

EDITOR'S NOTES

In 1995, Barbara Townsend edited a volume of *New Directions for Community Colleges* on gender and power in the community college. She and the chapter authors described the situation of women in community colleges and examined the influence of large numbers of women on two-year institutions. Beginning with the premise that gender representation, power, and stereotypes are significant in organizations, each chapter highlighted how a discussion of women leaders, students, and faculty affects and is affected by gendered perspectives. Townsend's volume has served as one of the only complete resources for individuals interested in examining the relationship among social identities, power, and the community college. A decade old, it now seems appropriate to reexamine gender in the community college setting and continue a discussion of the importance of female representation and experiences in our nation's two-year colleges. In addition, a discussion of gender should also include the perspective and lived experiences of males. Therefore, this volume both extends the work in Townsend's volume and broadens the discussion of gender to masculinity.

Issues of gender within a community college setting are always relevant. We know that the numbers of women in community college have not dramatically changed over the years. Large numbers of women have continued to enter the community colleges as faculty, administrators, staff, and students. Moreover, community colleges continue to be the place in the postsecondary hierarchy with the largest proportion of female workers. Women have been almost equally represented in faculty ranks in two-year institutions and have experienced unique opportunities to advance in administrative positions (DiCroce, 1995; Jablonski, 1996; McKenney and Cejda, 2000; Mott, 1997; Nidiffer, 2003; Phillippe, 2000; Piland and Giles, 1998). For example, women occupy up to 38 percent of the community college president positions, and 29 percent of women lead California's community colleges (McKenney and Cejda, 2000; Phillippe, 2000; Piland and Giles, 1998). In 2003, women were found to make up approximately 38.3 percent of faculty in higher education but 49.2 percent of faculty in community colleges (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003).

The issue of what gains women in community colleges have made is complex. Although these women are doing better relative to women in four-year universities with respect to presidential appointments, men continue to dominate the presidential role (Harvey and Anderson, 2005). Women of color have also made significant gains in the administrative ranks at community colleges relative to four-year institutions, but they are well below

parity, with only 5.7 percent minority women presidents at the community college level. The inclusion of women in some aspects of community colleges appears to illustrate that community colleges are gender equitable; yet the actual number of women in leadership positions and the exclusion of women of color point to a lack of equity. This complex picture of gender in community colleges creates a need to continue to examine the unique gender-equity issues in two-year institutions.

The importance of gender extends beyond statistical measures of representation. Research on these women's paths to leadership positions, gender identity conflicts among faculty, and recent discussions of men and masculinity speak to multifaceted gender-related experiences within higher education (Amey, 2006; Harper, 2004; Lester, forthcoming). Of note are the current national debates on the shrinking numbers of men in undergraduate education and attention to men of color. Gender socialization, masculinity, and the experiences of men within higher education institutions provide evidence of the ways in which men struggle to matriculate in college. In addition, a discussion of masculinity contributes to the debate on community colleges as gender-equitable institutions and extends the singular focus from femininity to the inclusion of masculinity. Without a discussion of men and masculinity, we are unable to fully understand why gender equity has not been achieved. Finally, the exclusion of men ignores a large population within the community colleges that is also susceptible to gender roles and norms. Therefore, this volume seeks to continue and expand the research on women in community colleges while also addressing issues of gender more broadly to include the experiences of men.

This volume explores the gender issues of community colleges and begins to unravel the complexities of gender for both men and women in two-year institutions. The chapters examine a wide range of gender-related issues that speak to the current challenges of community colleges. Many two-year colleges struggle with faculty retention and impending retirements of large numbers of faculty and leaders. In order to hire and retain new faculty, a discussion of work-life balance and the experiences of women leaders synthesizes ways in which community colleges can change policies and practices to develop leaders and retain faculty. Also included is a discussion of faculty work-life balance and representation of women in campus and districtwide governance. A challenge that all community colleges face is the need to serve students from various backgrounds. This volume provides a discussion of the gender-related experiences of female and male students, providing evidence of and recommendations for new ways to serve students who may be struggling with identity issues. Community colleges face a variety of challenges that are uniquely related to gender. This volume synthesizes many of the new challenges and provides extensive recommendations of how community colleges can assist those who teach, learn, and lead in our nation's democratic colleges.

This *New Directions for Community Colleges* volume is useful to several audiences. It provides faculty and leaders with an alternative perspective of their work environments that illuminates issues related to gender. Leaders who are interested in creating more pluralistic cultures that are welcoming to men and women will be interested in the issues of work-life balance, the satisfaction of noninstructional staff, and the gender identity conflicts that male students face. Faculty should consider the discussion of governance and the need to advocate for greater inclusion of faculty from across the institution, such as part-time faculty. In addition, this volume will be of interest to graduate students and scholars who are concerned with issues of gender, seek alternative perspectives of community colleges, and are interested in the intersection of workplace cultures and social identities. A discussion of gender in community colleges appeals to a wide range of individuals who seek to create and recommend practices and policies that make our nation's democratic colleges welcoming, diverse, and successful.

