

Looking Back and Looking Ahead:
A Review of the History and Impact of the
CCCU Women's Leadership Development Institute

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Executive Summary

A meta-analysis of more than 160 studies related to leadership indicates that women more commonly use a participative or democratic style of leadership and a less directive (“agentic”) style than men do (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). This *transformational leadership* style equips women well to lead effectively in current organizational cultures (Eagly, 2007; Judge & Piccolo, 2004) and is particularly critical given a generational shift in expectations of leaders and organizations (Kezar & Lester, 2008). While the “veteran generation” (those born between 1922 and 1943) has typically preferred directive leadership, well-defined hierarchy, and respected loyalty to the organization (Bennis & Thomas, 2007; Conger, 2001), Generation X and the “Nexter” generation typically value egalitarian leadership characterized by frequent, honest communication (Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000).

Research has made clear that organizational environments can themselves be “gendered.” According to O’Neil, Hopkins, & Bilimoria (2008), this gendered nature of organizational structures “ensures that women have limited access to positions of power in the organizational hierarchy. Stereotypically masculine traits are still equated with good management practices” (p. 736). Given widespread commitment to equality and justice concerns in higher education, it is surprising that women within that field continue to be underrepresented in nearly all high-level leadership ranks, although they now hold a slightly higher percentage of mid-level leadership positions in higher education than men (King & Gomez, 2008).

This disparity is particularly evident in evangelical higher education as represented by the membership of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCCU). While the percentage of female presidents in U.S. colleges and universities has increased since the 1990s to 23%, only 5% of 111 CCCCU presidents are female. Additionally, a 2008 examination of executive positions

across the 108 CCCU member institutions in the United States revealed that 84% had zero or only one woman in “chief” or “vice president” leadership roles (Longman & Anderson, 2010, in process). Because the CCCU member campuses serve a collective student body that is 60% female, such gender imbalances are striking, particularly given the concern of scholars and practitioners in recent years that campuses strive to create a climate that values diversity and reflects a commitment to the success and well-being of all students (Bryant, 2006; Harper, 2008).

As one strategy for identifying and equipping more women and persons of color for senior leadership, a bi-annual CCCU Women’s Leadership Development Institute (WLDI) has been offered on six occasions between 1998 and 2008. In total, 105 women who had been identified by their campuses as “emerging leaders” have participated in the year-long leadership development program launched at the Institute; 55 women participated over the same period in a parallel series of “mixed” Leadership Development Institutes involving both men and women.

The impact of these LDIs and WLDIs on participants has been measurable and catalytic to their advancement within the CCCU. A “then and now” assessment of the women who participated between 1998 and 2008 revealed that over 50% of the female participants had moved into more advanced positions on their campus or elsewhere. Advancements by women attending the LDI include 3 provosts, 5 vice presidents, 8 deans, 3 directors, and 6 faculty rank advancements. The WLDI advancements include 2 presidents, 7 provosts, 11 vice presidents, 14 deans, 9 directors, and 11 faculty rank advancements.

This paper explores recent shifts in leadership theory, the current leadership landscape for women, the issues women face in higher education and, in particular, the issues women face in evangelical higher education. In addition, the paper will discuss the history of the WLDI and the impact the Institute has had on its participants.

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The Cultural Context for Leadership

The October 26, 2009 issue of *Time* magazine, which featured a Special Report on “The State of the American Woman,” opened with this striking reminder:

If you were a woman reading this magazine 40 years ago, the odds were good that your husband provided the money to buy it. That you voted the same way he did. That if you got breast cancer, he might be asked to sign the form authorizing a mastectomy. That your son was heading to college but not your daughter. That your boss, if you had a job, could explain that he was paying you less because, after all, you were probably working just for pocket money.” (Gibbs, 2009, p. 27)

Similarly, much has changed in terms of “gendered realities” within the field of higher education since colleges and universities first opened their doors to women in 1855 (Thelin, 2004). By 1980, the percentage of women attending higher education had eclipsed the percentage of men (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Despite that growth in student numbers, as of 2007 women held only 23% of college and university presidencies nationwide and 38% of the chief academic officer positions -- the primary pathway into a presidency (King & Gomez, 2008).

