An Exploration of Institutional Climate and Supports Enabling Career Growth for Female Leaders at Utah Valley University

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This study investigates the underrepresentation of female leaders at Utah institutions compared to peer institutions and national averages. Using one Utah institution as a case study, this research considers existing female leadership dynamics in relationship to institutional support and climate factors. It also considers opportunities for developing an executive female leadership pipeline despite challenging contextual factors such as a conservative religious culture, an institutional climate that is challenged by perceptions of diversity and fairness, and few female role models.

INTRODUCTION

Utah, containing the headquarters of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) and heavily populated by members of this conservative Christian church, provides a unique environment to study women's leadership issues. Due to the Church's religious doctrine that emphasizes a patriarchal family structure (Walker, 1990), the divine role of motherhood (Miles, 2008), and a cultural tendency to marry young and have large families (Dodwell, 2013), there are unique contextual factors affecting women who choose careers, let alone those who wish to ascend into executive leadership positions. These contextual factors stem from LDS cultural expectations and result in unique work/life tensions. For example, LDS teachings promote the belief that "women are dependent upon men and upon marriage for exaltation in the afterlife and are subordinate to men on this earth within the family" (Miles, 2008, p.1). While this passage seems to subjugate women, Mormon interpretation would see this as recognition of the distinct and separate roles that men and women fill in relationship to each other, aka. traditional gender roles. Although this distinction in roles would appear inequitable, the Church has always promoted a belief in the equality of women with men – different but equal. Furthermore, while the Church is a staunch champion of traditional family roles and values, it has made doctrinal adjustments over the last several decades to accommodate working women (Miles, 2008).

Today, the number of LDS women in the workplace is approaching the national norm of 50% (Fletcher Stack, 1991), but more are working part-time rather than full-time (Miles, 2008). This lack of focus on career is because the role of work, and even education, is "understood as supporting and subordinate to women's primary roles as mother and wives" (Mihelich & Storrs, 2003, p. 407). This decline in the value of education was highlighted by the Utah Women and Education Project (UWEP, January, 2010) which investigated why Utah women's participation in higher education was in recession for several decades. Research findings from the project showed that only 49% of higher education

students in Utah are women, whereas the national average of female higher education students is 57%. In fact, "when compared to all other states, Utah is last in terms of the percentage of female students enrolled in postsecondary institutions" (UWEP, May, 2010).

Amidst this cultural backdrop, Utah institutions of higher education are trying to positively affect the educational futures of Utah women. However, the unique cultural dynamics in the state contribute to an under representation of female leaders at Utah System of Higher Education Institutions as compared to IPEDS peer institutions (see Table 1). As Table 1 shows, most Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) institutions, with the exception of the University of Utah and Salt Lake Community College have a representation of female executive, administrative and managerial staff of less than 40%. Given that women comprise just over half the general population, it would be expected that women's representation in leadership positions in USHE institutions would be roughly 50% if gender equity was present.

TABLE 1
A COMPARISON BETWEEN UTAH SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND PEER INSTITUTIONS OF FEMALE EXECUTIVE, ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGERIAL STAFF AS REPORTED IN IPEDS

Compare Type	Institution Name	2011 Females	2010 Females	2009 Females	2008 Females	2007 Females
Peer	Metropolitan State College of Denver	65%	75%	68%	56%	58%
Peer	California State University-Northridge	54%	49%	54%	46%	44%
Peer	Boise State University	51%	51%	48%	49%	47%
Peer	Northern Kentucky University	50%	50%	52%	51%	56%
Peer	Youngstown State University	50%	49%	45%	44%	45%
USHE	University of Utah	48%	44%	44%	n/a	39%
Peer	Kennesaw State University	48%	45%	45%	50%	51%
USHE	Salt Lake Community College	45%	n/a	34%	n/a	37%
Peer	Ferris State University	44%	43%	45%	47%	45%
Peer	University of Alaska Anchorage	38%	52%	48%	37%	38%
USHE	Utah Valley University	38%	38%	37%	36%	37%
Peer	Indiana University-Purdue-Fort Wayne	37%	37%	36%	36%	38%
USHE	Dixie State College of Utah	33%	29%	26%	23%	27%
USHE	Utah State University	31%	34%	33%	33%	33%
USHE	Southern Utah University	28%	28%	32%	31%	33%
USHE	Weber State University	25%	n/a	26%	n/a	22%
USHE	Snow College	17%	14%	14%	13%	17%

To understand the dynamics surrounding female leadership and advancement at one institution of higher education in Utah, the President of Utah Valley University commissioned a task force to investigate challenges related to female recruitment, retention and promotion and make recommendations to the executive cabinet. In order to assist the task force, this research was conducted to understand female leaders' desire to advance and to explore the institutional climate and supports that may or may not contribute to their advancement. In addition to assisting the institution's task force, through this study, we add to leadership literature by exploring culturally relevant understandings of women's desires to advance in academia within an environment heavily influenced by conservative religious mores.

