The Women's Leadership Initiative: One University's Attempt to Empower Females on Campus

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One university is addressing the gender gap in leadership with an internal model designed to support and inspire groups of women in leadership positions without leaving campus. Based on a coaching method used at Harvard's Women's Leadership Forum, our leadership initiative provides an on-campus leadership development and support program for women. This paper assesses the overall impact and effectiveness of this program and compares results of an external coaching model versus an internal facilitator (coach) model. This "grow your own" program is a low cost, effective model for leadership development that could be replicated by other institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the recent media attention to successful, high profile female leaders such as Marissa Mayer (President and CEO of Yahoo!), Meg Whitman (President and Chief Executive Officer of Hewlett-Packard), Indra Nooyi (Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer of PepsiCo), and Sheryl Sandberg (Chief Operating Officer of Facebook), data from the corporate world indicate that women represent only four percent of chief executive officer (CEO) positions of Fortune 500 companies (Catalyst, 2013). This lack of progress is dumbfounding given that for the last 25 years, women's entrance into professional and managerial positions has been on par with their male colleagues (Ely, Ibarra & Kolb, 2011). This same pattern is true for female physicians and scientists in the medical fields (Morahan, Rosen, Richman, & Gleason, 2001). Ely et al. (2011) state further that in business, "Even among recent graduates from leading business schools worldwide, women's career progress lags relative to comparable men's" (p.474). In the political sector, women occupy 98 out of 535 seats of the U.S. Members of Congress, representing a total of 18.3% of this decision making group. Of the 50 state governors, only five are women (Center for American Women and Politics, 2013).

It is well documented that women in higher education likewise hold fewer leadership positions than men (Cook, 2012; Eagly, 2007; Haslam & Ryan, 2008; Richardson & Loubier, 2008). Marschke, Laursen, Nielsen, and Rankin (2007, p.1) describe the overall progress in higher education as "'glacial,'" a term that can also be used to describe the gender representation among leaders in higher education. Catalyst (2013) reports that women earn nearly 60% of all bachelors and masters degrees and roughly 50% of all doctorate degrees. However, women are not well represented in the senior leadership ranks (Gardner, 2013). Although the undergraduate enrollment of female students now exceeds that of their male peers, this has "yet to translate into proportional representation in the labour market or access to leadership and decision-making positions" (Morley, 2013, p. 3). Women represent about 29% of higher education presidents, and the majority of them preside over less prestigious, associate degree-granting institutions (Cook & Kim, 2012). These patterns in higher education are found globally as well (Morley, 2013).

Given these patterns in both the corporate world and the academy, it is not surprising that leadership, as it relates to women generally, has been characterized by a number of metaphors such as "glass ceiling," "glass cliff," "labyrinth," "ivory basement," and "velvet ghetto" (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Eveline, 2004; Frenkiel, 1984; Guillaume & Pochic, 2009; Haslam & Ryan, 2008; Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986).

In 1984 and then again in 1986, the first references to the term *glass ceiling* emerged (Frenkiel, 1984; Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986). This metaphor indicates that women may pursue and succeed in a number of positions throughout their professional careers, but will hit a transparent ceiling when considering the senior-most leadership jobs. They can see through the barricades to the top posts, but are unable to push through them.

Eveline (2004) coined the term "ivory basement" to reflect the disproportionate relegation/concentration of women in academia in the bottom of the "ivory towers". The term "glass cliff" (Haslam & Ryan, 2008) comes nearly twenty years after the debut of "glass ceiling" and describes the precarious progress of women into leadership positions, specifically the delegation of less rewarding tasks to women and/or the appointment of women to leadership roles with a high risk of negative consequences. More recently, Eagly and Carli (2007) announced a different metaphor for women and leadership: the *labyrinth.*

> With continuing change, the obstacles that women face have become more surmountable, at least by some women some of the time. Paths to the top exist, and some women find them. The successful routes can be difficult to discover, however, and therefore we label these circuitous paths a labyrinth. (Eagly & Carli, 2007, p. 6)

