Stabilizing and Empowering Women in Higher Education: Aligning, Centering, and Building

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Chapter 1
Stabilizing and Empowering Women in Higher Education:
Aligning, Centering, and Building

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ABSTRACT

The importance of higher education in today's world and workforce cannot be overstated. It is well-known that higher education leads to better jobs, higher salaries, and elevated social status. Unfortunately, women have been historically underrepresented in the realm of higher education. In recent years, however, numerous efforts have been made to stabilize and empower women in this arena. As such, this chapter aims to provide an in-depth analysis of these progressive efforts. Stabilizing and empowering women in higher education is essential in promoting gender equality and generational social progress. While substantial gains have been made in recent years, much remains to be done. Universities must continue to support all women in higher education – students, staff, faculty, and leaders alike – through mentorship, work-life balance policies, and opportunities for advancement. Highlighted here is that these efforts will provide women with the support and opportunities necessary to succeed in and beyond the academic sphere.

INTRODUCTION

"If you educate a man, you educate an individual. But if you educate a woman, you educate a nation."
– African Proverb[1]

The importance of higher education in today's world and workforce cannot be overstated (Johnson, 2014). It is a known fact that higher education leads to better jobs, better salaries, and better social status (Osterman & Shulman, 2011; Wiles, 1974). Unfortunately, women have been historically underrepresented in higher education (Alemán & Renn, 2002; Cronin & Roger, 1999; Krause, 2017). In recent

years, however, numerous efforts have been made to stabilize and empower women in higher education (DiGeorgio-Lutz, 2002; Sharma & Afroz, 2014). Women's suffrage and civil rights movements marked significant milestones in the history and advancement of women's empowerment initiatives (Marino, 2019; Olson, 2001).

Figure 1. Women in higher education timeline
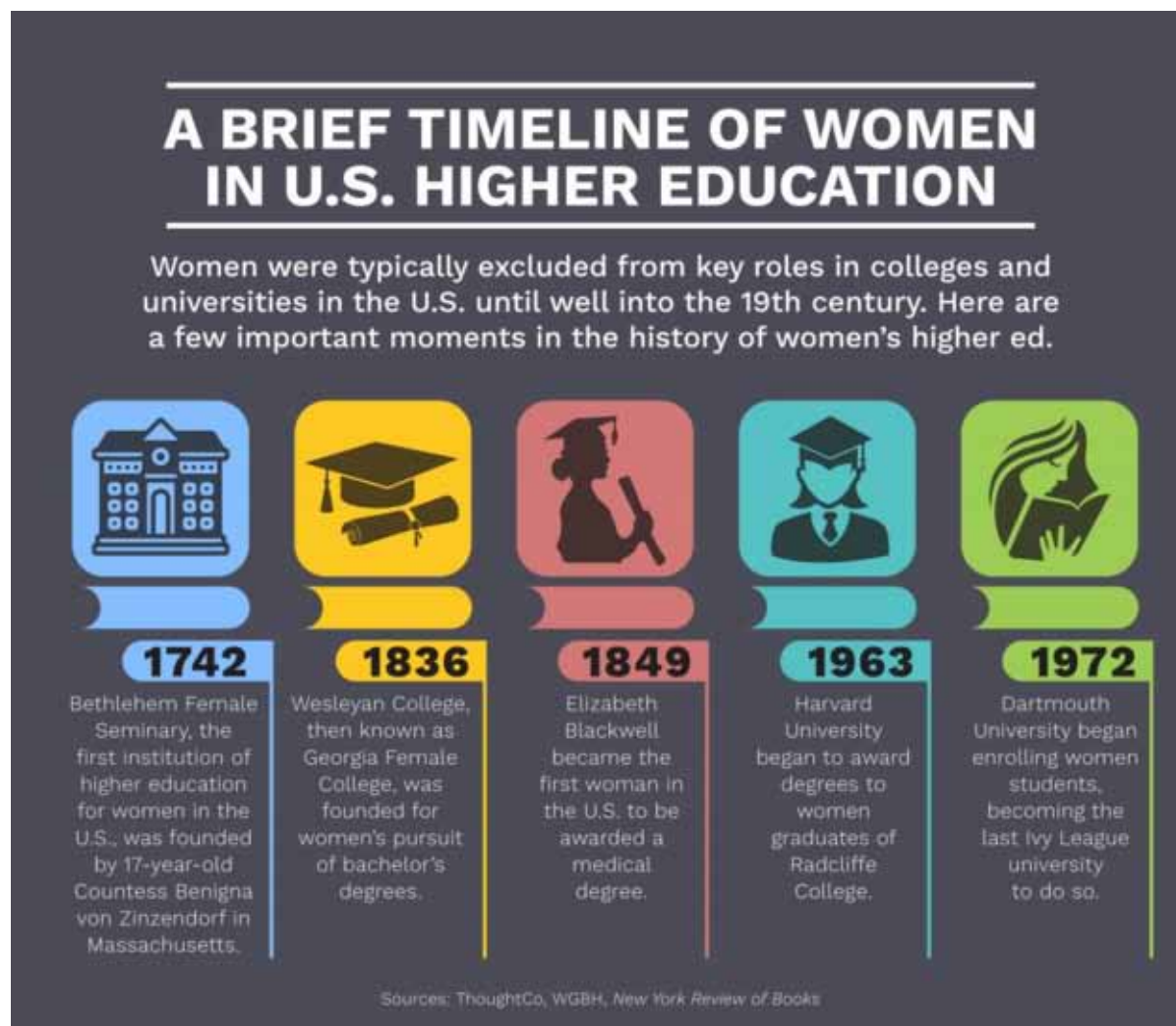
As shown in Figure 1 – *Women in Higher Education Timeline*, women were typically excluded from key roles in colleges and universities in the United States until well into the 19th century (Beard, 1916; Hill et al., 2016). Gender equity remains a challenge, even 100 years after recognizing women's right to vote (Perrons, 2009; Winchester & Browning, 2015). Although women have made noteworthy strides in advancing their status in various fields – including higher education – disparities remain extant (DeWitt, 2016; Noble & Moore, 2006). In higher education, women have successfully broken through the gender

