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The Influence of Background Characteristics on the Lifetime Development of Leadership for Women: A Conceptual Model

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WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Doug Gardner, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of College Success studies at Utah Valley University. He completed his Ph.D. in Educational Organization and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His research includes higher education institutions and college students. Specifically he is interested in issues regarding access to and success in higher education. Recently he has focused on access to higher education for women in the state of Utah and first-generation college students. Dr. Gardner teaches first-year experience courses and career exploration courses helping students to adjust to the demands of college and to identify major and career goals.

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Karen A. Longman, Ph.D., is Professor of Higher Education at Azusa Pacific University, working with 60+ students in APU's Ed.D. and Ph.D. programs in Higher Education. Dr. Longman had previously served for six years as Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty at Greenville College (IL) and for 19 years as Vice President for Professional Development and Research at the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities, based in Washington, D.C. Since 1998, she has directed a series of Women's Leadership Development Institutes designed to equip more women for senior-level leadership in faith-based higher education.

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Dr. Skleder is a social-organizational psychologist who joined Chatham University as Dean of Chatham's historic College for Women and Professor of Psychology in August 2007. During her 16 years at Alvernia College (now University), she served in a variety of academic leadership positions at, including Vice Provost, Director of the Center for Community Engagement, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management, Director of the Honors Program and Department Chair of Psychology. She has studied and published in the areas of Leadership development (especially among women), the mentorship process, organizational development, change and strategic planning, gender communication, and assessing student learning. She has also served on the Board of Directors of Leadership Berks, a leadership development program and has consulted with many not-for-profits on topics of leadership development and strategic planning. Dr. Skleder earned her Ph.D. and M.A. in Social and Organizational Psychology from Temple University B.S. in Psychology from the University of Pittsburgh and completed the Institute for Educational Management at Harvard University.

Session Short Description
The purpose of this session is present research findings from four recent studies focused on women and leadership in higher education settings. Presentations include 1) the impact assessment of a ten-year initiative, 2) a background characteristics conceptual model, 3) a narrative study of women leading, and 4) the role of women's colleges in developing leaders.

Session Abstract
Extraordinary challenges face higher education nationally, and leaders with exceptional capabilities are needed to help institutions meet these challenges (Rubin, 2004). Women are playing significantly more leadership roles in higher education than ever before (Tunheim & McLean, 2008). These women leaders in higher education need thoughtful and intentional preparation to equip them to be successful in these leadership positions (Madsen, 2008).

Although there is a growing body of literature that has been published on women and leadership in higher education, there is still much to be discovered and learned. The studies presented in this session will provide perspectives that will be helpful for practitioners, scholars and educators who develop women leaders in educational, non-profit or for-profit organizations.

The purpose of this session is present research findings from four recent studies focused on women and leadership in higher education settings. First, Longman will review the impact of a multi-faceted initiative over the past decade that has involved 160 women identified by their Council for Christian Colleges & Universities campuses "emerging leaders" – with the goal of identifying and preparing more women for senior-level leadership on faith-based campuses. Second, Madsen, Gardner, and Thackeray will offer a theoretical and conceptual model that can provide educators and researchers a tool to explore the early experiences of women in developing leadership. This model considers the importance of background characteristics of students in developing more effective leadership programs and strategies for women. Third, Dahlvig will share her preliminary findings of a narrative study that has involved following over three years the leadership journeys of five women leading within Christian higher education. The hierarchical structure and history of higher education matched with the patriarchal history of Christianity create a "perfect storm" of gender issues and potential discrimination for women leading within this particular context. Finally, Skleder will discuss how American women's colleges, while providing a host of academic and leadership opportunities for women, also face numerous challenges. This presentation will focus on the status of women's colleges, evidence of their effectiveness in developing women leaders, current challenges, and the application of effective practices to co-educational environments. The session will conclude with a few minutes for questions, answers, and discussion.