In 2009, Guillaume and Pochic created the term "velvet ghetto" to describe the placement of women and other under-represented people into high profile but low power positions in order to promote an image of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Scholars have identified a number of explanations for why women have difficulty in achieving high-level leadership posts and they include: gender role stereotypes about "good" leaders; the number of women available to fill leadership roles; a limited number of and access to female role models, mentors and/or sponsors; child care responsibilities; domestic duties; a lack of policies that promote work-life integration; variations in networks and support systems; organizational policies, practices, and processes that reproduce inequality; lack of negotiation skills; democratic leadership styles; and prejudice (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb 2011; Hornsby, Morrow-Jones, & Ballam, 2012; Hoyt, 2010; Hoyt, Johnson, Murphy, & Skinnell, 2010; Morahan, Rosen, Richman & Gleason 2011; Morley, 2013; Richardson & Loubier, 2008). The assumptions about "why" leadership inequities occur directly shape the format, structure, and goals of leadership programs designed to address the gender gaps in leadership.

In both her 2010 TED Talk and recent book *Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead,* Sheryl Sandberg acknowledges the lack of women leaders at the corporate level and offers solutions to the problem from her perspective as the COO of Facebook. As an increasing number of women are pursuing high-level leadership roles, specifically in higher education, many of them are seeking information and

tools that will enable them to advance to and succeed in the senior ranks. There is a clear need for women to be "effectively" and "efficiently" prepared for and supported in their leadership roles (Madsen, Longman, & Daniels, 2012, p.126).

Programs that have the potential to increase the number of women in leadership positions and provide continued support for female leaders in higher education are important for a number of reasons. First, the path to leadership in higher education can be unique where "often the transition to management can be the result of turn-taking and involves realignment to a completely new job without any training or support" (Morley, 2013, p. 6). Second, Morahan et al. (2011) state that "the attainment of a leadership position does not automatically ensure long-term success for women leaders. Recent research demonstrates that women in leadership roles may be more vulnerable and less likely to achieve sustained leadership success than men with comparable professional experience" (p. 387).

Third, if women continue to be under-represented across all decision making aspects of higher education, then "the expertise and skills of a significant part of the HE workforce are being under-utilized" (Morley, 2013, p. 5). Fourth, an organization's performance improves as the number of female leaders grow within that system (White, 2012). Fifth, higher education institutions need innovative leaders to traverse volatile economic times. Sixth, White (2012) states that the senior leadership positions on most campuses will be affected by retirements and thus "The decade ahead will be a critical period to prepare and promote women of all backgrounds to the highest executive positions and to strength the entire pool of women holding institutional leadership positions" (p. 12). Madsen et al. (2012) draw similar conclusions and add that most institutions lack an "intentional" process for preparing future leaders and thus they are woefully unprepared to deal with a retirement induced leadership vacuum.

Morley (2013) also argues that change in the patterns of higher education leadership are crucial because "The gendered world of HE affects the very nature of knowledge production itself" (p. 15). Morahan et al. (2011) likewise concur that the gender gap in leadership roles "represents a failure to obtain the critical mass needed to effect change, the underuse of some of our best talent; and a contribution to the deficit of strong women mentors" (p. 387).

Marschke et al. (2007) state that it is a mistake to simply "wait for the market to right itself or merely hope that demographic changes will continue in the same direction to achieve equity many generations from now…." (p. 20). They conclude that the only way to remove the "demographic inertia" around equitable gender representation in higher education is to implement radical and purposeful interventions within organizations. Morahan et al. (2011) make a similar argument that "To successfully challenge and change the deep-rooted culture of medicine and science in a sustained way, considerable research indicates that a critical mass of enlightened women leaders, about 5%-15%, is necessary" (p. 388). The authors believe that the only way to achieve this critical mass goal is to support initiatives that promote and sustain female leaders.

Leadership models developed and used by men will not suffice as the only examples for women. Leadership development programs geared specifically toward women are needed. Ely et al. (2011) argue that women's leadership development programs should be designed to "adequately addresses (sic) the organizational realities women face" and "foster in participants a sustained capacity for leadership" (p. 475). Madsen et al. also add that "(W)hile the importance of leadership development programming for both men and women is clear, several articles emphasize the beneficial impact of women-only opportunities" (p. 115).

