

*President and Provost’s Council on Women (PPCW)
Task Force Report: Senior Leadership Representation
March 2021*

Task Force Members

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Grand Challenge

Achieve at least 50 percent representation of women in senior leader roles across the university — including significant representation of women of color.

Context

Ohio State will have achieved this goal when women fill half or more of the senior leadership roles at the university. The definition of senior leader varies across the institution and can generally be defined as assistant vice president and above for staff, and department chair or dean and above for faculty. Achieving gender balance in leadership will transform our organization and clearly signal to all women at Ohio State that they have the ability to achieve.

Rationale and data

Previous attempts to evaluate gender and racial diversity among senior leaders have been incomplete due to variation in definitions across business and academic units. The task force recommends university-wide recognition of the leadership positions/titles that are applicable to the Grand Challenge.

Information for both Ohio State and national benchmarks indicate that women — particularly women of color — are underrepresented in leadership. Over the past two decades, the status of all women of color working in the academy has seen only minimal gains and, in some cases, decline.

According to The Eos Foundation’s 2021 study, [“The Power Gap among Top Earners at America’s Elite Universities”](#), women represent only 10% of top earners at Ohio State and early only 7% of the pay in this group. While this has improved dramatically under President Johnson, this progress also highlights the importance of strong efforts from the President and Provost to improve representation among senior leaders.

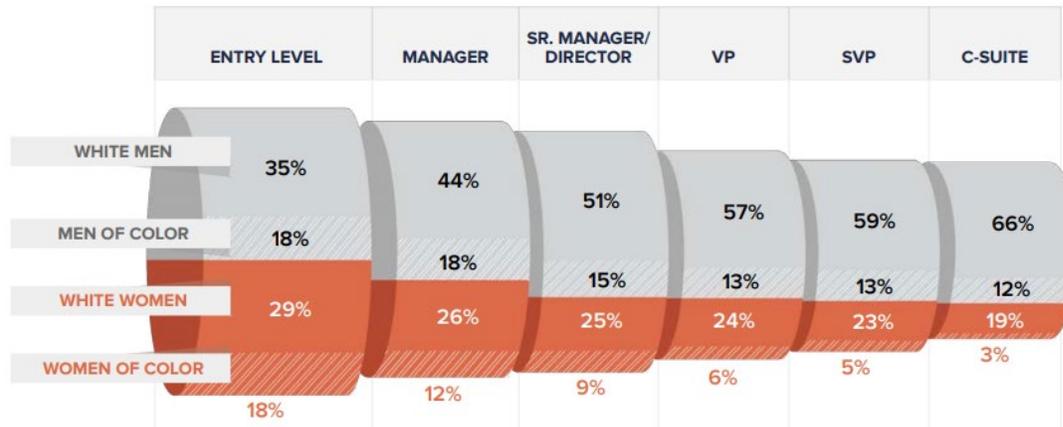
Women in the Workplace, 2020 (McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.Org) [full report](#)

“At the beginning of 2020, before the Covid-19 pandemic began in the United States, the representation of women in corporate America was slowly trending in the right direction. This was most pronounced in senior management: Between 2015 and 2020, the share of women grew from 23 to 28 percent in SVP roles—and from 17 to 21 percent in the C-suite. Women remained dramatically underrepresented, particularly women of color, but the numbers were slowly improving.”

REPRESENTATION OF CORPORATE PIPELINE BY GENDER AND RACE

■ MEN ■ WOMEN

% of employees by level at the start of 2020



The Women’s Place, 2020 Status Report on Women (data from September 2019):

- At the highest levels: 7 of 17 vice presidents (41%) are women, with 1 woman of color; 25% of senior vice presidents are women; 26% of deans are women, with 1 of 6 a woman of color; and 29% of vice provosts are women, but none is a woman of color.
- Among 98 Department Chairs, 30 (31%) are women, and 8 of those are women of color.

Analysis of data from past University Culture Surveys and Wexner Medical Center Employee Engagement Surveys showed that areas in which women faculty and staff reported less satisfaction than men included: for faculty, lack of responsiveness, transparency and equal treatment from unit head; for staff, a lack of potential for and clear paths for career progression and lack of supervisor support. Knowing that men hold more leadership positions than women across the university, these findings suggest equity among the leadership may lead to higher faculty and staff satisfaction in the workplace.

Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Revise the Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy 4.10 to include additional instruction on interim positions, search committees and search firms for senior leadership positions.

Ensure these same practices are applied to policies for senior faculty leadership positions.

Background: PPCW originally submitted this recommendation in January 2020 through the formal policy review process. The PPCW Position Statement on Racial Equity ([link](#)) in September 2020 again requested that the university examine and establish equitable recruitment practices.

Justification: Ohio State strives to set the standard for diversity, equity, and inclusion. The ad hoc nature of interim positions, when applied to senior leadership roles, raises clear concerns about diversity of candidates, inclusion of stakeholders, and equity in promotion. This is of particular concern given that individuals in interim roles are often selected to fill the position permanently. PPCW urges the university to define types of transitional leadership positions (officer-in-charge, acting or interim) and a corresponding process for use during planned and unplanned senior leadership vacancies. Revise policies to increase transparency toward achieving greater gender and racial parity.