The total percentage of women leaders at an institution does not paint a full picture of female leadership. Research indicates that although women are well represented in the lower rungs of management (White House Project, 2011), there is "strong evidence of gender disparity among positions

with higher salaries and greater powers" (Monroe, Ozyurt, Wrigley, & Alexander, 2008, p. 216). This trend is mirrored in the leadership distribution at Utah Valley University (Table 2).

TABLE 2
PERCENT OF FEMALES IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS AT UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Position	Females
Assistant Director	52.5%
Associate Director	50.0%
Director	36.2%
Senior Director	33.3%
Department Chair	22.0%
Assistant Deans	80.0%
Associate Dean	0.0%
Dean	14.3%
Assistant VP	25.0%
Associate VP	23.1%
CFO (1 person)	100%
VP	0%

When an organization values women and men equally, there should be gender balance at the entry, middle, and senior levels. When institutions exclude women from senior leadership positions, they lose out on the benefits diversity brings such as increased creativity and problem solving, improved productivity, and the ability to attract and retain talent. Today, women account for only 18% of top level leaders across all business sectors and make 78.7 cents to every dollar earned by men – a wage gap that increases with age (The White House Project, 2011). Furthermore, although women comprise the majority of college students (57% nationally) and receive the majority of college degrees, they make up only 26% of full professors and 23 percent of university presents (14% of presidents at doctoral granting institutions). Lack of progress breaking the glass ceiling is illustrated by the fact that the number of female presidents at colleges and universities has not changed in ten years. Additionally, women have regressed in closing the wage gap. In 1972, female faculty made 83% of what males made, today they make 82% (The White House Project, 2011).

BENEFITS OF FEMALE LEADERSHIP

Organizations benefit in myriad ways when female leaders are developed and promoted. Females contribute to diversity, and diverse workplaces reduce employee turnover, utilize a diverse talent pool, and contribute creativity, innovation and entrepreneurialism to the workforce Furthermore, diverse groups are high performing groups; a report by Ernst & Young showed that even if a homogenous group is more capable, a diverse group will almost always outperform a group of 'the best' by a substantial margin (2009).

Women who are visible leaders also serve as powerful role models to young women and normalize women's leadership for both men and women. Moreover, women have many characteristics endemic of strong leadership. In a 2008 Pew Research Center study, the public rated women above men in five of eight character traits they value highly in their leaders (honesty, intelligence, creativity, outgoingness, compassion) and equal to men in two other characteristics (hardworking and ambitious). Men rated higher in only one characteristic, decisiveness, but they did so by a margin of ten percent.

Although the Pew study ranked men higher in decisiveness, benefits of female leadership include 'risk smart' leadership that approaches decision making from a decidedly different perspective (Catalyst, 2004). Women's approach to leadership diminishes risk because they "tend to include diverse viewpoints

in decision making, have a broader conception of public policy, and are also more likely to work through differences to form coalitions, complete objectives, and bring disenfranchised communities to the table" (Catalyst, 2004, p.6).

Diversity in leadership not only promotes fairness but has distinct financial advantages. Fortune 500 companies with more women on their boards outperformed their competitors with 42% higher return in sales, 53% higher return on equity, and 66% higher return on investment capital (Catalyst, 2007).

Despite substantial and compelling evidence of the financial advantages when women sit on corporate boards, women hold only 14% of board seats at companies on the S&P Composite 1500 Index (Credit Suisse Research Institute, 2012). To rectify gender gap imbalances at executive levels and to have a positive influence on economic growth and corporate responsibility, companies and nations are taking action. Norway has mandated a 40% quota for female board participation and Finland has required companies with no or low numbers of women on their boards to disclose the reasons in their annual reports (Noble, 2013). Moreover, in 2012 the European Union approved a plan that calls on publically listed companies to sign a voluntary commitment to increase women's presence on their boards to 40% by 2020 (European Commission, 2012).

EXISTING DATA ON INSTITUTIONAL CLIMATE

In 2012, the Chronicle Great Colleges to Work for Survey was distributed to Utah Valley University employees. Overall, 83% of employees had pride in the institution and 71% of employees had positive evaluations of their work environment. But despite these and other strong positive ratings across many indicators assessing the institution's climate, five measures registered a disparity of 9% or more between male and female employees. These measures are presented in Table 3 and the two most prominent differences are that women feel promotions are not based on a person's ability and they do not feel they can challenge a traditional way of doing something without fear of harming their careers. Furthermore, the item that received the lowest score in the Great Colleges to Work For Survey was 'Fairness' with only 60% of UVU's employees giving favorable scores on the institution's climate of fairness.