Our single-sex Women's Leadership Initiative was designed to address the institution's gender gap in networking and leadership support. Based on a coaching method used at Harvard's Women's Leadership Forum, our leadership initiative provides an on-campus leadership development and support program for women. This paper assesses the overall impact and effectiveness of this program and compares results of an external coaching model versus an internal facilitator (coach) model. This "grow your own" model is less expensive than sending one woman at a time to an out-of-state program and it develops a critical mass of female leaders who can regularly connect with women across the campus. It is absolutely important to have national networks, but it is also invaluable to have local connections that can be called upon for a multitude of problems. Our model is a low cost, effective model for leadership development

that could be replicated by other institutions. The results should be of interest to leadership scholars and practitioners focusing on women and leadership, especially leadership development. It is hoped that the evaluation/assessment data from this program will inspire other campuses to create a similar leadership development program for women.

Existing Leadership Models and Literature on Leadership Development

There are a number of nationally known leadership institutes designed for women (Madsen, Longman, & Daniels, 2012). In fact, Madsen et al. (2012) identified nineteen sample international or national leadership development programs, fifty-two sample state or regional leadership development programs, and thirteen sample institutional leadership development programs for women in higher education.

Perhaps some of the best known are the HERS Institutes and the Harvard Women's Leadership Forum (WLF). For both programs, an individual attends the seminar for several days to a week, and then returns back to her campus. The Higher Education Resource Service (HERS) was founded in 1972 and began the first institute at Bryn Mawr College in 1976 (White, 2012).

> HERS Institutes provide an intensive 12-day curriculum that prepares women faculty and administrators for institutional leadership roles. The Institutes focus on knowledge, skills and perspectives for achieving institutional priorities and maximizing institutional resources. HERS Institute participants work with HERS Faculty and HERS Alumnae to develop the professional development plans and networks needed for advancing as leaders in higher education administration. (http://www.hersnet.org/institutes.asp)

The Women's Leadership Forum at Harvard is a five-day development program that "is designed to advance your management and leadership skills" (http://www.exed.hbs.edu/programs/wlf/Pages/default.aspx). This program brings together "a dynamic group of senior businesswomen from around the world—successful leaders of public and private firms, including business owners, entrepreneurs, corporate officers, and nonprofit executives" (http://www.exed.hbs.edu/programs/wlf/Pages/default.aspx).

Although the individual model can be quite effective in personal transformation for the participant, it is a costly and inefficient way to exponentially increase the leadership capacity in an academic institution. Participants in both of these programs incur expense in attending, whether the price is paid by the individual or by the institution that sponsors her. The HERS Institutes as well as Harvard's program are both costly--between $7,000 and $10,000 respectively per person in 2013. In a time of budget cuts and financial constraints, many institutions are not able to afford these expenses.

In trying to reach a large number of women on campus with limited financial resources, our campus instituted the Women's Leadership Initiative (WLI). The mission statement for the WLI is as follows: "The Women's Leadership Initiative strives to empower women in leadership roles by providing them the tools, resources, development opportunities and professional networks that will enable them to reach their full potential."

Our women's leadership initiative grew out of the individual experiences of two female campus leaders. Both had attended (one within the last 10 years and the other more recently) and had very positive experiences at the Harvard Women's Leadership Forum (WLF). They wanted to provide this experience to a substantial number of our institution's women. We contracted with Jane Wells Coaching and Consulting and her business partner, Dr. Harriet Nezer, to serve as the external consultants and coaches for the first round of this initiative. The two external coaches tailored a program for campus, based on the best practices identified in the leadership development literature and the "Board of Advisors" model utilized by the Harvard WLF program. In this model, a large group of women were divided into smaller coaching groups or "pods" led by a professional facilitator. Through a highly structured process of giving and receiving feedback, the women in each group served as advisors and coaches to each other, sharing their professional experience and insights.

In Phase I of our leadership program, twenty-nine women were placed into coaching groups, each consisting of four to five members. Each pod met five times during the Spring semester at rotating locations determined by the individual members. The external coaches, Wells and Nezer, facilitated the first session in person after the initial kickoff meeting, then facilitated the remaining four sessions via Skype from their Boston location. In addition, the participants were assigned homework and reading assignments from the book, *How Remarkable Women Lead* by Joanna Barsh, Susie Cranston and Geoffrey Lewis (2009).

The five sessions were designed to help participants hone their leadership skills, develop concrete strategies to address their individual leadership challenges, and create an engaged leadership community and network. Participants also gained insights into the coaching process, enabling them to more effectively encourage other women leaders. The Phase I coaching sessions ended in May 2012 with an on-campus closing event where 26 women completed the program.

