LEADERSHIP IN THE GENDERED UNIVERSITY

STREAM LEADERS: JAN CURRIE & LIISA HUSU

WEDNESDAY 23 JULY

2.00pm – 3.30pm
1. But Where Have All The Women Gone? Examining Issues of Gender and Leadership in Australian and New Zealand Universities
   *Jane Wilkinson & Tanya Fitzgerald*

2. Cross cultural perspectives of gender and management in universities
   *Liisa Husu & Kate White*

3. Women are encouraged to apply......
   *Linley Lord*

4.00pm – 5.00pm
1. Gender and higher education in Australia: The masculinity advantage and the obstacles women face
   *Jane Lorrimar, Bev Thiele, Jan Currie and Patricia Harris*

2. The MR Game: The ‘Deal or No Deal’ Reality In Higher Education
   *Andrea Gallant*

THURSDAY 24 JULY

11.30am – 1.00pm
1. Developing Successful Women Leaders: The National Institute of Education Fellows Program
   *Maureen Grasso, Donna Drake-Clark, Sandra Thomas, Trudy W. Banta*

2. Gender differences in approaches to leadership: the evaluation of Oxford University's academic leadership development programme 2006-7
   *Judith Secker*

3. Walking on the WILD side: lessons from university women and a university wide leadership program
   *Jennifer Weir & Jan Thomas*

2.45 – 3.45pm: Roundtable:
'Moving Forward?: Engendering Leadership and the Restructuring of Universities'
   *Moderator: Deborah Kerfoot*
WEDNESDAY 23 JULY
2.00pm – 3.30pm
But Where Have All The Women Gone? Examining Issues Of Gender And Leadership In Australian And New Zealand Universities
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'Women take over the campuses!' proclaim recent newspaper headings in regard to the increasing number of female students in Australian universities. Yet the picture in academe is not as straightforward as this. Particularly in higher status roles such as the research professorship, the face of formal academic leadership in nations such as Australia and New Zealand remains persistently (white) and male, despite years of equity initiatives, policies, legislation and feminist scholarship (see, for example, Brooks and Mackinnon, 2001). Moreover, it has been argued that even in areas where women are beginning to make inroads such as middle management, the latter roles have become increasingly ‘feminised’ and devalued, with increasing prestige attached to research only positions where the obtaining of large research grants and high stakes tenders has become the new masculine game in town (Blackmore and Sachs, 2007).

Hence, in examining the central puzzle for gender equity workers - why do women remain under-represented in top academic leadership positions? - we argue that what is first needed is a contemporary mapping of what appears to be an uneven and unclear terrain of women's academic leadership in countries such as New Zealand and Australia. For example, in which hierarchical roles are women leaders concentrated, in which universities, and in which discipline areas? Are we seeing persistent and uniform patterns of under-representation of women across all universities or do the figures shed a different light on this central puzzle? In this paper, we present preliminary work on comparative data from Australia and New Zealand, (2000-2007) to highlight the continuing nature of women's inequality within academic leadership and to explore differences between various types of universities. Given the lack of recent and substantial comparative data that details women's levels of participation as leaders and managers in higher education, we argue that this is a crucial gap in feminist research about academic women's leadership which needs to be filled before we are able to fully explain one of the most persistent and central conundrums underpinning feminist research in academe, that is, why so few women academic leaders?

Keywords: women, leadership, universities, under-representation

References:

WEDNESDAY 23 JULY

2.00pm – 3.30pm

Cross cultural perspectives of gender and management in universities
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This paper presents findings of the second phase of a multi-country study examining cross cultural perspectives on gender and management in universities.