TABLE 3
GENDER DIFFERENCE IN RESPONSES, 2012 GREAT COLLEGES TO WORK FOR SURVEY

Men	Women	Difference
Promotions in my department are based on a person's ability.		
56%	43%	-13%
I can speak up or challenge a traditional way of doing something without fear of harming my career.		
67%	57%	-10%
I am regularly recognized for my contributions.		
60%	51%	-9%
Changes that affect me are discussed prior to being implemented.		
57%	48%	-9%
I am paid fairly for my work.		
38%	29%	-9%

Data from the Higher Education Research Institution (HERI) survey, delivered in the 2010-2011 academic year, also contained statements related to gender equity. Because women are often judged by the same career measures as men, it is helpful to show that many women experience different types of stresses than men, indicating the playing field for career advancement is not level. For example, in the past two years, Utah Valley University female faculty have experienced **twice** the stress than their male colleagues in managing household responsibilities, child care, elder care, discrimination, dealing with children's problems, and being part of a dual career couple. Furthermore, these measures were higher for Utah women in all categories and lower for Utah men, with the exception of elder care and children's problems, when measured against their male and female counterparts at comparable institutions. This data (Table 4) suggests UVU females experience greater non-career related stress than females at other institutions, males at other institutions and males at their own institution.

TABLE 4
HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH INSTITUTION QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO GENDER SPECIFIC STRESS, 2010-2011

Please indicate the extent to which each of the following has been a source of stress for you during the last two years:					
Managing household responsibilities		Utah Valley		Comp. Inst.	
		Men	Women	Men	Women
	Extensive	12.6%	32.7%	15.7%	22.6%
	Somewhat	55.2%	50.0%	58.0%	54.9%
	Not at all	32.2%	17.3%	26.3%	22.5%
Child care		Utah Valley		Comp. Inst.	
		Men	Women	Men	Women
	Extensive	1.5%	28.0%	13.7%	23.3%
	Somewhat	35.4%	36.0%	35.2%	37.1%
	Not at all	63.1%	36.0%	51.1%	39.6%
Care of elderly parent		Utah Valley		Comp. Inst.	
		Men	Women	Men	Women
	Extensive	3.4%	26.7%	9.3%	14.4%
	Somewhat	49.2%	30.0%	32.7%	40.6%
	Not at all	47.5%	43.3%	58.0%	45.0%
Subtle discrimination (e.g., prejudice, racism, sexism)		Utah Valley		Comp. Inst.	
		Men	Women	Men	Women
	Extensive	4.9%	10.6%	4.1%	9.5%
	Somewhat	13.4%	29.8%	18.4%	27.8%
	Not at all	81.7%	59.6%	77.5%	62.6%
Children's problems		Utah Valley		Comp. Inst.	
		Men	Women	Men	Women
	Extensive	7.6%	23.5%	7.5%	9.7%
	Somewhat	36.4%	41.2%	33.3%	40.3%
	Not at all	56.1%	35.3%	59.2%	50.0%
Being part of a dual career couple		Utah Valley		Comp. Inst.	
		Men	Women	Men	Women
	Extensive	3.0%	17.6%	6.5%	14.0%
	Somewhat	29.9%	47.1%	35.9%	40.7%
	Not at all	67.2%	35.3%	57.6%	45.4%

Another interesting finding from the HERI was the disparity in the way men and women felt women were being treated at Utah Valley University. In response to the question, "Women faculty are treated fairly here", 57.5% of men strongly agreed with this statement compared to 30.8% of women who

strongly agreed they were treated fairly. Conversely, the percentage of men disagreeing with this statement was 6.8%, whereas 19.2% (1/5 of the female faculty population) somewhat or strongly disagreed that "women faculty are treated fairly".

Data from both the HERI and the Great Colleges to Work for Survey shaped the development of survey questions for this research. The intent was to build on existing institutional data to gain a greater awareness of climate issues related to or limiting career growth for women at UVU and to improve an understanding of the supports necessary to facilitate advancement. The survey was designed to collect data on past exposure to and success with leadership programs as well as the desire for future programing. The survey also considered the desire to advance and assessed the institutional climate factors related to leadership for both men and women. The research questions were:

1. What is the current representation of female leaders in senior executive positions at Utah Valley University and how many mid-level leaders aspire to these positions?
2. What institutional supports could contribute to female leader advancement at Utah Valley University?
3. What institutional climate dynamics present obstacles to female leader advancement at Utah Valley University?