The next step of the program involved training the initial cohort of women to serve as *facilitators for the second round of participants.* In fall 2012, the two external consultants returned to campus to train twenty-two of the Phase I participants who agreed to serve as coaches/facilitators for the Phase II participants. In this on-campus training, the consultants provided a "tool-kit" to each woman who would serve as a coach for Phase II participants. Detailed "lesson plans" and "homework assignments" were contained in a three-ring binder toolkit for use by the internal coaches. The internal coach-facilitators coached 46 women during the spring semester--January through May 2013. Each pod had two internal coach-facilitators and four or five Phase II participants. Forty-three women completed Phase II.

The designers of the curriculum for our leadership initiative indicate that the Centered Leadership model heavily influenced their structure. Barsh, Cranston, and Craske (2008) offer the following summary of the five dimensions of their Centered Leadership Model:

> *meaning*, or finding your strengths and putting them to work in the service of an inspiring purpose; *managing energy*, or know where your energy comes from, where it goes, and what you can do to manage it; *positive framing*, or adopting a more constructive way to view your world, expand your horizons, and gain the resilience to move ahead even when bad things happen; *connecting*, or identifying who can help you grow, building stronger relationships, and increasing your sense of belonging; and *engaging*, or finding your voice, becoming self-reliant and confident by accepting opportunities and the inherent risks they bring, and collaborating with others. (Barsh, Cranston, & Craske, 2008, p. 36)

The design of our approach likewise reflects key findings around Adult Learning Theory and leadership development. According to Allen (2007) "A leadership development program that incorporates the thinking of behaviorists, cognitivist, social learning theorists and developmentalists will not only involve learners at a higher level, it will help architects of leadership development programming design and implement interventions and environments more conducive to learning" (p. 36). Leadership development programs that "incorporate a number of 'real time' opportunities for learners to practice and perform new behaviors" (Allen, 2007, p. 28) incorporates behaviorism into its programming. Allen argues further that "This real time practice includes coaching from independent observers or others and offering immediate feedback to participants. In addition, designers of leadership development programs utilizing this learning theory may consider linking the subject being taught (in this case leadership development) to some form of prestige or desirable outcome" (Allen, 2007, p. 29). The *objectives-centered* instruction as described above is embedded in the structure of our WLI. For example, participants involved in the WLI were asked by the coaches to practice new behaviors (i.e., exhibiting active listening skills, asking non-leading questions, offering positive feedback, etc.) in the context of resolving a current leadership challenge.

Our WLI also contains elements of cognitivism, specifically, "*experienced-centered instruction*". In order to promote understanding, "one goal is for participants to be more in tune with their own processes and ways of knowing" (Allen, 2007, p. 31). Allen states that to achieve this, "a step-by-step model should

be introduced and related to the whole". Also, "a focus on real life problems that have immediate importance will better assist learners in solving problems that have immediacy 'because unsolved problems create uncomfortable ambiguity for learners'" (Allen, 2008, p. 31). The last condition is that "learning must take place in a safe and comfortable environment that will assist participants in solving problems and provide them with opportunities to test assumptions through activity" (p. 31). For the WLI, women were placed in small groups of four-to-five members and asked to complete a number of exercises designed to build trust. In addition, the monthly homework assignments were linked to a real-life work issue and were designed to elicit self-reflection with the ultimate goal of each woman resolving her own leadership challenge.

In terms of social learning theory, the coaches (in both Phase I and II) modeled an approach grounded in appreciative inquiry (where questions are framed to identify strengths), and the assumption was that individuals can find the answer themselves if questioned properly. Coaches were also attentive, supportive, encouraging, and engaged in active listening. Thus, they modeled the desired behaviors. In addition, "Leadership development opportunities should help participants better understand their environment and how it affects those within it" (Allen, 2007, p. 32). There were several exercises within WLI that ask participants to assess the landscape, who were the key players in their leadership challenge, who support/might oppose the work as well as asking them to identify and to assess their networks (where are the holes and what strategies can they use to fill them).

The final piece, developmentalism/transformative learning, was also present in our WLI. All of the homework exercises required deep critical reflection as did the questioning by coaches (and peers). Framing is one of the five cornerstones of the centered leadership model and asked the participants to be aware of their "habits of mind" (the complexity of their understanding of things, how they frame difficulties, challenges, resolve them, whether or not they remember prior successful ventures, etc.).