The literature indicates that women remain outsiders in leadership in universities and that discipline base, career mobility, other care responsibilities, experience outside academia, recruitment and appointment processes, organisational culture and gender stereotyping are contributing factors (Husu, 2000, Kloot 2004, Bagilhole & White 2008, Neale & White 2004, Ryan & Haslam 2004, OECD 2006, Ozkanli & Korkmaz 2000, 2000a, 2000b, Thomas & Davies 2002, Woodward 2007). The paper acknowledges that male hegemony is central to low representation of women in university senior management. Women have made little impact on masculine organisational structures and therefore compete in a hostile environment (Harley 2003, Bagilhole & White 2005). Male dominance of science, engineering and technology (SET) in particular, has a negative impact on women’s academic careers (Machado-Taylor et.al. 2007). The huge under-representation of women in SET is a testament to how knowledge in these disciplines is gendered (O’Connor (forthcoming)).

The first phase of this research undertook a quantitative analysis of women in University senior management in Australia, Finland, Ireland, New Zealand, Portugal, South Africa, Sweden, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. It found that their representation was consistently low across most countries, especially at Rector/VC, but also at Dean, level. Significant factors included: the link between low representation of women as professors and senior managers; role conflict; the intersection between gender and discipline and its impact on career progression especially for women in the arts and the sciences; and the divide between old and new universities, including differences in salary scales (Machado-Taylor et. al., 2007).

In the second phase investigators in each country conducted up to 20 interviews with both male and female senior managers in old and new universities, including current and former Rector/VCs. The focus was on getting into and getting on in senior management and perceptions of broader management culture. De-identified summaries were then analysed.

The interviews provided rich material about the organisational context in which men and women advance their university careers. VCs/Rectors or academic colleagues were found to be crucial in supporting academics into senior management. The advantages of being a senior manager were career satisfaction, a balance of life and work experience, and being part of a team. Disadvantages included low research productivity, time management and, for women in some countries, role conflict between work and non-work life. Women were considered to bring added qualities and skills to senior management, although some reported lack of support and hostility from the senior management team or other women. Not all senior managers aspired to further promotion to Rector/VC roles. In five years time many planned to be in totally different careers or to have returned to a research or senior academic role.

The research suggests that the role of discipline base, management culture and lack of support mechanisms in the under representation of senior women need to be addressed if universities are to transform their leadership and organisational structures.

Keywords: Gender, universities, leadership, management, organisational culture
Women are encouraged to apply is seen at the bottom of many advertisements. It has been seen as a way of increasing the number of women applicants for positions and showing that the organisation is gender sensitive or gender friendly. Perhaps not surprisingly interviews with women in leadership roles in Australian universities indicates that it much more than passive words on a page is required in order for them to consider vacant positions.

This paper presents a three stage model to explain why these women entered academic leadership roles. For the academic women interviewed ‘Stepping’ into a leadership role involved three key factors. These were triggers, motivating factors and considerations regarding career.

Triggers encourage the women to consider applying but it is not sufficient for them to make the decision to undertake a leadership role. A number of motivating factors were also identified that the women consider before deciding whether or not to make a career move which results in them being in a leadership role. The career move, which encouraged the women into leadership roles, was for some accidental; others were reluctant entrants and for some they had planned their career though rarely did this involve articulating a move into a leadership role.

The paper is structured as follows. Firstly the two triggers operate in relation to entry into leadership roles are explained. This is followed by an examination of the five motivating factors that emerged that encouraged women to consider undertaking their current leadership role. A discussion regarding how the women thought about careers follows. The paper concludes by considering the organisational implications of these findings and offering some suggestions in relation to increasing the number of women in leadership roles that moves beyond simple statements of ‘encouragement’.

Keywords: gender, leadership, universities, triggers, motivation, career

References:
WEDNESDAY 23 JULY
4.00pm – 5.00pm

Organisational Culture in Tertiary Institutions: The nexus between neoliberalism and gendered leadership
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The ideology of neoliberalism has substantially changed the power dynamics and nature of leadership in Australia’s institutions of vocational education and training (VET) and higher education (Blackmore, 1989; Callan, 2001; Currie, Thiele & Harris, 2002). It has transformed the nature of work and employment practices in universities and technical and further education (TAFE) colleges (Burton, 1987; Callus & Lansbury, 2002; Lafferty & Fleming, 2000). However, our study illustrates that neoliberal practices have maintained structures and gendered organisational cultures that exacerbate inequality and identity conflict.

