions in other words, new things popup, as you probably imagine, so no day is the same, if a day goes as planned, it's pretty unusual. *(interview)*

**Diamond University, Vice President Callcott Case Study**

Vice President Callcott holds a Master of Arts degree.  Her career path started as a member of the Peace Corps and a background in health education.  She made her entry into Student Affairs in residential life as a Hall Director. Her path moved her through residential life as the Assistant Director and then Director.  Vice President Callcott made the transition from the residential side of student affairs and served in the capacity of dean of students, and assistant and associate vice president of student affairs, before taking on the role of vice president.  Vice President Callcott feels fortunate to have been given the career opportunities she has to prepare her to serve in this capacity. *(interview and vita)*

Well, I've been fortunate, I didn't know I was going to be a Vice

President one day until the seed was planted in my mind, about 10

years ago, by one of my mentors who said, "You really need to think

about being a Vice President of Student Affairs." And I said, "Oh

really? Oh, I'm not qualified. No, no, no." . . . I've been fortunate to

have a lot of supervisors over the years who've allowed me to learn

and grow. *(interview)*

Vice President Callcott has served in the role of vice president for one and half

years. Her average day as a vice president keeps her busy from early in the morning until

late in the evenings.

I usually get up at 4:30 and spend some quiet time, reading and

journaling and then I usually dive into a little bit of e-mail or reading

the paper to just skim the paper for critical stories related to the

university or sometimes things I'm interested in, you know, what's

going on nationally in the State . . . with our students. I skim about

three different newspapers in about 30 minutes. Just roughly. I mean

some mornings, like today, didn't do any of that because I was at work

until 11:00 pm last night. So I got up, took a shower, and came to

work. So my typical day is a 4:30 start. I'm usually in the office by

6:45 and I work, I'm in meetings, most often back to back, from about

8:30 until sometimes, like last night 11:00pm. I'm in meetings with

the cabinet, with colleagues in the division, with colleagues around the

campus, with students, with the student government. I work very

closely with the student government here, and . . . also with the

foundation which I work closely with on fundraising.  And, you know,

I'll host . . . I'll go to a couple of student events a week that are usually

at night.  I will host a student dinner or parent dinners or some sort of

dinners, usually once or twice a week, and then I'm usually at some

sort of student sporting event every week. *(interview)*

Vice President Callcott originally did not see herself in the role of vice president.

She had many mentors who helped her see herself growing into and taking on that role.

*(interview and journal)*

**Rectangle University, Vice President Woolf Case Study**

Vice President Woolf holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Educational

Administration. Dr. Woolf's career path started as a residence hall director at a large

university.  After switching to another large University, she moved on to be assistant

director of student affairs, which allowed her to work up through the area of student

affairs over a 25-year career before changing universities to become the vice president of

student affairs at her current institution.  Dr. Woolf has worked at three different

universities throughout her career.  Dr. Woolf originally could not see herself in the role

of vice president, she had to do a lot of research before she discovered not all vice

presidencies look the same and it was really about institutional fit.  The university where

she spent the majority of her career required the vice president to live on campus and to

be in the center of the campus at all times.  Dr. Woolf, who preferred a mellower

leadership role, where she did not have to be on stage at all times, felt she could never

fulfill that role. However, through her work with other professionals, she found that she

could take on a vice president leadership role, but that it might not be at the same type of

institution she was working in at the time. *(interview and vita)*

> Most of my experience has been at large research universities. As an
>
> undergrad, I started at Grass University, and I did my master's at Plain
>
> State. And then I started working as a young professional at Sunny
>
> University, where I had an opportunity to advance in one university
>
> division. I was fortunate to have a promotional opportunity every few
>
> years, and I took advantage of those growth opportunities to keep
>
> learning and expanding my portfolio and my experiences. I was
>
> fortunate in that regard, and I started working on my doctorate,
>
> realizing that was important even though I didn't think I wanted to be
>
> a VP at that time. I still recognized the importance of education and
>
> understanding the larger higher education environment that influenced
>
> student affairs. So that was important in my preparation. I moved
>
> from being in a coordinator-level position, starting out in off-campus
>
> student services working with commuter issues and commuter affairs.
>
> I then moved into an associate vice president position. I was at one
>
> institution for about 26 years, a long time . . . and finally began to
>
> realize I didn't want to be a vice president at that type of university
>
> where, for example, at Sunny University, the vice president lived in a
>
> big house right in the middle of campus. It was literally a 24/7
>
> lifestyle of hosting different activities in the home, and doing
>
> development work at all the football games and basketball games. I

thought "that is not for me." But when I began to recognize "Do I

want to stay as an associate for the rest of my career?" I began to

think, "No, I'm not happy with that notion." I didn't see myself

staying energized, so I just began to talk to colleagues who were in

vice president positions at different types of institutions and began to

realize that there is this notion of institutional fit for what I wanted and

needed. There were indeed opportunities and leadership possibilities

out there. *(interview)*

When asked what a critical moment was in her decision to move onto a vice

presidency, Dr. Woolf noted that a change in vice presidents really challenged her to look

at why she was not in a vice president role.

One critical moment was, I think, when my vice president at Sunny

University changed , and I had somebody new come in and challenge

me. He saw what I had done in terms of professional leadership . . .

and it was him challenging me to say "So why aren't you . . ." So it

was really that nudging, "So why aren't you . . . it doesn't make sense

that you wouldn't pursue a vice presidency." Other colleagues also

asked me why I wasn't pursuing VP positions and often even

nominated me for these positions. All of that, combined with  some

self-reflection, caused me to realize that maybe I'm not looking at this

in the right way, maybe I'm getting stuck in this paradigm that  a vice

presidency needs to look like this. At that time, I wasn't being open to

the possibilities that I can shape what a vice presidency looks like.

That was probably one of those critical moments when I realized that maybe I was selling myself short, that I had some misconceptions about what a vice president had to look like, and that it didn't have to be a  24/7 job.  I began to realize, hey, I can look at my own strengths and needs and what I can offer and what I can gain and find a position that fits.  Another pivotal point was when I began to do my search and realized that institution type did make a difference and not all VP positions are the same. *(interview)*

Dr. Woolf has served in the role of vice president for seven years and she feels she has found her niche at her current institution. *(interview and journal)*

**Student-Centered Leadership**

*This above all, to thine own self be true.*

*-William Shakespeare*

The major theme in this study was students.  The students were what the women enjoyed most about their jobs.  In addition, the student-focus provided variety in their jobs and a team focus.  When asked what style of leadership they exemplified, participants responded student and staff-centered, providing mentoring and direction for those around them.  A leadership style where individuals may not always agree with the decisions they have to make, but where mutual respect surrounds the team because a more democratic and participative leadership style is in place.  There was a true affection in the concept that no two days were the same, suggesting a belief in constant learning.

**Square University, Vice President Emerson Case Study.**

No two days look the same for Vice President Emerson.  Each day is diverse and has its surprises and challenges. In one day the Vice President attends a meeting with a faculty member about a student of concern, a dean's council meeting, a meeting with the director of recruitment and admissions, answers email, addresses academic dishonesty issues, addresses public safety reports, works on assessment data, or develops surveys for new research.  Part of the preparation for a job in Student Affairs is being equipped for and enjoying the diversity each day brings.  Dr. Emerson describes people in student affairs as "just kind of salt of the earth kind of folks, they're not pretentious, they're not trying to conquer the world, they're trying to save maybe one student. And they are hard-working, they work nights and weekends . . . and we don't get recognition for that. If there's a crisis, we'll work around the clock, we don't take time off." *(interview)*

Dr. Emerson feels it is important to be true to oneself, and not worry about others expectations.  She worked for two opposite leaders in her career: Mr. Charismatic, a man who could move the team forward quickly, but also took credit for all the work; and, a big-hearted man who treated people with respect, which made folks want to work hard around him, but for whom it was a struggle to complete tasks.  Dr. Emerson has tried to adapt and pull the best from these leaders: making significant accomplishments, humility and respect. *(journal)*

I've been the first woman vice president at two Universities, been the first woman on the president's cabinet, I've been the first woman that people have had to report to in their career.  And some people would rather work for a man.  I'm not sure.  I think because women are so

collaborative and collegial, you know, they are more team focused as

opposed to individually focused.  There's research that shows that

people think that a woman can't make a decision, and so I'm always

very clear that I want people's opinions, I want people to feel

empowered and to speak up.  I want them to feel part of the team, but

make no mistake: when the rubber meets the road, if a decision needs

to be made now, I will make it and I will take responsibility for it.

But, for some reason, I've had this conversation with male colleagues

that report to me, and they always seem to think that a woman is more

wishy-washy than a male or they don't have confidence in a woman's

decisions as much as they would a male's decisions . . . I tried to treat

everybody the way I would like to be treated, if not better.  And that to

me is what leadership is all about.  It's not about you personally or

another person, it's about doing something for the greater good and

trying to leave the place maybe a little better than the way you found

it, right? *(interview)*

In *letters and a speech* written by Dr. Emerson, she expressed how important the

success of the students is to the university.  Dr. Emerson sees the student affairs team as

the division that supports "students in their academic, personal, ethical, cultural, social

and career development."  *(letter)* She considers all Student Affairs' staff to be well-

educated and highly trained people who care about the students and believe it is a

privilege to serve as mentors and champions.  The work they all do with the students hold

intense value, meaning, and purpose.  Dr. Emerson opens up to her staff, students, and parents and maintains an open-door policy for feedback, questions and concerns. *(speech)*

The organizational chart (Figure 4.1) of the institution allows for all directors to have a direct line to Dr. Emerson.  She feels it is important they have access to discuss and give feedback to her.  She has never held the position of a director, but she hires excellent people who know that they are doing to do their jobs, and she does not micromanage their divisions.  She does not feel she is an expert, this way she can let her directors do their jobs without looking over their shoulders with "Well, when I was in your job, this is what I did." *(interview)* She sees this as promising because she can see the big picture of the organization. This enables her to focus on the mission of student affairs enhancing the student living-learning experience, where the students are the most valuable asset to the university.  Both as students are receiving their degrees, but through student employment, because Student Affairs is the largest employer of students. Overall, Vice President Emerson's interviews, organizational chart, mission statement, letters to students and parents, and speeches triangulate a leader who appreciates feedback, patience, understanding, encouragement, mentoring, and support for staff and students.

Figure 4.1    Organizational Chart Vice President Emerson
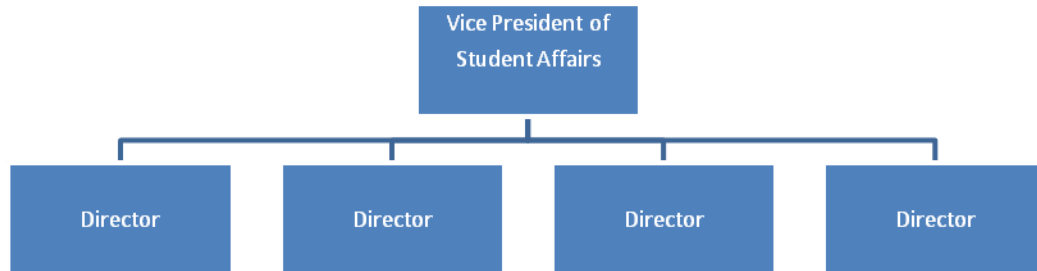


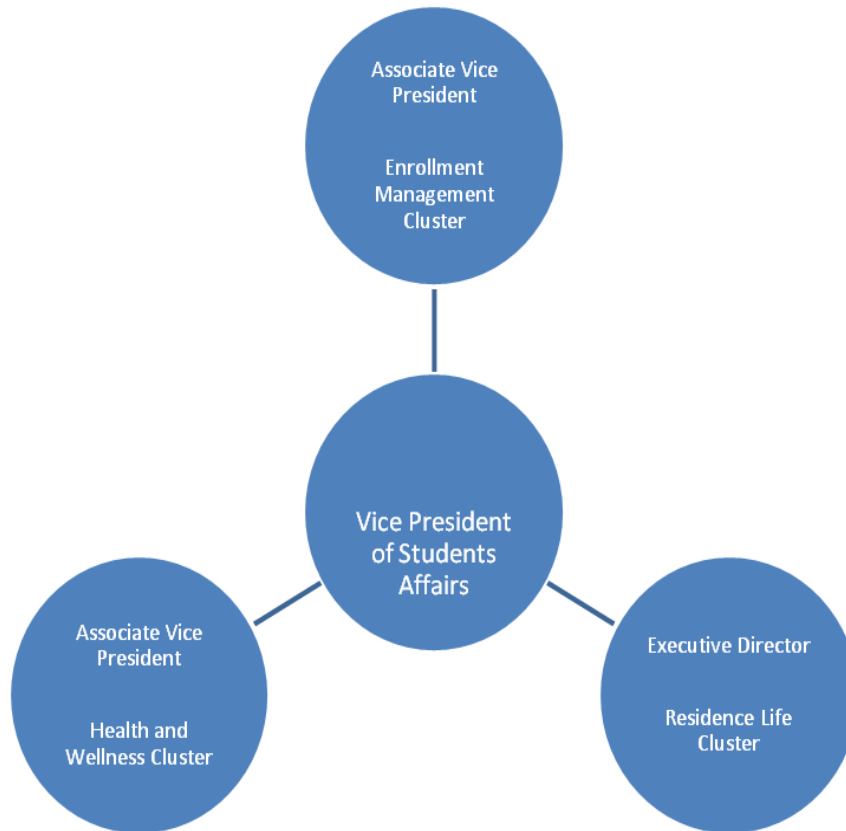**Circle University, Vice President Morrison Case Study**

Dr. Morrison described her day-to-day routine as being continuously active.  She sees her role as vice president to be one that supports the division in terms of resources and keeping her stakeholders up-to-date on what is going on.  She described her day as including a few meetings with many stakeholders and an extraordinary amount of email.  Over the past seven years, almost half of her job has included increased security and safety for students.  She sees having key relationships and working on those relationships as being critical aspects of obtaining the position as vice president in student affairs.  "It is making sure that you don't feel like you have arrived and you don't need the input of others" *(journal)* which has helped her most in her career.  Dr. Morrison has had mentors along her pathway, but she also believes in being a mentor and working with students, overall staying student-centered.  When describing her leadership style, Dr. Morrison puts much of her belief in hiring high-quality people. *(interview)*

Well, I really believe in hiring great people and staying out of their

way.  And ensuring that I stay up-to-date on everything they're

working on.  But, if anything, I think I get more done through

collaboration than any other style, not only with the people that report

to me, but the people that are on my collaborations across the

university, whether it be the academic area or other divisions.  I just

believe collaboration gets more done . . . I don't have a strong student

development background, so I did pursue a doctorate program in Adult

Learning and Technology while at Circle University, while I was an

associate vice president.  I think that helped round out my background.