Chapter One, by Barbara K. Townsend, provides an overview of the gender equity issues that community colleges face today. In a discussion of the changes to gender equity issues since her *New Directions* volume in the mid-1990s, Townsend describes the new trend of considering issues of gender as they affect both men and women. Gender equity is no longer a simplistic view of examining issues related to women, but a look at the impact of multiple and intersecting identities on students, faculty, and staff. Community colleges that are ethnically diverse and have students from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds are uniquely challenged to look beyond simple notions of gender. Townsend elaborates on the new focus on work-family balance among faculty and staff. The new generation of faculty and staff at community colleges is generally more concerned with work-life balance, necessitating that two-year colleges look to support faculty and staff beyond the workplace. Finally, Townsend summarizes the gains in gender equity that have occurred in community college since the mid-1990s. Using measures of representation, salaries, and faculty demographics, she shows that community colleges have made great strides in becoming more equitable for women.

The next two chapters focus on issues related to men and masculinity and community colleges. In Chapter Two, Athena I. Perrakis provides evidence of the factors associated with academic success for African American and white men. To do so, she uses a large, urban community college district as a backdrop with the purpose of illuminating the unique experiences of men in higher education. Chapter Three, by Frank Harris III and Shaun R. Harper, takes a different approach from that of Perrakis. These authors use gender socialization and the literature on masculinity to engage in a discussion of the gender identities that men bring to college. They also look at the identity conflicts that affect male students' attitudes, behaviors, and retention. The vignettes of the four students in the chapter illustrate the interaction of gender identity, masculinity, and college experiences that potentially contributes

to the lower numbers of men in undergraduate education. Chapters Two and Three contribute to the debates on the representation of men in higher education by identifying the challenging issues that men face as college students.

Chapter Four, by Soko S. Starobin and Frankie Santos Laanan, which also focuses on students, addresses the scarcity of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields in community colleges. Similar to their four-year counterparts, community colleges have low numbers of women who enter STEM fields, which leads to a small number of women students who transfer to STEM programs in universities. Understanding what causes STEM retention in community college provides further evidence of the leaks in the proverbial STEM pipeline. Data from a project funded by the National Science Foundation provide qualitative evidence of the importance of learning experiences, interactions with faculty, and educational and career aspirations on the overall impact of women in STEM fields. Starobin and Laanan conclude with compelling suggestions for practice, including the need to build a supportive community for women STEM students, send positive messages about women in STEM, and advise students correctly so that they can see a clear pathway to the baccalaureate.

Chapters Five and Six turn to issues related to noninstructional staff and faculty in community colleges. Despite their importance as financial aid and admissions officers and their high level of contact with students, noninstructional staff have been almost completely ignored in the research literature. The vast majority of these staff are women, indicating that this group is ripe for an analysis of gender issues. In Chapter Five, Molly H. Duggan focuses on organizational climate and workplace satisfaction among noninstructional staff to illuminate the impact of gender on interactions with faculty and students and perceptions of the workplace. Chapter Six, by Jaime Lester and Scott Lukas, continues to explore satisfaction but does so among faculty in campus and districtwide governance. The literature on gender, faculty, and governance points to the exclusion of women in high-power governance committees, as well as a lack of power in the decision-making process. Using California's 109 community colleges as a site for the study, Lester and Lukas provide evidence of gender-based discrimination during involvement and participation in governance.

The next two chapters present evidence on the challenges that leaders and faculty face in community colleges. In Chapter Seven, Pamela L. Eddy and Elizabeth M. Cox use interviews with six current women presidents of community colleges to unravel their experiences. The rich data portray women who are seeking to exist by adapting their leadership style to suit the masculine culture. This chapter illustrates community colleges as gendered organizations and a male-normed organizational structure. Margaret W. Sallee in Chapter Eight extends the discussion of gender equity to faculty and work-family balance. Research notes that women faculty enter community college because they want to establish work-family balance (Townsend, 1995). As Townsend describes in Chapter One of this volume,

a new generation of faculty is valuing work-family balance. The data provided by Sallee's survey illustrate that community college faculty feel supported by their institution, but also have fewer resources to draw on to establish work-family balance. Sallee offers important suggestions for practice of ways that community colleges can easily be more family-friendly.

Chapter Nine takes a different approach to discussions of gender in community colleges by examining compliance with Title IX. Cindy Castañeda, Stephen G. Katsinas, and David E. Hardy use national data to systematically understand if community colleges are measuring up to Title IX standards. They extend the discussion of gender equity beyond notions of faculty and administrative representation and salaries. The final chapter, by Pamela L. Eddy and Jaime Lester, concludes the volume with a discussion of the lessons learned from Chapters One through Nine. The authors summarize several of the pressing issues faced by community colleges, such as the attack on affirmative action and the expansion of gender construction. These issues show a need to establish new policies and practices within community colleges to better serve students and provide a welcoming and pluralistic workplace for faculty and staff.

Community colleges today face a variety of challenges that extend beyond representation and other numerical measures of equity. This volume provides practical recommendations and potential solutions to continue to foster equity in our nation's democratic colleges.

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