
Keynote Address

Ideals: The History and Future of the ACE Office of Women State Networks

Dr. Cynthia Smith Forrest

Dean of student services, Framingham State College, and ACE Network executive board liaison to the RI chapter

[PowerPoint Presentation](#)

Table-Top Discussions

Managing Dual Careers by Balancing Career and Family

Marguerite (Peg) Brown, vice president for development and college relations, Rhode Island College, and executive director, Rhode Island College Foundation

It would be unlikely that at a seminar of men in similar positions that this item would be a roundtable discussion.

Women are doing better in higher education in terms of percentages in securing administrative positions. However, the questions around juggling job and career are persistent and not time related. Women feel they carry the burden for meeting the challenges of family despite improvements in society's attitudes and expectations. Young women are dealing with the decisions to have children vis-à-vis their careers, while older women are dealing with the demands of adult children and aging parents. Many women in key administrative positions have often had to make choices related to career and family. Of the 13 presidents in RI, two are women. One is divorced; one is a religious sister. "You can have it all--just not at the same time."

Despite improvements in numbers of degrees earned, numbers of women attending college, and some gains in pay equity, women still trail men in comparable positions in terms of title and salary.

Professional Development for Future Leaders

Winifred Brownell, dean of arts & sciences, University of Rhode Island

Participants were asked if they currently were in their dream position, and, if not, what would that position be? What is necessary to obtain that desired job?

Some examples of good professional development programs for women in higher education were provided such the HERS program and the ACE Fellowship program.

The importance of having a doctorate in administrative positions was discussed.

Participants discussed professional development and doctoral programs that they would recommend.

Leadership Fundamentals for Middle-Level Leaders

Lorna Hunter, vice president for enrollment management, Bryant University

Self-Evaluation: Are you happy where you are currently or would you like to be somewhere else – it's OK to be happy where you are now.

Goal Setting: Women need to be more deliberate in their actions to get where they want to go -- Ask yourself where you want to be in five years. Write it down and put it someplace where you can refer to it periodically.

Refocus your activities toward your goals and/or revise your goals. Realize that you may have to step sideways in order to eventually move up.

Professional Development: Strive to master skills required for your current position and then set your sights on new skills. Look to leaders who hold positions similar to that for which you strive. Become a mentor – the benefits are for both parties involved. Focus on specifics, i.e. what you need to learn or what additional roles you need to take on. Join professional organizations related to your field.

Self-Promotion: Women need to more actively promote themselves. Present your accomplishments at least annually to your supervisor. Let your supervisor know where you would like to go and how he/she can help you get there.

Rhode Island Politics and the Effect on Women in Higher Education

Maureen Moakley, professor and department chair of political science, University of Rhode Island
Wendy Schiller, associate professor of political science and public policy, Brown University

Why is Rhode Island so resistant to having women in powerful political positions, including powerful positions in education? The cultural heritage of the state (Italian, parochial, etc.) plays a role. Also, women have not developed the large networks of associations that men have over the years. Women also can't always rely on the "supporting spouse" that men in politics can rely on, and women are more reluctant to self-start. In addition, the professional sphere in Rhode Island is smaller than those in other states, so women who are looking for avenues into politics have a more difficult time. Women have not developed large professional networks of associations, as in law firms or corporations where a lot of elected officials make their first set of political connections. Both women *and* men should be promoting women in government.

Creating a Safe and Supportive Professional Climate

Angela Renaud, dean of arts & sciences, Johnson & Wales University

What is keeping women from advancing in higher education? Holding a doctorate is an important asset. Women also can help themselves by finding mentors who are willing to listen and share their knowledge of what works. Women must decide on their own priorities: when considering the babies v. degrees question, each woman will determine her own "right answer."