Submission 1: The Influence of Background Characteristics on the Lifetime Development of Leadership for Women: A Conceptual Model

Susan R. Madsen
Utah Valley University

Doug Gardner
Utah Valley University

Susan Thackeray
Utah Valley University

Short Description (up to 50 words)

The purpose of this presentation is to offer a theoretical and conceptual model that provides educators and researchers a tool to explore the early experiences of women in developing leadership. This model considers the importance of background characteristics of students in developing more effective leadership programs and strategies for women.

Abstract (500-1000 words)

One of the critical goals of colleges and universities today is to assist students in becoming leaders. A host of centers, programs, initiatives, and strategies have been created and implemented to help provide effective experiences for students to develop the leadership knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to influence within a variety of sectors (e.g., public, private, and social). In recent years higher education institutions have begun to focus efforts on addressing the leadership developmental needs of female students. Yet, most efforts are designed based upon who these individuals are and where they are in life when they enter the doors of the institution. Researchers (e.g., Astin & Leland, 1991; Caffarella & Olson, 1993; Cooke, 2004; Hennig & Jardim, 1977; Madsen, 2008) have argued for years that much of who we are is developed during childhood and youth, and that early experiences are critically important to an individual's growth and development. Unfortunately, few leadership researchers (Hennig & Jardim, 1997; Madsen, 2008, 2009) have taken on the challenge of exploring the lifetime development of leadership in women, but interest is increasing.

Current leadership development programs are typically designed without insight regarding the background experiences of entering students. Yet, the consideration of background experiences could provide a rich foundation for a more comprehensive model from which to develop leadership before, during, and beyond college. The purpose of this presentation is to offer a theoretical and conceptual model as a tool for educators and researchers to explore the backgrounds of entering students in order to develop more effective leadership programs and strategies for students. Although this model was recently developed for another purpose, it is closely aligned with the framework used by Madsen (2007, 2008) in her extensive work on understanding the lifetime development of women leaders. In sum, presenters will argue that this model can provide a useful framework for understanding background characteristics of women in the creation of effective leadership development programs and strategies.

The model was originally created for understanding the background characteristics of women in Utah. Within the state of Utah the number of women who enter higher education institutions and who complete higher education degrees is outpaced by men (Madsen, Hanewicz, & Thackeray, 2010). While the rest of the United States is seeking for ways to increase the numbers of men accessing and succeeding in higher education, the state of Utah is concerned with helping women successfully make the transition from high school to college and to complete educational goals (Utah Foundation, 2009). With support from the Utah System of Higher Education, the Utah State Office of Education, Utah public colleges and universities, and others, the Utah Women and Education Project (UWEP) was created to carry out research that will help the state understand 1) why a lower number of young women are going to college initially after high school and 2) why Utah has a higher number of women who start college and do not complete their degrees. To begin this work, a team of scholars conducted an extensive review of the literature to assist them in developing a comprehensive model that would provide a foundation for this research.

The newly created background characteristics model is primarily based upon Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action, which was derived from previous research on beliefs, attitudes, intentions, and behavior. As social psychologists, Fishbein and Ajzen argued that an individual's behavior can be predicted by his/her attitude toward that behavior, and that beliefs

(behavioral and normative) influence those attitudes. They also purported that subjective norms (i.e., the beliefs of others whose opinions are important to them) are critical components of this reasoned action. This model has been used by Bean and Eaton (2000) and Baird (2000) to understand student retention behaviors in higher education settings. This theory also provided the foundation for the development of an in-depth model used to explore the background characteristics of women who chose not to attend college in Utah. The model discussed in this session identifies the college attendance decision as the ultimate behavioral outcome. This decision is critical for women (Stage & Hossler, 2000), and especially for women in the state of Utah (Madsen, Hanewicz, & Thackeray, 2010). This model brings attention to the role psychological and sociological norms, beliefs, and aspirations work together to influence the intention or inattention to attend college as well as the ultimate decision about the role college will play in one's life.