barrier but are still underrepresented in specific disciplinary sectors and many top-level leadership positions (Johnson, 2021; Johnson & Fournillier, 2022, 2023).

Without question, gains have been made regarding the participation of women in society, politics, education, and employment. Nevertheless, the representation of women in positions of power and influence has been conspicuously less progressive (Goethals & Hoyt, 2017; Crowe et al., 2018; Slaughter, 2015). Although women have made noteworthy strides in advancing their status in various fields – including higher education – disparities remain extant. In higher education settings, women have been able to break through the gender barrier (Aiston, 2011; Eddy & Ward, 2017; Rosa & Clavero, 2022). However, they are still underrepresented in specific disciplinary sectors and in many top-level leadership positions across the board (Hoyt, 2010; Siemiatycki, 2019; Thomas, 2017).

The reasons behind women's underrepresentation in higher education vary, ranging from familial and cultural attitudes to financial issues. Women have long been viewed as less capable than men in specific fields (El-Amin, 2022; Smith & Johnson, 2019). Additionally, the cost associated with obtaining a higher education degree can be prohibitive for some women. However, there has been considerable progress in recent years. Many universities have implemented policies actively encouraging women to pursue higher education degrees. Scholarships and financial aid packages have also been introduced to help women overcome financial obstacles.

THEORIES ON WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION

"Education is one thing no one can take away from you." – Elin Nordegren

Several theories attempt to explain the experiences and challenges faced by women in higher education, including the following five outlined below:

1. *Gender schema theory:* This theory suggests that individuals develop gender schemas or mental frameworks that influence their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. Women are often socialized to believe that specific fields or disciplines are unsuitable to and for them. Unfortunately, this may lead them to avoid pursuing these areas of study or encountering gender bias and discrimination when they do (see Bem, 1987; Davis & Wilson, 2016; Starr & Zurbriggen, 2017).
2. *Intersectionality theory:* Recognizes that women's experiences in higher education are shaped by the intersection of multiple social identities, such as race, class, sexual orientation, and ability. Women with various marginalized identities may face compounded barriers to success in higher education (see Carbado et al., 2013; Cho et al., 2013; Hancock, 2016; Nash, 2017).
3. *Stereotype threat theory:* This theory suggests that women who are cognizant of negative stereotypes about their gender may experience anxiety and decreased performance in academic settings. These experiences can contribute to lower retention rates and achievement levels for women in higher education (see Goff et al., 2008; Martens et al., 2006).
4. *Socialization theory* posits that individuals are socialized into gender roles and expectations from a very young age. Women may, over time, be socialized to prioritize caretaking and nurturing roles, which can conflict with the demands of academic work and make it more difficult for them to balance academic and personal responsibilities (see Carter, 2014; Grusec & Hastings, 2014; Stockard, 2006).