In the midst of these shifting demographics, concerns about whether colleges and universities were offering a campus environment that supported women’s abilities and contributions captured the nation’s attention in a report by Hall and Sandler (1982) on chilly classroom climates. Subsequent studies revealed that the chilly climate phenomenon continued throughout the 1990s on college campuses (Whitt et al., 1999); more broadly, a 2000 *Harvard Business Review* article expressed concern that “subtle, systemic forms of discrimination” still linger. Two professors of management, Myerson and Fletcher, concluded their assessment of organizational culture:

It's not the ceiling that's holding women back; it's the whole structure of the organizations in which we work: the foundation, the beams, the walls, the very air. The barriers to advancement are not just above women, they are all around them.... We must ferret out the hidden barriers to equity and effectiveness one by one. (Myerson & Fletcher, 2000, p. 136)

The possibility that Christian colleges and institutions, which seek to model God's intentions for human respect and dignity, might be discriminatory or inhospitable to certain student populations raises concern. An article in *Research on Christian Higher Education* (Sequeira et al., 1995) discussed the reality of "microinequities" evident in attitudes and comments within their Christian university that contributed to "pain and disappointment" for many of the female faculty. Dissertation research by Garlett (1997) that examined 90 CCCU institutions' catalogues between 1970 and 1995 to determine what changes had occurred in the status, number, and academic placement of female faculty as compared with their male colleges concluded that women on these campuses did, indeed, face more career impediments than did their secular counterparts.

Exploring the extent to which gender hierarchy and egalitarianism characterize the perspectives of contemporary evangelicals, research funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts concluded that the "vision of a hierarchically ordered universe has been drawn on with great success historically and continues as the orienting gender story among the majority of conservative Protestants today" (Gallagher, 2004, pp. 218-219). Given that the majority of CCCU institutions self-identify as evangelical, the reflection of former Council president Robert C. Andringa (1999) about the CCCU's efforts to promote diversity is telling: "We are behind," he wrote, "We are behind in offering women the same opportunities to teach and administer as

men. And 60 percent of our students are female!” (p. xvii).

More recently, a 2007 survey of over 1,900 faculty serving at CCCU institutions highlighted that gender inequities persist in Christian higher education (Joeckel & Chesnes, 2009). These authors report that survey responses reflect an “unfortunate pattern of gender polarization, a pattern that reveals more acutely the level of gender inequities on CCCU campuses” (p. 117). For example, when asked to respond to the statement “Female faculty at my college/university are treated equally to male faculty,” only 24% of the female respondents strongly agreed, compared with 47% of the male respondents (p. 117). Drawing from both quantitative and qualitative data, these researchers note:

In short, gender inequities have become subtly institutionalized, woven seamlessly into the daily, unquestioned workings of the school--hence the invisibility of sexism on campus, as indicated by our data--reinforced by a theological, political, and social campus climate that has become normative and therefore functionally homogenous. It is this homogeneity, among other dead weights, that stalls attempts to eradicate sexism. (p. 123)

Effective Leadership: Women’s Contributions to a Paradigm Shift

A substantial body of literature has explored the concept of tokenism, building in part from Kanter’s (1993) research about the beneficial impact that gender-balanced executive teams can have on organizational culture. Recent research by Tiao and Tack (2007) on factors affecting executive women’s leadership experiences identified that “the most effective way to improve executive women’s experiences at work is to place more women in powerful leadership positions (p. 14). Yet, as will be discussed more fully below, an analysis of the composition of executive-

level leadership* across the CCCU in 2008 revealed that 84% of the U.S. member institutions had zero or only one woman in these positions.

This lack of women's "voice" in senior leadership is problematic not only because 60% of the collective student body is female (notably, both male and female students need such role models), but also because of the beneficial impact of the transformational style that women typically bring to their leadership. Those born in the "veteran generation" (between 1922 and 1943) have tended to prefer directive leadership, well-defined hierarchy, and respected loyalty to the organization (Bennis & Thomas, 2007; Conger, 2001); relatedly, the traditional male leadership style has typically been more autocratic and directive, focusing on systems, structures, rules, outcomes, tasks, and hierarchy (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Eagly & Karau, 1991). Newer models of leadership--those preferred by Generation X and the "Nexter" generation—have been advocated (Bennis, 1991; Collins, 2001; Kezar & Lester, 2008; Robinson, 2002) and modeled by both male and female leaders. Such models emphasize empowerment, value strong relational skills, focus on bringing out the best in followers, and emphasize consensus-building and mutual collaboration between leaders and followers.

