

From Whence They Came

The Contexts, Challenges, and Courage of Early Women Administrators in Higher Education

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It is likely that most people are familiar with the old adage that dooms a society that ignores its history to subsequently repeat it. Although this adage is quite hackneyed, it nevertheless holds an element of truth. So I have rephrased it, conveying what for me is its essence. My version states: “From history we gain insight, and from insight we have a *chance* at wisdom for the future.” It is in this spirit that I offer a chapter on the contexts, challenges, and courage of early women administrators in higher education. This chapter begins with a review of women’s opportunities for participation in higher education over the past two centuries. It then turns specifically to the opportunities and actions of early women administrators. Finally, it urges readers to insist on structures that support the experiences of women who participate in higher education at all levels.

TOUGH AS ROOTS—BARRIERS TO WOMEN’S EDUCATION

Over time, higher education has become a national stage on which social attitudes about women and gender are dramatized. Although a full history of women’s education is beyond the scope of this chapter (see Gordon, 1990; McCandless, 1999; Nidiffer, 2001b; Rosenberg, 1982; Solomon, 1985), a review of the various arguments opposing women’s education places the work of female administrators in perspective. This history also illustrates the strategies and struggles of some of the first change agents for women’s participation in higher education.

At the time of the American Revolution, a powerful barrier to white women's higher education was based on Anglo-Saxon tradition. In fact, the cornerstone of resistance was the very Judeo-Christian heritage on which the country was founded. Laws and social practices were informed by the pan-Protestantism of the era that proclaimed a divinely ordained world order. God's plan called for women to be subservient and generally confined to the domestic sphere of life, while men were part of the political, economic, and social spheres of their communities (Rosenberg, 1982). The "cult of true womanhood" demanded piety, obedience, purity, and domesticity, and dictated life for many middle-class white women (Welter, 1976). Thus, it was impractical to educate women. If the colonial colleges chiefly prepared young men to enter the ministry, politics, or academic life, the idea of women attending college was absurd. They could never be ministers, politicians, statesmen, or farmers.

Not only would college serve no useful purpose for a woman, but common wisdom also dictated that she lacked the intellectual capacity to handle the rigors of the classical curriculum. In the antebellum era, the dominant curriculum consisted of classical studies with an emphasis on language study, literature, and philosophy as the pinnacle (Rudolph, 1962). Much of the new science was relegated to the margins of established colleges such as Harvard and Yale. Ironically, early women's academies tended to emphasize science (Shmurak & Handler, 1992; Tolley, 1996). Another accommodation to women's perceived intellectual inferiority was offering higher education limited to the "finishing arts" or the "Ladies Course" provided at Oberlin College (Solomon, 1985). Both curricula were less rigorous than the curriculum offered to men and emphasized women's likely domestic role.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, a new justification for limiting women's education entered the national discourse. Science, specifically biology, was used to justify the differences between the genders. It was commonly assumed that the body was a closed biological system in which the expenditure of energy in one part necessarily deprived another part. It was further believed that the conclusions of Charles Darwin could be applied to the full range of human activities—that "specialization of function" was critical to both social and biological evolution (Rosenberg, 1982). Therefore, a biologically based justification for limiting women's education and therefore her encroachment into previously male roles emerged from the medical community.

In 1873, a former member of the Harvard Medical School faculty, Dr. Edward H. Clarke, published his views on women's education in a small book entitled *Sex in Education; or, a Fair Chance for the Girls*. Clarke believed that biology was destiny, women's brains were less developed than men, and women could not tolerate intense levels of mental stimulation. More importantly, Clarke linked concentrated brain activity with the potential malfunction of the reproductive "apparatus," especially if women were overtaxed during the "catamenial function" (menstruation) (p. 48). Clarke feared for women's ruined health.

Clarke's book had a tremendous impact and was extensively used by opponents of women's education. Yet, its biological argument waned in favor of one of social undesirability (Gordon, 1979). Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, the discomfort surrounding changing gender roles was often expressed as a fear of "masculating" or "un-sexing" women, making them unfit for marriage. After the turn of the nineteenth century, a version of this argument resurfaced as the notion of "race suicide." Anxiety regarding acceptable sex roles combined with increasing xenophobia and anti-immigration sentiments and condemned women's education as grievously harmful to the larger society. College-educated women married later, if at all, and had fewer children than their less-educated contemporaries. Of course, the only "race" of concern in this argument was that of white, native-born, middle-class Americans (Gordon, 1990).