But the most important move I made I think was (hiring) you know the

associate vice president who is also the dean of students, who has an

extremely strong student development background so that sort of filled

in the gaps where my background was limited . . . I try to stay out of

the way of all my competent directors.  We've got a great leadership

team and I think it's best if I support them, as well as knowing what's

going on. *(interview)*

Dr. Morrison feels leadership is not about power, but empowerment, "I think the

best model is to try to approach her team in a selfless way, it's not about you and your

achievements; it is about empowering others and seeing them succeed." *(speech)* She

feels that to focus on the students is the key concept to bring all divisions of the

university together.  She enjoys reaching out to other departments across campus to see

what they can learn from each other and how they can each benefit students better.  The

organizational chart (Figure 4.2) of her division reflects both her belief in hiring excellent

people to run their divisions, but also collaboration.

Figure 4.2    Organizational Chart Vice President Morrison

Associate Vice President

Enrollment Management Cluster

Vice President of Students Affairs

Associate Vice President

Health and Wellness Cluster

Executive Director

Residence Life Cluster

Although all paths lead to the vice president, her organizational chart depicts each division of student affairs sitting in a cluster, as opposed to the traditional hierarchical model.  (*interview*) Dr. Morrison feels it is important to never feel like she has arrived as a leader, her team and learning are important to keep at the forefront of her mind. (*journal*)

> I want always to stay fresh.  I think we all need to continue to learn
> and know that we're all on a learning curve.  Never feel like we've
> arrived, because when you start doing that I think you lose sight of
> how you want to stay fresh in what you're doing.  And I don't believe
> that I have the perfect vision for a division.  I think it's a collective
> vision based on the extra piece of everybody that's part of our student

affairs division. We also learn from others in other areas that you

know question and give us ideas. *(interview)*

Dr. Morrison's mission for student affairs ties in the importance of the students'

overall development, helping students become informed and contributing citizens. Each

department is asked to support at least one of the students learning outcomes, always

asking the question "What do we want our students to learn?" *(letter)* Dr. Morrison

believes when one chooses to be a vice president of student affairs, it is a lifestyle, not a

job. It includes nights and weekends, but incorporating family is part of that lifestyle.

I feel I am still a learner, and I'm still right in the middle of my career.

Of course I see my peers begin to retire, and it's so strange because I

feel just yesterday I was 27, you know and just sort of really launching

a career if you will . . . But I think one thing leads to another. Never

burning bridges, reaching out to other people and not feeling like there

are barriers. I think who we are as people and what we have inside is

what carries us to having that determination to forge on. Not setting up

barriers for ourselves is kind of my, well, it's obviously my mantra.

*(interview)*

When reflecting on what satisfies her most about working in student affairs and her

leadership role as vice president of student affairs, Dr. Morrison feels the variety and

diversity are what keep her energized.

I love the very nature of the rules are constantly changing. And there

are new things you work on and the work load is just so different. You

know one minute I might be working on a student improvement

challenge, or how to revamp scholarship programs and the next minute

I'll be working with the dean of students on something related to a

student issue. And the best part is working directly with students. I

just think the very nature and just being able to work with a really

outstanding leadership team here. I'm very fortunate in that it's a top

notch team in student affairs, as well as in the University, so I value

those relationships. *(interview)*

Overall, Vice President Morrison's interviews, organizational chart and mission, student learning outcomes, and speeches triangulate a leader who focuses on a strong team, dynamic, with collaboration and learning coming from all areas of the university focused on the student.

### Triangle University, Vice President Dickinson Case Study

Dr. Dickinson proclaims her days are never normal. She has a variety of tasks to do. "I will have a variety of things going on from issues having to do with personnel, planning, budget, one-on-one meetings with my senior people, chancellors, executive committee meetings." *(interview)* She feels it is important to gain knowledge along multiple lines to serve the students. *(speech)* The principles Dr. Dickinson lives by include doing the work up front and making sure that her decisions always keep the students at the forefront.

Do the work up front, don't ever cut corners, make sure that you are

not getting ahead of the students. Always, always make sure that you

bring into the conversation all those that in one way or another have an

influence in the issue. Always behave with integrity, you always make

sure that anybody, anytime can step into your business, into the work

that you are doing, and that you're fully ready to disclose absolutely

everything. Pay attention too, very carefully, to when you are working

with an issue, try to move this issue, try to think of this issue in as

many iterations as you can going forward so that you can have a sense

of what might come and how you're thinking about it. This is

something that many of us do in our business; do you know what the

headline is? How is the issue going to be perceived, and how will you

frankly, be putting the interests of the students and the institution first.

So, you know, it's all about integrity, it's all about preparation, it's all

about supporting the students, and making sure that your work is truly

excellent. *(interview)*

Dr. Dickinson believes in the importance of putting the students first in her

position. In her *speeches and letters* to students, she emphasizes how important they are

to the mission of the university. She reiterates, with students, that student affairs plays a

central role and she wants to make it as productive and rewarding as possible. She also

emphasizes the importance of five values: integrity, excellence, accountability, respect,

and service, all of which shape the student experience.

It has served me well because of those principles we've talked about

before. It was the focus of the students. People will say, "You have to

make decisions that pit the students against the institution." And my

answer to that is, if you're doing right by the students, you're always

doing right by the institution. So there's no conflict there. *(interview)*

In addition to her student-centered approach to leadership, Dr. Dickinson also sees an importance in engaging and including her staff as much as possible. When asked about her leadership style, she said she valued open criticism and inclusion.

Well, there's some things that over the years have become more . . . have crystallized in my mind. One I absolutely have in operation is that of being very open to criticism and self-analysis. Secondly, I bring to the table, I will make sure people feel that they can bring their ideas and thoughts forward. That it is an inclusive, it's an inclusive management approach. The standards have to be high, there is no choice there, the standards have to be very high. So we all have to be there, ready to participate in performance evaluation and to do that well. And we have to look for the students' input in what we do. We have to be collaborative, absolutely collaborative, and be able to assist all of our institutional colleagues, as well as our constituencies, you know. Parents, for example, or friends of the institution, alumni, and so forth. So, you know, I think that is what is important to me as a leader. *(interview)*

Dr. Dickinson sees the value of encouraging individuals who wish to move forward in their careers, mentoring and nurturing them along their pathway. She feels professional development is extremely important. *(speech)* The organizational chart of the university shows an expansive number of departments, but despite the large size, Dr. Dickinson encourages direct involvement as much as possible, as she feels this is the way to gain knowledge and understanding and to continue to focus on the students.

Figure 4.3    Organizational Chart Vice President

Dickinso
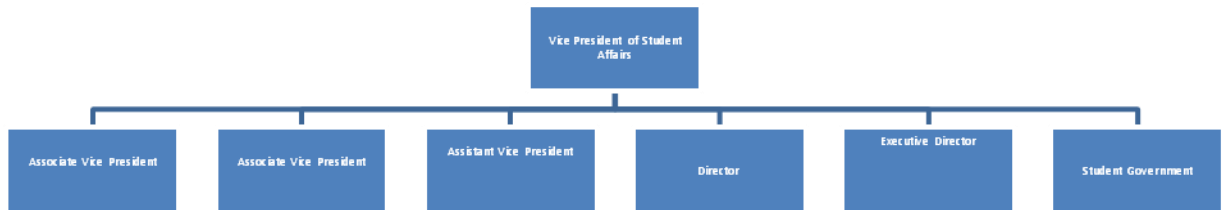


**Diamond University, Vice President Callcott Case Study**

Vice President Callcott has a different schedule, depending on the time of year. She sees her job as cyclical, where each year around the same time, she attends sporting events, charity events, and student and parent dinners.  Her schedule includes a number of night and weekend events focused around the students.  She considers herself an inquisitive person and likes to work hard, although she does not consider herself a workaholic. *(journal)*  When she describes her leadership style, she focuses on what she might want to leave behind and what people may say she stood for, not what she accomplished, but what she stood for.  She has seen herself evolve through the many leadership positions she has taken on and has forced herself to think hard about what she values as a leader. *(interview)*

> Not what I accomplished, but what I stood for, what were the
>
> principles or values that I wanted to stand for.  So I've really tried to

take time once a year.  You have just a half hour to sit with a cup of coffee and reflect.  Am I living by my values?  Am I getting off course?  How do I get myself back on course?  And I've given my direct reports permission to smack me if they see me getting off course, "cause it's easy."  It's easy when you're running around like a chicken with your head cut off.  I believe in collaborative leadership and shared—sort of shared decision-making and I've hired great people.  I've inherited some great people, and I've set the stage for us to be a team where we may have to disagree, including with me, in our team meetings because if we're going to make better decisions, we put it all out there.  But to do it respectfully, but to be honest, and that there won't be repercussions for that.  I also can be decisive when needed.  You know, when there's a whole bunch of conflict, I gather information.  Sometimes I used to gather more information and more and more, but in my role, I don't have time as much . . . More comfortable with making decisions, but I'm still pretty much an info gatherer.  In fact, that's probably one of my . . . faults, still taking too much information.  I'm a listener, a learner, and I try to walk my talk. I try to be a visible role model to my team. *(interview)*

Vice President Callcott values the teamwork and nurturing she has received from her mentors and hopes to provide much of the same leadership to her students and staff. In a *speech* to student female leaders, she admitted that, for the first 15 years of her career, she did not see herself as a leader, she could not even imagine it as a possibility.

She credits this to being stuck in the traditional picture of being a leader. When she

started in administration, not many women sat in leadership positions, making it hard to

see herself in leadership. Over time, she learned leadership did not need to be "suit and

tie, male leadership," *(speech)* but leadership that was true and authentic. Self-designed

to fit one's own personal leadership style to reflect and be grounded in values and

principles. In the speech to these female leaders, she left these parting words:

> Last thoughts: BE authentic! If you don't know what that means for
>
> you—start journaling about it— think about what you want people to
>
> say they think you stand for—it's a question that helped me think
>
> about who I want to be AND then think about the behaviors and
>
> actions that will reflect those qualities. Being authentic will help you
>
> be healthier, grow, and be at peace with who you are becoming. Cut
>
> yourself some slack. We are becoming leaders we aspire to be. That
>
> means we are going to struggle, and also are going to fail and
>
> sometimes be successful. *(speech)*

Vice President Callcott firmly believes in the team approach. She has been

working on building a team that communicates, up, sideways, diagonally, down. "The

trick is not only working on myself, but working with my team leaders to help them to be

receptive and to make room for people to disagree with them." *(interview)* Disagreement

is also seen as part of the process of learning and nurturing a team. *(journal)* Her

organizational chart (Figure 4.4), similar to Dr. Dickinson's, is a large unit and has many

supports built into the senior leadership team.

Figure 4.4      Organizational Chart Vice President Callcott
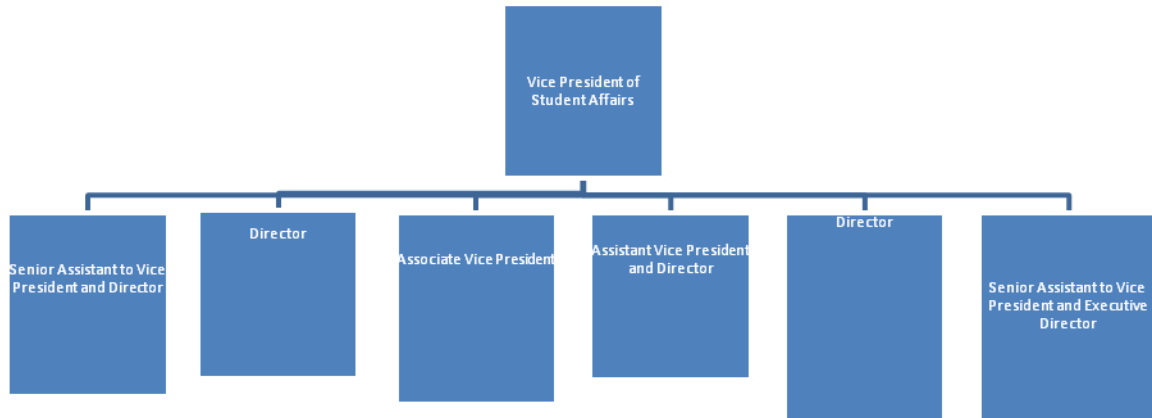


**Rectangle University, Vice President Woolf Case Study.**

Vice President Woolf oversees what she considers a nontraditional division of student affairs, one that houses academically focused initiatives, such as supplemental instruction and tutoring.