5. ***Structural theory:*** Focuses on the systemic and institutional factors that create barriers to success for women in higher education, such as biased hiring and promotion practices, lack of access to funding and resources, and insufficient support systems for balancing work and family responsibilities (see Arlow & Brenner, 1964; Friedkin, 1998; Wingood & DiClemente, 2002).

Together, these theories highlight the complex and multifaceted nature of the challenges faced by all women in higher education – students, staff, faculty, and leaders alike – and the need for systemic changes to address these issues (Parker, 2015; Shaukat & Pell, 2015).

The Importance of Equity

Equity in higher education is crucial because it ensures that all individuals have an equal opportunity to access and succeed in higher education, regardless of their socioeconomic background, race, gender, or other personal characteristics. There are several reasons why equity in higher education is essential. Firstly, equity promotes social mobility. Higher education can serve as a pathway to upward social mobility. However, certain groups may be left behind without equity in access and success, perpetuating social inequalities (Haveman & Smeeding, 2006; Navarette et al., 2017). Secondly, equity enhances economic growth. A diverse and well-educated workforce is essential for economic growth and development. Equity in higher education ensures that individuals from all backgrounds can contribute to and benefit from a thriving economy (Bourguignon & Dessus, 2009; Duflo, 2012).

Third, equity fosters a diverse and inclusive society. A multicultural, pluralistic academic body (i.e., students, staff, and faculty) can enrich the educational experience and promote cultural understanding. Equity in higher education promotes a more inclusive society that values and celebrates diversity (Allen, 2023; Winters, 2020). In addition, equity addresses systemic inequalities. Historically, certain groups have been excluded from higher education due to bias, nepotism, and large-scale systemic disparities. Equity in higher education is essential to addressing these inequalities and promoting social justice (Forcier et al., 2021; Richerme, 2021).

Thus, to achieve equity in higher education, institutions must address the various barriers that prevent equal access and success for all constituents. This work includes ensuring adequate financial support, providing academic and social support services, and addressing institutional biases and discrimination across the board (see Johnson, 2023; Schnackenberg & Simard, 2023; Thomas, 2019).

Equity for Women in Higher Education

Specific to women in higher education, equity for women is critical to achieving overall fairness and impartiality in higher education. Despite progress in recent years, gender inequalities persist in higher education, particularly in leadership positions and in certain academic disciplines (Eloy et al., 2013). Here, among others, are four reasons why equity for women in higher education is crucial: (1) *Equity for women promotes gender equality*. Women comprise roughly half of the population and should have an equal opportunity to access and succeed in higher education. Equity for women in higher education helps break down gender barriers and promote gender equality (De Welde & Stepnick, 2023). (2) *Equity for women increases diversity*. Women bring different experiences and perspectives to the classroom and academic research, enriching the educational experience for everyone. Equity for women in higher education promotes diversity in academia (Johnson, 2021; Johnson & Fournillier, 2022, 2023).

Further, (3) *Equity for women promotes economic growth.* Women with higher education degrees earn more and are more likely to contribute to economic growth. Equity for women in higher education ensures they have equal chances to access and benefit from the tools gained in higher education (Duflo, E. (2012). (4) *Equity for women specifically addresses systemic gender inequalities.* Women have historically been underrepresented in higher education, particularly in leadership positions and specific academic disciplines. Equity for women in higher education is necessary to address these and other systemic gender inequalities (Guthridge et al., 2022).

To promote the advancement of women in higher education, then, institutions can take several steps, including implementing policies to address gender bias, providing mentorship and support for women, and increasing the representation of women in leadership positions and in underrepresented academic disciplines (Graham, 2019). It is necessary to recognize that equity for women in higher education is not just a women's issue but an issue that affects society as a whole. Every constituency member has a role to play in achieving equity and justice.

STABILIZING AND EMPOWERING WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION

"No country can ever truly flourish if it stifles the potential of its women and deprives itself of the contributions of half of its citizens." – Michelle Obama

One of the most efficient ways to stabilize and empower women in higher education is through mentorship programs. These programs provide women with access to experienced female academics in their field who can offer guidance, support, and motivation. They also provide networking opportunities, which can be invaluable in securing employment opportunities. These and related strategies ensure that women are afforded, at minimum, equal opportunities to pursue higher education degrees and advance in academia (De Welde & Stepnick, 2023).

In addition, universities have implemented policies that promote work-life balance for female academics. These policies include flexible scheduling, part-time options, and job-sharing. Such measures help women balance their academic pursuits with family responsibilities. Stabilizing women in higher education involves ensuring they have the resources, support, and opportunities to pursue their academic and professional goals without facing discrimination or barriers to advancement. Empowering women in higher education involves providing them with the tools, resources, and support required to succeed academically and professionally. Stabilizing and empowering women is crucial for achieving gender equality and promoting social and economic development.

Relevant leaders, researchers, academics, and community members agree that this can be accomplished by providing equal opportunities for women (Coles & Francesconi, 2019). Women should, naturally, be provided with equal access to higher education, scholarships, fellowships, and other resources. These opportunities enable them to pursue their academic goals without discrimination or barriers. Further, higher education institutions should actively encourage women to participate in research, conferences, and other educational activities (see Antoniou & Apergi, 2019). These and other actions will help create a more inclusive and diverse academic community. In this same vein, universities and colleges must continue promoting gender-sensitive policies (Stromquist, 2020, 2022). There should be palpable procedures sensitive to women's needs, including maternity leave, flexible working arrangements, and

childcare support. These judgment-free actions go a long way to ensure that women are not disadvantaged in their academic pursuits due to family responsibilities.

Stabilizing and empowering women in higher education includes good, *active* relationship-building (Brown, 2005; Graham, 2019). Leaders must work to ensure that female students, faculty, and staff receive mentorship and guidance from senior women in their respective fields. This level of assistance helps build supportive networks and enables women to navigate the challenges of higher education. Overtly combating gender-based violence (Bosco Damous & Guillopé, 2021) is a primary example. Universities and colleges should have policies and procedures in place to address gender-based violence, including sexual harassment and assault. This intentionality will lead to the development of safe and supportive environments for women in higher education. Given the sheer importance of leadership, empowering women's leadership (see Longman & Madsen, 2014) is a must. Women should be encouraged and supported to take on leadership roles in academia. This support will help to break down gender stereotypes and promote women's voices in decision-making processes.

As outlined above, stabilizing and empowering women in higher education requires a large-scale and concerted effort from universities, governments, and society members. We all have a part to play in creating more inclusive and equitable academic environments for women. Stabilization and empowerment can be achieved by providing equal opportunities, encouraging participation, promoting gender-sensitive policies, providing mentorship, combating gender-based violence, and empowering women's leadership (Krause, 2017; Longman & Madsen, 2014; Lyness & Grotto, 2018).

Aligning with Women in Higher Education

"Women share this planet 50/50 and they are underrepresented—their potential astonishingly untapped."
– Emma Watson

Gender equity strategies that respond to women's unique challenges in higher education must be developed and strengthened. Through research into gendered hierarchies, societal impositions on gender norms, and identification of such biases and stereotypes, perceptive institutional policies can be created to ensure equal access and opportunities for women. Policies and initiatives such as equitable access to funding, family-friendly benefits (such as support for parental duties and childcare), equal access to faculty positions, and salary parity can help realign higher education settings toward gender equity.

Figure 2 – *Women in Higher Education – The Numbers Behind the Story* covers a 40-year timeline between 1972 and 2014, in which Title IX (1972) ensured equal access to higher education for both sexes:

Figure 2. Women in higher education: The numbers behind the story[2]
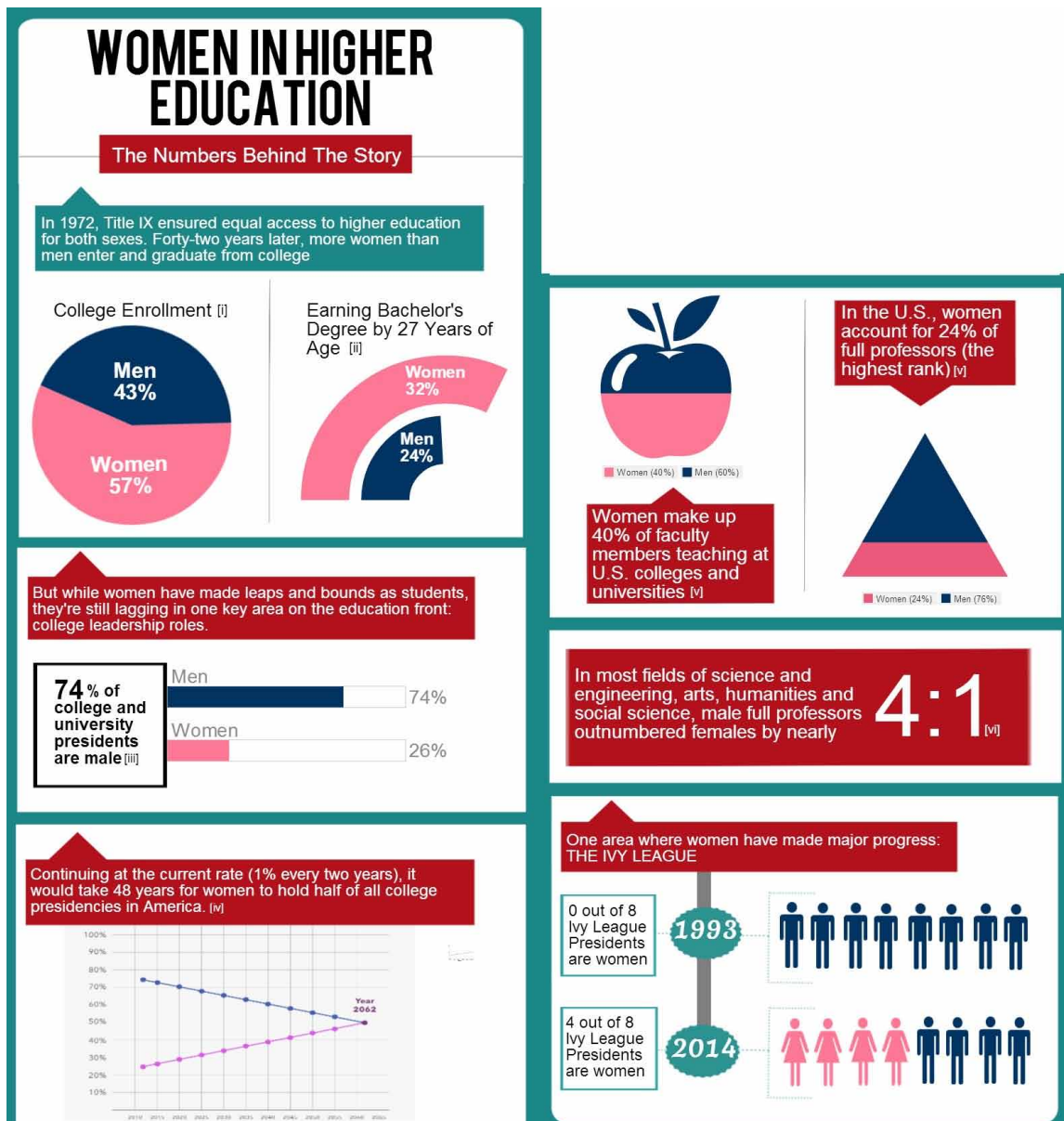
Over 40 years later (2014-present), more women than men enter and graduate from college. While women have made leaps and bounds in the academic sphere, they are still lagging in one key education area: top-level leadership roles. To date, roughly 74% of college and university presidents are male. Across all fields (e.g., science and engineering, arts, humanities, and social science, etcetera), male full professors have and continue to outnumber females by nearly 4 to 1 (David, 2015; Hill et al., 2016; Sheltzer & Smith, 2014).