This study draws upon both postmodern and poststructuralist perspectives and applies the key principles of Australian feminism to our analysis (Blackmore & Sachs, 2000; Burton, 1991; Caine and Pringle, 1995; Pocock, 2003). Essentially, context, structure, social relationships, cultural expectations and individual agency are the key factors developed into a multidimensional framework to analyse how neoliberal ideologies have shaped Australian tertiary institutions. As sites of power, identity conflict and gender politics, they expose the cumulative impact of neoliberal ideology on leadership and management practices and illustrate the way individuals adopt or resist a peak culture.

In our study, we interviewed staff at two Australian universities and two technical and further education (TAFE) colleges. First, we describe the systemic or structural gulf between the executive and corporate managers and the workers they manage. Second, we use the term peak culture to describe the chasm between the values and practices of senior managers and staff. We illustrate how individual managers are driven by political rhetoric, financial pressures and self preservation to discard many if not most traditional educational values. Third, we highlight how structural and cultural changes affect women’s movement into senior leadership and middle management positions. We describe their angst as they grapple with relentless efficiency targets and performance measures. We describe the sacrifices, identity conflicts and professional compromises they make to stay afloat and the hoops they jump through to get to the top.

Keywords: Gender, power, identity, neoliberalism, universities, TAFE colleges, leadership, management

References:


The MR Game: The ‘Deal Or No Deal’ Reality In Higher Education

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The contention of this paper is if leaders, leadership and organisations are to be transformed an awareness of their cultural consciousness and projected reality is vital. How often have your heard the phrase “you have to play the game if you want to get on”? This appears to be ironically the dominant wisdom, which is freely shared, although in private. An auto ethnographic case study reveals that there is a widely perceived notion by academics that there is a management ‘game’ accompanied by a tacit understanding of how this should be ‘played’. The practice of the game is not that tacit however, the phenomenon of the ‘game’ can be observed and experienced. For those who do not want to play the game the question is, how did this became a reality and is it infallible?

Jean Gebser’s (1949/85) foundational work on cultural consciousness demonstrates that reality is a cultural construct. It is Gebser’s work that helps demystify the game. He suggested that the cultural reality being projected today is a mental rational one. The phenomenon of the mental rational (in extreme) is characterized by a reality that is fragmentary, hierarchical, egoic, with a temporal and spatial emphasis on the present, materialistic and the disenfranchisement of self and the other. These are some of the identifiable characteristics adopted when playing the game for self advancement’ in a mental rational reality.

Gebser’s research demonstrated that the mental rational way of thinking, is oppositional. Oppositional thinking in management has contributed to the disenfranchising of the other which is especially observed with those who are: ethnically different, economically impoverished, women, children and Gaia. Mental rational management has resulted in the ‘Tragedy of the Commons’1, whereby those in power have acted independently without recognition that their actions have advertently brought about social and environmental degradation. This tragedy has been aided, also ironically, by learned academics both in the workplace and research.

The dominance of a patriarchal culture is also a mental rational (MR) reflection of reality. The feminine is often invisible within the culture. What generally has manifested, as a consequence of the MR game is androgynous ‘power dressing’ women, often other women’s worst ‘enemies’. There is also the bastardisation of the masculine projected by managers in the hierarchical halls of the ego. The management mystique of the MR masculinity is no longer as captivating or sought-after in 21st Century leadership. The MR reality is cultural created and is infallible. Gebser (1949/85) documented that when a culturally constructed reality loses meaning it implodes and another forms.

The 21st Century appears to be a time when ecological (social and environmental) sustainability requires a-gendered leadership in organisations. Recognising a-gendered leadership requires our awareness that there are multiple ways in which Western culture projects a sense of reality. A-gendered leadership is freedom from gender specific dominance, no longer is there the disconnection from feminine wisdom. A-gendered leadership adopts notions of guidance and wisdom thus replacing the dominant emphasis on management and control. As Pat Arneson might say the MR game is being dismantled.