The Glass Ceiling Phenomenon

Ruth Sherman, vice president for academic affairs, Community College of Rhode Island

Women have more career choices and opportunities now; nonetheless, greater numbers of women are choosing to begin their own businesses to avoid glass-ceiling roadblocks. Women may have greater promotional opportunities within student affairs than in academic affairs. Some non-tenured women fear speaking up when problems arise on campus because they believe that their careers will be impacted negatively. Only 21% of college presidents are women.

The President's Commission on the Status of Women at URI implemented a series of steps intended to advance the progress of women at URI. This Commission has been a great resource for women. Discrimination against women today is much more subtle than before. Practices that look neutral on the outside may in fact harm women (e.g., scheduling late afternoon meetings when many women must leave for day care centers).

Affirmative Action

M. Beverly Swan, provost & vice president for academic affairs, University of Rhode Island

The group agreed regarding the importance of following the Michigan court decisions.

Female and minority candidates can sometimes be attracted to a campus if they are offered additional salary and perquisites; however, other members of the department are sometimes offended by these attempts to attract diversity to the department.

Departments should never be all male. The first person to diversify a department, though, needs special support. Minority candidates need to feel that they can find appropriate cultural events, support networks, even restaurants and hairdressers/barbers that can meet their needs and tastes. Departments that meet diversity goals should be rewarded by their administrative leaders. These departments should also be asked to lead other

departments in diversifying. Administrative leaders who are not willing to stand behind making exceptions for minority candidates stand to lose their credibility.

Business Meeting

Nancy Carriuolo led a business/organizational meeting as a means of formally initiating a Rhode Island chapter of the ACE Network. Nancy asked the group to review the draft operating guidelines developed by her and her staff with the assistance of state coordinators from Massachusetts, Virginia, New Jersey, and Wisconsin. She recommended that the RI chapter, to be called RIWHE (Rhode Island Women in Higher Education), begin as a simple operation with one major event per year. A state coordinator will serve as chair to an executive board/planning committee, consisting of at least one woman from each public and independent degree-granting college and university in Rhode Island. In addition, one woman from each institution will serve as an institutional representative. She noted that institutional representatives had played an important role in recruiting women for the day's meeting, but that they are also encouraged by ACE to promote the cause of women as leaders on their campuses. Such duties are spelled out in the operating guidelines.

As a result of reflecting on the draft guidelines one last time prior to the business/organizational meeting, Nancy suggested amending the guidelines in the attendee's registration packets to include provisions for honorary members (perhaps Sue Carcieri, the governor's wife and an educator, as well as Toby Ayers from the RI Commission on Women). Nancy also suggested amending the draft guidelines to include all the most recent goals from ACE's national Office of Women in Higher Education.

The attendees agreed to keep the organization simple at first and only make the guidelines more elaborate, as needed, at a later date. On a motion duly seconded and approved, the group agreed unanimously to organize according to the draft guidelines (with the amendments stated above). On a second motion, the group unanimously recognized Nancy Carriuolo as state coordinator/chair of RIWHE. Nancy noted that although she serves as chair, she is ably supported by various members of her all-female staff (Michol Stapel, Deanna Velletri and Aronda Rodgers) who handle many of the details involved in organizing the meetings, maintaining the listserv and formation of necessary databases.

Nancy informed the group that a regional meeting of OWHE was in the planning stages, with a tentative date and site set for late October/early November in southern New Hampshire. The conference would take place from about 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and would include a panel of presidents. The theme would be promoting women's leadership in "tough times." About six or seven attendees were interested in such a meeting; others preferred not to travel as far as New Hampshire and suggested Holy Cross in Worcester as an alternative site.

In response to Nancy's question about topics at the regional conference or at future RIWHE meetings, participants suggested the following topics: handling a specific crisis (e.g., a case study), dealing with personnel issues, and looking behind the scenes at discussions/events to which women are not always privy. Nancy noted that she will carry RIWHE's feeling regarding a regional conference back to the planners.

Nancy closed the meeting at 4:35 p.m. by thanking all the attendees and promising to be in touch via e-mail with more information about RIWHE and the proposed regional conference.