Notably, the leadership typically characteristic of women is consistent with this transformational style (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001), a style that can enhance both the organizational culture and its effectiveness (Eagly, 2007; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Wheatley, 1999). A 2009 research-based article in the *Harvard Business Review*, for example, found that women were viewed as having superior abilities in eight of 10 leadership categories (Ibarra & Obodaru, 2009). Eagly's (2007) meta-analysis of research regarding

*For the purposes of this study, "executive positions" included the president, chief financial officer, chief academic officer, chief student development officer, chief enrollment officer, chief advancement officer, or other positions with a vice president or higher designation (e.g., senior vice president).

leadership effectiveness found that women, somewhat more than men, demonstrate leadership styles that positively relate to effectiveness whereas men, more than women, exhibit styles that hinder effectiveness. Eagly notes, “In the United States, women are increasingly praised for having excellent skills for leadership and, in fact, women, more than men, manifest leadership styles associated with effective performance as leaders” (p. 1).

Despite the effectiveness of a transformational leadership style, not all organizations embrace this collaborative approach (Kezar et al., 2006). Organizational culture itself can influence the emergence of leadership styles. The acceptance of leaders, for example, largely depends on the tone set by the dominant group, influencing perceptions about what it takes to be a good leader. O’Neil and Bilimoria (2005) cite the work of Kanter (1977) and their own research on the impact of women being under-represented at the highest organizational levels: “The resulting ‘tokenism’ continues to perpetuate an unequal playing field in terms of advancement opportunities for women: women continue to be subject to labeling, excessive scrutiny, and stereotyping as they attempt to rise up the organizational hierarchy” (p. 170).

In addition to challenges related to tokenism in senior-level leadership, another norm that women face is the expectations that other employees have of those holding supervisory roles. Eagly’s (2007) research suggests that, in many organizations, employees typically prefer male supervisors rather than female supervisors. Earlier, Schein et al.’s (1996) “think manager, think male” theory emerged from multi-national research findings that both male and female respondents significantly perceived men to be better managers than women. Interestingly, female respondents in the U.S. were the sole group that did not significantly perceive men to be better managers. For a variety of reasons, then, women face greater difficulty in obtaining leadership positions and succeeding in male-dominated organizational structures.

The Leadership Landscape for Women

While women today make up slightly more than half of the managerial workforce, senior-level leadership roles are still predominantly held by men. Women currently hold only 6.2% of the top earners in *Fortune 500* companies, 3.0% of the CEOs positions in those companies, and 15.2% of corporate officers' positions (U.S. Women in Business, 2009). In the arena of national politics, women as of 2008 held 16.4% of the seats in Congress (Center for the American Woman and Politics, 2008).

Within the field of higher education, women have greatly advanced in their educational pursuits (U.S. Department of Education, 2005), preparing them to step into positions at the executive level. The most recent data from the U.S. Department of Education (2009) indicate that among 2007 graduates, women earned 57.4% of the bachelor's degrees, 60.6% of the master's degrees, and 50.1% of the doctoral degrees granted that year. Thus, women are no longer restricted in their ability to obtain an education, and their increased educational attainment allows them to gain the preparation typically required for professional advancement.

While women continue to be under-represented in higher education senior administrative positions, several trends are encouraging. According to data from the American Council on Education, the percentage of women serving as university presidents more than doubled from 9.5% in 1986 to 23% in 2006 (King & Gomez, 2008). In recent years, women have been selected to lead prestigious universities such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Princeton University, Harvard University, the University of Michigan, and the University of Pennsylvania. Harvard University's decision to name Dr. Drew Gilpin Faust as president in 2007 represented a symbolic step forward for women in academe, as Susan Scrimshaw, president of Simmons College noted: "I think of it as the last really big glass ceiling in higher education. A woman

becoming president of Harvard is breaking the last barrier” (Wilson, 2007, p.1).

Despite such rhetoric, these high-visibility presidencies by women must be viewed in light of the fact that only 14% of the public doctoral universities and 7% of the private doctoral universities nationwide are currently led by women (Hartley & Godin, 2009). Most of the women holding presidencies serve in institutions of less than 3,000 students and in community colleges. Documenting this pattern, the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), an association of more than 600 liberal arts colleges and universities, reported that 28% of first-time presidents in its membership were women, as compared to 30% of the community college presidents and 23% of presidents nationwide (Hartley & Godin, 2009). The CIC study also cited recent data that the average age of first-time CIC presidents is 59 and that only a quarter of CAOs at CIC institutions indicated interest in pursuing a college presidency. CIC has therefore launched professional development programming aimed at preparing chief academic officers to assume the presidency, a pathway viewed to be particularly appropriate given the commitment of these institutions to teaching and learning.