**Keywords:** Cultural consciousness; mental rational; reality; transforming leaders; organisations; a-gendered leadership

**References:**


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Developing Successful Women Leaders: The National Institute of Education Fellows Program
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Thirty years ago, the landscape for women doctoral students was bleak. In 1979-1980, women earned just 29.7% of all doctoral degrees (U. S. Department of Education, 2007). For women in engineering and the sciences, the statistics were especially grim: women earned 12.3% of the doctorates awarded in the physical sciences and 3.9% of those given in engineering. Moreover, women doctoral students encountered few professors who looked like them; only 21% of faculty members in 1972 were women (U. S. Department of Education, 1991). Based on this limited number of professors, and with so few women entering the pipeline to become professors, there were few role models in the Academy who could serve as mentors for women students. Yet research has shown that mentoring is a key element in degree completion (Nettles & Millett, 2006) and that relationships with faculty are critical to success at the doctoral level (Girves & Wimmerus, 1988).

In the late 1970s, the University of Tennessee received a grant from the National Institute of Education (NIE) to develop an innovative program designed to provide advanced educational training and research opportunities for women and minorities. A key goal of the program was to engage students in activities generally known to lead to degree completion and career success: interacting with peers and faculty to develop support networks, conducting research on “real world” issues, developing research proposals, making presentations at key meetings, and being introduced to leaders in the field of educational research. The students were also involved in the planning, management, and evaluation of the program. Senior faculty provided instruction, served as mentors, and directed the students’ research and writing efforts. Seventeen predoctoral students participated in the program. All but one were women; four were African American.

A reunion in 2007 brought together 10 of the 15 surviving graduates to talk about their experiences in the program and their subsequent career stories with the project administrator. The program achieved its goals: all of the participants had received their doctorates and had achieved career success as presidents of their own consulting firms and as professors and administrators in higher education. Applying methods of narrative analysis (Riessman, 2008) to the stories tape-recorded at the reunion, we expect to show how the NIE program maximized factors that contribute to success in graduate degree completion. The participants’ stories will also demonstrate how the program contributed to their later career success.

This research is significant because Golde (2005) reports that 40% of the students who begin doctoral programs do not complete them. However, very little research has focused on graduate programs (Girves & Wimmerus, 1988). Retention and attrition at the doctoral level are poorly understood and the few extant studies of graduate programs fail to suggest ways to improve doctoral education (Golde, 2005). This research presents the example of a successful program and includes suggestions for improving graduate education while enhancing the participation of women and minorities.

Keywords: women in academia, gender and degree completion, graduate education
THURSDAY 24 JULY

11.30am – 1.00pm

Gender differences in approaches to leadership: the evaluation of Oxford University's academic leadership development programme 2006-7
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This paper evaluates Oxford's first academic leadership development programme for academics wishing to explore and develop their leadership capacity and provides an insight into women's and men's differing perspectives on academic leadership.

The University's objectives in providing the programme are to:
• undertake positive action in leadership for women and ethnic minorities,
• capture (from sponsors and senior mentors) experienced colleagues' know-how,
• broaden the pool of leaders,
• increase involvement of academics 'on the ground', and
• improve perceptions of leadership amongst academics.

The purpose of evaluating the programme was to test the extent to which it had met these objectives in providing it, and to find out what impact it was having for participants. Evaluation was carried out using on-line and face-to-face interviews, together with feedback from sponsors and mentors and observation in participants' meetings.

Key findings, which will be explored as a case study, are that:
1. There were gender differences in participants' objectives: men came to the programme with clear career goals and continued to focus on attaining established positions; women tended to come with a view to testing themselves and finding out whether leadership at Oxford might fit with their personal values and skills, and to leave expressing a taste for leadership across established boundaries.

2. Gender differences were also apparent when sex equality concerns were directly addressed:
   Women were significantly more likely than men to identify gender differences in leadership style
   Women were significantly more likely than men to identify possible barriers to women’s careers compared with men’s

3. There were no such differences identified between men’s and women’s views when race equality concerns were addressed: participants identified both cultural and institutional factors, rather than direct discrimination, as possible barriers to people from ethnic minorities entering leadership at Oxford.