Researchers have also concluded that coaching and/or mentoring can encourage women in the area of leadership. Learning how to lead from a coach or a mentor is beneficial because "In a coaching relationship, individuals reflect on their own strengths, challenges, and experiences to develop insights and to experiment with new ideas and behaviors" (Patti, Holzer, Stern, & Brackett, 2012, p. 264). Having a mentor gives a mentee more skills (Chopin, Danish, Seers, & Cook, 2013; Madsen, 2008) and they "pay off not just in better performance but also in increased job satisfaction and decreased turnover" (Goleman, 2010, p. 143). In addition, the coaching relationship is not only good for the individual, but also the organization. Chopin et al. (2013) state the following:

> Establishing programs that will foster interpersonal and networking skills would benefit not only the individual but also the organization. Learning from more experienced workers through mentoring relationships is one way for employees to develop the skills necessary to adapt to the rapidly changing organizational structure. (Chopin et al., 2013, p. 17)

While mentoring is said to be beneficial for a person's career as well as for an organization (Chopin et al., 2013) there are difficulties for women in identifying a mentor (Haley & Jaeger, 2012). There are not always opportunities to have a woman as a mentor, especially if one is located in a male-dominated profession.

Ely et al. (2011) state that "Establishing a safe space for learning and experimentation and building a community of peer support are critical elements of any effective leadership development program" (p. 486). Research has documented that having a network of people to talk with and get ideas from in a professional setting is especially important for women. According to Flemming & Nelson (2007) "(R)elationships are important to women's psychological and social development as well as their identity and sense of self…a particular kind of relationship—mentoring. Potential solutions to the problems women face in the workplace are based on these relationships" (p. 20). Enabling women to learn from other women can provide important perspectives. Thus, "Women-only programs foster learning by putting women in a majority position, and this contrast with the more familiar, male-dominated work context can provoke powerful insights (Ely et al., 2011, p. 488).

In summary, like other off-campus leadership development programs for women, our WLI is focused on helping women develop leadership skills (Ely et al. 2011; Hornsby, Morrow-Jones, & Ballam, 2012; Morahan et al., 2010; White 2011;) and enhance their professional networks (Ely et al., 2011). Like the Harvard WLF program, the WLI, uses the "Board of Advisors" model, in which an assigned coach facilitates professional development through a highly structured program of small-group discussion, readings and homework assignments at their home institution. Our approach utilizes some of the best leadership development practices identified for adult learners (Allen, 2007) and like Ely et al. (2011) our program utilized a coaching/mentoring program designed to promote exchanges between women that are authentic and reciprocal and promote relationships that continue beyond the program. Our single sex approach also lines up with the research of Ely et al. (2011), Hornsby, Morrow-Jones, and Ballam (2012), and White (2012).

METHOD

Survey Development and Implementation: Measuring Change

The sections that follow discuss the survey design, including data collection method and instrumentation. The data collection method at Time 1—the introductory meeting for the Women's Leadership Initiative —was group administration. Data collection at Time 2—at least four months after the initial meeting and at the end of the group coaching—was also group administered. We have pre- and post-test data for Phase I of the initiative where approximately twenty-six females in top-level administrative positions on campus were "coached" by external consultants. The women in Phase I occupy positions such as Provost, Deans of Colleges, Associate Deans, Associate Provosts, Directors, Chairs, etc. We also have pre- and post-test data for Phase II of the initiative where forty-three women in the early to mid-level of their careers were coached by the Phase I participants (i.e., internal coaches).

The survey covered the following five broad areas: (1) strategic thinking (How important is strategic thinking to success in your current role; How would you rate your effectiveness at strategic thinking), (2) influencing others (How important is this skill to being effective in your role; how effective are you at influencing your supervisors; how effective are you at influencing people you supervise; how effective are you at influencing your peers), (3) speaking up and asking for what you need (how critical is this to effectiveness in your role; how effective are you at speaking up and asking for what you need), (4) career planning and professional development (how critical is professional development to your success; rank the quantity and quality of your professional networks), and (5) progress on their leadership challenge (how much progress did you feel that you made on your leadership challenge). For the first four areas, participants were asked to rate their responses from one to four with one being "the least" and four being "the most". For the fifth area, participants were asked to rank their progress in terms of 1=no progress, 2=limited progress, 3=progress, and 4=significant progress. For the post-test survey, there were also open-ended questions that asked how the "group coaching" had helped participants with each of these areas and solicited suggestions for strengthening and improving the group coaching process.