While there has been progress in women moving into administrative leadership in some sectors of higher education, and more equitable representation exists at the middle management level, disparities are particularly evident in evangelical higher education as represented by the CCCU membership.

Evangelical Higher Education Leadership

In 2009, six of 111 presidents are female, two of whom entered presidential leadership only in the 2009-2010 academic year. Given that the role of chief academic officer is a typical pathway into the presidency, it is concerning to find only 19 female chief academic officers among the 111 CCCU member institutions. Three of these women serve in academic affairs roles

within institutions that have a male provost, the role often considered to be the “chief” academic officer. Regarding gender representation on the faculty, Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) data on the Council membership reflects that approximately 66% of the faculty are male and 34% are female, whereas the collective student body composition is approximately 61% female and 39% male (Council for Christian Colleges & Universities, 2004). Drawing from the same HERI database, CCCU female faculty (43.8%) were significantly less likely to hold a doctoral degree than male faculty (67.4%) or than female faculty elsewhere (54.6%). Fewer women faculty (27.2%) in the CCCU were tenured, reflecting a significantly lower rate than male faculty within the CCCU (46.2%) or female faculty elsewhere (37.3%). The median salary range in the CCCU for female faculty was \$10,000 less than the median salary range for men after controlling for faculty rank, advanced degree, and length of experience.

Women who seek leadership positions in CCCU institutions continue to meet more barriers than men. Some of these challenges include a lack of role models, theological conservatism that limits access to top leadership positions, embracing a collaborative leadership style that can be misunderstood or disrespected, and feeling “out of sync” with the command-and-control leadership style of some male-dominated administrative cabinets (Schreiner, 2002). One faculty member at a CCCU institution commented in a 2005 *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, “...at conservative religious institutions, women face a stained-glass ceiling, with the Bible and church tradition routinely used to justify gender discrimination” (Mock, 2005, p. B24). The author continued, “While I am at times troubled by the alienation I feel, I remain far more concerned about the lack of female role models for students at Christian colleges and universities” (p. B24).

If emerging female leaders are to make significant contributions in CCCU colleges and

universities, these concerns and issues need to be addressed. The major programmatic initiative by the CCCU over the past decade in this area has been bi-annual offerings of the Women's Leadership Development Institute. The following section provides the context for this work and summarizes data on its effectiveness.

Background and Purpose of the WLDI

Creation of the Executive Leadership Development Institute

In 1993, the catalyst for launching the CCCU's "Leadership Development Institutes" was the concern among CCCU leaders for creating programmatic initiatives that would identify and equip future leaders for higher education leadership across CCCU member institutions. The Women's Leadership Development Institute (WLDI) began under the leadership of Dr. Karen Longman, Vice President for Professional Development & Research at the CCCU from 1980-1999, then Vice President for Academic Affairs at Greenville College (1999-2005), and now professor of higher education at Azusa Pacific University. With supportive funding provided by Bennett Memorial Foundation, a Steering Committee was formed to oversee the development of a project called the "Executive Leadership Development Institute" (ELDI), with the goal of providing professional development for newer presidents, chief academic officers, and emerging leaders.

During 1994 and 1995, this Steering Committee began planning for the first Presidents' Institute, which was held in Frisco, Colorado, in July 1996. Participants in the Institute included ten individuals who had served in the presidency for many years as well as ten newer presidents who had been in the role three years or less; all 20 presidents were male. During the following year, each new president had the opportunity to "shadow" a mentor president. In 1997, this same model was used with ten newer and ten senior chief academic officers. Thus, a three-year

rotating cycle of leadership development programming was created, with the focus of the annual ELDI offering shifting from presidents to chief academic officers to emerging leaders.

During a time of evaluation with the Steering Committee after the 1996 Presidents' Institute, the proposal of having presidents and chief academic officers of CCCU institutions identify emerging leaders on their campus for a formalized training opportunity was discussed. Since very few women and almost no ethnic minorities were in CCCU senior leadership roles at that time, the concern emerged that nominees for the first offering of the Leadership Development Institute (LDI), designed to identify and equip emerging leaders, would likely be predominantly White and male.

Given the CCCU's commitment to expand the leadership presence of women and persons of color across Christian higher education, the importance of diversifying the "pipeline" into senior and administrative leadership was clear. In seeking to address this priority, the LDIs were designed primarily to identify and equip those who have been gifted and called by God to serve as academic leaders in Christian higher education--the primary route to an institutional presidency (Hartley & Godin, 2009; King & Gomez, 2008).