4. There were gender differences amongst participants in the way that leadership at Oxford is perceived:
   While both men and women were able easily to describe the key leadership features and priorities of departmental leadership, women were more likely than men to give priority to interpersonal skills and work relationships and to focus on support for individuals
   Perhaps because men joined the programme with a clearer view of leadership than did women, the programme had a greater impact on women’s perceptions of leadership than on men’s

5. Men and women ascribed different values to the diverse features of the programme:
   Women demonstrated a preference for features, such as mentoring, which provided individual support
   Men were more likely than women to have existing support from a senior colleague such as a head of department, and demonstrated a preference for programme features exploring leadership theories

Keywords: Gender, academic leadership, programme evaluation

References:
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De Vries, J. Can't we just fix the women? Designing a women's leadership development program that challenges the organisation' (at the Inaugural International Women and Development Conference 2006)
Secker, J. 'Developing women at a UK University' (at the Women's Executive Development Conference, Adelaide, April 2006)
THURSDAY 24 JULY
11.30am – 1.00pm

Walking on the WILD side: lessons from university women and a university wide leadership program
Jennifer Weir & Jan Thomas, Murdoch University; j.weir@murdoch.edu.au, J.Thomas@murdoch.edu.au

This paper is a case study of a professional development program for women in a research-intensive university in Australia, and an associated research project to identify organisational issues and trends. The project also included a survey of academic staff within the university to gain an insight into perceptions and culture alongside structural conditions. It was prompted by an AUQA audit recommendation in 2006 and a perceived inconsistency between the espoused equity values and goals of the University, and the realities for women academics. It is widely recognised in the literature that that there are a number of factors within organisations that disadvantage or impede women’s career progression and are often submerged in various organisational structures, operations and decisions. Louise Morley (2006) explains “gender discrimination can take place via informal networks, coalitions, and exclusions, as well as by formal arrangements in classrooms and boardrooms” (Morley, 2006: 543).

In attempting to explain the lack of progress in raising the representation of women in senior academic roles not only in this particular university, but in Australia more broadly, a number of issues emerge including the importance of gender awareness and appreciation in preparation in the full range of professional development programs, the absolute need for cross-institutional coordination/alignment and systematic approaches to achieving gender parity in universities. A recent report in the Times Higher Education suggested that while the number of women academics has steadily risen in the UK and will overtake that of men within two years, it will be 50 years before equivalence is reached at the professorial level. Professor John Pratt’s analysis showed that “the glass ceiling effect is still evident. Even if institutions stopped appointing male professors, it would be 15 years before there were as many female professors as males because the starting point was so low” (Tysome 2007). Despite the fact that change is needed, we explore whether the main culprit for the lack of women in senior positions is still the glass ceiling, or to what extent there is more in common with what has been referred to as a ‘sticky floor’ (Alexander, 2008). As Rebecca Shambaugh recently pointed out, “women have not made the progress we deserve in the executive suite, and the glass ceiling is still the oft-cited usual suspect. But it is not the whole story – and by believing it is, we may be holding ourselves back” (Shambaugh 2006).

In the face of slow change in higher education, a coordinated national approach aimed at minimizing traditional mechanisms and transforming higher education is also necessary to generate real change across the Australian higher education sector. Universities Australia has set targets for universities on numbers of women in senior positions, and The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) has taken some interest in gender balance (as evidenced by this institution’s recommendation). However, as The High Court recently confirmed universities are considered corporations. the Commonwealth has the potential power to legislate on matters concerning corporations (Moodie 2007: 110). Therefore, the Commonwealth, if it so desires, has the power to legislate specifically on matters of equity, governance and quality. While the sector has had increasing government regulation more broadly, gender parity in governance for Universities has gone largely unnoticed by successive governments. This paper will conclude by exploring some of these national higher education issues alongside institutional and individual issues to take a multilevel analysis.

Keywords: academic women, leadership development, women in higher education

References: