# SPOTLIGHTING FEMALE LEADERSHIP:

STRATEGIES, STORIES, PERSPECTIVES

International Association of University Presidents







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### **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Introduction	Fernando León García  President, International Association of University Presidents (2021-2024)  President, CETYS University	05
Chapter I	Origin and Implementation of this Initiative Devorah Lieberman President Emerita, University of La Verne	06
Chapter II	Sue Cunningham  President and CEO, Council for the Advancement and Support of Education	29
Chapter III	Silvia Giorguli President, El Colegio de México	40
Chapter IV	Carmen Lamagna Vice Chancellor, American International University, Bangladesh	47
Chapter V	<b>Eun-joo Lee</b> President, Seoul Cyber University	57
Chapter VI	Devorah Lieberman President Emerita, University of La Verne	65
Chapter VII	Gülsün Sağlamer  Rector, Istanbul Technical University	75
Chapter VIII	Elizabeth Stroble Chancellor, Webster University	85
Chapter IX	Jamienne S. Studley President and Chief Executive Officer, WASC Senior College & University Commission	92
Chapter X	María Vicenta Mestre	100
Chapter XI	Inga Žalėnienė Rector, Mykolas Romeris University	106











#### INTRODUCTION

As President and on behalf of the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP), I am pleased to share with you this publication that extends the work begun in 2023 through the IAUP Women's Leadership Initiative. Under the leadership of President Emerita of the University of La Verne, Dr. Devorah Lieberman, this publication focuses on a select group of female IAUP Presidents/Rectors/Chancellors, their leadership strategies, their professional trajectories, and advice for other higher education leaders and aspiring female leaders. We are most thankful for the work led by Dr. Lieberman and extend our appreciation to each of the authors who submitted inspirational and thought-provoking chapters.

Throughout the past year, IAUP has held a number of workshops, seminars, panels, and webinars addressing this topic, culminating in this publication. It will be accessible on our IAUP website and will be available in paper at our October IAUP Triennial. Our hope is that this publication can raise awareness, identify best practices, and share important lessons that can help others who are already in leadership positions, as well as those who are embarking on senior leadership positions.

IAUP continues to support initiatives and global meetings that further the mission and vision of the organization while adding to the success of each member, president and institution.

Very appreciatively,

Dr. Fernando León García

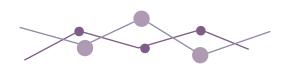
President, IAUP 2021-2024
President, CETYS University







### **CHAPTER ONE**



## The Origin and Implementation of this Initiative

### Devorah Lieberman, President Emerita, University of La Verne



## The International Association of University Presidents (IAUP)

The International Association of University Presidents has a long history and a significant mission. The following describes its history and mission.

#### **HISTORY**

The founders of IAUP, were university leaders from the US, South Korea, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Liberia, that came together in 1964 to discuss the creation of a worldwide organization that would facilitate communication among higher education leaders from various countries, promoting friendship and collaboration between them. The inaugural IAUP conference was held in Oxford, England in June 1965, with the participation of approximately 120 representatives of universities from 21 countries. Over the years, IAUP has contributed to the strengthening of the international mission and quality of education of its member institutions and has grown to become an association of several hundred members from nearly 100 countries. The rich series of academic events and activities of IAUP have drawn the attention and respect of many world leaders.

#### **MISSION**

The primary purpose of IAUP is to strengthen the international mission and quality of education of member institutions in an increasingly interdependent world, and to promote global awareness and competence as well as peace and international understanding through education. This unique worldwide platform facilitates the exchange of professional experience through conferences, seminars, publications, and commissions. (http://iaup.org)





#### IAUP believes the best approach to achieve its aims are to:

- **1.** Be independent of all ideological and political interests.
- **2.** Contribute to international dialogue, tolerance and understanding in the promotion of international justice, cooperation and peace; and
- **3.** Continue giving positive and creative support to its members, by providing an active global network and forum specifically for the heads of universities in which they can:
  - Share their valuable experiences and outcomes
  - Contribute toward the development of universities in economically deprived regions throughout the world
  - Respond to the need to broaden access to universities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds
  - Help introduce new qualitative developments in the wider university sector
  - Extend and enhance the international dimension of universities; and,
  - Ensure that universities continue to support and reinforce cultural diversities that are vital to sustaining the development of personal identities, social cohesion and human creativity.

#### THE ORIGIN OF THIS INITIATIVE

Aligned with the history and mission of the International Association of University Presidents, in summer 2023, Dr. Fernando Leon Garcia, President of IAUP and President of CETYS University (Mexico), identified an IAUP focused and much needed initiative to support successful female leadership among IAUP Presidents/Chancellors/Rectors as well as help female mid-level higher education administrators who aspire to be institutional Presidents/Chancellors/Rectors. It should be noted that several years ago this initiative was suggested and encouraged by IAUP members, Dr. Gülsün Sağlamer, Former President of Istanbul Technical University, Dr. Elizabeth Stroble, Chancellor of Webster University, and several other university presidents.





During my twelve-year presidency of the University of La Verne (2011-2023), I was an active member of IAUP. When I retired from the presidency, August 2023, Dr. Leon Garcia asked if I would help lead this initiative which would engage male and female IAUP Presidents/Chancellors/Rectors to further the goal of supporting those women who are already serving as institutional CEO's as well as those who aspire to achieve this level. As a retired female president and someone who is profoundly interested in the study of and strategies for successful leadership, I was delighted to assume this task. This initiative focuses on identifying (1) strategic leadership skills globally for female university presidents/rectors/chancellors; and, (2) ways that male and female institutional presidents globally can create pathways, pipelines, and professional opportunities for women to ascend into executive leadership roles in higher education.

This publication is born from the IAUP Women's Leadership Initiative. Ten female institutional leaders (all members of IAUP) were invited to submit chapters that focus on their personal stories, their own leadership, advice to other female presidents and advice to aspiring female presidents. The countries represented by the chapters in this book are: Spain, Lithuania, Turkey, Mexico, South Korea, Bangladesh, and the United States.

#### COORDINATING AND IMPLEMENTING THE INITIATIVE

There is a plethora of research and publications that identify and codify successful leadership strategies. Some of the scholarship focuses on particular demographics (e.g., gender, age, ethnicity, culture) and others focus on industry (e.g., education and corporate or nonprofit). When IAUP created the concept for this publication, we did not know if there would be any common themes that threaded through the authors' responses. We started with the assumption that these female international IAUP presidents would have wildly diverse perspectives on their own leadership trajectories, reflections on their own leadership strategies, and advice to other aspiring female presidents.



This initial thinking was aligned with international author Doris Kearns Goodwin's perspective on leadership.

Borrowing from my blog published by the American Council on Education -- Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Leadership in Turbulent Times*, 2018, posits these questions: Are leaders born or made? Where does ambition come from? How does adversity affect the growth of leadership? Do the times make the leader or does the leader shape the times? How can a leader infuse a sense of purpose and meaning into people's lives? What is the difference between power, title, and leadership? Is leadership possible without a purpose larger than personal ambition?

Though Doris Kearns Goodwin poses these questions about leadership in a binary fashion, I see the foundation of these either/or questions as the importance of understanding the difference between the title "leader" and the action of "leadership". When one assumes a new title (e.g., President/Rector/ Chancellor) with institutional oversight and responsibility, there is an obligation to demonstrate leadership skills that are purpose driven and bigger than self, ego, or title. I believe that there are no definitive answers to questions that revolve around whether leaders are born or made, is leadership learned or innate, what are the qualities of female leaders versus male leaders. Each of these answers resides on a leadership continuum and includes multiple perspectives. Successful leadership, and in this case leadership for female presidents, includes all of the above: leadership is both innate and also learned and leadership qualities vary by person and gender. However, there is a common denominator in the literature (https://www.proquest.com/openview/401f828dd9161692 0594a1cdbefa16e5/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750) which asserts that successful leaders embody and demonstrate the following attributes: humility, honesty, transparency, vulnerability, vision and ethical behavior <a href="https://www.">https://www.</a> higheredtoday.org/2024/04/03/beyond-march/ -



#### Included in this Publication

Each of the 10 presidents/chancellors/rectors included in this publication represents a higher education institution that is a member of the International Association of University Presidents with a current (or former) president who is female. These institutions range from public to private, from large to small, from recently established to founded several hundred years ago, from urban to rural, from research to teaching, and from internationally recognized to regionally recognized. Because the institutions were from different countries and continents, we assumed that there would be more cultural differences than cultural commonalities. However, we found that though there were vast differences in location and culture, there were consistent common themes that emerged across all 10 presidents and their reported leadership experiences.

Each institutional leader authored their chapters by responding to the following seven topics/prompts:

- Institutional overview
- Years of tenure as a president/chancellor/rector
- Professional trajectory to the c-suite
- Gender and the position of president/chancellor/rector
- Successful leadership strategies
- Advice for other female presidents/chancellors/rectors
- Advice for females who aspire to be presidents/chancellors/rectors

Interestingly and unexpectedly, across these presidents who are from vastly different cultural and geographic backgrounds, ages, and experiences, clear commonalities and themes emerged. The themes give us insight into the paths that were common among these institutional leaders, the perceived impact gender has had on their professional lives and choices, their leadership strategies, the advice they proffer to other presidents/chancellors and rectors and advice they have for other females who aspire to be presidents/chancellors or rectors.





#### **Overarching Topics and Emergent Themes**

Across all chapters, the following are the most common overarching and emergent themes:

- Theme One-- First Female Institutional Leader: The authors reflected upon their feelings being the first female president/rector/ chancellor of their respective institutions.
- Theme Two-- A Higher Purpose: The authors addressed their dedication to something much greater than themselves...their institution, their students, the future of higher education, their country.
- **Theme Three—Mentor/Coach:** The authors addressed the importance of having a mentor or coach that would serve as a sounding board, a support, or a confidential guide.
- Theme Four-- Listening Carefully: The authors highlighted the importance of "listening" to their cabinet members and their constituents, not believing that they were the smartest person in the room, and that they could always listen and learn from others.
- Theme Five—Proving Oneself: Most of the authors asserted that gender plays/played a role in their leadership position and success. They posited that as women they had to consistently prove themselves in their leadership positions so that those who did not believe women should lead would not influence others to think similarly.
- Theme Six—External Perceptions: The authors raised the concept that gender is just one of the factors that impacted how they were perceived by others. However, they said other demographics were also part of the perception equation: e.g., their country of origin, their religion, and their age.
- Theme Seven—Essential Attributes: Every author mentioned the importance of consistently exhibiting the following attributes: authenticity, humility, being laser focused on the institutional mission, resilience, communication and empathy.





• **Theme Eight—Am I Good Enough:** Several referred to "the imposter syndrome" and how easy it is to feel that they do not deserve to be the institutional leader. These leaders talked about how important it is not to listen to that inner voice that says, "am I good enough?" but, to know that they are good enough and that is why they have been selected for this leadership position.

#### **Deeper Analysis of Topic Emergent Themes**

A deeper analysis of each chapter topic provided the following more detailed emergent themes with examples from the authors. The common themes, related to each topic, are described below.

#### **TOPIC ONE:**

#### **Overview of the Institution and Tenure of the Presidency**

The following emergent themes were present across nearly all author responses to the request to describe their institution and their length of tenure in the presidency.

- Theme One—First in Their Position: Nearly all the authors were the first females to be appointed to their positions, whether it was a government appointment, an institutionally elected appointment, or selected through an open/external search.
- Theme Two—Consistent Commitment: All the authors articulated how deeply honored and humbled they were to be appointed to this leadership position and that they were fully committed to this leadership role throughout their entire presidency.





- Theme Three—Length of Tenure to Achieve Outcomes: Each had served at their institutions as Chief Executive Officer for approximately 10 years. And, for those who no longer serve in this leadership position, each, independently expressed that they chose to step down either at the end of a government or institutionally determined term because they felt their work was (near) complete and it was time for new leadership.
- Theme Four—Unrelenting Focus to Achieve: A common description
  across all the authors was that they were each honored (and often
  surprised) that they had been selected for these prestigious and
  significant positions. This included expressing that they were always
  working harder and achieving more as female leaders because they
  needed to prove that they could achieve as much, if not more, than a
  male president.

As one rector expressed, "on the 6th of August, 1996, the President of the country directly called and congratulated me as the first Woman Rector [of this university]. I have to confess that the 6th of August, 1996, was a turning point in my life."

#### **TOPIC TWO:**

#### Professional Path to the President/Chancellor/Rector

The following emergent themes were present across all or nearly all author responses to the request to describe their professional path to the position of president/chancellor/rector.

Each institutional CEO in this publication was reflective and forthcoming about their professional paths. For some, the institution where they are serving





as the CEO was their alma mater. For others, it was not their alma mater, and not necessarily the country nor region where they were raised. Most CEOs completed their undergraduate education in their home country and for many they completed their graduate degrees in the United States or Great Britain. The following themes related to their professional paths emerged across most of the authors.

 Theme One—Serving a Greater Good: The presidents/rectors/ chancellors assumed their roles because they felt a calling, a higher purpose, and a desire to impact the greater good. No one president/ rector/chancellor took the role because they were seeking the title, authority, or power.

The following quotes from various authors exemplify this emergent theme:

"I was attracted to this current leadership role by a job posting that began, 'seeking [a president with] a passion for student success."

"As I sought a presidency, I was interested in institutions that were mission-focused, entrepreneurial in spirit, and seeking a leader with my background, skills, and experiences. I found that at [this institution] and thus made the transition to yet another new community and institution."

"As I researched the history, mission, and vision of [this university] I came to understand that my personal commitment to higher education and the mission of the institution were very much aligned."

• Theme Two—Role Model Obligation: Most of the CEOs understood (and expressed) that they understood they had an obligation to be a role model for other women and/or underrepresented populations.





One president captured this emergent theme, "As the inaugural woman chancellor of my institution, I believe my path has served as an inspiring narrative, encouraging women to engage actively in advancing empowerment and progress throughout society. The exceptional accomplishment in promoting women's causes through educational programs, initiatives, or personal endeavors in the context of a developing country have rightfully earned me recognition and acclimation."

 Theme Three—Open to Opportunity: Most of the CEOs reflected on their career trajectory as "opportunity focused". None followed a traditional path to the presidency but the opportunities for advancement came from many directions and indirectly others in their professional sphere recognized leadership qualities in them that they did not necessarily see in themselves.

The following presidential quotes reflect this theme:

"As I reflect on my professional journey, it makes sense in retrospect, but the 21-year-old, [as I was then] had no idea, nor plan, for the career that I have been incredibly fortunate to experience".

"The willingness to move for opportunity has been key to my professional path to this position, beginning with the transition from K-12 teaching to advanced study, including a PhD in Curriculum Studies that prepared me as a faculty member in teacher education. Faculty positions [at other universities] open doors for participation and leadership in public-private partnerships for education reform and research."



#### **TOPIC THREE:**

#### **Strategies for Successful Leadership**

The following emergent themes were present across all or nearly all author responses to the request to offer their personal strategies for successful leadership.

• Theme One--Service to Others: As noted throughout the chapters, the authors continually reflected upon the desire, need, and obligation to serve others. For most, their focus was on serving students with a quality education, character development, and career opportunities. This commitment to service informed their leadership strategies.

One president captured this emergent theme with the following quote: "The leadership strategies I employed during my presidency were focused on leading with vision, listening well, continuing to move the university and its initiatives forward, treating everyone with respect, continually and authentically giving others praise and credit when it was earned, and reminding everyone that we were a university that was meant to serve and support our students."

• Theme Two--Listen and Engage Diverse Perspectives: Every chapter author emphasized the importance of listening to their constituents as they moved through process, initiatives, strategic planning, and building long-term relationships. Authentic listening led to trusting relationships with each constituent group. And, as the president made the final decisions, constituents usually felt their voices were considered in the decision-making process.