METHOD

The sample was comprised of institutional leaders determined with a data set provided by the Human Resources Department. From the administrative side of the institution, all leaders with the title of director (whether Assistant Director, Associate Director, Director, Senior Director) or above (Assistant Vice President, Associate Vice President, Vice President, or member of the executive cabinet) were included in the sample. From the academic side of the institution, all Department Chairs, Assistant Deans, Associate Deans and Deans were surveyed.

One limitation of this study was the inability to include past department chairs or faculty leaders with interim posts in the sample. The fixed nature of the data sample did not enable a larger consideration of leadership within academics which presents a diminished understanding of the institution's faculty leadership pipeline.

Two hundred and seventy-seven institutional leaders were sent an online survey which was open for eighteen days; 169 surveys were completed (61% response rate). The distribution of respondents across job category is as follows: Assistant Director (20), Associate Director (12), Director (71), Senior Director (10), Department Chair (24), Assistant Dean, Associate Dean, Dean (14), and Assistant V.P., Associate V.P., V.P., or other member of the Executive Cabinet (18). Thirty-six percent of the respondents were female and 64% were male.

DATA, ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

Support for Leadership Development

Utah Valley University offers a formal leadership development program. The formal leadership development program is an eleven month program that seeks to give forum participants the opportunity to participate in and learn about senior leadership in a university setting. The forum is comprised of twelve fellows, both faculty and staff, selected from a pool of applicants across campus. Fellows participate in a retreat, forum seminars, enrichment experiences and mentorship by an executive cabinet member or senior leader at the institution.

The Human Resource Department offers a development program designed to help UVU's current and future supervisory employees become engaged leaders. The program is offered three times a year, and focusses on the development of successful people management skills. The Human Resource Department also offers monthly one day workshops on topical subjects related to interpersonal skills which are designed to provide opportunities for employees to learn to be better leaders.

As presented in Table 5, both male and female leaders have participated in and benefited from the

formal leadership training program offered at Utah Valley and non-Utah Valley leader programs in relatively equal numbers, but females attended and benefited from HR trainings at a significantly higher rate than their male colleagues. Also, females expressed a belief that future participation in leadership development would benefit them at higher rates than their male counterparts across all four measures. Men expressed high levels of interest in these leadership development programs, but questioned the degree it would benefit their careers.

Approximately half of leaders surveyed have been mentored in the past by senior leaders and benefited from the experience. Mentorship is also the leadership development opportunity from which participants believe they would most benefit in the future. If leaders stated they would like to participate in and felt they would benefit from mentorship in the future, they were asked a follow-up question regarding which characteristics they wished to share with their mentor. More than half of women chose gender (56.3%) as a characteristic they felt would be beneficial in the mentor relationship – the only mentor characteristic that was statistically significant when chosen by men or women.

TABLE 5
PAST AND FUTURE LEADERSHIP PREPARATION ACTIVITIES

		Past Participation				**Future Participation**		
		not aware	no participation	participated & no benefit	participated & benefited	no participation	participate but question benefit	participate & benefit
UVU leader training	F	16.1%	43.5%	6.5%	33.9%	10.9%	**30.4%***	58.7%
	M	17.3%	44.2	1.9%	36.5%	3.0%	**53.7%***	43.3%
HR Training	F	11.3%	**25.8%***	9.7%	**53.2%***	8.7%	47.8%	43.5%
	M	23.1%	**43.3%***	6.7%	**26.9%***	11.9%	59.7%	28.4%
Non-UVU leader programs	F	24.2%	24.2%	3.2%	48.4%	-	37.0%	63.0%
	M	18.3%	32.7%	1.9%	47.1%	7.5%	31.3%	61.2%
Mentorship with senior leaders	F	22.6%	19.4%	**8.1%***	50.0%	-	28.3%	71.7%
	M	22.1%	28.8%	**1.0%***	48.1%	3.0%	31.3%	65.7%

Leadership Advancement

Both female (77.0%) and male (67.0%) leaders surveyed revealed they aspire to higher levels of leadership than they currently hold. Participants that do not aspire to higher levels of leadership cited contentment with current position as the most common reason not to advance. Those who stated they wanted to advance their career where then asked about challenges related to advancement.

As shown in Table 6, men and women were similarly confident about their qualifications for advancement, opportunities at the institution, and the appeal of positions to which they aspire. However, women stated that advancement would make it difficult to fulfill family or childcare responsibilities at twice the rate of their male colleagues (31.1% vs. 15.3%). Additionally, more women (46.7%) than men (33.9%) agreed that advancement would be disruptive to their work/life balance.

Women indicated less of a willingness to pursue additional education necessary for advancement. Of those surveyed, 35.5% have doctorate degrees, 37.9% have master's degrees, 16.0% have bachelor degrees, and 10.7% have associate degrees or less. Of the doctorate degree holders, only 25% belong to women. Master's degrees are more equally distributed across gender with 46.9% of master's degrees held by female leaders at Utah Valley University.