> As a vice president for student affairs, I have oversight of a fairly large division of student affairs, that's traditional in some respects, but non-traditional in others. I do not have the enrollment services function at this university. There's an associate provost for enrollment that has financial aid, admissions, and advising. But we do have a fairly large academic support component within student affairs here, so we have a lot of things including: running student computer labs, testing centers,

tutoring and supplemental instruction, and other academic support

programs and services.  So that's a little bit unique, but otherwise it's

fairly traditional, including housing and residence life and other

student engagement programs and services such as counseling and

health..  The campus has a large commuter population and all the

support programs and services and educational opportunities that go

with those. *(interview)*

Dr. Woolf has a diverse range of activities she performed daily. She finds her job

rewarding, with the focus and measures of success being student-focused. *(letter)* She

feels each day is a learning experience.  She measures success by providing quality

student services and remaining student focused.

I think success is . . . there's so many different ways to slice and dice

that.  But for me success has been building a division of student affairs

that truly understands the core mission that we play within the

institution around fostering student learning and success.  And that our

mission, our role, is more important than just providing a few support

services.  Those are certainly important, but it's part of this bigger

piece of what we do to foster student learning.  We have an important

role and we have to demonstrate how are we impacting learning.

Through things like having learning outcomes and assessing what

we're doing, how we're doing it, and whether  we are being effective.

I think that's what I have felt good about -- creating a culture of

professionals and educators that are part of this bigger enterprise of

higher education. It has been rewarding . . . although we're not

completely there yet. We still have some staff and areas who function

more in their silos and do not necessarily understand the big picture of

student learning outcomes. But I believe in being integrated into the

institution as a whole, working collaboratively with vice presidents,

deans, and faculty -- being a player at the table. *(interview)*

In her *letters and speeches* to students she capitalizes on the fact the university is

centered on their experiences. "The student affairs personnel support (students) goals

and strive to adapt our services to the ever changing needs of our student." Part of the

core competencies set up by Dr. Woolf includes the expectation that each student affairs'

employee will build collaborative relationships with other divisions and students. It is

critical to work productively as a team, engage in networking and mentoring

relationships, maintain cross-cultural awareness, contribute to the campus environment,

and share information with internal and external stakeholders. *(speech)* The mission of

Student Affairs is to promote student learning, well-being and success. Dr. Woolf feels

part of the core values of Students Affairs is always to stay inclusive, collaborative, and

at all times remain student-centered. *(letter)* Dr. Woolf described her leadership style as

service oriented. She feels it is important to always assess the situation so that the right

environment can be created for staff and students to flourish.

I think my leadership style is situational leadership or servant

leadership. I can be an effective catalyst and facilitator for moving our

division forward and doing the job and fulfilling the mission that we

have. I'm not going to do that in a singular way. I'm effective in

building people around me, empowering them, helping them to grow

and learn and be effective, so they can be the best that they can be. So

they can support us as a division as we move forward.  I can step up

and be that leader that needs to take command and make decisions and

set the course and ask people to follow and embrace that, but I'm more

comfortable when I can be empowering, collaborative, and working as

a team.  In making decisions, I'd much rather get team buy-in and

involvement.  Sometimes that frustrates people because it takes more

time. *(interview)*

The organizational chart (Figure 4.5), mission, letter and speeches to students

support the student-centered, collaborative approach of leadership.  Dr. Woolf feels she is

always learning from her staff and they work together to create the best possible

experience for the students.  *(journal)* Dr. Woolf and her division of student affairs

believe looking at the student as a whole is critical to the success of the students at

Rectangle University.

Within student affairs, we tend to have at our heart looking at the well-

being and success of students.  I think that shapes the fact that we are

so focused around student development and student learning and the

student experience -- looking at the whole student and  students' lives

outside of their classes. I think we have a different way of looking at

that educational experience when students come to college.  We can

serve as the "conscience" of the campus as we deal with issues of

personal growth, social justice . We try to get people to think about not

staying in a silo, and to remember that we are educators along with our

academic colleagues. *(journal)*

Figure 4.5        Organizational Chart Vice President Woolf
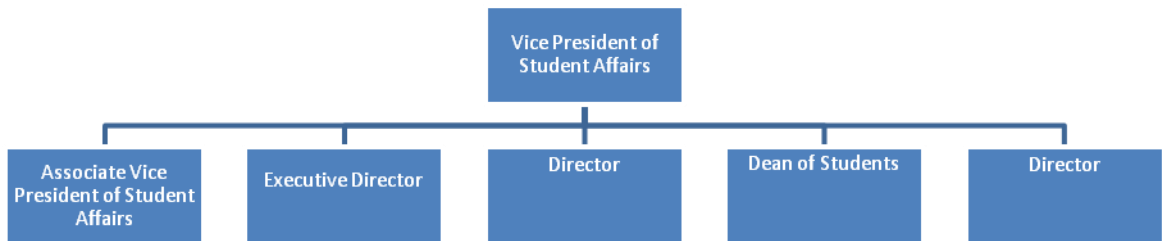


**Summary**

Chapter Four presented the demographics and the first part of the themes present

through the coding and categorizing process (Appendix E). Paying particular attention to

the individual analysis of the women's demographics, path to career advancement, and

preferred leadership style.

The first research question asked what paths these women took to reach their

chief executive leadership positions. Each woman attested that women in executive level

leadership positions is possible and tells of a different pathway toward the vice president

of student affairs position.  The vitae and organizational charts show a path that weaves

through multiple Universities.  No one woman was able to move up the ranks to Vice

President by working at only one University.  The interviews and curriculum vitae show

a diversity of different positions and different experiences inside and outside the

university prior to becoming the vice president of student affairs.

Part of the second research question inquires about their preferred leadership style; the research demonstrated a focus point of the students. The students were what all these women enjoyed most about their jobs. In addition, the student-focus provided variety to their jobs and the importance of a team focus. When asked what style of leadership they exemplified, participants responded student and staff centered, providing mentoring and direction for those around them. A leadership style where staff members may not always agree with the decisions they have to make, but a mutual respect surrounds the team.

The following chapter will continue to reveal the results of the research. Chapter Five provides compiled results focusing on what internal dialogue in their leadership narrative women executives have as they make leadership decisions and whether women felt they have they been endorsed and nurtured in the institution, in addition to other factors women executive leaders felt influenced their leadership development, whether as a support or a barrier.

## Chapter 5

## Results: Women Executives Internal Dialogue

**Introduction**

The results presented up to this point have focused on breaking the cases up to see each individual characteristics, pathways, and leadership focus. Where Chapter Four provided the individual analysis of the women participating in the study, Chapter Five will begin to provide a combined analysis of the remaining themes. Chapter Five provides compiled results focusing on what internal dialogue in their leadership narrative women executives experience as they make leadership decisions. This chapter also addresses whether these women feel their institutions had endorsed and nurtured them. Finally, the chapter includes information about the participants' institutions and other factors women executive leaders believe affected their leadership development, whether as support, or as barrier.

**The Third Shift**

The third research question asks what internal dialogue in their leadership narrative do women executives have as they make leadership decisions. Rich descriptions of the five women participating in the study involved the three challenges present in the third shift. The first challenge—*the identity challenge*—identified as being authentic, rather than trying to be someone others will accept. The second challenge—*the task challenge*—the battle between "getting the job done", versus worrying about how everyone feels. And, finally, the third challenge—*the balance challenge*—defined as spending energy on one's own achievements, as opposed to service to others (Bolton, 2000).

Few people use these terms consciously, thinking, "I must be going through the third shift," when laying out ways they deal with conflict, making decisions, or hearing negative comments about themselves. Whereas the first shift (the hours put on the clock at work), the second shift (the hours caretaking and housekeeping) are understandable. The third shift, not as easily understood, addresses the internal process (Bolton, 2000; Hochschild, 1989). The current research was purposeful in asking questions that could expose these internal processes and identify which third shift, if any, a woman in a vice president role of student affairs could experience. In order to best dissect the theme of the third shift, results were broken into each challenge: identity challenge, task challenge, and balance challenge.

**The Identity Challenge.**

The identity challenge addresses being authentic, rather than trying to be someone others will accept (Bolton, 2000). One of the most prominent themes throughout this research was the concept of being true to oneself. The women in this study underscored the importance of staying true to their core principles and values. When asked what advice participants would give to other women aspiring to branch into executive level leadership, the overwhelming response was to "be true to thy self." The overwhelming response suggests a tendency to become what others want as opposed to what they want. Vice President Callcott summarized how she responds to negative feedback.

> Throughout my career I have heard positive and negative— sometimes
> some really hard stuff to hear, like untrue accusations, and sometimes
> helpful and substantive feedback—equally hard but important. My
> internal thought processes can range from accepting and reflecting to

really "beating myself up" and thinking very negative thoughts. In fact on many occasions my first internal reaction is "I'm not qualified to do this work" and need to go somewhere else, look for a new job. Sort of the flight reaction. Over time and after many experiences of negative feedback, and yes positive feedback as well, and studying about authentic and effective leadership, I have come to understand that the process of allowing myself to be vulnerable to feedback is critical if I really want to become the leader I aspire to be. Yes, there have been times that I come home very heavy-hearted, questioning my competence, questioning my decisions, seeking affirmation. I sit with it. I pray about it. I journal about it, especially if it's really weighing on me and if needed I seek additional feedback. Sometimes I've reversed a decision and owned up to my team I made a bad decision. But, not all bad decisions can be reversed. I can think of a couple times in my 30-year career that I have had a "do-over." Do-overs are amazing, but they can't always happen. I learn and then move on. Sometimes I've said to my team, I messed up, and hope they will scream louder at me in the future before I run off the cliff. I've been a vice chancellor for a year now, working to build a team that really communicates up, sideways, diagonally, down, etc. We will be better for it. The trick is not only working on myself, but working with my team leaders to help them be receptive and to make room for people to disagree with them . . . listening to my body and soul. *(interview)*

Vice President Callcott is not alone in her beliefs. Dr. Morrison feels a career can go fast. "You want to make good choices along the way and one thing leads to another . . . and I think it's who we are as people and what we have inside is what carries us, and to having that determination to forge on and not setup barriers for ourselves is kind of my, well, it's obviously my mantra." *(interview)* Dr. Emerson goes further to say:

I have learned that you will always be criticized if you are doing your

job. If you are doing nothing, the worst someone can say is, "She's

retired on the job," or "She never does anything." I'd rather be

criticized for doing something. As long as I know in my heart of

hearts that I am being fair, honest and ethical and am giving at least

100%, I am happy with myself. And, that, in the long run, is all that

counts. *(journal)*

Dr. Dickinson approached this challenge when talking about one of her internal fears and concerns. She worried about reading the political environment correctly.

And for me personally, one of my concerns was whether I was able to

read the politics of the environment. Could I read them, and could I

work with it? And, I've always felt pretty insecure in that. And I don't

feel any more secure today, but over time, I came to say to myself that

I just wasn't going to worry about it, that more of my energy was

drained by the worries as to whether I was going to handle politics

than whether I did or not. So in a sense I mentally sized up the whole

issue. *(interview)*

Vice President Callcott admits she struggles with self-esteem.  Vice President

Callcott remembered her pathway to leadership vividly.

I was the hall director and I just couldn't see a career path for myself.

I said, "Well, I can't be a hall director the rest of my life."  So what am

I going to do after I'm done being a hall director?  Oh, I guess I'll have

to go find another profession and Dan[7], who was the assistant director

then and then became my director for eight years.  Really taught me a

lot about seeing my capacity and potential, versus seeing myself as not

adequate and seeing my self-esteem has been one of my greatest

challenges my whole career.  People say, "Oh, you don't show it."

Now, I've got a pretty good stage.  I sure have.  But, you know, behind

it, there's always a sort of nagging little self-doubt going on.

*(interview)*

Dr. Woolf and Dr. Emerson disclosed they have worried someone may find they

are not an expert or they were an imposter. *(journal)*  It's possible to trace these feelings

back to earlier in their careers.  Nonetheless, the most important lessons they learned is

hard work and being happy with oneself.  Dr. Woolf found it helpful not to compare

herself to others because, by being true to herself, helped her step into your own

leadership role. *(journal)*  She is a firm believer that not all vice presidencies are the

same, but that it depends on the institutional fit.

So I've had some good people, a few mentors along the way that have

kind of helped me look at who I am and the talents I have.  And not try

to compare myself and be true to who I am and my style and my

---

[7] Name changed to ensure confidentiality.

approach and don't, just because I am an "I" on the Myers-Briggs. We

all have to live in a very extroverted world, and I'm very effective at

that, but I've always thought "I could never be a vice president"

because I'm not this out there, mix and mingle, you know kind of

extrovert extraordinaire. And, I'm not this charismatic, dynamic, out

front leader and "get behind me and follow." People have helped me

recognize there are all different styles and strengths that we have, and

as long as we are being true to that and helping bring others along as

effective members of the team. It is ok to not be that person that you

think is the stereotype . . . maybe I'm getting stuck in this paradigm of

a vice presidency needs to look like this. And not being open to the

possibilities that I can shape what a vice presidency looks like. And,

so I just, that was probably one of those critical moments. Then

realizing that maybe I was selling myself short and I thought that a

vice president had to have the personality or have this mentality of

embracing their job in this 24/7 way. And, I just began to realize, hey

I can look at my own strengths and kind of needs and what I can offer

and what I can gain and find. And then another pivotal point was I

think when I did begin to do my search realizing that there were

institutions that were, you know, made a difference in terms of not all

VP positions are the same. *(interview)*

**The Task Challenge.**

The task challenge, battling between "getting the job done" versus worrying about how everyone feels (Bolton, 2000), was present looking through the background and listening to the path each woman took toward their vice presidency. Dr. Dickinson felt the pressure when she moved from working with a small, private institution to a larger, public institution. Many people commented on whether she was going to be able to handle a larger institution. Smaller colleges might appear to be more intimate; however, Dr. Dickinson suggested they are less likely to stick individuals in one area. She feels one can diversify at a smaller college, showing expertise in multiple areas, and have an inclusive management approach. *(interview)* Vice President Callcott believed a collaborative approach helps accomplish the task, but it can be a double-edge sword because people want to be heard and they also want a decision.