Yet another criticism emerged during the Progressive Era: coeducation was feminizing male students and even the institutions themselves. At the turn of the century, the popular press, reflecting society's preoccupation with feminization, encouraged American men to be more manly, athletic, and aggressive (Gordon, 1990). Some social commentators feared that increasing industrialization and urbanization were rendering men too soft, but other critics considered higher education the real culprit. They charged that coeducation was responsible for the loss of manly verve. The fact that such a charge conferred enormous power on women and depicted men in quite unfavorable terms seemed lost on the critics. Such criticism was, in fact, a response to the growing prevalence of coeducation, especially to the impressive academic success of women students (Rosenberg, 1982). For example, at the University of Chicago between 1892 and 1902, women earned 46% of the baccalaureate degrees but 56.3% of the Phi Beta Kappa keys (Gordon, 1979).

When the nineteenth century drew to a close, American higher education was profoundly different from what it had been just 50 years previously. As the mission, purpose, curriculum, and structure of universities had changed, the antagonism toward women's education took on new nuances. Within the academy, Americans passionately embraced science. The various scientific disciplines replaced classical study and philosophy as the pinnacle of the curriculum (Veysey, 1965). Clear gender distinctions emerged even within departments. One common division separated the theoretical (considered masculine) from the practical (feminine). Thus, a relatively new stereotype took hold—a belief that women were incapable of learning science and were skilled only in the humanities, languages, and possibly applied social sciences—which conveniently ignored the previously held and diametrically opposed belief.

Along with a zeal for science came an enthusiasm for all that was rational and empirical, with a concurrent disdain for the emotional and unscientific. Not surprisingly, the belief that men were rational while women were emotional reinforced the privileged status of men at the universities. "Feminized" became a demeaning epithet and prestige hierarchies of disciplines and professions were

established which remain today. The professional schools of law, medicine, business, and divinity were dominated by male students with a social ethos that women did not belong. Universities hurried to add graduate and professional programs frequented by men and resisted those in the “feminized” occupations, encouraging four-year colleges to train the nurses, social workers, and teachers. At many universities, it was reasoned that establishing more male-oriented professional schools would increase the number of men on campus and elevate a coeducational university to the status of the all-male Ivy League. An economist at the University of Chicago summed up the thinking of the era in 1902:

The congestion of numbers [of women students] is now largely due to the fact that the undergraduate courses are practically used by women as an advanced normal school to prepare for teaching. Just so soon as proper support and endowments are given to work which offers training for careers in engineering, railways, banking, trade and industry, law and medicine, etc. the disproportion of men will doubtless remedy itself. (Rosenberg, 1982, pp. 48–49)

The criticism leveled at coeducation spoke volumes about the changing nature of the relationship between higher education and the economy. As the twentieth century dawned, members of established professions were organizing, and members of nascent occupations were working hard to professionalize. Higher education became the gatekeeper to the professions and, consequently, the middle class (Bledstein, 1976). As more graduate schools opened and entry to high-status jobs depended less on family name, male students resented the places taken and honors won by women at the premier state universities. As higher education became associated with economic success, the privileged fought hard to limit broadening access (Barrow, 1992).

Despite this formidable collection of barriers, women’s colleges were founded and other colleges and universities became coeducational, although usually spurred by a mixture of economic and pragmatic necessity, rather than any feminist sentiment. Morrill Act–funded colleges and their sister state institutions experienced serious financial pressures in their early years from the 1860s through the 1880s (Nevins, 1962; Rudolph, 1962). When it was discovered that families would pay tuition for daughters as well as for sons, colleges opened their doors to women, but often maintained their disdain. External economic demands also influenced the cause. At various times, the economy needed teachers or nurses, for example, and women’s opportunities increased. Occasionally, coeducation resulted from a sense of fairness or even from the persuasive rhetoric of the early women’s rights movement. Yet, as historian Lynn Gordon sardonically commented, colleges and universities were rarely “overwhelmed by egalitarian considerations” and, on the whole, did not admit women enthusiastically (1990, p. 21).