As a result of the Steering Committee discussions about these concerns, the Bennett Memorial Foundation provided funding for an additional LDI in 1998 with the criterion that participation would be limited to women with identified leadership potential; thus, the "WLDI" concept was launched. Qualified ethnic minority applicants were given priority in the selection process for the "Mixed" (i.e., men and women) LDI and the "Women's" LDI. In 1997, nominations for these new groups were solicited, with 17 participants identified for the 1998 mixed-group LDI and 15 for the WLDI group. Two four-day Institutes for emerging leaders were held in 1998, a pattern that has continued in 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2008. Each group

typically consists of 15-22 “Fellows” plus a Resource Team of senior leaders. Since 1996, the entire ELDI initiative has served over 350 participants through an array of Presidents’ Institutes, Chief Academic Officers’ Institutes, and Leadership Development Institutes.

Model programs used to develop the LDI/WLDI curriculum include the Harvard Institutes, the DePree Center at Fuller Theological Seminary, the leadership programming of the American Council on Education (ACE), and the Bryn Mawr Summer Institutes for women. In total over the past decade, the WLDIs have served 106 female participants; the LDIs have served 55 women and 40 men. Related to the goal of equipping persons of color for senior leadership, 21 women and 10 men of color have participated in the WLDIs and LDIs to date.

Application Process

Selection criteria for WLDI participation has included: (a) being recognized at an institutional level as someone with demonstrated leadership skills, (b) holding a doctorate or nearing completion of a doctorate, and (c) providing evidence of increasing levels of leadership responsibility within and/or beyond higher education. Additionally, applicants must provide two letters of reference, one submitted by a senior administrator on their campus or elsewhere. Applicants also address key questions about their experiences and aspirations for leadership in Christian higher education, their philosophy of Christian leadership, a self-evaluation of their strengths and leadership potential, identification of mentors, and a description of their professional, personal, and spiritual goals. Individuals nominated for participation in the LDI or WLDI have typically been assistant deans, department heads, division chairs, or other faculty leaders.

The core of the WLDI/LDI experience has been a four-day Institute held in June every other year (1998 – 2008) at Cedar Springs Christian Retreat Center, located near the Canadian

border near Bellingham, Washington. In addition to the Institute itself, the broader year-long WLDI/LDI program includes: (1) the provision of a variety of leadership articles and books; (2) the design of a one-year Professional Development Plan; (3) networking with experienced administrators on the Resource Team, and (4) financial support toward a two or three-day “shadowing” experience with a senior leader on another CCCU campus.

The Resource Team at each Institute offers a variety of presentations and panel discussions, with ample time for group interaction. In recent years, the curriculum has been shaped in concert with Azusa Pacific University’s doctoral programs in higher education, drawing from the latest leadership research and literature. Sessions typically have included an introduction to board governance, higher education finance, understanding organizational culture, external constituency relations, conflict resolution, strengths-based leadership, leadership effectiveness, strategic planning, team building, and balancing multiple responsibilities.

The Impact of the WLDI on Participants

An initial assessment of the WLDI’s impact on the 71 women who had participated in 1998-2004 was conducted in 2005 (Lafreniere & Longman, 2008). Early in 2010, the participants from the 2006 and 2008 WLDI groups were sent the same survey, yielding an overall response rate of 79% among the WLDI participants between 1998 and 2008. Overall, 60% of respondents indicated that they had moved into a new position that reflected increased leadership responsibilities since participating in the WLDI. Most of these women reported having an affirming experience in their first expanded leadership position after attending. The following quote suggests the transformative power of the WLDI in the lives of participants:

The WLDI experience changed my life. I have always been a capable student and professor, but I lacked confidence in myself as a leader of my (mostly male) peers. The WLDI experience showed me--through personal insight-development activities, discussions, readings, and shadowing--that my gifts are valuable to my college and to

higher education. The confidence I gained as an academic administrator has helped me develop and implement new initiatives, encourage faculty to continually improve their service, and develop my personal mission to equip others so they can thrive in the work to which they are called. As a woman around an academic table recently occupied only by men, I bring a different voice to discussions; I often have a more concrete perspective in terms of how decisions will impact various stakeholders, and I often have a better sense of how to connect various people's gifts with current needs. Learning from other women leaders and seeing how they live out their gifts has been enormously important for me. – *Reflection from a WLDI Participant*

Through open-ended questions, participants were asked to identify the one single most beneficial impact of their involvement in the WLDI on their professional and/or personal lives.