Our general analytical strategy was to use statistical techniques for comparing and establishing statistical differences (i.e., not likely to have occurred due to chance) between groups. We utilized paired samples t-tests because we tested the same people on two separate occasions. We also calculated effect size with eta squared to determine the magnitude of the intervention's effect (i.e., participating in the WLI over a semester). For eta squared, .01 indicates a small effect, .06 indicates a moderate effect, and .14 indicates a large effect (i.e., a substantial difference in the scores obtained before and after participating in the leadership initiative).

RESULTS

Specific Results from Phase I Participants (Group Coaching with External Facilitators)

A total of twenty-four out of twenty-six Phase I participants completed the surveys. There were ten variables where pre- and post- responses from Phase I participants are compared. The results indicate that

TABLE 1
COMPARISON AND PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST DATA FOR PHASE I AND II

	Phase I Pre-Test	Phase I Post-Test	Phase II Pre-Test	Phase II Post-Test
Importance of strategic thinking to success	3.68 (n=22)	4.0* (n=22) t-value=-2.31 df=21 eta squared=.20	3.84 (n=25)	3.80 (n=25)
Effectiveness at strategic thinking	2.86 (n=22)	3.36*** (n=22) t-value=-4.58 df=21 eta squared=.50	3.12 (n=25)	2.94* (n=25) t-value=2.38 df=24 eta squared=.187
Importance of influencing others	3.77 (n=22)	3.95* (n=22) t-value=-2.16 df=21 eta squared=.18	3.52 (n=25)	3.68 (n=25)
Effectiveness at influencing supervisors	2.95 (n=22)	2.82 (n=22)	2.76 (n=25)	2.76 (n=25)
Effectiveness at influencing people you supervise	3.05 (n=21)	3.19 (n=21)	3.28 (n=25)	3.14* (n=25) t-value=2.06 df=24 eta squared=.150
Effectiveness at influencing peers	2.95 (n=22)	3.14* (n=22) t-value=-2.16 df=21 eta squared=.18	3.04 (n=25)	3.06 (n=25)
Importance of speaking up and asking for what you need	3.59 (n=22)	3.77* (n=22) t-value=-2.16 df=21 eta squared=.18	3.52 (n=25)	3.74* (n=25) t-value=-2.19 df=24 eta squared=.167
Effectiveness at speaking up and asking for what you need	2.64 (n=22)	2.77 (n=22)	2.32 (n=25)	2.62** (n=25) t-value=-3.13 df=24 eta squared=.289
Importance of professional development	3.29 (n=21)	3.48 (n=21)	3.38 (n=26)	3.31 (n=26)
Quantity/Quality of professional networks	2.45 (n=22)	3.00*** (n=22) t-value=-5.02 df=21 eta squared=.545	2.68 (n=25)	2.84 (n=25)
Extent University supports women leaders	2.54		3.14	2.82* t-value=2.63 df=21 eta squared=.248
Progress made on leadership challenge		3.29		3.0

Note: *p≤.05 **p≤.01 ***p≤.001

there were significant changes in participants' scores on six of the ten variables indicating that participation in the Women's Leadership Initiative had a significant positive impact on their scores (see Table 1). For example, there was a significant difference in the pre/post mean scores on the importance of strategic thinking (3.68 versus 4.0, .05 level of significance). The eta squared indicates that participation in the WLI had a large effect on the respondents' scores. Respondents also indicated that their effectiveness at strategic thinking had significantly improved (2.86 versus 3.36, .001 level of significance) and that WLI participation had a large effect on their mean scores. In addition, there is a significant difference in the importance of influencing others at time one and time two (3.77 versus 3.95, .05 level of significance). The eta squared also indicates a large effect. There was a significant difference in the pre and post scores of their effectiveness at influencing their peers (2.95 versus 3.14, .05 level of significance) with the eta squared again indicating a large effect. There was a significant difference in the "importance of speaking up and asking for what you need" (3.59 versus 3.77, .05 level of significance) and the WLI's effect is considered large. Finally, there was a significant difference in the ranking of the quantity and quality of their professional networks (2.45 versus 3.0, .001 level of significance) and the largest impact measured with eta squared.