The resistance toward women's entry into higher education did not magically disappear once admission was granted. The legal barriers of exclusion proved easier to surmount than attitudinal ones, so resentment and prejudice lingered. But despite the social, political, ideological, and economic arguments against them, women successfully obtained educations. The early female academies provided the first opportunities. By the 1830s and 1840s, Oberlin and Antioch Colleges experimented with both coeducation and integrated education. After the Civil War, more women's colleges were founded and female students were admitted to many public universities, especially in the Midwest. By the turn of the twentieth century, women's participation in higher education was secured, but equality of treatment was an elusive goal. Early women administrators opened the first doors, and the second wave improved conditions for admitted students. The many women administrators who continue this battle today are their legacies.

REMEMBER THE LADIES

The intellectual and political fomentation surrounding the American Revolution, especially the conviction that all human beings were inherently rational, led some women to question their lack of educational opportunity. Abigail Adams exclaimed, "If you complain of neglect of Education in sons, what shall I say with regard to daughters, who every day experience the want of it?" and asked her husband, John, to please "remember the ladies" in the new political system being created (Solomon, 1985, p. 1). Other feminists such as Mercy Otis Warren, Judith Murray, and Mary Wollstonecraft agitated for more education and greater political participation and recognition for women (Solomon, 1985). Sadly, the revolutionary zeal that inspired the Founding Fathers to seek more freedom and opportunity for themselves and their sons did not extend to women.

There were a few eighteenth-century experiments with women's education. Timothy Dwight, sympathetic to the need for women's education, opened a small coeducational academy in Greenfield Hill, Connecticut in 1773. In 1797, the Young Ladies' Academy of Philadelphia, co-founded by Benjamin Rush, opened. Sarah Pierce began her "respectable academy" in Litchfield, Connecticut four years later. But women's higher education made little progress until the 1830s (Solomon, 1985).

Grudgingly, male educators accepted the idea of women's higher education, but narrowly, and only if it satisfied specific pragmatic or economic needs. One such need was "Republican Motherhood," an idea championed by Benjamin Rush. Rush believed women should be educated so they could, in turn, school their sons in ways judged advantageous by the leaders of the new Republic (Kerber, 1980). While Republican Motherhood may have been deemed

noble, other issues were considered more urgent (Nash, 1997). The expansion of common (elementary) schooling produced a need for teachers at a time when a growing mercantilism gave young men new career opportunities that made teaching less attractive. The Second Great Awakening, a period of tremendous religious fervor, created a need for missionaries. These two developments only minimally expanded the edges of the female sphere because within them, women remained obedient Christians and nurturers of children (Solomon, 1985). This heritage permeated the academies and the curriculum remained overwhelmingly pious. However, it was a workable social contract—women found intellectual and professional fulfillment without violating social expectations and provided services that were genuinely needed, and society did not condemn them.

A more radical catalyst for women's education was the first women's movement. In the late 1830s and 1840s, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and other women's rights advocates included women's education in the *Declaration of Sentiments* at the first Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848 (Gurko, 1976). Although the social and political progressives of the 1840s asked women to put their educational aspirations on hold to concentrate on the more urgent issue of abolition, a few steadfast pioneers created academies for women.

All over the country, but especially in the northeast and south, these new women educators had different expectations for their students (Farnham, 1994). The principal leaders of the academy movement were Emma Willard, Catherine Beecher, Zilpah Grant, Mary Lyon, and Almira Phelps. As Barbara Solomon (1985) characterized them:

Each in her own way appeared to accept the social constraints placed on women and yet drew on Enlightenment republican thought and on evangelical sentiment to enlarge the scope of women's higher education. Women, pioneering in new roles, founded schools where the female student became the focus of academic purpose. (p. 17)

Emma Willard's Troy Seminary (1821) in upstate New York and Mary Lyon's Mount Holyoke Seminary (1837) in western Massachusetts exemplify the movement. The early curriculum created by the founding presidents was as demanding as many of the other antebellum colleges for men, especially in the sciences. The academies often emphasized intellectual accomplishment, teacher training, and self-reliance for students. A considerable number of presidents' administrative duties and responsibilities would be familiar to college presidents today. The founders had to generate political support for their schools, raise funds, market the colleges, handle admissions, design the curricula, discipline students, hire, control, and fire the faculty members, deal with community leaders, and fend off antagonists. The majority of these academies closed and

became teachers' colleges or even secondary schools. The exception was Mount Holyoke, which emerged after the Civil War as one of the eastern, elite, women's liberal arts colleges known as the "Seven Sisters."