TABLE 6
CHALLENGES RELATED TO ADVANCEMENT

		strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree	n/a
I believe I am qualified to advance beyond my current position.	F	35.6%	53.3%	8.9%	2.2%	-	-
	M	33.8%	60.0%	4.6%	1.5%	-	-
I believe there are opportunities that will enable me to advance.	F	11.1%	40.0%	24.4%	22.2%	2.2%	-
	M	9.2%	38.5%	33.8%	18.5%	-	-
The experience of leaders in positions to which I might advance appears appealing.	F	8.9%	64.4%	13.3%	11.1%	2.2%	-
	M	13.8%	64.6%	16.9%	3.1%	-	1.5%
Advancement will make it difficult to fulfill family or childcare responsibilities.	F	6.7%	24.4%	8.9%	31.3%	24.4%	4.4%
	M	1.5%	13.8%	21.5%	36.9%	23.1%	3.1%
I am concerned advancement will be disruptive to my work/life balance.	F	11.1%	35.6%	24.4%	24.4%	**4.4%***	-
	M	7.7%	26.2%	15.4%	33.8%	**16.9%***	-
I am willing to pursue additional education necessary for advancement.	F	26.7%	28.9%	24.4%	2.2%	**8.9%***	8.9%
	M	30.8%	38.5%	18.5%	7.7%	**- ***	4.6%

With regards to past motivation to advance, roughly one-third of both male and female leaders stated they had no explicit communication from senior leaders to advance, but indicated this would have a great effect on their motivation to advance in the future (see Table 7). Encouragement to maintain work/life balance has had modest effect on past motivation to advance, with both female and male leaders indicating it would moderately or greatly affect future motivation (80% and 78.5% respectively). Female role models have had a significant effect in past motivation for advancement and a significant number of women (31.1%) suggest it will greatly affect their future motivation to advance as well.

TABLE 7
PAST AND FUTURE MOTIVATION TO ADVANCE

		Past Motivation to Advance				Future Motivation to Advance		
		no experience	no affect	moderate affect	great affect	no affect	moderate affect	great affect
Explicit communication from senior leadership to advance.	F	32.8%	4.9%	36.1%	26.2%	8.9%	31.1%	60.0%
	M	3.0%	35.0%	11.0%	30.0%	1.5%	27.7%	70.8%
Encouragement from supervisors to maintain work/life balance.	F	37.7%	16.4%	29.5%	16.4%	20.0%	44.4%	35.6%
	M	35.0%	22.0%	30.0%	10.0%	21.5%	38.5%	40.0%
Role models of similar gender or ethnicity.	F	24.6%	24.6%	21.3%	**29.5%***	**22.2%***	46.7%	**31.1%***
	M	24.0%	39.0%	23.0%	**9.0%***	**50.8%***	33.8%	**15.4%***

As discussed earlier, existing institutional data pointed to discrepancies between men and women in their views related to a climate of equity and diversity at the institution; findings from this survey support this observation (see Table 8). For example, fewer women (42.6%) than men (68.0%) agreed with the statement "Diversity is important at this institution", and twice the number women (37.7%) than men (19.0%) disagreed that Utah Valley is effectively practicing diversity in career advancement. Additionally, men agreed 10.4% more often than women that the institution is effectively implementing its core theme of inclusion.

Women experience a significant difference from men in the strength of their ability to express their beliefs and personalities in the workplace. The difference between men and women in their combined agreement scores is 9.1%, which is slightly lower than the 2012 Great Colleges to Work for Survey data that showed a 10% difference between men and women regarding the statement, "I can speak up or challenge a traditional way of doing something without harming my career".

The Great Colleges to Work for Survey also revealed a 13% difference in agreement between men and women regarding the statement, "Promotions in my department are based on a person's ability". Similarly, in this survey, females expressed 10.1% less agreement than males with the assertion that their qualifications would be the most important factor considered for promotion. Women also expressed 9.6% less agreement that there are opportunities for advancement, and 9.1% less agreement that their pay is comparable to others of the same rank and service time. Despite the disparity between men and women on these climate issues, women and men had similar agreement related to their ideas being considered (68.8% to 65% respectively) and equal agreement on being recognized for contributions (56.0%).