Specific Results from Phase II Participants (Group Coaching with Internal Facilitators)

There were eleven variables where pre- and post- responses from Phase II participants were compared. The results indicate that there were significant changes in participants' scores on five of the eleven variables indicating that participation in the Women's Leadership Initiative had a significant impact on their scores. For example, respondents rated their effectiveness at strategic thinking lower at time two than at time one (3.12 versus 2.94, .05 level of significance) and that WLI participation had a large effect on their mean scores. In addition, there was a significant difference in the importance of effectiveness at influencing people they supervises at time one and time two (3.28 versus 3.14, .05 level of significance). The eta squared also indicates a large effect. It might appear counterintuitive that scores on these two variables significantly declined after participating in the WLI. It is quite possible that through conversations with the coaches and their podmates that many of these women broadened their understanding of strategic thinking and/or how others influence people they supervise. It is possible that participants realized that they could be more strategic in their thinking or more effective in influencing people they supervise and thus lowered their self-evaluations at time two. So, these data are probably better reflections of areas that need development and less about our WLI having a negative impact on the participants. In addition, Phase II participants rated the University's support of women leaders significant higher at Time 1 than at Time 2 (3.14 versus 2.82, .05 level of significance). Again, it is possible that through discussions with other women Phase II participants learned that other women on campus (regardless of type of position or location within the structure) had had negative experiences. Thus, the women did not realize the systematic nature of this bias until they began to communicate with other women about their experiences. This more informed awareness is reflected in lower scores at time two.

There was a significant positive difference in the importance of speaking up and asking for what you need (3.52 versus 3.74, .05 level of significance) and the effect of participating in the WLI is considered large. WLI participants also indicated that their effectiveness at speaking up and asking for what they need had significantly improved between time 1 and time 2 (2.32 versus 2.62, .01 level of significance). These results indicate that women who are not professional coaches can effectively coach other women on campus and that the in-house professional model for women's leadership was beneficial for the participants.

Assessing the Overall Impact and Effectiveness of this New Program

A total of thirty-four women were invited to participate in Phase I of the initiative. Twenty-nine women committed to the program and twenty-six participants completed the program for an 89.7% completion rate. Twenty-two of the 26 (84.6%) Phase I participants agreed to serve as coaches in Phase II of the initiative. Fifty-three women were invited to participate in Phase II, forty-six of those women committed to the program, and forty-three (93.5%) completed the program.

The quantitative survey results indicate for Phase I participants that there were significant changes in participants' scores on six of the ten variables (eight if the level of significance was lowered to .10). These results indicate that participating in the Women's Leadership Initiative had a significant positive impact on their scores. Ninety-two percent of the respondents indicated that they had made progress/significant progress on their leadership challenge. Only one woman from Phase I indicated that she did not make any progress on her leadership challenge. The quantitative results from Phase II participants, although they appear to be more mixed, indicate that there are significant positive changes in participants' scores on two (four if the level of significance is .10) of the eleven variables. Every woman from Phase II indicated that she made some progress on her leadership challenge with 82.6% indicating progress/significant progress.

Responses to the open-ended questions inquiring how the "group coaching" had helped participants on each of the skill areas likewise indicated high overall satisfaction with both Phase I and Phase II of the program. For Phase I, at least half of respondents (and sometimes 92%) wrote comments to the open-ended questions and there were no open-ended responses indicating that respondents were dissatisfied with the group coaching. For Phase II, at least two-thirds (and sometimes as high as 81%) of participants wrote responses to the open-ended inquiries and *all* of their comments were positive reflections of their experience. For both groups, the general theme for strengthening and improving the group coaching process was to offer more of it.

In terms of the utility of modifying an external leadership development program to fit a university setting, the cost to participate in the 2013 Women's Leadership Forum at Harvard is $9,500. The cost per faculty member for the HERS Institutes is $6,900. The two-year cost for the external consultants for our WLI was $50,000. A total of 69 women have completed the program for an average cost of $725 each. Harvard's leadership program is a five-day intensive program (not including travel to and from Harvard) requiring at minimum a 40-hour commitment from participants. The HERS Institutes offer both a concentrated immersion format (two weeks, excluding travel to and from the location) and a cumulative multiple sessions format (covering 12 days, excluding four different travels to and from the location). The leadership "cost" of the internal facilitation model is the time commitment from the internal coaches and the women who were coached. Each Phase I participant was asked to give back to the University community by serving as a coach in Phase II of the initiative. For the coaches, these women committed to participating in four hours of training, four hours each for an introductory and completion session, and five 90-minute sessions (as well as preparation for those sessions) for approximately a 24.5 hour commitment. The time commitment for "being coached" was approximately 15.5 hours.