The latter half of the nineteenth century was a critical era in American higher education. Strong undergraduate colleges and academies matured, offering more sophisticated curricula and becoming the liberal arts colleges of today. Other institutions added graduate training and metamorphosed into research universities. Simultaneously, higher education diversified—before the century was over, separate colleges had been created for African Americans, future teachers or engineers, and women.

A PLACE FOR WOMEN

Historian Geraldine Clifford (1989) commented on the historical correlation between the number of women students attending an institution and the number of adult women employed there. In coeducational institutions, women faculty were most frequently found in "women's" departments such as education, social work, or home economics. Women rarely became senior administrators except when charged to care for women students in roles such as physical educators, doctors, or deans of women. However, the women's colleges offered new opportunities. Several of the single-sex institutions hired women faculty in many disciplines and in administrative positions at various levels, including president.

Today, women's colleges are found in every region of the country. They range in quality, target population (historically African American or predominantly white), and affiliation (either sectarian, especially Catholic, or independent) (Harwarth, Maline, & DeBra, 1997). In the nineteenth century women's colleges were most common in the Northeast. In comparison, Southern higher education was often single-sex, but lagged behind the North in the number of students enrolled, while the Midwest was dominated by coeducation. The most well known of the prestigious Northeastern colleges were the Seven Sisters—Mount Holyoke (1837), Vassar (1865), Smith (1875), Wellesley (1875), Bryn Mawr (1884), and the coordinate colleges of Barnard (1889) and Radcliffe (1894). Of these, Wellesley and Bryn Mawr were led by women presidents early in their history.

Alice Freeman of Wellesley and M. Carey Thomas of Bryn Mawr personified women's administrative authority at the turn of the century (Bordin, 1993; Brown, 2001; Horowitz, 1984, 1994). As Cynthia F. Brown (2001) noted, their leadership was fraught with symbolism and potential for future women leaders. Both women had to reconcile notions of the "old woman" (pious, domestic, subservient) with the "new woman" (intellectual, accomplished, public) in ways that placated conservative members of the community

while pushing their vision of the college forward. They had to attract and please male mentors and benefactors, support and encourage women faculty, and provide women students with quality education. Brown argues that Freeman, who became president of Wellesley in 1881, was more successful at this balancing act than Thomas, whose passion and strong-headedness frightened and alienated many conservative critics (see also Horowitz, 1994). Freeman's personal style was more accommodating and her board of trustees was less antagonistic than the board of trustees at Bryn Mawr. Thanks to Freeman's persistence in "challenging the waning tenets of Victorian culture and suggesting ways that old and new woman could merge identities," Brown states, "the 'girl president' successfully liberalized curriculum, college life, and faculty expectations" (2001, p. 40). Yet, despite their different personal styles, both leaders created strong women's colleges with clear, intellectual missions.

Catholic women's colleges represented another type of single-sex institutions at the turn of the century. Between 1896 and 1918, fourteen Catholic women's colleges opened their doors (Introcaso, 2001). Unlike their independent counterparts, Catholic women's colleges expected female leadership from the founding religious order. But the women religious who ran the colleges faced several dilemmas. First, leaders of these institutions had to decide how "Catholic" the curriculum would be. In other words, would they model Vassar, or become an extension of Catholic secondary education? Second, these leaders had to reconcile social attitudes about women, as well as church views on women's authority, with their own sense of ambition and mission for the colleges (Brown, 2001).

Whether in Catholic or independent colleges, the pioneering women presidents "confronted the task of aligning social, personal, and intellectual expectations for their young institutions" (Brown, 2001, p. 56). At times, this meant challenging such formidable foes as the cultural ideas about the place of women and the centrality of religion. Although the majority of American women today choose coeducational environments, the women's colleges played a critical role in the history of women's education. Only at these colleges was women's intellectuality a foregone conclusion, and only there did women assume senior administrative authority before the latter half of the twentieth century.

"CO"-EDUCATION IS NOT "EQUAL" EDUCATION

Single-sex colleges offered students an environment in which the intellectual capacity of women was assumed rather than doubted, yet these institutions were too few in number to educate all women who wanted a college degree. Even among the so-called "first generation" women (those attending college between 1870 and 1890; see Solomon, 1985), coeducation was the more popular choice. Out of all 18–21 year old women in the U.S. during this era, only

2.2% went to college. However, among all college students, women comprised 35% of those enrolled. Slightly over 70% of all first-generation students were in coeducational institutions (Newcomer, 1959, p. 46).