TABLE 8
CLIMATE DYNAMICS RELATED TO DIVERSITY AND GENDER EQUITY

		strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree	n/a
Diversity is important at this institution.	F	13.1%	**29.5%***	27.9%	**23.0%***	**6.6%***	-
	M	10.0%	**58.0%***	20.0%	**11.0%***	**1.0%***	-
UVU is effectively implementing its core theme of inclusion.	F	3.3%	36.1%	32.8%	24.6%	3.3%	-
	M	3.0%	47.0%	31.0%	15.0%	4.0%	-
UVU effectively practices diversity in career advancement.	F	4.9%	24.6%	27.9%	**32.8%***	4.9%	4.9%
	M	5.0%	34.0%	40.0%	**17.0%***	2.0%	2.0%
I can express my personality and beliefs in the workplace.	F	**6.6%***	44.3%	24.6%	16.4%	8.2%	-
	M	**18.0%***	42.0%	22.0%	11.0%	7.0%	-
Qualifications are the most important factor for promotions.	F	6.6%	39.3%	27.9%	19.7%	4.9%	1.6%
	M	10.0%	46.0%	21.0%	17.0%	4.0%	2.0%
I have the opportunity for advancement within this institution.	F	1.6%	32.8%	26.2%	26.2%	9.8%	3.3%
	M	7.0%	37.0%	22.0%	23.0%	11.0%	-
When I offer an idea, I believe it will be considered.	F	9.8%	59.0%	18.0%	8.2%	4.9%	-
	M	15.0%	50.0%	20.0%	11.0%	4.0%	-
I am appropriately recognized for my contributions.	F	11.5%	44.5%	19.7%	16.4%	6.6%	1.6%
	M	12.0%	44.0%	22.0%	12.0%	10.0%	-
My pay is comparable to others of the same rank.	F	3.9%	23.0%	23.0%	29.5%	18.0%	1.6%
	M	5.0%	31.0%	17.0%	25.0%	21.0%	1.0%

Findings from this study suggest that while both male and female leaders have benefited from past leadership development efforts, they desire additional support for career advancement. In open ended comments, both men and women cite personal goals, a desire to improve the University, and the appeal of increased responsibility and pay as motivations to advance. However, themes indicative of leader complaints were the lack of "clear and honest communication" regarding advancement, lack of leadership training opportunities, the belief that "loyal Utah Valley employees" should be promoted rather than hiring external candidates, and suspicion that "outside influences impact hiring decisions".

Women attempting to ascend leadership ladders perceive the climate as less supportive than their male counterparts. Comments such as "knowing the glass ceiling is a mile thick is not encouraging", "explicit statements from senior administrators to include more women and minorities in leadership positions", "the vast majority of key Utah Valley positions are white males, seeing someone like me is important", "if this institutions advertises diversity, it needs to embrace it in hiring and promotion practices", and "Utah Valley would greatly benefit from the promotion of greater numbers of qualified women and minorities" represent gender equity concerns from some of the institution's female leaders.

Although altering institutional climate is challenging, recommendations for Utah Valley University women as well as department and institutional suggestions are presented below. The degree to which these recommendations are considered, promoted and adapted by UVU will ultimately be decided by the Women and Leadership Task Force, senior leaders at the University, and women within the institutional

community themselves.

INSIGHTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Diversity Goals

As a federal subcontractor, Utah Valley University is required to maintain an affirmative action plan that explains how they recruit and advance qualified minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and covered veterans (Department of Labor, 2013). Furthermore, an institutional policy exists which charges Human Resources with the responsibility to write, implement, monitor, and update the University's affirmative action program in compliance with the law and to provide an annual program report of activities to President's Council.

Affirmative Actions include training programs, outreach efforts, and other positive steps designed to ensure equal employment opportunity. Affirmative Action programs analyze and audit the composition of the institutional workforce and compare it to the composition of relevant labor pools. If women and minorities are not being employed at a rate to be expected, given their availability in the relevant labor pool, the affirmative action program defines specific steps to address this underutilization. Affirmative Action programs do not create a quota system, create preferences, or discriminate against non-minorities (MIT, Human Resource Department, 2013).

Seeing that policies and practices already exist to document and monitor progress towards Affirmative Action measures, it is recommended that these practices be made as transparent as possible and that the institution advertise its diversity goals. Given the climate concerns regarding fairness and gender equity that emerged in this and previous institutional surveys, communication regarding the steps the institution is taking to rectify the gender gap in leadership as well as other areas of the workforce seems advisable. A diversity initiative requires the oversight and accountability of senior leadership as well as a climate of transparency and trust in order for it to be championed towards determined outcomes.

Campus Dialogues

One of the interesting artifacts from this study was the large number of participants who wished to engage in campus dialogues regarding leadership development. Seventy-seven research participants (71.1% of the female and 69.2% of the male research participants) indicated a desire to join in campus dialogues regarding leadership development. To accommodate this interest, it is recommended that campus dialogues be scheduled to gain feedback from the campus community regarding their leadership needs, inclusion concerns and to disseminate information regarding equity initiatives.