The application of the model is relevant to the development of women across the lifespan. Astin and Leland (1991, p. 66) claimed that "leaders emerge from the critical interplay of personal values and commitments, special circumstances or historical influences, and personal events that motivate and mobilize people's actions." The decision to attend college can be a critical event in the life of a woman's personal and professional development and this decision is not arrived at serendipitously. The decision for a woman to attend college is influenced by her beliefs, values, and personal aspirations as well as the beliefs of significant others, most importantly the family of origin. Although the development of leadership can be an unintended outcome related to many activities and choices, the opportunity for many opportunities can be limited by the decision not to attend college. In sum, this session will present the UWEP background characteristics model in terms of its use for exploring the childhood and youth experiences of women entering college so that more effective leadership experiences and opportunities can be developed and provided. It will also discuss the model in terms of the importance of women's decisions to attend college as a critical opportunity for them to develop leadership in general. Presenters will conclude by discussing implications for research and practice as well as suggestions for future research.

Submission 2: "Changing the Face" of Christian Higher Education Leadership: Assessing the Impact of a Ten-Year Women's Leadership Development Initiative

Karen A. Longman, Ph.D.
Azusa Pacific University

Short Description
This session reviews the impact of a multi-faceted initiative over the past decade that has involved 160 women identified by their Council for Christian Colleges & Universities campuses as "emerging leaders" – with the goal of identifying and preparing more women for senior-level leadership on faith-based campuses.

Abstract
The 111-member Council for Christian Colleges & Universities represents a cross-section of faith-based institutions that are drawn from more than 30 Christian denominations. These campuses collectively serve 325,000 students, have 1.6 million alumni, and have annual

operating budgets of $4.2 billion (CCCU 2009-2010 Profile: http://www.cccu.org/about). Although the student population across the CCCU membership is 60% female, a 2008 analysis of the composition senior leadership of these campuses revealed that 84% of the U.S. member institutions had zero or only one woman in executive-level positions.

This lack of women's "voice" in senior leadership is problematic not only because of the gender imbalance between senior leadership and the student population, but also the missed beneficial impact of the transformational style that women typically bring to their leadership. Those born in the "veteran generation" (between 1922 and 1943) have typically preferred directive leadership, well-defined hierarchy, and respected loyalty to the organization (Bennis & Thomas, 2007; Conger, 2001). Newer models of leadership--those preferred by Generation X and the "Nexter" generation--emphasize empowerment, value strong relational skills, focus on bringing out the best in followers, and strive for consensus-building and mutual collaboration between leaders and followers (Bennis, 1991; Collins, 2001; Kezar & Lester, 2008). According to a meta-analysis of more than 160 leadership studies, women typically use this highly-effective transformational style of leadership (Eagly & Johnson, 1990).

As one strategy for identifying and equipping more women for senior leadership in Christian higher education, a Women's Leadership Development Institute (WLDI) has been offered on a bi-annual basis each June between 1998 and 2008, with another planned for June 2010. In total, 105 women who had been identified by their campuses as "emerging leaders" have participated in the WLDI; additionally, 55 women participated over the same period in a parallel series of "mixed" Leadership Development Institutes (LDIs) that involved both men and women. Thus, a total of 160 women have participated in the WLDI/LDI programs over the past decade.

In addition to the initial four-day Institute that includes presentations by cabinet-level leaders, panels, and discussions, the broader year-long WLDI/LDI program includes: (1) the provision of a variety of leadership articles and books; (2) the design of a one-year Professional Development Plan; (3) networking with experienced administrators on the Resource Leadership Team, and (4) financial support toward a two or three-day "shadowing" experience with a senior leader on another CCCU campus.

The impact of these LDIs and WLDIs on participants has been measurable and catalytic to their professional advancement. A "then and now" assessment of the women who participated between 1998 and 2008 revealed that over 50% of the female participants had moved into more advanced positions on their campus or elsewhere. As of 2009, advancements by women who had attended the LDI include 3 provosts, 5 vice presidents, 8 deans, and 3 directors. Professional advancements by those who attended the WLDI offerings include 2 presidents, 7 provosts, 11 vice presidents, 14 deans, and 9 directors.