Today the climate of coeducational campuses is described as “chilly” for women (Sandler, Silverberg, & Hall, 1996). By comparison, the climate in the late nineteenth century was downright frigid. Many male professors, administrators, and students were openly hostile (Gordon, 1990). Male students made it difficult for women to enter their preserve. Photographs of lecture halls of the era reveal a pattern of strict gender segregation (Rosenberg, 1988). Women were ridiculed under the guise of humor as misogynistic cartoons and stories filled campus newspapers, literary magazines, and yearbooks. “Coeds,” as they came to be called, were excluded from clubs, dining halls, music groups, honorary societies, and most activities associated with campus prestige (Gordon, 1979).

This antagonism toward women students was tangibly manifested in the inequitable distribution of resources that universities bestowed on them. In general, coeducational universities did not provide women with housing, medical care, or physical education facilities, despite the fact that such facilities existed for men by the 1870s. Access to a gymnasium was considered especially important because of the concerns regarding the health and fitness of women students. Ordinarily, universities barred women from the gyms initially and then gradually relented to granting limited access because of pressure applied by women students and their allies. However, the access granted was often at times assumed less desirable by men, during the dinner hour, for example. Antagonism toward women students was also apparent in the extreme paucity of scholarship money available to women. In response, local club women, YWCA members, and faculty wives raised money for scholarships and other, nonacademic needs (Nidiffer, 2000; Solomon, 1985). But the capacity of local club women to make permanent changes at the universities was limited. Instead, two new types of administrators took it upon themselves to improve the academic, material, and physical well being of women students: physical educators and deans of women.

One cadre of new administrators were the physical educators. Male college administrators were quite nervous about the “dangerous experiment” (McGuigan, 1970) of coeducation, particularly with respect to women’s health. They engaged the services of physical educators or female doctors to ensure that college did not ruin the students’ health. The first physical educators usually had teaching duties in addition to their administrative responsibilities, but were rarely afforded full academic rank. Commonly, these women combined teaching gymnastics or physical culture with history, English composition, Latin, or elocution. Physical education teachers also served as registrars, librarians, or the presidential assistants (Paul, 2001). They faced many obstacles, the most pervasive being the lack of academic respect and sneers of other educators who believed physical training was antithetical to mental training. They

also dealt with seriously inadequate facilities, the controversy over gymnasium costumes, and the stigma of masculinity (Paul, 2001).

Regardless, these women were dedicated to overseeing students and directing their conduct. As historian Joan Paul (2001) noted:

Some of the most powerful and dominant women in education were the physical educators. . . . From the time they entered the halls of academia, they assumed responsibility for their young female charges by governing almost every aspect of their lives. Out of concern for their physical well-being, they supervised their women students' diets, the amount of rest they received, regulated their exercise, monitored their weight, and worked to improve their posture. . . . [The physical educators also] monitored [students'] behavior in and out of class, prescribed proper dress, neatness, and cleanliness. . . . Health, as the perceived outcome, was an encompassing notion that comprised physical, mental, and social behavior. From mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century, these women educators were strong agents of social control in their perceived role as the guardians of women's health. (p. 183–184)

These early women leaders dramatically shaped the higher education environments and experiences available to women.

The second group of early administrators on coeducational campuses were deans of women. The position of dean of women is intriguing because it was the first systemic, administrative response in higher education to cope with a new, and essentially unwelcome, population (Nidiffer, 2001a). Deans of women were initially employed in the first coeducational colleges of the 1830s and 1840s: Oberlin and Antioch. Propriety required the close supervision of unmarried young women. The president and faculty quickly recognized such "problems which demanded the presence and supervision of an older woman" (Holmes, 1939, p. 109). The first woman administrator in a coeducational college was Mrs. Marianne Parker Dascom of Oberlin, who held the title of "Lady Principal of the Female Department" (Kehr, 1938, p. 6).