Women continue to face numerous challenges, such as pay gaps, discriminatory policies and practices, the ongoing struggle to balance work, family, and other responsibilities (Johnson, 2021), and a lack of

appreciation for their academic scholarship and teaching contributions. Realigning, recentering, and rebuilding efforts are necessary to tackle these challenges and ensure women thrive in higher education settings. This work, then, should focus primarily on aligning and forging alliances with women (Allan et al., 2006), centering women's voices and experiences (Osei-Kofi et al., 2010), and emphasizing and promoting community building (Sandmann & Jones, 2023), all in – and beyond – the context of higher education.

Centering Women in Higher Education

"We educate women because it is smart. We educate women because it changes the world." – Drew Faust

Centering women and women's experiences in the context of higher education is primary. Women must be recognized for their academic scholarship and teaching contributions as with any other subgroup. Creating spaces where women can have their voices heard and their concerns addressed is essential to making the progress we seek. Fewer academic women participate in publications, conference presentations, and reviews, which is a significant concern. Increasing academic recognition for women's work, such as instituting gender equity awards to appreciate women's research and teaching efforts and creating exclusive academic networks, can recenter women in higher education.

In the context of higher education, centering women involves prioritizing their needs, experiences, and perspectives in all aspects of the academic environment, from policies and practices to curriculum and pedagogy. Centering women can involve a variety of initiatives and strategies, including the following five supports:

1. *Gender-responsive policies and practices* (Wattanaporn & Holtfreter, 2014): Creating procedures and policies that are responsive to the needs of women students, faculty, and staff. This work can include policies related to sexual harassment and gender-based violence, parental leave, flexible work arrangements, and support for women in leadership positions;
2. *Curriculum and pedagogy* (Khalil et al., 2023): This means ensuring that the curriculum and pedagogy in higher education are inclusive and reflect women's experiences, voices, and perspectives. Strategies can include integrating feminist and gender studies into the curriculum, creating women's studies programs, and promoting women's voices in classroom discussions and research;
3. *Support services* (Pasque & Nicholson, 2011): Providing support services that are tailored to the needs of women students, such as career services, networking programs, and counseling services;
4. *Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)* (Barnett, 2020): Creating a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion that supports women students, faculty, and staff. This work can include promoting diversity in hiring and promotion practices, providing training on unconscious bias and microaggressions, and creating opportunities for dialogue and collaboration across different groups; and
5. *Research and scholarship* (Hart, 2006): Encouraging and supporting research and scholarship that explores issues related to gender and women's experiences in higher education. Strategies can include funding research on gender disparities in pay and promotion, researching and spotlighting women's experiences in STEM fields, and promoting interdisciplinary research focusing on women's issues.

In sum, centering all women in higher education requires a commitment to gender equity and recognizing women's unique challenges and opportunities in academic settings. By prioritizing women's needs, experiences, and perspectives, higher education institutions can create more inclusive and supportive environments that benefit all academic community members (Barnett, 2020; Hart, 2006; Khalil et al., 2023; Wattanaporn & Holtfreter, 2014).

Community Building in Higher Education

"Young women who want an education will not be stopped." – Freida Pinto

A culture of diversity and inclusion must be ingrained into higher education settings. Educators and other stakeholders in higher education must commit to rebuilding academic spaces that undermine gender equity efforts. Institutions must identify and eliminate harmful policies and cultures that hinder women's advancement. Coaching and relevant professional development programs that address gender biases and help women strive for tenure are not as common as they need to be in academia. Building a robust institutional culture that supports gender equity can help rebuild trust and relationships among female faculty members, helping to maintain a safe academic environment. Community building in higher education involves creating a sense of belonging and connection among students, faculty, and staff within the educational environment (Fitzgerald et al., 2020).

Building a sense of community can involve a combination of initiatives and strategies, including strengthening student organizations as a pipeline to navigating in and beyond academia. This work can include organizations focused on cultural identity, service, leadership, and academic interests. These programs can be particularly beneficial for women who may feel disconnected or isolated from the greater educational community as they continue traversing the sphere. Collaborative learning provides ample opportunity to encourage and facilitate collaborative learning opportunities among students, staff, and faculty alike (Sandmann & Jones, 2023). This work can include group projects, team-based assignments, and peer review sessions.

Incorporating service learning opportunities into academic programs can allow shareholders to engage with the larger community and build connections beyond the educational environment. Campus events offer numerous opportunities to bring together academic community members. Some examples can include cultural celebrations, guest speakers, and social events. Finally, the continued creation of inclusive cultures directly promotes community building and engagement. These efforts can move the needle beyond promoting diversity in hiring and promotion practices and unconscious bias and microaggressions training to actively support and create opportunities for collaboration and empowerment across all spectra (Sandmann & Jones, 2023).

Community building in higher education is critical for creating a supportive and inclusive academic environment. A most suitable climate involves those who intentionally promote academic success, personal growth, and advancement opportunities for all. By fostering a sense of belonging and connection, higher education institutions can create a culture that supports and empowers all academic community members (Sandmann & Jones, 2023; Welch, 2023).

SUPPORTING WOMEN AND WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION

"We want the education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet." – Swami Vivekananda

Supporting Women in Higher Education

Empowering women in higher education involves providing them with the tools, support, and resources necessary to succeed academically and professionally. Stakeholders and institutions can support women in higher education by promoting leadership opportunities. Universities and colleges should actively promote leadership opportunities for women in academia. These efforts include encouraging women to take on leadership roles in student organizations, faculty governance, and other academic groups. In addition, it is essential to promote women's research and publication. Women in academia should be encouraged to pursue these and other related opportunities (e.g., funding). This work can help to build their academic credentials and promote their professional development. In this way, allies have a stake in uplifting and advancing women's voices in and beyond the academic sphere (Mayya et al., 2021).

Universities and colleges should have procedures in place that are sensitive to the needs of women (including, but not limited to, maternity leave, flexible working arrangements, and childcare support). We must ensure that women are not disadvantaged in their academic pursuits due to family responsibilities and other internal or external factors. Moreover, educational institutions should work to address gender bias in hiring, promotion, and tenure decisions (Fitzgerald et al., 2020). These efforts can include unconscious bias training for faculty and staff and promoting diverse representation in academic leadership positions. Finally, providing financial support for all remains a top priority. Women in higher education may face financial barriers due to systemic inequalities such as the gender pay gap. Universities and colleges can provide financial support through scholarships, grants, fellowships, and other resources to help women overcome these barriers.

Thus, empowering women in higher education requires a multifaceted approach. It must coalesce to address systemic inequalities, provide resources and support, and promote diversity and inclusion (Coles & Francesconi, 2019; Hoyt, 2010). By working to empower women in academia, we can create a more inclusive and equitable academic environment for all.

Supporting Women Leaders Higher Education

Women's leadership in higher education is critical for achieving equity and promoting diversity in academia. While progress has been made in recent years, women remain underrepresented in top-level leadership positions in higher education. There are four important reasons why women's leadership in higher education matters: (1) *Women in leadership promote and advance gender diversity*. Women bring unique perspectives and experiences to leadership roles, which can help to promote diversity and inclusion in higher education (Goethals & Hoyt, 2017); (2) *Women in leadership address gender inequalities*. Women continue to face barriers to leadership in higher education, including gender bias, structural inequalities, and lack of support. Women's leadership can help to address these inequalities and promote gender equity in academia (Lyness & Grotto, 2018).

Further, (3) *Women in leadership provide other women with role models*. Women leaders in higher education serve as role models for students, faculty, and staff, particularly for young women who may

be considering pursuing leadership positions in academia (Smith & Johnson, 2019; Thomas, 2019); and (4) *Women in leadership improve overall organizational effectiveness*. Diverse leadership teams have been shown to improve organizational effectiveness and decision-making. Women's leadership in higher education can help improve academic institutions' efficiency whole-scale (Gipson et al., 2017).

As such, institutions can take several steps to promote women's leadership in higher education. These actions include implementing policies to address gender bias in hiring and promotion, providing mentorship and support for women leaders, and increasing the representation of women in leadership positions (Guramatunhu-Mudiwa & Angel, 2022). It is necessary to recognize that women's leadership in higher education is not just a women's issue but an issue that affects the entire academic community (Mayya et al., 2021). Everyone, again, has a role to play in promoting and advancing equity by stabilizing and empowering women in higher education.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ALIGNING, CENTERING, AND BUILDING WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION

"The education and empowerment of women throughout the world cannot fail to result in a more caring, tolerant, just, and peaceful life for all." – Aung San Suu Kyi

Among other areas in which direct growth is and continues to occur, women currently have higher college enrollment and completion rates than men. They outnumber men in undergraduate and graduate programs, with a ratio of 1.4 to 1 in undergraduate and 1.6 to 1 in graduate programs. However, despite their higher enrollment and completion rates, women often face more significant student loan debt than men. Women college graduates are more likely to have student loan debt and carry higher balances than their male counterparts. Other challenges and disparities unique to women in higher education include lower workforce pay and higher rates of mental health diagnoses. Despite making up the majority of college students, women are underrepresented among college faculty, in leadership, and they face disparities in various aspects of academia. Today's college completion rates speak to the growing gender gap in college completion, with young women being more likely to enroll in college and have a four-year college degree than young men. Women's educational gains have occurred alongside increased labor force participation and economic changes. College completion strongly correlates with higher lifetime earnings and more significant wealth accumulation (Alemán & Renn, 2002; DiGeorgio-Lutz, 2002).

Sociocultural Change and Women's Higher Education

Women's increased participation in higher education is both a force for and a consequence of sociocultural changes. The rise in women's higher education participation is linked to broader social transformations and has been studied concerning various variables, including social change indicators. Additionally, historical struggles continue to impact extant progress. For women, the journey toward higher education attainment and equality remains marked by historical inequities. Until the 19th century, for example, women were effectively barred from higher education, but they gradually gained access to education by establishing women's colleges and coed institutions. Progress continues to be made, but challenges such as pay equality and stereotypes persist.

Representation and Leadership in Higher Education

Achieving gender parity in higher education requires addressing issues of representation and leadership. Efforts are underway to increase the number of women leaders in higher education, such as promoting women's representation in high-ranking leadership positions and challenging the notion of a 'pipeline myth' suggesting a shortage of qualified women for leadership roles and responsibilities. For women of color, the ramifications of intersectionality remain ongoing. Women of color face additional challenges in higher education. Disparities exist in enrollment, graduation rates, advanced degree attainment, and representation in leadership positions. Addressing these disparities is essential for achieving equity and inclusivity in higher education (Krause, 2017; Longman & Madsen, 2014; Lyness & Grotto, 2018).

On a global scale, ensuring access to quality education for all girls and young women and providing leadership and advancement opportunities is more than a human right. Equity is (and should continue to be) an international development priority in this capacity. Educating and advancing the paths of girls and women has wide-ranging benefits, including improved health outcomes, reduced poverty, and increased social and economic empowerment. Moreover, recognizing the importance of women in higher education and addressing the challenges they face is crucial for achieving gender equality, promoting diversity and inclusion, and creating a more equitable and prosperous society.

CONCLUSION

"The more we pull together toward a new day, the less it matters what pushed us apart in the past." – Johnnetta Cole, PhD

Stabilizing and empowering women in higher education is essential in promoting gender equality and social progress. While sizable progress has been made in recent years, much remains to be done. Universities must continue to support women in higher education through mentorship programs, work-life balance policies, and opportunities for advancement (Graham, 2019). These efforts will provide women with the support and opportunities necessary to succeed in and beyond academia. Thus, creating a culture of gender equity and inclusion in higher education depends on realignment, recentering, and rebuilding efforts. These strategies focus on creating pool opportunities for women and creating safe spaces that appreciate and celebrate their work. Such an environment can strengthen women's career paths in higher education settings, eliminate gender biases and stereotypes, and prepare the way for the next generation of women in academia.

In recent years, various efforts have been made to stabilize and empower women in higher education. Stabilizing and empowering women in higher education is essential in promoting gender equality and social progress (Schnackenberg & Simard, 2023). While substantial progress continues to be made in recent years, there is still more work to do. The importance of higher education in today's world and workforce cannot be overstated, and university settings play a role in executing the school-work-advancement pipeline for women (Crowe et al., 2018; Welch, M. (2023). As such, this chapter highlights that these efforts will provide all women in higher education – students, staff, faculty, and leaders alike – with the support and opportunities necessary to continue succeeding in and beyond the academic sphere.

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ENDNOTES

[1]   All epigraphs retrieved from https://yourdream.liveyourdream.org/2017/06/25-education-quotes/

[2]   Figure 2: *Women in Higher Education – The Numbers Behind the Story*. Retrieved from https://elearninginfographics.com/women-in-higher-education-infographic/