Additionally, the female participants have provided input on a survey that asked them to retrospectively assess the impact of various components of the initial four-day Institute as well as other dimensions of this year-long professional development experience. Having the opportunity to network with experienced administrators on the Resource Leadership Team, the shadowing opportunity on another campus, and having informal conversations with other academic women were rated highest as contributing to feeling prepared for more senior leadership positions.

These survey results, combined with insights from the literature on leadership development, suggest helpful implications for those interested in preparing more women for senior-level leadership. Vinnicombe and Singh (2003), for example, identified the use of women-only leadership training as "essential for women to develop a stronger sense of self and stronger relationships with other women," a finding corroborated by the WLDI participants. Three distinct stages of women's careers have been described by O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005); different approaches to leadership development and support are needed for each of these stages. Additionally, the role of "calling" is discerned differently by men and women (Phillips, 2009); calling was identified as a factor by many of the WLDI participants in their willingness to move into more senior leadership roles (Longman, 2008). Finally, a *Harvard Business Review* article emphasized that the best leadership development programs are closely aligned and integrated with the strategic objectives of the organization, with current leaders held accountable for leadership development (Cohn, Khurana, & Reeves, 2005).

Paper 3: A Narrative Study of Women Leading Within the Christian Higher Education

Jolyn E. Dahlvig
Calvin College

Short description
This presentation will summarize preliminary findings of a narrative study of women leading within Christian higher education. The hierarchical structure and history of higher education matched with the patriarchal history of Christianity create a "perfect storm" of gender issues for women leading within this particular context.

Abstract
The Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU), a subset of private, independent institutions, provides a unique backdrop for a study of women leaders. Within the member institutions of the CCCU as of 2009, there are six female presidents, 17 female chief academic officers (Anderson & Longman, in process), and women represent 36 percent of full-time faculty (Lafreniere & Longman, 2008) as compared to 45 percent female faculty within the 6,350 accredited institutions within the United States (U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). Recent dissertations have explored components of women's leadership journey within higher education, but have not focused on the unique context that characterizes CCCU institutions (Carter, 2007; Curry, 2000; Dale, 2007; Hertneky, 2008; Jones, 2008; Long, 2008). The majority of CCCU institutions could be characterized as evangelical or adhering to traditional Christian beliefs. The CCCU blends two male-dominated, hierarchical societal enclaves: higher education and religious institutions. Due to traditional biblical interpretations and culturally-supported patriarchy, traditional religious institutions have historically been recognized as perpetuators of gender inequality (Creegan & Pohl, 2005; LaCelle-Peterson, 2008).

In an effort to more fully understand the experiences of women leaders within Christian higher education, this presentation will report findings of a longitudinal narrative study. In the tradition

of qualitative research, narrative studies explore the experiences of a targeted population with special attention to context (Clandinin &Connelly, 2000; Josselson, Lieblich, & McAdams, 2003; Riessman, 1993). Narrative research has been specifically described as striving "to preserve the complexity of what it means to be human and to locate its observations of people and phenomena in society, history, and time" (Josselson, 2006, p. 3). This study followed the leadership journey of five women over three years. Interview questions were focused on the intersection of gender and Christian culture, significant moments in the women's leadership development, and their day-to-day experiences as campus leaders.

This study broadens existing literature of women within the CCCU (Absher, 2009; Dahlvig & Longman, in press; Lafreniere & Longman, 2008; Moreton & Newson, 2004; Oates et al., 2005; Oates et al., 2008) as well as contribute to Madsen (2008) and Glazer-Raymo's (2008) call for further scholarly research on women in higher education to better understand the experiences of traditionally marginalized voices within higher education and to illuminate systemic problems that may contribute to marginalization. Highlighting the stories of successful female leaders provides insight into dimensions of campus culture, policies, leadership programs, or personal characteristics that have contributed to their success.