> I believe in collaborative leadership, sort of shared decision making
> and I've hired great people. I've inherited some great people, and I've
> set the stage for us to be a team and that we have to disagree including
> with me in our team meetings because we're going to make better
> decisions, if we put it all out there. To disagree respectfully, but to be
> honest, and that there won't be repercussions for that. I also can be
> decisive when needed. You know, when there's a whole bunch of
> conflict, I gather information. I used to gather more information and
> more and more, but in my role, I don't have time as much. I think
> people don't like you to gather information forever and ever. They're
> like, "Come on, make a freaking decision." You know. . . my biggest

fear or worry . . . . It's probably always been that I'm going to let down my team or my leaders, the people I work with and for. Disappointing people is the thing that sometimes limits me when I have to make tough decisions . . . . We're supposed to be caretakers, I think . . . . And that *is* different than our male counterparts might. But I don't mind that because I like that. I think part of my success has been because I have cared for and engaged in caretaking with the people I've worked with and I have personally checked this, "How are you doing? I heard your mom's not well. What's going on?" *(interview)*

Dr. Morrison feels one's spouse should not dictate the jobs that they take. She explains through her *interviews and journal* the frustration with the current model for individuals interested in the college presidency.

I think one frustration I have is I don't think what your spouse does should dictate jobs you're able to get or not get. And, that's why I've got a little bit of a challenge with the modern American presidency because I think it's too geared toward the traditional husband/wife combination and that the wife—who normally is the case—could be the husband- but the spouse has to play a role in terms of fundraising and event hosting. I don't think that should have to be the case. And certainly a president should be able to be hired just for who they stand for and how they lead. *(interview)*

Dr. Morrison mentioned the modern American presidency and suggested an unwritten rule in the plight for the presidency, in which it is not all about the job that one does. She explains it is also about having a partner who "feeds egos and mends wounds" through hosting fundraising, social gatherings, and taking care of different facets of the university. One of the interview questions asked of each woman was whether they considered applying for a Presidency position. Their answers varied from a point blank "No" to consideration in applying for smaller institution Presidencies. All of the women interviewed had experience working in research universities at a point in their career, but little interest in holding a presidency at that type of institution. The most common answer was they did not feel qualified or did not like the work associated with the presidency. *(interview)*

The university president effects how these women go about doing their jobs. One way is through the professional development available to them. All women interviewed specified the president does not find professional development opportunities for them. They felt support for professional development opportunities they presented and in which they wanted to take part. Among the participants, two were in the process of accepting new university presidents. Both women expressed uncertainty about expectations; Dr. Woolf summarized her feelings of uncertainty.

> I guess the biggest thing, it's been a little longer than a couple months,
> but I have a new president that came up in January. So that has
> significantly shifted and changed the way I think about the work and
> just trying to figure that out. Trying to, when you had a really good
> relationship with a president and then she left, she's the one that hired

me, and then she retired and went back to the classroom.  And then

just trying to assess what does the new president want of me?  What

are their perceptions of student affairs?  What do they know, not

know?  How do you help them be successful? *(interview)*

Dr. Emerson, the only woman in the study who had applied for a Presidency

position earlier in her career, also reflected on receiving 360 degree evaluations at two of

her former institutions.

I've had some of these 360 degree evaluations when I was at Mountain

State and University of Mountain.  They did 360 degree evaluations of

all the vice presidents . . . . I'd have somebody say well, "I'd like to be

like her when I grow up someday."  And then I'd always have

somebody say, "She doesn't know what she's doing."  And of course

the tendency of human nature is to throw out all the good things

people say and focus on anything negative.  And, I would think about,

now who would say that I don't know what I'm doing?  And, that used

to just irritate the heck out of me.  But I've come to realize that, maybe

in their mind, they either didn't like what I was doing, they didn't

understand what I was doing, or they didn't know what I was doing

because they don't have enough understanding of the theory and

practice of student personnel and student services to understand.  So,

I've decided not to let that bother me.  You always have your critics.

It all boils down to is your conscience clear?  Have you done

everything you think you can do?  I have this over-riding principle that

someday I will be judged based upon the way I have treated other

people.  That's it. And will I be able to stand up at that point that day,

look whoever in the eye and say, "I tried to treat everybody the way I

would like to be treated, if not better."  And that to me is what

leadership is all about.  It's not about you personally or another person,

it's about doing something for the greater good.  And trying to leave

the place maybe a little better than the way you found it, right?

*(interview)*

Dr. Morrison felt she can learn by watching leaders she works with.  She takes

any opportunity to learn what she can, even if the lesson might be also what type of

leader one does not want to be.  "I had a person I worked for one time who alienated

others through ego and I think watching other leadership styles you learn a lot. Knowing

everybody has a role in the workplace and it's very important to leave ego at the door and

don't let it interfere with the work you are doing." *(journal)*

**The Balance Challenge.**

The balance challenge is defined as spending energy on one's own achievements

as opposed to service to others (Bolton, 2000).  *Interviews and supporting documents*

suggested this challenge had two connecting parts: work achievements and personal

goals.  When looking at the Vice President role, all the women responses show little

work-life balance.  Vice President Callcott evaluates her work-life balance.

I don't have a balance and I think it's a fallacy to try to create a

balance. But I do think it's important for each to know what we need

to do to stay healthy, spiritually and physically and mentally, and that

when I don't take time to nurture those parts of my holistic self, I don't

do good work and I want to do good work. *(interview)*

Dr. Dickinson felt being available 24 hours a day as essential to being successful

at her job. She also suggested that being the vice president is not a job but a mission; she

questioned whether it is possible to incorporate work and personal, but felt it may be

needed to keep a better balance. *(interview and letter)*

Honestly, I don't. There's just, there's so many demands on you in this

division that I haven't. And frankly, that's another one of those things

that I just essentially bypass, I don't worry about it. I do what I need

to do. And I have to, you know, I have to be there for my staff, I have

to be there for the students, but that doesn't mean that I work 24 hours

a day, but it is a situation where I know that I am available essentially

24 hours a day regardless of where I am. And you know I don't know

what else to say. You know, you remember we talked at the beginning

about my mentor. You know, one of the things he used to say, and I'm

not sure I buy it, but he used to say in some ways, you have to merge

the two, you know. You have to, with some jobs where to a degree it's

a mission, it's not a job. You need to incorporate as best as possible

the work as part of what gives you both satisfaction and balance.

*(interview)*

Dr. Morrison believed strongly that "the best model is to try and approach things

in a selfless way, it's not about you and your own achievements; it's about empowering

others and seeing them succeed." *(journal)*

I used to get hung up on time on task. But for me the mental shift is it's not thinking about how many hours I spend at work or doing work related things at home. It's the attitude that I have towards integrating kind of a sense of purpose and peace into the way I approach my work. And I don't know if that makes any sense. For example, I work long hours, but I know that for me I have to build in time for things like yoga and working out. I live in an area that has beautiful mountains; and going hiking, and I have been and I love to do anything related to the outdoors. So I will take off at 4:30 in the afternoon and go over to the student union and do a yoga class and come back and pick up with my work. Or, I will take, just block time on my calendar to feel renewed and rejuvenated. So it's not so much thinking about how many hours I'm putting in; it's, am I staying renewed and recharged when I know my batteries are running down? I've done it long enough, now I can kind of tell when it's time to shift something, and realign, prioritizing the work in the right way. Am I getting sucked into the details? Or am I staying high level? It's just that constant self-reflection, self-evaluation and being tuned into my own energy reserves and so you know. It's not easy. *(interview)*

Dr. Emerson recalls early in her career she took work home with her. Her position at a private college was what she considered a dark time in her life when she did not have a work-life balance and dealing with student issues consumed a large part of her

life. *(journal and interview)* In her *interview*, she recounted her stories vividly, and how it shaped her career.

> I took a lot of work home with me. We had so many crises. I mean
> there were weeks that three out of seven nights I would get a call that
> one of our students had been hospitalized for alcohol intoxication. Or,
> a student had been killed or somebody shooting on campus at night.
> And I remember every night going to bed thinking please don't let my
> phone ring, please don't let my phone ring. And I was just very
> anxious because it could go for weeks and nothing would happen and
> then all of a sudden you could get these calls at two in the morning,
> three nights in a row . . . . I didn't have as much balance there. And I
> wasn't the chief student affairs office. There was the vice president,
> he'd been the dean of students. He'd been the one on call, and he was
> like "it's your turn." And after the campus called you at one in the
> morning you got in your car and got down to campus and spent two to
> three hours and go home and try to shut that down and go back to
> sleep, it was just virtually impossible. That was kind of a, it was a
> rough period in my life because there were just, there were some real
> tough things. *(interview)*

Dr. Emerson recounted a story that remains firmly rooted in her mind as she balanced her own career and the best interests of the student's family.

> I got a call at one in the morning and police sergeant says, "We need
> you to come to campus." So I get in the car, go down to campus. One

ambulance is pulling away just as I get there. First young man, second young man is getting loaded into the ambulance . . . . So police drive me over there, and go in, slowly a few kids start filling up the room, the waiting room, and the nurse comes out and asks to speak to me. And um, I tell her who I am, my relationship to the student, and she says "He's passed." And I'm like, "Passed where?" I mean, it was the first time in my whole career I had ever lost a student. I mean, I've had students die in car accidents and things like that . . . I became really close to the family . . . spent the night at their home. Went to the young man's high school and helped plant a tree in his memory, spent the night in his room at his house. His high school principal came over and had dinner with the parents and me. The family pulled out the family album. Showed me pictures of their son . . .I think that was probably the turning point where you decide, ok am I going to stay in this business? Or am I going to get out? Because how many more of those can you take. Oh gosh, I spent more time in emergency rooms probably than I did behind my desk half the time. And um, that was kind of a dark period in my life because I thought, "I hadn't bargained for this." I thought, "I'm planning programs, services and activities, I didn't realize that would be part of the job." Obviously it was an important role . Somebody needed to do it. But I think most people go into this profession, they don't think about that. *(interview)*

Dr. Emerson concluded the university she worked at might have been an anomaly as far as the intensity of the services. She felt people do not think about when they are thinking about what student services staff work with on a daily basis, from the level of the residential advisor all the way up to the vice president of student affairs. *(journal)*

Vice President Callcott summarized her balance in her *journal*, as she tried to foster her own growth and her team members.

> There are many decisions to make every day, I often wonder if I'm
>
> involved in too many decisions. We have become a lean university in
>
> all divisions and especially student affairs and with the public eye
>
> intensely on our campus at an unusual level; I have probably become a
>
> micromanager, one characteristic I've never wanted to emulate. It's a
>
> balance between helping and protecting our staff from the critical eye
>
> of media misrepresentation (which happens much too often) and
>
> developing and mentoring my great team. *(journal)*

Vice President Callcott spoke candidly about working through tough issues. Most frequently, conflicts when an issue surrounding decisions she had made were not supported and staff tried to go around her and do what they wanted to do anyway. Vice President Callcott remembered being upset, hurt, and angry and could not stop thinking about it for a few days until she was able to talk with the individuals involved in the issue. *(journal)* Similar to the other participants in the study, when issues like this came up it could fester and remain on one's mind until a resolution could take place, especially when it came to student safety or budgetary issues.

There was a point early on in my position as the director of housing

when we were dealing with a massive budget short fall.  We were

going to have to lay off a ton of people and restructure the department,

and we had six months to figure it out.  And I had never been through

anything that catastrophic financially.  I've been through other kinds

of crises but not financial crisis . . . and so, I went to *my boss* and I was

pretty stressed and wasn't sleeping cause there's lot of front line staff,

and I had already become so fond of the department and had gotten to

know people.  More than any other group of staff, you have to respect,

care for and advocate for the front line staff, and that's in my heart.

But I'd never thought about it as a supervisor or a leader as something

to be really, really focused on, and so I've carried that with me through

my whole career.  So I'd really gotten to know the staff.  I knew every

custodian.  I knew every maintenance worker.  I knew every cook.  I

knew the dishwashers.  I knew everybody, and I knew that I was going

to have to lay off some of those people who had been at Desert

University for like 30 years.  And it was just, it was killing me, and as

much as it was killing me, it was probably terrifying them, and I went

to *my boss* and I said, "I think you've hired the wrong girl."  And said,

"I'm not a budget expert.  You know, I'm good at program and

strategic planning and building buildings and you know that", I said,

"But I'm not really a budget guru."  And he said, "I don't ever want to

hear you say that out loud again."  He said, "I want you to erase that

and I want you to substitute this. I am becoming an excellent budget

manager." Ever since slightly, but enough to really help me keep

saying that to myself, and I wrote a little note sticking it on my

computer that said, "I am becoming an excellent budget manager."

*(interview)*

The balance challenge extends through each woman's experience to weigh

personal time and achievements against the service of others in their jobs.