Significant gaps remain in the gender and racial makeup among senior leadership positions. Defining situations when a search committee should be used will increase involvement of interested parties to assemble a diverse applicant pool. A separate consideration is the use and effectiveness of external search firms. When search firms are used, the university should hold them accountable – in writing – for advancing a specific number or percentage of candidates for senior/executive positions who are women and women of color. Minority-owned search firms may be given priority.

Policies from benchmark institutions:

University of Illinois (page 34): [guidelines for interim appointments](#)

University of Maryland: [policy on interim appointments](#)

Penn State University: [positions requiring national search process](#)

RECOMMENDATION #2: Include PPCW representative (or designee) in the recruitment and selection process for senior leadership positions.

Background: PPCW leadership has informally made this request during previous discussions with university leaders. Adding the request as a formal recommendation is intended to create an actionable process for moving this forward.

Justification: This recommendation seeks to utilize women faculty and staff who have, by their self-selection into leadership roles or training initiatives, are uniquely qualified to provide advice on filling senior leadership positions. The President and Provost's Council on Women (PPCW) advocates to the president and provost for all women faculty and staff and is called to provide leadership in the development of policies and practices. Current and former members represent women from all areas of campus and through their participation in PPCW have developed an understanding of gender equity issues and have demonstrated a commitment to the university's diversity and inclusion values.

Ohio State provides significant commitment and support to The Women's Place ([TWP](#)), which exists to "serve as a catalyst for institutional change to expand opportunities for women's growth, leadership and power in an inclusive, supportive, and safe university environment". TWP serves both units and individuals seeking to find creative solutions to barriers impacting the retention and advancement of women. With 20 years of providing high quality training and programming, The Women's Place has created a cadre of established and developing women leaders around the university who would also be called upon to fulfill this need.

Recommendation #3: Adopt and implement a policy on faculty mentoring.

Background: Recommendations for a faculty mentoring policy were mentioned in PPCW's final report in 2018 and a draft policy was included in the final report for [2019](#) (page 33).

Justification: In 2017, a PPCW task force was charged with inventorying faculty mentoring resources at Ohio State. The results ([final report, page 5](#)) showed that few programs recognize differential mentoring needs of women and men. Other general gaps include development of junior faculty beyond initial promotion, and lack of written guidelines and publication of existing resources on department websites. There are notable best practices including the College of Medicine – Center for Faculty Advancement, Mentoring and Engagement (FAME) and Ohio State – ADVANCE, created to increase the representation, advancement and recruitment of women faculty in academic STEM careers.

Effective faculty mentoring is critical for enhancing academic excellence, building a strong and diverse faculty, and developing a respectful and positive work climate in which all members of the university community can thrive. OSU seeks to make faculty mentoring a priority by undertaking and regularizing sound mentoring practices.

Recommendation #4: Establish an Administrative Fellowship Program for staff employees

Administrative fellows who undergo a structured learning and professional growth experience would create a clear pipeline of eligible, skilled and qualified women and women of color candidates for top leadership positions at the university.

Background: In 2017, a PPCW task force was charged with inventorying staff mentoring resources at Ohio State and found that there was no coherent and institutionalized focus on mentoring for employees. Staff represent 28,000 individuals and a majority (67% or 19,000) are women. PPCW task forces have continued to collect internal and external data in 2018, 2019 and 2020 and have issued annual recommendations to make improvements in mentoring, especially as professional support for women and women of color who seek to advance their careers at the university.

Such a program could be designed and structured in a number of ways, with the principal goal being promoting excellence and inclusiveness by enlarging the pool of qualified Ohio State personnel who would bring institutional knowledge and the lessons learned from a "curriculum" deliberately designed to equip women and underrepresented minority candidates with the skills, insights and qualifications needed to fill top administrative posts.

Justification: The fellowship program dedicated to mentoring would inspire and support staff at Ohio State in their pursuit of this critical form of professional development. Administrative fellows who undergo a structured learning and professional growth experience would create a clear pipeline of eligible, skilled and qualified women and women of color candidates for top leadership positions at the university. Administrative fellows, selected as part of a competitive process, would be paired with a senior leader at Ohio State. The fellows would continue in their existing positions while participating in a formalized mentoring relationship focused on leadership development in a defined set of skills, matching the fellows' aspirations and university needs, and for a specific, pre-determined term.

PPCW has collected information on isolated staff mentoring programs around the university including: University Libraries personnel, Administrative Professionals, Women Empowering Women Program in Dept of Athletics and the Chemistry Dept. Mentoring Program. A staff Administrative Fellowship Program would bring some parity to the multiple faculty fellowship positions that have successfully developed careers.

Benchmark institution

Penn State Administrative Fellows Program): [program summary](#) and [application process](#)