By the late 1880s, however, the growing concern about coeducation at the newly expanding universities changed the nature of the nascent profession of deans of women. At a few universities, women students, their parents, and occasionally community members, insisted the universities offer some living arrangements for the women students. Without supervised housing, middle-class parents and families who lived long distances from the campuses expressed reluctance to send daughters to college (Gordon, 1990). Instead of hiring dormitory matrons as the early colleges had, the universities of the late nineteenth century began hiring professional deans of women. The first and most influential of these women was Marion Talbot of the University of Chicago, who left Boston for the "woolly" West in 1892 (Talbot, 1936).

Talbot was influential for myriad reasons. First, Chicago at the turn of the century was a vibrant and exciting community, especially for women interested in the emerging field of settlement work, the forerunner of modern social work. Talbot linked the students with interesting women such as Jane Addams of Hull House, and assembled a broad intellectual community. As a result, other deans interested in improving the academic life and job prospects of women students looked to Talbot as a model. Second, Talbot was a born organizer and gathered her fellow deans for a meeting in 1903. This Conference of Deans of the Middle West was the first professional meeting for women college administrators. Third, Talbot was a social scientist of some note and helped lay the intellectual foundation on which the work of pioneering deans rested. In her book, *The Education of Women*, Talbot (1910) stated unequivocally, “women have proved their ability to enter every realm of knowledge. They must have the right to do it. . . . Unhampered by traditions of sex, women will naturally and without comment seek the intellectual goal which they think good and fit” (p. 22). She used her academic training to document the success of women at the university, refusing to let women’s accomplishments go unnoticed (Fitzpatrick, 1989).

Following Talbot’s lead, deans of women at Berkeley, Cornell, Indiana, Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin developed a *raison d’être*—to improve the material and intellectual experience of women on campus. To do so, they created career centers and job opportunity fairs, and introduced students to professional women in the community. The deans built women’s centers, instituted innumerable programs for social and academic enrichment, and agitated for adequate on-campus housing. They also helped women learn valuable skills for post-college success such as leadership and supervision, and how to develop a sense of community. The deans were disciplinarians and were sometimes at odds with their charges, but the student diaries and records that survive indicate these women made life at coeducational universities bearable (Nidiffer, 2000).

MAKING ADMINISTRATION A PROFESSION

By the early twentieth century, a symbiotic relationship between universities and the middle class solidified (Bledstein, 1976). American faith in science as a remedy for medical *and* social ills created a growing dependence on, and respect for, expertise. The moniker “professional” came to describe members of selected occupations who were entrusted to care for their “clients.” As Burton Bledstein described, professionals were endowed with middle-class status (and the resulting economic security) and universities became the gatekeepers. The alliance of the middle class, the professions, and the universities proved powerful and appealing. Numerous occupations struggled to gain the attributes of a profession, including the emerging field of university administration (Hawkins,

1992). For women, it was the deans who took the first steps toward professionalization (Nidiffer, 2000).

By the early twentieth century, a sense of what comprised a “profession” emerged. In general, professions had a unique and significant niche of expertise, based on an identifiable knowledge base. Members were responsible for policing the profession, usually through the auspices of a professional organization. These organizations maintained standards, issued or revoked licenses, enforced codes of ethics, lobbied for practitioner benefits, and negotiated with universities to train aspirants (Nidiffer, 2000). As a result, professional organizations had significant control over the supply and demand for professionals and the consequent remuneration and status of practitioners. The quintessential model was the relationship between the American Medical Association and the nation’s medical schools. Professionalism, with its implied expertise and authority, also indicated a dedication to one’s profession above all else—an ethos that violated the family-first expectations placed on women. Thus, women faced the additional burden of either exclusion from professions or gender-role conflict if they participated (Antler, 1977).

The early deans sought to create a profession of university administration for women. In this effort, Marion Talbot was especially pivotal. After convening the first conference of deans in 1903, she oversaw the continuation of these meetings on a biennial basis. Additionally, she helped define the intellectual foundation for deaning in her 1910 book, *The Education of Women*. On the eve of World War I, Lois Mathews of the University of Wisconsin added two other elements by teaching courses designed to introduce aspiring women to the profession of university administration and writing the first book exclusively for the profession, *The Dean of Women* (1915). What the deans of women did not have was a formal organization. Instead, the early deans at the Midwestern universities were meeting at their conferences and joining the conferences of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA).