Although the research questions focused on the development of female leaders, it is recommended that two additional dynamics influence the tenor of the dialogues. First of all, men need an opportunity to voice their feelings and concerns about their own leadership needs. Second, the campus dialogues should be used as an occasion to strengthen male advocacy for diversity initiatives. Gender equity programs that focus solely on developing women have limited success (Catalyst, 2009). Institutions must enlist both men and women to work together to change organizational cultures that perpetuate gender inequities. UVU wishes to be seen as an inclusive campus, it should make efforts to help men recognize that gender bias exists and understand the dynamics that perpetuate its existence.

One of the qualitative findings from this study was frustration over lack of communication and clear expectations surrounding career opportunities, advancement, and hiring practices. It is recommended that these campus dialogues be used to foster open dialogue as an opportunity to disseminate information from this research, existing institutional policies and practices, and recommendations from the Women's Leadership Task Force. It would also be helpful to have representatives from senior leadership and Human Resources present to hear the opinions of Utah Valley leaders regarding diversity and career advancement.

Utah Women as Root Bound Leaders

Many leaders at Utah Valley University maintain long tenures in their positions. At the senior executive level, the average length of service time reported is 20.37 years for women and 14.42 years for men. The average service time for Senior Directors is 14.05 years for women and 13.6 years for men; Directors service time is 11.44 years and 10.58 years for women and men respectively. Faculty have greater movement within their careers because department chair postings are for two years, but service time at the institution is still lengthy at 9.28 years for women and 10.28 years for men. Deans have the shortest average service time at 2.9 years for women and 8.39 years for men. With such long service times, executive leadership positions are far and few between. Thus, competition for these positions will be fierce and women must plan to compete with external candidates who may bring a wide variety of experiences to the table.

Women seeking to ascend the career ladder often compete for positions against men who have a greater diversity of experience due to their mobility. A study by Catalyst (2012) found men more willing to relocate than women (56% to 39% respectively). The willingness to relocate for career advancement and opportunity may be compounded for some Utah women because in the LDS culture, work is understood as supporting and subordinate to her primary role as mother and wife (Mihelich & Storrs, 2003). Even if a woman has risen through the ranks of an institution, she may be conflicted about uprooting her family in order to expand and diversify her own career goals. Although she may have fostered deep and rich experiences within her own back yard, these experiences may not compare to other candidates who have experiences across a wide variety of institutions and states. The unwillingness or inability of some Utah women to leave the state automatically creates a disadvantage in the hiring process because women's encumbered choices leave her local experience at a comparative disadvantage.

Given the dynamics that make women less mobile than their male counterparts, it would be helpful if a larger understanding of these issues is considered and represented in hiring decisions. That said, Utah Valley University is driven by its mission and has a responsibility to its students, community and stakeholders to be a serious institution. It cannot afford to hire women simply to meet diversity goals - it must strive to hire the most qualified and talented individuals. Therefore, it is recommended that 'root bound' female leaders figure out ways to mimic a diverse set of career experiences in order to compete with men who are more mobile. This may prove to be a difficult and uncharted path, but as the institution pushes towards diversity, so too should female leaders consider diversity within their own resumes.

Doctorate Degrees for Female Leaders

As a serious institution, Utah Valley fosters a culture of academic rigor and professional excellence. One measure of professional excellence is the number of doctorate degrees held by full time faculty, which is 59% at the time of this writing. Within the Academic Affairs Division there is increasing pressure for executive leaders to hold doctorate degrees because they will be negotiating and working with faculty with this level of degree. Despite the need for executive leaders in key positions to have a doctorate degree, this research revealed that a modest 35.5% of the leaders surveyed have doctorate degrees; of those only 25% were earned by women.

Utah cultural dynamics may minimize the importance of this level of education for women. In a survey conducted by the Utah Women and Education Project, Utahns indicated that men should have more education than women. Forty-nine percent of those sampled stated that the minimum level of education a male should receive is four-years or higher, but only 39% believed females need this same level of education (UWEP, January, 2010). In addition to cultural pressures, many women delay or deny pursuing a doctorate degree due to childrearing or marital responsibilities, which may disadvantaged them when they seek promotions.

In other institutional divisions (Student Affairs, University Relations, Administration, etc.) the importance of the doctorate degree related to hiring and advancement is less clear. For women at Utah Valley, it would be beneficial to know expectations related to degree achievement so they could pursue career opportunities that align with their professional goals. However, even with this kind of alignment, a woman must recognize that without a doctorate degree, her chances of advancement will become

increasingly strained the higher she climbs in academia. Thus, it is recommended that women who seek to advance their careers at Utah Valley pursue higher education. That said, academic leaders must recognize the extra burden this places on women who are in their childbearing years or who are the sole providers for their families. For women who are financially able to attend graduate school, either through a distance program or through one of the three local universities that provide offerings, the verbal support and appropriate time-off to pursue studies would be advantageous. For Utah Valley women who demonstrate financial need, it is recommended that a scholarship be considered for women seeking to advance their careers by pursuing a doctorate degree.