The key theme responses are summarized below.

1. The women cited the positive benefits of *getting to know other women through the WLDI*. One noted, “The networking relationships that occurred during the week gave me multiple opportunities to reflect on my goals and strengths within the context of Christian higher education.” Another commented, “I believe the most important benefit is that of becoming aware of a women's leadership network within the CCCU institutions, and having the opportunity to learn from others within the network.”
2. For many respondents, the *mentoring/shadowing experience* was significant in reframing their thinking about their own potential leadership. One individual responded, “Being mentored as a female professional into the ‘big picture’ of how a university really works.” Another commented on the importance of learning about how to juggle multiple responsibilities: “It gave me insight into how other women in positions of leadership at institutions of Christian higher education balance the responsibilities of being a wife, mother, and administrator.”

3. An additional beneficial impact was the *opportunity to form ongoing professional relationships*. One woman commented that she appreciated “having a highly qualified group of peers to encourage me in my leadership journey.”
4. Many women expressed *appreciation for the opportunity to interact with others who shared similar commitments*. One woman noted, “So often we (women administrators) are the only one or one of a few on our campus, so it was good to connect with other women to hear their realities and see that we have similar experiences.”
5. For some participants, *having time to focus, reflect and clarify their personal sense of calling to the academic profession and/or to leadership* was of primary importance. One respondent said that she appreciated “...the time set aside to learn and assess my capabilities. We live at such a hectic pace that we rarely have time to constructively think about ourselves, our dreams, and how to realize those dreams.”
6. Many participants *found encouragement to press on in spite of resistance to women in leadership in Christian higher education*. One respondent identified the single most beneficial impact for her as “networking with other women of similar calling and drive and finding support in their similar struggles.” Participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to dialogue about the issues that women in leadership face. This feedback was summarized by one respondent, “Knowing there are others like me who understand the unique nature of being a woman leader on a Christian campus.”
7. Another important aspect of the WLDI was *acknowledging the value of women in leadership in Christian higher education*. “It delivered me from the myth that women

must operate like men in the administrative world, or that there is one prescription for leadership that one must follow. I learned to appreciate different forms of leadership as well as different expressions of Christianity and saw that the struggles within my own institution were common to many institutions.”

8. Some *experienced a renewed confidence in their personal leadership abilities*. One woman commented that the WLDI “...built my confidence by placing me in a supportive community of like-minded women. I found I was neither too old, nor too shy, to move ahead in Christian higher education. Two women from WLDI remain my best friends and mentors.” Another stated, “After participating in WLDI, I realized I had the skills and talents to take on a senior leadership role. WLDI gave me the confidence to do the work.”

The significance of being nominated as an emerging female leader in Christian higher education was noted by several participants. Some reported that this nomination process led senior administrators to articulate, for the first time, their confidence of the leadership potential in these women. This expressed confidence from a senior-level leader, especially a male leader, prompted some of the participants to consider the possibility of professional advancement.

The ripple effects of the WLDI experience continue to expand. In *Outcomes* magazine, the WLDI has been featured as a model for Christian non-profit organizations (Longman, 2008). More recently, Dahlvig and Longman (2010, in press) reported their findings of a grounded theory study of the “defining moments” that were described as being pivotal in the personal and professional journeys of women who had participated in the WLDI. Three patterns of response were identified as being the “most defining moment” on the leadership development journey of these women: (1) someone speaking potential, sometimes as succinctly as a single sentence, into

their lives, leading to enhanced confidence of leadership abilities; (2) encountering a person or situation that resulted in reframing the participant's understanding of leadership in ways that allowed these women to begin perceiving themselves as leaders; and (3) experiencing a situation that led to feeling compelled to stand up for a conviction or a strong belief.

Also in 2009, research was conducted to track the women who participated in both the LDIs and WLDIs from 1998-2008. An analysis of "then and now" compared the role of participants while attending the LDI/WLDI with their current role. This comparison revealed that over 50% of the female participants had moved into more advanced positions on their campus or elsewhere. The LDI advancements include 3 provosts, 5 vice presidents, 8 deans, 3 directors, and 6 faculty rank advancements. The WLDI advancements include 2 presidents, 7 provosts, 11 vice presidents, 14 deans, 9 directors, and 11 faculty rank advancements.