## How Case Studies Spun Together

Two themes arose throughout the analysis of interviews and supporting

documents connected to the research questions, particularly looking at other factors

women executive leaders felt played a role in their leadership development, either as a

support or as a barrier. First, the stories of the women create a path of created

opportunities by their own professional development, mentors, and nudges from those

who supported them throughout their careers. Second, their careers took on a life of their

own where they continued to challenge themselves, to create environments of constant

learning, and to step into the challenge no matter the situation dealt.

### Created Opportunities.

Vice President Callcott felt she could attribute her success to her mentors and

former bosses. Her mentors pushed her to see herself in a different way and to continue to

learn in her positions.

I didn't know I was going to be a vice chancellor one day, until the

seed was planted in my mind about 10 years ago by one of my

mentors, who said, "You really need to think about being a vice

president for student affairs." And I said, "Really? Oh, I'm not

qualified. No, no, no am I going to be." I was the director of housing at

the time. And I said, "Why do you think I'd be good?" And he told

me all the reasons why, and it was the president of one of the

universities where I worked, and I was actually having an exit

interview with him because I was moving on to another job. So

anyway, I've been very fortunate to have a lot of supervisors over the

years who've allowed me to learn and grow. But I've been fortunate

to have opportunities to really be stretched and challenged and part of

that has been because they've provided that to me and part of it is

because I go and ask. I didn't realize that at the time but because I'm

just, I like to do things and learn things. I've always gone and said,

"Would you mind if I got involved in this project, or is there a special

project that I could help you with?" or—because I like to be learning

new things. *(interview)*

Drs. Woolf and Emerson recall positive mentors who were critical in helping

them see themselves in their current positions. Dr. Woolf's direct supervisor looked at

her impressive professional development resume and challenged why she was not in a

vice president role. *(interview)* Early in Dr. Emerson's career, someone insisted she

continue her education in student personnel and higher education administration.

*(journal)* Dr. Dickinson based many of her principles and values on her mentors and

bosses, which she feels prepared her to take on the leadership of a large university.

And she was very, you know, definitely instrumental in shaping the

way I see our work and the principles that I think we live by.  Do the

work upfront, don't ever cut corners, make sure that you are not

getting ahead of the students.  Always, always make sure that you

bring into the conversation all of those that in one way or another have

an influence on the issue.  Always behave with integrity, you always

make sure that anybody at any time can step into your business, into

the work that you are doing, and that you're fully ready to disclose

absolutely everything.  Pay attention too, very carefully to when you're

working with an issue, try to move the issue, try to think through the

issue in as many iterations as you can going forward so that you can

have a sense of what might come and how you're thinking about it.

*(interview)*

Dr. Morrison pointed out people gave her opportunities to flourish by letting her

take on tasks.  Take on new challenges.  Through these experiences, she gained the

knowledge she needed to be prepared to take on the role vice president of student affairs.

*(journal and interview)*  She also stressed the importance of peers, and she felt fortunate

to have a peer at her institution she is able to have as a mentor. *(interview)* Many of the

other participants did not have anyone at their university they felt close to; however, they

noted, although it can be lonely at their own institutions, other university vice presidents

of student affairs and past colleagues were an enormous support system providing

opportunities and learning experiences. *(interviews)*

All the women interviewed stressed the importance of creating opportunities and of challenging oneself to take on new opportunities. *(journals, speeches, and interviews)* Dr. Dickinson suggested starting at a smaller school in order to cross-train and become an expert in many areas, rather than to become stuck in a single area. *(interview)* Dr. Morrison felt strongly about not allowing gender to interfere with work.

> Always be at the table. And to not let gender get in the way. I think too many women that I've known over the years have let gender be a factor when it doesn't have to be. If you show the kind of support you need to have in the work place for others. You know I started being on the leadership team of the president . . . and watched the other women and what I noticed was women who are the most effective are those who don't get caught up in gender issues. I think you've got to be tuned in to, you know, certainly gender has played a factor in the past, but you perpetuate the challenges if you stand behind it and have it be your cause. I think if anything you want to, and I find the most difficult people I've worked for have been women because sometimes women don't want others to achieve or be able to go forward and I think we need to as a leader. I know that all our directors are female. I want to give them every opportunity to advance like I do the men and I think it's important to, how you embrace diversity is that, you know you give others open arms and move forward and that would be my advice. *(interview)*

**Leaning In.**

The words of Dr. Morrison segue into the theme of leaning in. Each woman had varying career paths and thus took away different lessons from their experiences. The women's experiences told a story of preparation and resiliency playing a role in where they are today. As Dr. Morrison stated in the last section, do "not let gender get in the way". If one wants to succeed, one has to move past it. Vice President Callcott sees how gender plays out and finds mechanisms that work best to help keep her moving forward and stay encouraged.

> I do think there's expectations that women be—I do see organizations
> cut men, male leaders, a lot of slack on the compassion and care and
> people dynamics of an office, and when a woman is on a leadership
> role it's like, why aren't you helping build. You know, why aren't you
> visiting with people and networking and talking and socializing.
> Where my boss is, no one would ever expect this; if I was him they
> would expect the support side. I would have to say, I could not do this
> job without my partner of 34 years. He has been my encourager. He
> has believed in me. He has done so much support my career and to
> help me when I need to think through tough things. Sometimes, he
> just listens to me. Can you believe what's going on, you know. He
> keeps confidences. He's a great confidant. He's a wonderful friend. I
> could not be a Vice Chancellor without his help right now. *(interview)*

Vice President Callcott explains she has to care for herself to deal with the messy issues that end up on her desk. Most of the time it hits her desk because the issue is

messy; if it were not it would not end on her desk.  It may take counseling through the employee assistance program, journaling, or allowing time to rejuvenate.  She concludes it is okay to give herself that time; this is what helps keep moving forward. *(journal and interview)* Similar to Vice President Callcott, three out of the five women made a point of saying without a supportive spouse their career in student affairs would not be possible. *(journals and interviews)*

Dr. Dickinson reflects back to her positions and the opportunities she took to learn.  She expressed that although she had not worked for a large public university, she understood all the aspects that made up her current division because she had worked in most of the departments in one capacity or another throughout her career at smaller institutions.  She explained "For example, I don't have to be a programmer to provide leadership to a Registrar's office or to an IT area, but I need to understand the principles, the issues, the cost, the quality of the training, and so forth." *(interview)* All of the women participating in the study felt prepared for the vice president position when they took it on based on their past positions and knowledge. "I felt very prepared because I have worked at a college or university since I was twenty- two," *(interview)* explains Dr. Emerson. Dr. Morrison took on the role of interim vice president of student affairs before taking on position permanently. *(interview)* The women's advice to other women looking at becoming vice presidents of students affairs was encouragement to take a seat at the table and prepare themselves in any way possible because, as Dr. Morrison stated, "I was sort of in the right place (career wise), at the right time." *(interview)*

Dr. Woolf, who originally did not see herself in the role of vice president, felt that it was "really just years of experience and education and professional development."

I think I was one of those individuals who didn't start out thinking I

wanted to be a vice president. I looked up the ladder when I was a

younger or mid-level professional and saw some of the things that the

vice presidents did and I thought you know that's not really for me.

But the more experience I gained, and the more I was exposed to the

ins and outs of that role, the more I began to realize hey you know, if

you have the right institutional fit, that meshes with my preferences

and priorities and lifestyle, then it can work. *(journal)*

Dr. Dickinson puts forward that, in addition to work preparation, mental preparation also occurs when taking on leadership roles. When asked about double-standards or dual expectations on her as a woman, she replied she feels these dual expectations both as a woman and as a Latino woman.

I would say to a degree, yes. In as much as I am conscious that what I

do, to a degree, represents, women, Latino women, Latinos, you

know? I'll give you an example. Over the last few years, I've

developed a tendency to get furious in certain circumstances. It drives

me bananas. I am mortified by it in certain circumstances because I

know it's obviously connected to gender, right? And you know 99

percent of the time, it goes well and people appreciate it. They tend to

see it as a form of commitment to what I'm saying, which also annoys

me a little bit because what do you think? I didn't try, I wasn't as

committed? You know what I mean? So I find, you know, when I'm

doing, when I'm speaking into a group, and depends on who I'm

speaking to or about, there are some things I want to say, and there's

some things that touch me deeply, you know?  And I'm finding it very

difficult not to get teared-up over those.  So and you know, I try to

practice a lot so that I'm sort of prepared for it but still, it's not easy.

And, and the main reason why I find that problematic is because of the

gender association. *(interview)*

Dr. Emerson, who was the first woman vice president at her past University, feels

"it is still a man's world and men still have the ultimate power."  Dr. Emerson has never

reported to a woman and has always wondered how it might be different.  "It seems to me

that there are still different rules for men and women in employment." *(journal)* She

recalls vividly an experience she had recently where a double-standard set forth for a

female faculty member.

Women who are forceful and decisive are considered aggressive and

men who are forceful and decisive are considered great leaders.  I was

in a meeting recently with another high ranking female official, and I

was surprised when she made a comment about one of our peers

saying, "Don't include her in the meeting—she's so aggressive."

Having been in the numerous meetings with the colleague under

discussion, I could not recall a single incident where the colleague had

been aggressive.  Not even a little bit. *(journal)*

The women in this research described tales of taking risks, preparation, and

resiliency.  Leaning in to their careers was critical in order to move up through higher

education administration.

**Summary**

Chapter Five presented the second part of the themes through the coding and categorizing process (Appendix E), paying particular attention to the combined analysis of the internal dialogue women have as they make leadership decisions and other factors women executive leaders felt played a role in their leadership development either as a support, or a barrier.

The third research question asked about the internal processes of the women in vice president roles.  The current research was purposeful in asking questions that would expose these internal processes and see what third shift, if any, may be happening as a woman in a vice president role of student affairs.  In order to best dissect each case study, data was broken into each challenge: identity challenge, task challenge, and balance challenge.

The identity challenge, one of the most prominent themes throughout this research, was the concept of being true to oneself: Stay true to core principles and values. When asked what advice participants would give to other women aspiring to branch into executive level leadership, the overwhelming response was to be true to oneself.  The second challenge showed all women approached their jobs using a collaborative approach.  Juggling the task challenge of "getting the job done" with the collaborative approach. One participant articulated a double-edge sword where people want to be listened to and heard and they also want a decision made quickly. The third challenge dealing with balance suggests two connecting parts: work achievements and personal goals.  When looking at the vice president role, all the women reported little work/life balance in this type of position, and that it was a challenge to find time for themselves.

The most poignant way of explaining the role of vice president in student affairs was not a job, instead, it was a mission.

Two themes arose throughout the interviews and the analysis of documents connected to the research questions. The stories of the women showed a path of created opportunities by their own professional development, mentors, and nudges from those who supported them throughout their career. Their careers took on a life of their own where they continued to challenge themselves, and create an environment of constant learning. The participants felt many of their successes, values, and principles could be attributed to their mentors and past bosses. Mentors pushed each woman to see herself in a different way and to continue to learn. All the women interviewed stressed the importance of creating one's own opportunities and challenging themselves to take on new roles. No matter the experience, resiliency and preparation were common threads. Chapter Six provides conclusions, analysis, and implications that can be drawn from the study.

## Chapter 6

## Conclusions

**Introduction**

On November 8, 2012, Patricia Hill Collins spoke to an auditorium of individuals at the National Women's Studies Conference in Oakland, California. Her words penetrated the room, asking about a post-Civil Rights era, an era where oppressions of race, class, gender, and sexuality are intersecting, an era where "old practices" and "new strategies" become intertwined (Collins, 2012; 2013). She asked hard questions about how we begin to break down the oppressive structures still present in the post-Civil Rights era. What structures create full access and opportunity? One answer is through truth-telling, speeches, essays, interviews, and taking research beyond the pages of a book. Yakaboski and Donahoo (2011) suggest there has been a shift away from researching the unique experiences of women, particularly those working in student affairs. The new, popular approach is a gender-neutral research approach. Yakaboski and Donahoo (2011) advocate for research to stray from this trend and continue to supply more-gender specific research, one that does not look at organizations in a gender neutral way.

The purpose of this study was to explore perspectives of women currently employed in executive level leadership and who had therefore successfully navigated the challenges, to gain insight into how career advancement took place, in particular, examining women working in the area of higher education student services. The current study adds to the limited gender-specific research and exploration of women currently in executive level leadership positions within student services. Providing social awareness

of the experiences of women in postsecondary education executive leadership, examining 'old practices' and 'new strategies' through a qualitative, multiple case study, examining the following research questions:

1. What path to career advancement did women take to reach their executive level leadership position?

2. Do women executive leaders have a preferred leadership style? Do they feel they can express their preferred leadership style, and do they feel they have they been endorsed and nurtured in the institution? What other factors do women executive leaders feel played a role in their leadership development, either as a support or as a barrier?

3. What internal dialogue in their leadership narrative do women executives have as they make leadership decisions?

Highly qualified women continue to be over-looked in the executive pipeline. The development of women into executive level leadership is critical. The hope for this study is to create a working framework for future generations of women who wish to ascend to executive level leadership, creating social awareness for the issues surrounding gender and leadership. Chapter Six examines the results of this multiple case study to suggest analyses, limitations, implications for real world application, and future research directions.

**Analysis**

**Exploring Labyrinths.**

The first research question asks the path to career advancement women took to reach their executive level leadership position. Increasing numbers of women in high-

visibility leadership roles creates growing optimism in the field of education. Eagly and Carli (2007) contend the glass ceiling metaphor no longer fits, paths to the top exist; nevertheless, they can be difficult to discover creating the imagery of the circuitous paths of a labyrinth. The overwhelming results of the current study illustrated that women did not have a straightforward path to their position.