Recruiting and Retaining Diversity

Utah Valley University's Human Resource Department has the potential to play a vital role in championing diversity initiatives. Currently, there is no formal diversity training offered for staff that could strengthen an awareness of Affirmative Action initiatives and the benefits of a diverse workforce. The Human Resource Department does offer a Safe Hire training that describes the lawful treatment of protected classes, but resources for hiring committees and departments on the recruitment and retention of underutilized classes have not yet been developed. Diversity training and hiring resources would be helpful in promoting more equitable recruitment and hiring practices, and it is recommended that Utah Valley communicate its plans for these types of initiatives in order to maximize transparency and fairness while minimizing distrust of hiring procedures.

Utah Valley University has another challenge it should consider if it aims to hire increasingly diverse and highly qualified faculty and staff. Qualified candidates from outside the state may be leery about relocating their career to an area so highly influenced by a dominant religious culture that is foreign to them. Thus, it is recommended that resources are created that assist prospective hires, new hires, and hiring committees to address issues of culture shock and assimilation. Other institutions in Utah have addressed gaps of understanding between individuals new to Utah and Utah/Mormon culture in ways that cultivate curiosity and respect (Westminster, 2010). However, when these issues are not addressed, the lack of dialogue could easily turn to confusion and contempt if a new hire is experiencing culture shock and left to their own devices to recognize and resolve their sense of displacement. Resources that promote understanding and respect for cultural differences, as well as an awareness of the stages of cultural adaptation, may have a positive effect in the recruitment and retention of female leaders from outside the state.

Female Leadership Program

Findings from this study indicate that the University needs to develop more women for leadership in higher education (e.g., increase aspirations, develop skills and competencies, obtain mentors and coaches). Because leadership development programs are a critical element in teaching and supporting women in higher education to prepare for, attain, and maintain positions of influence within their institutions (Madsen, 2012), it is recommended that a female leadership program be developed at Utah Valley University. As Baltodano states, given "the currently stalled progress in moving more qualified and deserving women into positions of leadership, combined with the critical need for creative and innovative leadership in higher education, the call for women's leadership development programs for women faculty, administrators, and staff in higher education is imperative" (2012, p.65).

Institutions across the globe are working to design programs that will effectively develop the leadership skills of female faculty, staff, and administrators (Airini Collings, Conner, McPherson, Midson & Wilson, 2011; Madsen, Longman, & Daniels, 2012). Successful initiatives at other universities have combined efforts from different areas on campus (Bonebright, Cottledge, & Lonnquist, 2012; Horsnby, Morrow-Jones, & Ballam, 2012), but it appears that a collaboration between the Human Resources Department and the Women's Success Center would be most effective. The Women's Success Center has experience designing programs and targeted strategies for helping Utah Valley women achieve success. Therefore, their expertise has the potential to "bring exponential benefits not only by expanding the pool of gifted individuals to meet today's current leadership challenges but also by providing role models for

future generations of leadership" (Longman and Lafreniere, 2012, p 58). In this way a female leadership development program not only benefits faculty and staff, but also gives female students an understanding of supports helpful to prepare and successfully compete in university leadership advancement.

SUMMARY

Utah Valley University is a dynamic and growing institution with a rich history of innovation and adaptation. Furthermore, the University is situated in a state with conservative religious mores that has promoted traditional roles for women. These traditional female roles create unique tensions for women attempting to ascend into leadership positions within academia and Utah institutions are lagging behind in equitable representation of female leaders. As Utah Valley confronts these realities, there will be a tension between the way things have been done for years and new ways of considering the future. This research and the contemplation of Utah Valley's commitment to gender equity and diversity initiatives is one step towards considering, confronting and resolving this tension. If Utah Valley is willing and able to champion equity across all levels of the institution, it will remain a place people love to work and a vital and innovative hub of learning, but gain the potential of being a model for inclusive environments of excellence.

POSTSCRIPT

Within a few months of this research being presented to the Executive Cabinet, the Vice President of Student Affairs accepted a presidency position in another state. The President of UVU took this opportunity to conduct an administrative reorganization of his cabinet and promoted two long-term female leaders within the institution: the CFO who had served 33 years and the Associate Vice President of Enrollment Management who had served for 17 years. This changed the representation of women in the vice presidency from 0% to 33% overnight. The president communicated these changes in a letter to the institution in which he stated, "The appointment of [these women] first and foremost reflects their individual competence as institutional leaders. But, importantly, it also reflects my personal commitment to increasing representation of women in leadership positions at every level of the institution, starting with the senior-most level." The women across campus cheered.

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