Evidence of the impact of the LDI and WLDI offerings was also clear at the 2009 meeting of CCCU Chief Academic Officers (CAOs). Of the 42 CAOs in attendance, 11 were women. All 11 had been involved at Cedar Springs; 10 initially as a participant in the WLDI/LDI and one as a Resource Team leader. Four of the 10 had returned to Cedar Springs as Resource Team leaders; five of the 10 participated in subsequent Advanced Leadership Institutes.

More recently, the 160 women who have participated in an LDI or WLDI at Cedar Springs were surveyed to assess their level of interest in Advanced Leadership Institutes. Nearly 70% of those responding indicated that they would like to attend another 3 or 4-day gathering at Cedar Springs in the next 3-5 years. When asked about programs themes, the women ranked the following highest (in rank order): (1) Introducing the latest research and literature on effective leadership; (2) Communicating vision, hope, and optimism in leadership; and (3) Understanding and influencing organizational culture. Additional areas of interest included: budget training;

career and family issues; working with boards; surviving extremely conservative cultures; leading from the top, middle, and bottom; making tough choices; and leading through crisis.

The Case for Further Women's Leadership Development

Glazer-Raymo (2008), a well-known researcher on gender in higher education, notes that while the gender gap for women faculty and high-level administration has diminished in recent years, multiple challenges still face women in their professional advancement. Similarly, Rita Bornstein, an experienced college president, has expressed concern that "...progress is slow, tenuous, and limited by the intractability of gendered organizational structures, perspectives, and expectations" (Bornstein, 2008, p. 162).

The research related to leadership theory and practice has affirmed the effectiveness of a transformational leadership model (Eagly, 2007; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Wheatley, 1999). Because colleges and universities are typically less bureaucratic and more egalitarian than corporations, higher education is particularly well-suited to implement this 21st century leadership model of collaboration and teamwork (Bornstein, 2008). Bornstein identifies the challenge and opportunity ahead:

It properly falls to the academy, given its values of equity, excellence, and innovation, to redefine leadership for this new era and to demonstrate new pathways for identifying, preparing, and supporting women and people of color for the presidency of postsecondary institutions. (p. 163)

Christian higher education has the potential to lead this transition, given a theological commitment to diverse gifts within the Body of Christ and the obligation of the church to develop and celebrate the giftedness of every believer.

There are many reasons why women should be better represented in high-level positions across the CCCU member and affiliate institutions. One reason is that faculty, staff, and students – both males and females – need women as role models at every level of the institution. As more women become high-level leaders at CCCU institutions, they can demonstrate capable and competent leadership in ways that resonate with Generation X and “Nexter” students – an egalitarian leadership style typified by decentralization and frequent, honest communication (Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000).

Institutions in the CCCU must increasingly commit themselves to providing opportunities for women leaders in senior-level leadership positions. The WLDI has been successful in identifying and equipping women for more senior leadership roles across the CCCU. To develop such giftedness in those who have potential to provide visionary leadership to Christian higher education honors the affirmation of the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 2:10, “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Leadership Development “Best Practices” and Looking Ahead

Feedback from the six offerings of the Women’s Leadership Development Institute over the past decade have allowed for some fine-tuning of a program that has been highly rated by participants and effective even from its initial offering. The 1998 WLDI, for example, contributed to eight of the 15 participants moving into significant leadership positions on their campuses, with five serving in cabinet-level positions during the past decade.

A summary of the leadership research, titled “Women’s Leadership Development: Strategic Practices for Women and Organizations” (Hopkins et al., 2008), reinforces that several “best practices” for women’s leadership development were incorporated in the WLDI program

from its initial offering:

- Use of leadership assessment tools should be thoughtfully undertaken. [The WLDI has introduced participants to the *Clifton StrengthsFinder* and more recently to the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire*.]
- Use of women-only leadership training is viewed as “essential for women to develop a stronger sense of self and stronger relationships with other women” (Vinnicombe & Singh, 2003).
- The importance of coaching and mentoring. [The Resource Team is available for coaching both during and after the Institute. Additionally, the shadowing visit has provided opportunities for role modeling and mentoring.]
- The value of establishing professional networks with other women. [The networking among the 160 women who have shared the Cedar Springs experience has proven to be invaluable to many participants as they have experienced discouragement, assisted others in job searches and salary negotiations, or considered career moves.]
- The importance of guided Career Planning. [Participants are encouraged to work in concert with a Resource Team member to develop a one-year Professional Development Plan. A copy of this plan is submitted to the WLDI Director after returning to campus.]