In the summer of 1915, Kathryn Sisson McLean, dean of women at State Teachers College, Chadron, Nebraska, initiated an informal discussion among deans of women who were taking graduate courses at Teachers College, Columbia University. McLean and her colleagues realized that

neither professional training, while essential, nor informal professional organizations such as the Conference of Deans of Women, while valuable, could foster national connections among deans of women. To achieve this end, the profession needed an official professional society which served deans of women across the country. (Bashaw, 2001a, p. 163)

In the summer of 1916, McLean learned that the National Education Association was holding its annual meeting in New York City and asked that the

Teachers College graduate students be allowed to hold an organizational meeting for deans of women. NEA officials agreed and the National Association of Deans of Women (NADW) was born (Bashaw, 2001a).

During the 1920s the nature of these organizations changed, but the overlapping memberships and the web of interconnection persisted. The biennial conferences of deans continued until 1922, when they became a division of the NADW. NADW established permanent headquarters in Washington, D.C. in 1926. The ACA merged with the Southern Association of Collegiate Alumnae in 1921 to form the American Association of University Women (AAUW), the "most long-lived, significant, and complex" of women's organizations (Bashaw, 2001b, p. 250). Both organizations provided women with professional support when many of the other organizations for university administrators ignored or prohibited women's participation. However, their support was granted only to white women. Because of racist attitudes and practices, African American professionals were forced to form a parallel structure.

A relatively small number of African American students were educated in northern institutions prior to the mid-twentieth century; most attended Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Analogous to the experience of women at male-dominated colleges, African American professionals had few opportunities at predominantly white institutions. The first African American dean of women, Lucy Diggs Slowe, worked at Howard University (Anderson, 1989). From the beginning of her career in 1922, Slowe defined herself as an expert in women's education, not a matron. Like her pioneering white counterparts, Slowe was dedicated to making a viable women's community on Howard's campus. In 1924, she became the first president of the National Association of College Women (NACW), an organization for African American women that closely paralleled the AAUW whose restrictive practices made most African American women ineligible for membership. Eventually, the NACW became the National Association of University Women. It merged in 1954 with the National Association of Personnel Deans of Negro Educational Institutions, an organization for both men and women (Davis & Bell-Scott, 1989).

In 1922, Slowe became the first African American woman to join the NADW. The NADW did not formally exclude African American women from membership, but their practices effectively eliminated participation. The NADW often held their annual meetings in restrictive hotels so African American women were neither accommodated nor served meals. Slowe protested, but the NADW did not change. In response, she gathered her African American peers at a Conference of Deans and Advisors of Women on Howard's campus in 1929. The Conference was run under the auspices of the Standards Committee of the NACW until 1935, when it became an organization in its own right, the Association of Deans of Women and Advisers to Girls in Negro Schools (ADWAGNS). Slowe provided vital leadership from the first Conference in 1929 until her death in 1937 (Anderson, 1989; Davis &

Bell-Scott, 1989). Not until the late 1960s and early 1970s did slightly greater numbers of African American women hold administrative positions in predominantly white institutions and gain, for the first time, leadership positions in the NADW (Nidiffer, 2000).

The NADW and the AAUW sustained white professional administrators throughout the Depression years and war years, but the ensuing years brought considerable change to both groups. The Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka Kansas* resulted in some integration of the groups. Two other, coeducational organizations dedicated to student affairs became more central to the profession, especially the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA—the outgrowth of the first organization for deans of men, NADM). Women were also achieving limited recognition in organizations for other types of professionals (such as admission officers or registrars) and feminist activists questioned the necessity of single-sex organizations (Bashaw, 2001b). And finally, women students, several student affairs professionals, and other senior administrators were suggesting that deans of women were not essential, perhaps even anachronistic (Nidiffer, 2000).

In response, the NADW broadened the types of professionals it served and changed its name accordingly. In 1956, it became the National Association of Women Deans and Counselors (NAWDC); in 1973, the National Association of Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors (NAWDAC); and finally in 1991, the National Association for Women in Education (NAWE). However, it was unable to recapture its position as the leading professional organization for women administrators. Sadly, the NAWE closed its doors completely in 1999.

THE NEW WOMEN ON CAMPUS

Perhaps the struggle of whether to pursue separate or integrated structures was most obvious in the domain of women's athletics. Physiology may always dictate a certain amount of separation between male and female sports, but inequities in resources and opportunities for women athletic administrators have more to do with gender bias than sex differences.