DISCUSSION

It is quite clear from both the qualitative and quantitative data that participation in our University's Women's Leadership Initiative had a significant positive impact on the first round of women. The data for Phase II participants are likewise encouraging; there are just fewer significant positive impacts. One possible explanation for the variations in documented impact is that this was the first time for any of the women functioning as coaches in Phase II to serve in this type of role. It is highly likely that their coaching abilities will improve with each iteration of this process. It is also plausible that the differences in WLI impact can be attributed to differences between Phase I and Phase II participants. As stated earlier, there are clear differences between the women in both the length of time in academia and their current position within the institution. It is interesting to note that the pre-test means for Phase II participants are higher than the pre-test means for Phase I participants on seven of eleven variables indicating an overall higher initial self-assessment from this second group of women. Phase I participants self-assessed higher on the following four variables: the importance of influencing others, their effectiveness at influencing supervisors, the importance of speaking up and asking for what you need, and their effectiveness at speaking up and asking for what you need. Also noteworthy is that Phase II coaches appear to have impacted Phase II participants in terms of understanding the importance of and their effectiveness at speaking up and asking for what they need. In addition, Phase I participants appear to

have made more progress than Phase II participants on their leadership challenge (i.e., they had higher post-test mean scores on their leadership challenge progress, 3.29 versus 3.0).

CONCLUSION

While the current metaphors used to describe women and leadership may seem daunting, including notions of cliffs, basements, ghettos, labyrinths, and impenetrable ceilings, it is our contention that programs such as ours will help significantly more women traverse the pathways of leadership with ease. Perhaps other universities will consider using our model for an internal leadership development program as they think about increasing the overall leadership capacity of their institution and achieving a critical mass of female leaders on their campus.

Using the time-honored techniques of coaching and mentoring provided sound initial results with our program. Women who were not professional coaches (i.e. practitioner faculty and administrators like those at HERS) were able to effectively coach other women on campus. This success is attributable in part to the fact that WLI's structure and curriculum contains components of long-standing external programs designed to have positive impacts on female leaders. Several examples include having the development take place in a female-only environment, targeting women from diverse backgrounds and types of appointments in various stages of their careers, and creating a safe network of trusted colleagues where risk-taking is encouraged.

In our model, a large number of women are able to link their leadership challenges to their core values and address that challenge in a meaningful way without having to leave the institution. This method is more cost-effective than those that send one woman out-of-state for leadership development and networking. We are not downplaying the benefits of attending a program away from home, but want to draw attention to the benefits of on-campus programming. In fact, we would argue that the best strategy is to provide both internal and external development opportunities for women. Women should have the opportunity that external programs offer to pursue strong external networks and to discuss their leadership issues without fear of reprisal.

White (2012) states that the HERS model facilitates external relationship and connections for those women who participate. In contrast, our initiative facilitates internal relationships between and among professional and academic women on campus. The groups or "pods" in our program cut across every type of professional woman leader on campus—which is interdisciplinary in its approach. Lastly, our model enables each woman to solve a particular career/leadership challenge within her own campus environment.

We are in the early stages (i.e., beginning year three) of our WLI program and currently do not have long term data on the impact of this program. Our current data are self-reported about the perceived impact. To be truly sure of the program's effectiveness our future evaluations need to move beyond the perception of participants to results criteria (Madsen et al., 2012). The real "tests" are to see through time if this program expands the collective capacity of our institutional members and to assess the impact of newly development connections among female participants. Our program, like HERS and the Harvard model, will need to modify and change to continue to offer different types of leadership development opportunities as the needs of women and the context for higher education change.

ENDNOTES

1. Three additional variables indicate statistical differences on the pre and post scores (effectiveness at influencing supervisors declines, effectiveness at influencing people you supervise increases, and importance of professional development increases) when the level of significance is lowered to .10.
2. Two additional variables indicate statistical differences on the pre and post scores (importance of influencing others increases and quantity and quality of professional networks increases) when the level of significance is lowered to .10.

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