Submission 4: The Role of the Women's College in Developing the Next Generation of Women Leaders: Challenges and Opportunities

Anne A. Skleder, Ph.D.
Chatham University

Short Description
American women's colleges, while providing a host of academic and leadership opportunities for women, also face numerous challenges. This presentation will focus on the status of women's colleges, evidence of their effectiveness in developing women leaders, current challenges, and the application of effective practices to co-educational environments.

Abstract
In 1960 there were more than 200 women's colleges in the United States (U.S. Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 2009). This number is now, by any count, under 60. There is both good news and bad news. The good news is that women have access that is greater than ever before to higher education opportunities, that include both single gender and co-educational environments. And, there is a strong body of well-respected research demonstrating that women's colleges provide an exemplary learning environment for their students (e.g., Astin, 1993; Riordan, 1994). The bad news is that women's colleges become co-educational, merge and close each year. Women, therefore have less and less access to the advantages of this distinctive opportunity. And, as they diminish in number, women's colleges are finding it increasingly difficult to "make the case" for their relevance in the 21st Century. In fact, only about three percent of college-bound women will consider attending a women's college (U.S. Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 2009).

This presentation will include three parts. The first will center on the demonstrated advantages of women's education, including that commissioned by the Women's College Coalition (Hartwick-Day, 2008) and outcomes of the National Survey of Student Engagement (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, and Associates, 2005) and other sources. There is also strong evidence that women's colleges are more successful than co-educational institutions in preparing women for careers in non-traditional areas, most notably those in the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields. For example, graduates of women's colleges earn undergraduate degrees in the life and physical sciences at a rate 1.5 times that of their counterparts in co-educational colleges and universities (Sharpe & Fuller, 1995). These data suggest many opportunities to develop programs that will educate the next generation of women leaders and help to address continuing inequities and imbalances in many fields. Furthermore, there is evidence that the culture of women's colleges is more likely to support young women to take on leadership challenges, reward collaboration and collective achievement and take on opportunities that are at odds with traditional gender roles (Manning, 2000). These skills, abilities and attitudes are important contributing factors to the advancement of women in many fields and to address the glass ceiling and what Alice Eagly has dubbed the "sticky floor" (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Second, a number of high impact programs being offered on various women's college campuses will be described. These practices will fall into one or more of the following five categories: 1) Initiatives that leverage their distinctive elements as women's institutions such as traditions and leadership opportunities; 2) Opportunities presented by the presence co-educational graduate programs, 3) Programs in experiential learning (including service-learning, internships, and study abroad); 4) Internal collaborations with student affairs; and 5) External collaboration with their local and regional communities. Significant emphasis will be placed on both demonstrated outcomes of these programs and initiatives, as well as the significant challenges faced by women's colleges.

A traditional literature search will focus on identifying peer-reviewed studies regarding practices in these categories at women's colleges. Because many practices will not be reported on in the published literature, a review of web-sties will also be conducted, and the leadership (including the Executive Director) of the Women's College Coalition will be interviewed to identify institutions and practices that fit the parameters of the study. The next phase will focus on more in depth research on institutions identified through the literature review, web-site review and leadership interviews. Targeted interviews will be held with five college leaders (including senior administrators and presidents) from institutions with exemplary high-impact practices illustrating each of the five categories described above. The interviews will probe the development of these initiatives, outcomes data demonstrating their effectiveness, challenges of implementation, and applicability beyond the current context.

Third, conclusions will be draw about themes common to these high impact practices, how these practices might work synergistically to maximize their effect on student leadership and growth, and challenges that cut across initiatives and institutions. A goal will be to identify what can be learned from this study that can be applied to other educational environments, especially middle and high as well as to co-educational higher education contexts in ways that hold promise for the development of learning and leadership for both men and women. For example, understanding the reason for success of particular initiatives in STEM on the campuses of women's colleges

may provide models for effective educational practices in middle and high schools that hold promise for counteracting cultural norms against promoting STEM fields for women.