Vice President Emerson's path began as an elementary education major, working through several administrative assistant positions before making the move into administration. Her vita shows her working for four different universities prior to her work at her current institution. Vice President Morrison began her career in higher education, and then took an offshoot and worked in city management for several years before returning to higher education. Prior to her current position, she worked for three institutions in several different capacities, in two different cities within city management. Vice President Dickinson had the most expansive knowledge of student affairs, began her journey on the academic side of higher education as a professor. Her career spanned six different institutions. Vice President Callcott started her career with a degree in health education and as a peace corps volunteer. She worked her way through three different institutions prior to her current post as vice president. Vice President Woolf worked her way up through eight different positions, through two universities before making the move to a smaller university to hold the position of vice president.

As mentioned previously, none of the women had a straightforward pathway to their positions. The women worked through several positions, which may appear normal for anyone moving up the typical career ladder. Nonetheless, one could contend gender may play a role in the movement of institutions. Vice President Woolf shared institutional

fit is important. She could never see herself in a vice president role at the institution where she spent a large portion of her career.  Many women in junior level executive positions and directors may have this same opinion. Byerly (2011) interviewed mid-level managers at post-secondary institutions; these women felt movement within their current University might be limited without movement to another institution or department. What is the economic impact for women who have to move in order to move up to executive level positions in their careers?  This is especially concerning for women working in student services, because Chronicles of Higher Education (2012) data suggests this position is the lowest paid vice presidency position within the University system. Movement to multiple universities requires having the income to be able to make these expensive moves.  Although not addressed this study, women who come from low-income, first generation backgrounds may take on a heavier burden limiting them from making such risky moves.

One contention mentioned by Carli and Eagly (2007) is family responsibilities can hold women back from access to executive level positions.  It did not appear this was the case in the responses of the women in this study.  Two of the women waited until later in their careers to marry and three of the women attributed having a supportive husband who did much of the child-rearing or supplied continual support for their career. Additionally, these three women said they could not do the jobs they do unless they had the support of their spouses.  Vice President Callcott mentioned her husband is the one her children call each day; he was a schoolteacher, he was available to do the homework after school, and during the summer breaks. Future research could investigate the tendency for women holding vice president positions to have a supportive family who

take a partnership in outside responsibilities. The women in this study tended to have smaller numbers of children, or to marry after the establishment of their careers. This research seems to suggest the choice between a family and a career may still exist.

Jones' (2012) American history of motherhood asks, is it possible to minimize one's experiences down to a series of personal choices? According to Frye (1983), this type of thought process is a trap. Kleinman (2007) focuses on the current view if only someone works hard enough they will not be affected by oppressive forces. Like a bird in a cage, if only looking at one side of the bird's situation, one might only see a couple of wires and wonder why the bird does not fly around the obstruction. It is only when one steps away from the situation and looks at the big picture they are able to see the systematic forms of oppression that, as a whole, make up the cage trapping the bird in place (Frye, 1983). Sandberg (2013) suggested that we must play by rules that others have created in order to move ahead in our careers, although she hoped women will not have to play by these archaic rules forever. Additionally, the current data might suggest in order to include women in the pipeline toward the executive suite in higher education, public policy and institutional policies must change. In the current study, the average hours per week worked was 61 hours per week, for a woman whose spouse is less supportive or one who held similar hours and heavy burdens through family (children, parents, sick partner), this schedule could be tough. Two of the women noted they had experienced being the primary caretaker for a sick family member recently and the demanding schedule of the vice presidency was challenging.

**Student-Centered Leadership.**

The second research question asks if women participating in the study had a preferred leadership style and whether they felt they could express their preferred leadership style. The theme student-centered leadership aligns with the theories surrounding transformational, servant, and authentic leadership (Bass and Riggio, 2006; Greenleaf, 1977; George and Sims, 2007). The students were the crux of what all participants enjoyed most about their jobs. Additionally, the student-focus provided variety in their jobs and an overall team focus. When asked what style of leadership they exemplified, participants responded student/staff centered and empowering those around them. A leadership style where individuals may not always agree with the decisions made, but a mutual respect surrounding the team. Affection for the concept that no two days are the same, suggests a belief in constant learning.

Vice President Emerson described her division as being full of "salt of the earth people…trying to save maybe one student." She tries to treat everyone the way she would like to be treated, she wants people to feel empowered, and she wants people's opinions. Vice President Morrison identified her role in student affairs as a support system for her other divisions. She declared it is important for her too never feel like she had arrived. She is not an expert and she supports input from her team. She believes these principles have helped her throughout her career. Vice President Morrison does not believe she alone has the perfect vision for the division of student affairs; she believes it is a collective vision with her team, where they learn from each other. Vice President Dickinson emphasized the importance of putting students first, in order to make their college experience as productive and rewarding as possible. She does not ever feel conflicted about her role as a vice president to put the university's interests and the

students' interests first.  She feels that if she is doing right by the students, she is always doing right by the university.  Vice President Dickinson believes strongly in an inclusive management approach where her team feels they can bring their ideas forward. Vice President Callcott believes in collaborative leadership, and has highly qualified people with the intention to set the stage for a strong team. Vice President Woolf finds her job rewarding, with the student-focus she has in her position.  She considers success to be a student affairs division that fosters student learning.  She perceives herself as effective at building the people around her, empowering them, and helping them grow and learn to be effective leaders themselves.

In 1990, Sally Helgesen proclaimed an end to the warrior age of leadership in her book *The Female Advantage*.  "The Warrior is the traditional male hero who charges in to the battle with the aim of dominating and winning" (p.253).  The integration of fostering, nurturing, mentoring, portrayed by the women in this study, decreases the emphasis on winning and opens up a new form of leadership, one that is not intent on dominating, but rather on listening, inclusion, and focusing on the holistic education of the student and staff.

*My leadership perspective has evolved from being like an 'outfit you look at and think it would look nice on someone else but not me' to an 'outfit I have designed myself'.*

*Vice President Callcott*

Originally, this study led with the thought that transformational leadership would dominate when reviewing the interviews, speeches, and documents provided by the women; however, as Vice President Callcott suggested, what I thought the outfit might

look like on the women, turned out not to be entirely accurate. The leadership style was an outfit that these women had designed themselves within the area of student services.

It is important to first revisit the different types of leadership presented in literature review. Transformational leadership involves "inspiring followers to commit to a shared vision and goals for an organization or unit," (Bass and Riggio, 2006, p.4). Servant Leadership begins with the natural inclination of service toward others, and the inclination comes first before the consciousness of being a leader (Greenleaf, 1977). Reviewing servant leadership exemplifies characteristics of transformational leadership because both place an emphasis on followers' development and empowerment; however, servant leadership does not account for the intellectual stimulation component evident within transformational leadership (Smith, Montagno, Kuzmenko, 2004).

Within this study, it was more predominant to see characteristics of transformational leadership. However, authentic leadership (another style of leadership not originally analyzed in the literature review) was also present. An authentic leader described as a self- aware individual who leads with their heart, driven by the mission and big picture results (Buckingham, 2012; George and Sims, 2007). In the case of student-centered leadership, the big picture inspiration extends to students and staff. The women in this study depicted a style of leadership that encompasses the four components of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, in addition to the authenticity present in authentic leadership.

Overall, the women expressed that their number one preference is to be true to themselves, empower others, stay student-centered, and continue to learn. The

characteristics that stand out the strongest, connected to transformational leadership, were the strong connections women have with intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individual consideration. The characteristics of authentic leadership that stand out the strongest in this study are the women's desire to be self-aware and lead with their hearts. The characteristics of both transformational and authentic leadership combine to create student-centered leadership, a style of leadership that may be typical among professionals who work within student affairs.

**Third Shift.**

The third research question asks the internal dialogue in their leadership narrative women participating in the study have as they make leadership decisions. This research question aligns with research surrounding the "third shift." Bolton (2000) described the third shift as living each day twice, performing psychological duties while driving in the car, in the shower, or before falling asleep at night. Few people use the terms associated with the third shift or consciously think, "I must be going through the third shift." when laying out ways they deal with conflict, decision making, or hearing negative comments about themselves.

The current research was purposeful in asking questions that would expose these internal processes and see what third shift, if any, might be happening with a woman in a vice president role of student affairs. Bolton (2000) contends women experience the aspects of the third shift more than do their male counterparts, and Byerly and Caldwell-O-Keefe (2012), suggested this may also extend to minority populations because the costs in the workplace can be higher for women, people of color, and LGBTQQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning) populations. The women participating

in this study have spent their careers working through competing aspects of their leadership and the internal processes that occur.

Vice President Emerson learned she could expect someone will always criticize her for doing her job. She has received 360 degree-evaluations in the past, and she wondered who might have said the negative, mean comments she received. She has worked hard to let herself, "See, perhaps they may not have enough information or knowledge to make the judgments that they do." Vice President Emerson recalled early in her career that she took work home with her. She considered that the dark time in her life where she had no work-life balance and dealing with student-concerns consumed a large part of her life. Vice President Morrison spent a large amount of time on student security over the past seven years. It is a daily worry for her. She expressed that who she is within is what carries her through difficulties. Furthermore, she believed her approach is one that is selfless; it is not about her own achievements, but rather about empowering those around her. Throughout her career she has had to make a mental shift because she says it is not how many hours she works, rather, it is the attitude she has through integrating a sense of purpose and peace to what she does. Vice President Dickinson shared experiences about her internal fears and concerns reading the political environment. Her feelings intersect as a Latino woman in higher education administration. She shared that she fears her actions could potentially be mistaken as representing how all Latino women act. Her passion about topics may come across as too emotional. She has at times become frustrated because of gender association with her actions. She bypasses the work/life balance and does not worry about it; she does what she needs to do. Vice President Callcott explained that receiving negative and substantive

feedback can vary from acceptance to beating herself up and thinking negative thoughts. She admitted she has struggled with self-esteem throughout her career and has had strong mentors who helped her through defining moments in her career. Vice President Callcott admitted she does not have a work/life balance and believes that it is a fallacy to try to create a balance. Vice President Woolf has found it useful not to compare herself to other people because by being true to who she is she is better able to step into her own leadership role. Vice President Woolf reflected on the uncertainty that occurs when a new president comes to the institution. It can take time and energy to figure out what is expected and build a relationship.

When discussing work/life balance, many of the women commented they did not experienced what is traditionally considered a work/life balance. They indicate when they feel drained of energy they must rejuvenate, whether by scheduling time for yoga during the day, journaling, or taking time outside of work to shut work off at home. Fochtman (2011) suggested that one way women persist in positions in academia, particularly in student services, is "finding an individual work-life balance strategy that worked" (p.101). The participants in this study all appeared to be in a place where they had found a way to keep their energy and find outlets for work/life balance. Vice President Woolf emphasized that this becomes more effective by finding an institutional fit. She would not be happy at a larger institution where she had to be charismatic and live in the center of campus for her life to be on display 24 hours a day. The smaller institution where she currently works provides her the opportunity to balance her life.

The current data suggests more societal concern over the aspects of third shift variables should occur. The concept of living each day twice is concerning, with

challenges that are centered around being true to oneself or being someone others will accept, accomplishing the task or worrying about how others feel, and spending time on one's own achievements as opposed to achievements of others.  Future research needs to look more in-depth at whether women at all levels of leadership experience higher levels of third shift duties.  Vice President Callcott explained she felt women were expected to be caretakers at work, while men were cut slack in this area.  If this is the case, then it can attribute to the "opt-out" phenomena mentioned earlier in the introduction and literature review.  The third shift may play a stronger role in why women opt-out of the work force.  Even when women make risky decisions in their careers, the third shift can follow them leading to higher burnout rates and physical and mental health wellness issues.  Without systematic change in the expectations of women to be the caretakers in the workplace, an extra burden is present for women to feed egos and mend wounds.

**How Case Studies Spun Together.**

Two themes arose throughout the analysis of interviews and supporting documents connected to the research questions, particularly looking at other factors women executive leaders felt played a role in their leadership development, either as a support or as a barrier.  First, the stories of the women create a path of created opportunities by their own professional development, mentors, and nudges from those who supported them throughout their careers. Second, their careers took on a life of their own where they continued to challenge themselves, to create environments of constant learning, and to step into the challenge no matter the situation dealt. As mentioned above, congruent with Eagly (2013), these women did not have straight pathways to their positions.  Rather, each of the women had to place themselves into new challenges to

move forward using different universities to build their professional resume.  They took

on these risks and challenges at numerous stages along their careers.

"You gotta be determined to get there" (Drury, 2010). Chief operations officers

(CIOs) in higher education sighted utilizing mentors, support groups, perseverance,

extensive preparation, and behavior adaptation (massaging egos) in order to progress to

their current position.  Similar to the women participating in this study, women holding

the position of CIO, the importance of utilizing mentors, perseverance, and preparation

were vital to their effectiveness.  Drury contended that "maintaining awareness that the

real changes needed relate to cultural and structural changes in society, gendered

organizations, including higher education" (p.75).  The results of this study suggest

similar results.

*Created opportunities.* As the women reflected, through the assistance and advise

of mentors, many doors opened for them.  Thanks to the advice and assistance of their

mentors, they stepped through doors, worked hard and took on challenges that helped

them throughout various stages of their careers.

Early in Vice President Emerson's career, a mentor insisted she continue her

education and consider a graduate degree in student personnel and higher education

administration.  One of the critical moments in her career was to leave a university where

she worked 14 years. Leaving her child to finish the school year and husband to sell their

home, while she moved 850 miles away was hard. Vice President Morrison attributed her

success to the flexibility of her spouse, who supported her career path.  She shared her

feelings about her husband as a mentor. Vice President Callcott believed having a

supportive partner was a strong support system to help continue advancing her career.

Vice Presidents Morrison and Emerson cite their spouses' support and encouragement as being critical to building their careers, whether in terms of taking care of tasks on the home front, or through the emotional and mentoring support. Vice President Morrison stressed that many people in her career have let her take on tasks, and new challenges, and it was through those experiences she felt prepared to take on the role of Vice President. Vice President Dickinson based many of her principles and values on those of one of her mentors. She was fortunate to work at many smaller universities prior to her current post, creating opportunities for her to learn all the aspects of student services. Vice President Callcott felt she would attribute her success to her past bosses and mentors. She did not know she was going to be where she is today; it was a seed planted in her by one of her mentors. Vice President Woolf had not originally seen herself in her current position; it was her mentors and a past boss who pushed her into believing she could take on this role.

*Leaning in.* Vice President Morrison suggests that, as a woman, one must push through the gender issues surrounding the work environment, sit at the table and be present.

> Always be at the table. And do not let gender get in the way. I think
> too many women I've known over the years have let gender be a
> factor, when it doesn't have to be if you show the kind of support you
> need to have in the work place for others. I started being on the
> leadership team of the president and watched the other women, and
> what I noticed was women who are the most effective are those who

don't get caught up in gender issues, and I think you got to be tuned in

too, you know.

Sandberg (2013) recounted a story about several women who were present at a

company executive meeting.  They sat back against the wall, while the men all filed

around the table.  Sandberg then encouraged the women to join them at the table.  Dr.

Morrison's comment resonated with Sandberg's experience.  One has to be resilient and

push themselves to take a seat at the table, even if it feels uncomfortable.  Byerly's

(2011) research looking at mid-level managers indicates that women felt they needed to

be extra prepared in order to be at the right place at the right time, the right place

referring to their preparation level.  When looking at the final theme, the women had not

entered their positions unprepared.  Resiliency, hard work, and preparation all were

common threads among the women's stories. Vice President Callcott realized how gender

can play a role in an organization.  She recalled that men often are allowed slack on the

compassion and caring aspects of people dynamics in the office, whereas when a women

is in a leadership position, people will wonder "why isn't she trying to build, you know

why aren't you visiting with people and networking and talking and socializing…we're

supposed to be the caretakers I think."

Dr. Emerson, who was the first woman vice president at her past university, felt

"it is still a man's world and men still have the ultimate power."  Dr. Emerson has never

reported to a woman and has always wondered how it might be different.  "It seems to me

that there are still different rules for men and women in employment."  Dr. Dickinson

approached resiliency and preparation in a way that resonates with the concept of being

prepared to take on new opportunities.  In her interviews, she reflected back to the

positions she has had and the opportunities she took to learn. For example, in her current position she expressed that, although she had not worked for a large public university, she understood all the aspects that made up her division because she had worked in most of the departments in one capacity or another throughout her career.

Based on their past positions and knowledge, each of the women participating in the study felt prepared for the vice president position when they took it on. "I felt very prepared because I have worked at a college or university since I was twenty-two," explains Vice President Emerson. Vice President Morrison took on the role of interim vice president of student affairs before throwing her hat into the ring for the permanent position. The women's advice to other women looking at becoming vice presidents of student affairs was resounding encouragement to take a seat at the table and prepare in any way possible.

**Limitations**

No study can be executed perfectly. Throughout the data collection process, a researcher encounters critical decisions at all avenues to complete the study where the data remains current and relevant. Limitations may be potential weaknesses within a study. The current study revealed a few weaknesses that were apparent prior to data collection, and discussed in the dissertation proposal, and others that emerged during the data collection and writing process.

The first limitation, length of time in the field, noted during the research planning process and became salient during the data collection process. Qualitative studies are dependent on gaining access to rich, descriptive knowledge from the participants. Due to limitations of the participants, it was hard to spend any more time and provide any more

data than is presented. One inclusion of the study was the participant journals. Plowman (2010) suggested that using the diary method as a form of data collection is effective in discovering gendered norms within organizational culture, gathering reflections of both the personal and the professional, and drawing out beliefs that shape access and power. This allowed for richer, more descriptive data to be gathered.

However, including the journals was difficult. The first plan in the data collection process was for women to complete the journals between a first and second interview. However, that did not work. The women participating in the study did not originally feel comfortable journaling about the daily events that occurred throughout their workday. One issue that solidified this issue was being a researcher only holding the position of director as opposed to a vice president or associate vice president. A complication to the study because participants were not talking with a colleague they were talking with someone they could potentially supervise. This type of reticence was not expected; and did not occur in an earlier study researching mid-level managers (Byerly, 2011). Recognizing the importance of the journals, the women were asked to complete the journals post hoc, at the conclusion of the interviews. Even then, participants needed direction regarding what to write about without feeling as if they were breaking confidential issues they dealt with on a regular basis. After this feedback, I created an open-ended set of journal questions where the women could have a jumping off point (Appendix F). Four out of the five women were able to complete the journals; one vice president was not able to complete them, but cited lack of time as opposed to feeling uncomfortable about completing the journals.

Second, a multiple-case study can be challenging to manage; however, it is a common way to enhance external validity (Merriam, 2009). Criticisms surrounding the use of case studies are a lack of representativeness and the subjectivity of the researcher. Within the current study, the voice of difference is an important basis for choosing a qualitative approach as opposed to a quantitative approach. As expressed in chapter one, quantitative data shows women experience leadership differently, in most cases, by being excluded outright from executive level positions. The use of a qualitative data case study allows for the investigation of the how and the why; creating a different story to be depicted that can add to the overall theoretical knowledge surrounding leadership and gender.

In a typically case study the third leg of the research includes observation or a form of independent verification of what people may think of the women's leadership style. A survey and an observation was considered upon the design of this study, however early on in the research design it was felt do to the public nature of these women's jobs and obtrusiveness it may have deterred  women from participating if these were included. Additionally, reading literature on outside views of women as leaders, there can be bias about how women's leadership is perceived. The current study wanted to eliminate what people thought of women, and focus on the voices, beliefs, actions, and pathways of the women. The addition of independent verification from other employees, although a clear possibility for future research, it seemed to be a distraction from the purpose of this study.

Finally, it was impossible to travel to all the Universities in the research project because of both the time restriction of the researcher and the time restriction of the

participants. The exclusion of face-to-face interviews may have limited the relationship

the researcher and participant established. One participant, due to fortuitist

circumstances, was interviewed in-person and evaluation of the data did not appear to

show any stronger connection as compared to the other women interviewed over the

phone. However, because of the lack of travel and the time constraints, it was impossible

to see the women in an observational setting to complete one of the legs of a multiple

case study. Additionally, early on in the research process, it was felt that including an

observational piece would compromise the anonymity of the participants in the study. It

was important and stressed by at least one participant that anonymity was important to

them throughout this study. During the dissertation proposal process, it was suggested to

see if the women would be okay with including their real names in the study in order to

include the observational piece. Through thoughtful conversation with my dissertation

advisor, Mary Gardiner and the Human Subjects Review Board (IRB), it was decided that

the best way to conduct the study was to keep anonymity and use the inclusion of

speeches written by the participants for the observation leg of the research project.

Decisions and notes made during the writing process may not necessarily be

considered limitations, but could affect future directions of research. In order to provide

the best anonymity as possible, all the women were written as Vice Presidents. This was

not in fact the case; this study encompassed both Vice Presidents and Vice Chancellors

with a fairly even spilt. Because of the different structures of the University system that

has a President structure and a Chancellor system, it may be seen in future research that a

distinction needs to be made. It was not felt it needed to be made in this study because of

the wide range of experience each woman had working with multiple Universities during their tenure in higher education.

Additionally the ethnic and racial background of the women in the study is noticeably unbalanced; only one woman of color was interviewed for this study. Diversification was attempted because women from 12 of the 13 Western states were invited to participate in the study; however, only seven women responded with interest in participating in the study, two of whom subsequently pulled their names from consideration prior to the beginning of the data collection process, due to time constraints. Future research may want to focus on women who may have multiple minority identities intersecting with their experience in their position. It was mentioned in the one case, within this study, that Dr. Dickinson felt expectations on her both as a women and as a Latino woman. Other areas would suggest women of color, low-income background, first in the family to receive a degree, or LGBTQQ may have different experiences, due to the intersections of these different pieces that make up their lived experiences (Byerly and Caldwell-O-Keefe, 2012; Lykke, 2010; Walby, Armstrong, and Strid, 2012). Future research could focus on these types of research questions to have a complete picture of these experiences within the executive level positions of student services.

**Implications**

The purpose of this study was to explore perspectives of women currently employed in executive level leadership and who had therefore successfully navigated the challenges, to gain insight into how career advancement took place, in particular, examining women working in the area of higher education student services. Answering

three research questions, the data provided a rich array of information examining the lives and institutions where each of the women worked throughout their careers.

The overall results show women did not ascend the traditional ladder to their vice president/chancellor without movement to multiple universities as they moved through the labyrinth toward the vice presidency. The implication of the current study is that the wires' of oppression does not limit women from penetrating the glass ceiling and moving through the labyrinth, but it does affect the trajectory and requires the alignment of many factors in order to reach the executive level suite. Vice President Emerson contended it is still a man's world and men still hold the power in higher education. Change appears to have taken place for these women as they reflected through their career; however, change takes time. "A survey of the Princeton class of 1975 found that 54 percent of the women foresaw work-family conflict, compared to only 26 percent of men. The same survey of the Princeton class of 2006 found that 62 percent of women anticipated work-family conflict, compared to only 33 percent of the men" (Sandberg, 2013, p.100). Change may not be occurring quickly enough, "old practices" are still in place and "new systems" need to be set up. The voices of the women in this study, back up the data presented by the Princeton class. The women share stories of not having a work/life balance and having to create a system for themselves that allows them to continue to do their jobs without a strong balance, their jobs are a mission.

Throughout their careers, the women portrayed a student-centered, inclusive approach toward leadership. One could ask if the concept of student-centered leadership is a unique thing. Is it unique to people working only in student services? This style of leadership has a different dynamic because of the role of *in loco parentis* in the field of

education (Leonard, 1956), a role critical to the function of the university structure. Data showed that within student-centered leadership were the components of transformational and authentic leadership, especially for individuals that work in student affairs. Working through the data showed a strong overarching theme of student-centered leadership, the passion for students to succeed was part of career path to share that passion. It was not the participants saying what they were suppose to say, the passion for students made them who they are and how they wanted to see themselves as leaders. Although future research can look at other areas, inside and outside of education, the goal of the current study was leadership within student affairs, given the limitation of literature and research on executive level women in student affairs.

The third shift presented itself in several forms throughout their biographies; most poignant were staying true to oneself, being open to feedback (positive and negative), including individuals throughout the decision-making process, and lacking what would be considered a typical work-life balance. Are systematic structures set up that make it hard to be authentic? The addition of a "third shift" for the women in the study did not waiver their energy, focus, and passion about their work environments. Within the field of transformational leadership, conflicting evidence provided when looking at self-monitoring behavior and self-efficacy of transformational leadership. Research assumptions suggest that individuals who are transformational leaders will be high in self-efficacy and low in self-monitoring behavior, but mixed research results have been produced (Anderson and Tolson, 1989; Bass and Riggio,2006; Neilson, Yarker, Randall, and Munir, 2009). The implication in this study is that gender and experiences that have supported or hindered women along their pathway may affect this research assumption.

Because of the need to play by rules within leadership roles, it may be critical to be high

in self-monitoring and depending on the supports created by one's institution self-

efficacy can range for women in leadership as they move through the various challenges

present in their "third shift." Future research should look at women in executive level

positions within the area of student affairs using the lens of student-centered leadership.

The results of this current qualitative study may suggest that self-monitoring can be high;

however, gender and the third shift variables could be possible mediators. Concerning

the variable of self-efficacy, mediating factors that could be present are gender and

supportive mentors.

All the women felt they had enjoyed opportunities mentors had created for them

and opportunities they had created for themselves. Overall, the concept of feeling

prepared for their positions came in the form of not shying away from challenges at

various stages throughout their careers, taking a seat at the table, and perseverance.

Women found themselves needing to be prepared for all the opportunities that may come

up for them. Sandberg (2013) suggested women have to play by the rules set up by the

system if they want to move ahead. Sandberg hoped "that we won't have to play by these

archaic rules forever and that eventually we can all be ourselves." (p.49). The women in

this study have spent their careers working on being true to themselves, not necessarily

what others will accept. The challenges come into play with the management of staff who

do not always give them positive endorsements in 360 degree performance evaluations.

Future research could look into this style of leadership to see if it is typical among both

males and females working in student services. Research aligning with the third shift

would suggest male administrators in student affairs experience their leadership role

different then women. Women, and/or individuals of color, and/or LGBTQQ would have

experiences different then a white male because of their privilege and public credibility

of what a leader looks like (Eagly and Carli, 2007; McIntosh, 1988; Rothenburg, 2012).

"There is no more powerful position that that of being 'just' human. The claim to power

is the claim to speak for the commonality of humanity" (Rothenburg, 2012, p.10).