Several recommendations from the literature and from previous participants suggest exciting possibilities for the future:

First, research suggests that women and men discern their “calling” in different ways (Phillips, 2009) and have divergent conceptions of career success. Whereas men tend to view

career success as high salaries, moving up professionally, and achieving status (Sturges, 1999), women typically think in terms of intrinsically rewarding roles, personal achievements, self-development, and work-life balance. The concept of “calling” clearly is important to women’s choices about career paths (Longman, 2008). Accordingly, strategies need to be put into place to assist more women to discern whether God has gifted them administratively and is calling them into leadership roles.

Second, the WLDI thus far has targeted only emerging leaders. O’Neil and Bilimoria (2005) identified that women’s careers can be divided into three age-related phases: the idealistic achievement phase, the pragmatic endurance phase, and the reinventive contribution phase. A multi-tiered leadership development initiative is needed that also offers programs oriented toward Generation X and “Nexter” up-and-comers and toward more senior leaders who often find themselves serving in lonely places.

Third, a *Harvard Business Review* article by Cohn, Khurana, and Reeves (2005) emphasizes that the best leadership development programs are closely aligned and integrated with the strategic objectives of the organization, with the current leaders held accountable for leadership development. While some CCCU member institutions have initiated leadership development programs as a strategy for “growing their own,” much remains to be done in this area. O’Neil and Bilimoria (2005) emphasize these practical implications for institutions seeking to make the development of leaders a priority:

Better organizational efforts are needed to ensure that women receive ongoing coaching and mentoring, work for managers who support their development, have access to organizational resources and opportunities to develop their skills, are given challenging assignments, are acknowledged for their unique talents, and are recognized for aptitude

learned through life experiences and “non-traditional” work histories. (p. 168)

Looking ahead, higher education faces the “graying of the academy” and the imminent retirement of the many currently serving in senior leadership. Identifying and preparing an applicant pool that includes greater numbers of women and persons of color is an urgent need; this is particularly true for CCCU institutions. This summary report is offered with the hope institutional and organizational efforts toward that end will be enhanced by an awareness of some of the constructive building blocks laid over the past decade.

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Appendix A

Verbatim Feedback from Former Participants in the CCCU Women's Leadership Development Institutes

When asked to identify the single most important benefit of participation:

“Rich memories envelop me of family meals with delicious food; of quiet walks by the water, woods and garden, going out alone but finding company with the Lord; of RELUCTANT REALIZATIONS THAT GOD HAS BIGGER PLANS FOR OUR LIVES THAN WE EVER IMAGINED; of the knowing looks on the faces of our benefactors and mentors as lights dawned in our understanding; of the sisterhood with wonderful women from other CCCU schools; and of returning to my work, clearly cognizant that it is a calling and determined to become a sponge for learning all that might be required of me. God bless the WLDI and subsequent shadowing which have influenced my life in a way similar to reading one of the classics, such as JANE EYRE or LES MISERABLES, books that keep on teaching long after one has finished reading them.”

“I have been promoted twice since WLDI, now to vice president. Although I did complete my doctorate since that time as well, I believe the letter my president received from my mentor helped shape his perception of my leadership abilities. Also, it boosted my confidence that the president chose to nominate me, and that WLDI selected me to attend. For the first time at WLDI, I understood that there really is a network among CCCU schools for moving to higher administrative positions. It was an important step in my development and my career progression.

“Finding other women more like me than are many of the women on my campus--more likely to exercise leadership, to consider competition an ok thing, to have career goals.”

“I believe the most important benefit is that of becoming aware of a women's leadership network within the CCCU institutions, and having the opportunity to learn from others within the network.”

“Leadership within a Christian context. I've participated in many other leadership institutes but the WLDI was the ONLY one that approached the literature, the art and science of leadership, from a Christian perspective. This has been invaluable!”

“It delivered me from the myth that women must operate like men in the administrative world, or that there is one prescription for leadership that one must follow. I learned to appreciate different forms of leadership as well as different expressions of Christianity and saw that the struggles within my own institution were common to many institutions. I also walked away with a new group of friends that I contact every summer for a reunion.”

“The time set aside to learn and assess my capabilities. We live at such a hectic pace, that we rarely have time to constructively think about ourselves, our dreams, and how to realize those dreams.”

“Networking with others -- so often we (women administrators) are the only one or one of a few on our campus, so it was good to connect with other women to hear their realities and see that we have similar experiences.”

“A deeper understanding of the value of various perspectives and the need for women to step up and be contributors in areas of leadership and in campus decision making in general.”