Linda Carpenter and Vivian Acosta (2001) discussed the catalyst for a separate women's athletic organization in a recent essay. They noted:

in the 1950s and 1960s intercollegiate competition for women was informal and predominantly social. . . . No championships were held, and colleges provided little, if any, support. Female physical educators volunteered as coaches, . . . athletes bought their own uniforms, packed brown bag lunches, and paid their own transportation and motel bills. (p. 209)

Women athletes and coaches looked to amateur sports groups for help, but soon realized that a formal organization was needed. Yet, the female athletic administrators were worried about following the male model, with its inherent flaws (Carpenter & Acosta, 2001). So, in 1966, the Division of Girls and Women in Sport (DGWD), part of the former American Association for Health and Recreation, created the Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (CIAW).

CIAW's primary purpose was "to sanction intercollegiate athletic events and to establish, conduct, and promote national championships for women" (Carpenter & Acosta, 2001, p. 210). The CIAW was replaced by the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) in October, 1971 in a move to improve the financial backing of women's sports. By design, the AIAW was different and, in the minds of the participating women, better than the male-dominated NCAA (Carpenter & Acosta, 2001). Women of AIAW worked for the passage of Title IX, the 1972 civil rights legislation, which states that women shall not be denied participation in, or the benefits of, educational programs receiving federal assistance.

The NCAA initially fought to exclude athletics from the purview of Title IX. Then, after losing that battle, fought to exclude "revenue" sports such as men's basketball and football. The courts voted against the NCAA, but it was a Pyrrhic victory for women. Deciding its interests were best served by incorporating women's athletics under its auspices, the NCAA pushed to eliminate the AIAW and encouraged institutions to subsume women's sports under the control of the existing athletic director. The result was a staggering loss of jobs for women who had served as coaches and directors of separate women's athletic programs. To date, the losses have not been recouped and the majority of new hires in women's athletics are men (Carpenter & Acosta, 2001).

In other administrative positions, women tend to compete in any venue, not only in single-sex settings. In the first study of its kind, Karen Doyle Walton and Sharon McDade (2001) surveyed women Chief Academic Officers (CAOs). The CAO position is important on its own, but as an acknowledged stepping stone to a presidency, it is key to women's advancement. Walton and McDade found that women occupy approximately 15% of all CAO positions. Of those, most female CAOs preside at baccalaureate and liberal arts colleges (37%), while slightly fewer than 13% serve at Research I or II universities—about the same percentage who work at women's colleges. Like most other administrative positions, more white women serve than women of color and the salaries of women CAOs are lower than men's. Although these data are disheartening, they represent a significant increase from just twenty years ago.

Women account for approximately 16% of all college presidents or CEOs. Women presidents least often lead elite research universities and are generally paid less than male presidents (American Council on Education, 1998; Touchton, Shavlik, & Davis, 1993; Walton, 1996). Women presidents may belong to

a host of institutional, professional, or even discipline-based organizations that are coeducational. Yet, in 1990 the Office of Women in Higher Education sponsored a single-sex group that provides a forum for discussing the issues unique to women presidents (Nidiffer, 2001c).

As the new millennium dawns, it is time to refocus the efforts of all administrators in higher education. Rather than asking whether women are better served in single-sex or coeducational (but male-dominated) structures, it is time to make more concerted efforts to thwart the sexism that makes women-only spaces so necessary. It is also time to reframe the question. We no longer should assume that the traditional, male-oriented nature of institutions is the norm to which women must respond.

CONCLUSION

What is the historical legacy of women administrators? These pioneers combined tenacious activism and savvy pragmatism to attain genuine access to a full college life for women students and, in the process, created professional opportunities for themselves (Bashaw & Nidiffer, 2001). They identified opportunities and pursued them. They founded secular and religious women's colleges; they helped students on coeducational campuses find opportunities and acceptance; they demanded that colleges enforce gender-equity legislation. They attended to women's health, material well-being, and intellectual growth. And they proved to a skeptical society that women are capable leaders and managers.

From the pioneers of post-revolutionary America to the presidents of major universities today, women administrators have accepted the challenges of creating institutions, ensuring access, and easing the way for women. In many ways, they have redefined women's higher education. These women were administrators, but more important, they were educators, reformers, and fighters, whose actions provide guidance to enable positive change in higher education.

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