As mentioned in the literature review, the entanglement of inequalities can fall

across issues of gender, race, class, sexuality, nationality, education, and upbringing

(Buono and Kamm, 1983; Collins, 2013; Feree, 2011; hooks, 2000a, 2000b).  All of these

identities can marginalize an individual.  Third –wave feminism "respects not only

differences between women based on race, ethnicity, religion, and economic standing but

also make allowances for different identities within a single person" (Heywood, 2006,

p.xx). Multiple identities complicates feminist analysis, but it is a critical next step to

avoid one's identity pitting female against male, black against white, oppressed against

oppressor. Breaking away from this rigid analysis creates inclusion for transgender,

bisexual, and interracial identities (Walker, 2006). The introduction to intersectionality is

an extremely important component of any identity-based study. It was important in the

literature review to acquaint the reader with enough information about feminist theory in

order to keep that in mind throughout the reading of the study however there was not

enough data to talk about intersectionality in depth throughout the results. It was

important to stay focused on the data and research questions throughout chapters four and

five. One could ask why "whiteness" was not talked about. One participant mentioned

her experience as a Latina woman, the other participants did not speak of their race as a

part of the questions asked. Dyer (2012) would argue this is the case because it is not

seen as whiteness, but normal. The purpose of this study was to bring a voice to women working in the executive level cabinet of Student Affairs. A deeper level of questions and analysis could provide a stronger understanding of intersectionality and white privilege, bringing even more voices to light.

An exploratory interview question asked the women whether they ever considered applying for a President position. Almost all of them said no or not at the current institution where they worked. The implication of this result suggest a gap at the top level of higher education institutions, women who have worked their way up through student services. Many of the women talked about how they thought their president let them attain professional development they approached their president with; however, few presidents took a vested interest in these women's professional development. Vice President Emerson reflected on a situation where she happened to be in the administration building on campus, where all the vice presidents were housed, except for her. She was approached by one of VPs and asked if she was going to lunch with them. Apparently, a group of VP's went to lunch with the President regularly, but she had never been invited. Vice President Emerson also recounted a time when the president scheduled another meeting over their monthly meeting, but the president never called to reschedule or recognize that he had missed his meeting with her.

How many presidents across the country are thinking, "she could be a University President, I will develop and challenge her in the areas she would need to attain the position of president." All the women in this study reflected on how they did not originally see themselves in the position of vice president, until important mentors in their lives planted the seed. How many women in student services have had this same

experience?  If Presidents of universities proclaimed a true end to the warrior age of leadership and changed their approach to who they saw as candidates for the presidency, how many women would we see enter the role of university president, especially since women make up a substantial number of those working in the field of students services (Rhatigan, 2009)?

**Final Thoughts**

Engaging in research focused on the voices of women empowered me as the participant-researcher.  Throughout the research process, I questioned the need for such a study in an age when conventional wisdom suggests gender equity has been achieved.  When I began data analysis for writing the results section, I still questioned whether my research held any substantial results that would benefit society.  As I continued to read more literature and plug through the dissertation process, I realized my feelings of inadequacy were reminiscent of much of the research and the experiences the women participating in the study shared with me.  It was through their words I felt the inspiration to continue on my journey.  If the only impact the reader takes away from this writing is by hearing the voices of women working in the area of students services allows for a growing web of connections other women can cling to as they strive to find their voice and encouragement. How incredibly important encouragement is for other women to continue along the same path as the fierce and fantastic women in this study.

Living in rural Idaho, where talking about gender inequity and feminism can be synonymous with a scarlet letter, created a passion within.  It is of concern when the word feminist can make people uncomfortable.  Throughout the study, I found myself unable to bring up the word feminism, for fear the women participating in the study

might shut down and decide not to participate fully in the study. None of the women spoke about being feminists either, which only solidified in my mind that it may be an unsafe term to use. I used the terms gender equity, double-bind, and dual expectations, all terms that have surrounded the feminist movement. What are the implications of this reticence? In this chapter, I wrote about limitations of the study. Is this avoidance of the "F" word a limitation?

My reservations about adding this to the line of questioning specifically come from personal discomfort and my uncertainty with how it would affect the study and the research questions. It was clear from four out the five women interviewed they had to think for a moment about a time when dual expectations were placed on them. In a way, do they force themselves to become gender blind? If so, is this harmful or helpful for the acceptance of women in leadership? In the case of color blindness, it could actually be harmful. For example, Dr. Morrison mentioned one cannot let gender interfere. Would that be accepted if she were to say, "you cannot let race or sexuality interfere"? It seems, in both cases, this is suggesting a woman, and/or a person of color, and/or LGBTQQ individual, would have to do in order to progress forward within the current system. Does this seem like an equitable system that sets up one group to have to ignore uncomfortable situations that happen within the work place in order to keep moving forward? Although this stretches the meaning of Dr. Morrison statement, it does bring up how much women, people of color, LGBTQQ, and/or individuals with limited income, first generation backgrounds are expected to not allow themselves to be hindered by perceptions of inequality.

I found this research to be of especially strong interest and importance to the leadership community. With an increase of women in these positions, it is important to stop doing business as usual and to challenge institutional norms. With a growing number of women obtaining decision-making power, researchers might ask has the work to obtain gender equality only begun. Could a revolution be forthcoming creating work environments that incorporate a feminist model of shared power, no matter one's gender? Could the accepted idea that men create the culture of the workplace and women adapt be up for a fundamental change? The voices of the women in this study add to the promise of a new system that promotes authentic leaders and simultaneously advances the interests of the university.

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**Appendix A**

**First interview Guide**

Code name: _____     What is the first letter of your first name? _____
                              What is the first letter of your mother's first name? _____
                              What is the first digit in your address? _____
                              What is the last letter in your last name? _____

1. Tell me what your current job entails?

2. How prepared did you feel when you started in your current position?

3. Can you describe the path you took to get to your current position in detail?

4. What do you believe to be the critical moments in preparing for your career path?

5. How would you define yourself as successful in the workplace?

6. Tell me about specific mentors along the way?

7. What has been your biggest fear along your career path?

8. What type of preparation did you take to improve your experience in the

   workplace?

9. Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

10. How would you describe your leadership style?

11. What advice would you give other women in mid-level management aspiring to

    the executive level administrators?

12. How do you think student services differs from other departments on campus?

13. How do you maintain a work life balance?

14. Do you ever feel like there are dual expectations on you? If so, describe what they

    are and how you negotiate these expectations?

15. Anything else to add that could inform the challenges and supports encountered

    by women in executive positions in the university?

Thank you very much!

**Appendix B**

**Second Interview Guide**

Code name: _____  What is the first letter of your first name? _____

What is the first letter of your mother's first name? _____

What is the first digit in your address? _____

What is the last letter in your last name? _____

1. What significant events have taken place in your position since we last met?

2. What satisfies you about your current position?

3. What support does the President of the University give you in regards to your professional development?

4. Do you have someone within the University you can talk to about your experiences, frustrations, insights?

5. How do you deal with conflict?

6. Can you tell me about a time you had a colleague disagree with you? Subordinate?

7. Tell me how things were resolved?

8. Tell me about an experience where you felt undermined at work?

9. Have you ever thought about becoming President of a University? Why or why not?

10. Do you anything else to add?

**Appendix C**

**Demographic Survey**

Code name: _____    What is the first letter of your first name? _____
                           What is the first letter of your mother's first name? _____
                           What is the first digit in your address? _____
                           What is the last letter in your last name? _____

1.  How many years have you served in your current position?

2.  How many divisions/offices do you supervise?

3.  Age? Approximate.

4.  Race?

5.  Ethnicity?

6.  Yearly Salary w/out the addition of teaching contracts or supplemental contracts?

7.  What supplemental contracts do you have within the institution?

8.  Within the community?

9.  How many hours a week would you say you work? Approximate.

10. How many hours outside of work time would you say you put in? Approximate.

11. Estimated household income? Feel free to decline to comment if desired.

12. Family status comment?

13. Any other comments in relation to women in executive positions in the university

    and the challenges and supports they encounter? Anything I should have asked?

Thank you very much!

**Appendix D**

**Informed Consent**

## INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Purpose of Research:
You are being invited to take part in a research study that has certified this project as exempt by the University of Idaho Institutional Review Board (IRB). It is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully, and if anything is unclear or you would like more information, please ask. Take time to decide whether or not you would like to volunteer in this research study. If at any time you would like to discontinue your participation in the study please do so. Again at any time you may discontinue participation.

There are two main purposes for the following research project. First, I hope to provide an in-depth examination into the lives of women in executive level management positions in student services. Second, I hope to find key items within all women's experience that may help shed some light on how other women may aspire to obtain executive level positions.

Procedures:
For the study, I will ask you to complete two face-to-face, one hour interviews, complete a biweekly electronic diary in the weeks between the first interview and the second, and complete a demographic survey upon the completion of the study. The questions include inquiring what your job entails, your educational background, everyday experiences and feelings, as well as future goals. You can choose not to answer any questions. You may also stop participating at any time. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary.

Risks and Benefits:
There are not any foreseeable risks to participating in this study. You will be asked a number of interview questions you may feel discomfort, frustration, or fatigue. There may be unforeseeable risks not anticipated, however, every effort will be made to minimize any risks. You will not receive direct benefits for being in this study. However hopefully the information obtained in this study will benefit women within and outside leadership positions.

Confidentiality:
All of your records about this research study will be kept locked up so no one else will see them. You will be assigned a code name, so that no one will be able to connect the information provided with your name. The principal investigator will do all the interviews and transcribing of information.

Person to Contact:
If you have any questions regarding this study you may call the principal investigator, Sari Byerly, saribyerly@gmail.com 208-954-9334, or the major professor supervising the dissertation Dr. Mary Gardiner 208.364.9905 gardiner@uidaho.edu

Participation Consent:
Signing my name below means that I agree to be in this study. I will be given a copy of this form after I have signed it.

_____          _____
Signature of Participant                                                    Date


_____          _____
Signature of Investigator                                                  Date

**Appendix E**

**Categories and Themes**

Theme:   Exploring Labyrinths (Research Question 1)
Categories:    Working at multiple Universities
                Experience in multiple divisions
                Knowledge in various areas/not experts in one area

Theme:   Student-Centered Leadership (Research Question 2)
Categories:    Student Focused (made up of 30 codes)
                Transformational Leadership
                Servant Leadership
                Teamwork
                Nurturing
                Mentoring
                Collaboration
                Constantly Learning /Diversity of tasks
                Get Everyone's Feedback

Theme:   Third Shift (Research Question 3)
Categories:    True to Self
                Excellence/staff inclusion, teamwork, feedback
                Deal with conflict
                No work life balance/Integrate work and life
                Take home conflict/vivid recollections
                Security of students 24/7

Theme:   Created Opportunities (additional theme ties to research question 2)
Categories:    Create own professional development
                Mentors suggested paths to current position
                Sitting at the table

Theme:   Leaning In (additional theme)
Categories:    Don't let gender get in the way
                Double-standards/man's world
                Insecurity/Dislike of politics
                Preparation

**Appendix F**

**Journal Open-Ended Starter Questions**

Reflect on the decisions you have made recently and your internal process making those decisions on a day-to day basis.

Reflect on conflicts that may have come up recently or throughout your career, what is your internal process in approaching these conflicts.

Reflect on a time you heard something negative about a decision you made, what was your internal process in dealing with this feedback.

Write about thoughts or events you have on your mind over the next few days, free writing in as much detail as you feel comfortable giving.

**Appendix G**

**University of Idaho IRB Exemption**

# University of Idaho IRB Exemption

February 24, 2012

**University of Idaho**

**Office of Research Assurances (ORA)**

**Institutional Review Board (IRB)**

PO Box 443010
Moscow ID 83844-3010

Phone: 208-885-6162
Fax: 208-885-5752
irb@uidaho.edu

To:    Gardiner, Mary
CC:    Byerly, Sari

From:   IRB, University of Idaho Institutional Review Board
Subject: Exempt Certification for IRB project number 12-055
Determination:  February 24, 2012

Certified as Exempt under category 2 at 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2)

IRB project number 12-055:  The Path to Leadership: Voices of women who have navigated the executive labyrinth

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This study may be conducted according to the protocol described in the Application without further review by the IRB. As specific instruments are developed, each should be forwarded to the ORA, in order to allow the IRB to maintain current records. Every effort should be made to ensure that the project is conducted in a manner consistent with the three fundamental principles identified in the Belmont Report: respect for persons; beneficence; and justice.

It is important to note that certification of exemption is NOT approval by the IRB. Do not include the statement that the UI IRB has reviewed and approved the study for human subject participation.

Remove all statements of IRB Approval and IRB contact information from study materials that will be disseminated to participants. Instead please indicate, "The University of Idaho Institutional Review Board has Certified this project as Exempt."

Certification of exemption is not to be construed as authorization to recruit participants or conduct research in schools or other institutions, including on Native Reserved lands or within Native Institutions, which have their own policies that require approvals before Human Subjects Research Projects can begin. This authorization must be obtained from the appropriate Tribal Government (or equivalent) and/or Institutional Administration. This may include independent review by a tribal or institutional IRB or equivalent. It is the investigator's responsibility to obtain all such necessary approvals and provide copies of these approvals to ORA, in order to allow the IRB to maintain current records.

This certification is valid only for the study protocol as it was submitted to the ORA. Studies certified as Exempt are not subject to continuing review (this Certification does not expire). If any changes are made to the study protocol, you must submit the changes to the ORA for determination that the study remains Exempt before implementing the changes. The IRB Modification Request Form is available online at: http://www.uidaho.edu/ora/committees/irb/irbforms

University of Idaho Institutional Review Board:  IRB00000843, FWA00005639