Example quotes from the presidents support this emergent theme: "This is aligned with research that tells us that we create more effective





organizations when drawing on different perspectives. Leaders have a special opportunity to build bridges and connections, across functional areas, disciplines, generations, and ultimately across historic and cultural divides."

"I am keen for my colleagues to feel safe in being open and honest with me. I value their insights and counsel and know that I will be more effective if I hear them, undisguised in politeness."

• Theme Three--The Importance of Mentors and Coaches: A number of presidents were specific about the importance of having an external/agnostic coach or mentor who would regularly be available for advice, support, and to challenge/push them along the way. Oftentimes, because of the power differential, subordinates do not feel comfortable disagreeing or challenging the president. The mentor and/or coach can provide that role. An institutional investment in the President's coach is an investment in the long term success of the president as well as the institution.

Example quotes from presidents supporting this theme:

"Seeking out mentors has proven key. Executive coaching has been very important for me in the last decade of my career."

"It became critical for me to rely on my mentors, my husband and our children, with whom I could share my stress, my joys, my concerns, my exhaustion, and my vision. I knew that I could always count on their unwavering support, advice, and love."

"Keep spaces of interaction, building on the sorority among women leaders in higher education and sharing the good practices as well as the mistakes."





• Theme Four--Be Transformative: The presidents were clear that they were each responsible for and accountable to their institutions as they championed transformational change across their institutions. They each commented that they were not hired to maintain the status quo and that transformational change was part of their responsibilities. The strategies to create and implement the transformational change were a focus for their presidencies.

Several presidents pointed out that transformation would be achieved by making their institutions distinctive, relevant, and competitive. These elements became the foundation for strategic planning and led to their institutions long term sustainability.

Their quotes include:

"I believe I can be described as a 'transformational' leader."

"Change is a fact. Transformation is a must. Time is short."

"In order for the university to survive and thrive long into the future, [transformation] is required. We must ask and answer the following questions:

- How can we be distinctive from other institutions?
- How can we be relevant to the students [and the community]?
- How can we be competitive with other institutions?

"If I am not elected, I will be one of 10 losers. But, I think if I am elected, I will be the first female rector in the history of [this university].

• **Theme Five-- Focus on Students:** Throughout the presidents' reflections, they consistently addressed the need to focus on students.





They expressed concern that this focus could easily be lost among the myriad of other responsibilities and distractions, and it was their responsibility to maintain that focus.

The presidents' responses included:

"When a conversation about a hard decision would get technical or mired in legal or budget issues, [my mentor] would stop and say, 'What about the students?'

## **TOPIC FOUR: Gender and the CEO position**

The following emergent themes were present across all or nearly all author reflections on the role of gender and their CEO position.

Theme One—Perceptions and Educating Others about Bias:
 Nearly every president asserted that their gender affected others' perceptions of their ability, experience, and quality of performance.
 Several authors gave specific examples of how, when, and where these perceptions were expressed. Though, every author also recognized that they were able to address and often overcome negative biases based on gender.

Their reflections included the following quotes:

"We know that people typically watch women and people of color who are leaders more closely, and judge them more critically. In that setting you'll have the tough job of being authentic, independent, and at least appear both relaxed and in charge."





"Gender can indeed play a role in a university president's position, although the extent to which it affects the role can vary depending on several factors, such as culture of the institution, societal norms, and individual experiences. Gender stereotypes and biases may shape perceptions of female leadership."

"When I was first introduced to the part-time faculty by the Chair of the Faculty Senate, he said 'Please join me in welcoming the first female president of our University'. Whether I wanted it or not, even this introduction placed gender as a significant element of my presidency".

"There will be many who treat me differently (for better or for worse), intentionally or unintentionally, because of my gender, religion, age, or other demographic. However, I took it upon myself to take these as educational moments to kindly, gently, and firmly share my thoughts [and educate the person exhibiting this bias]."

• Theme Two--Obstacles and Artificial Barriers: Several presidents directly discussed obstacles and artificial barriers faced by female leaders.

The following presidents' quotes support this theme of how they were treated by others and expectations:

"Both women and men can be leaders, but women still face artificial barriers which may be different in each case."

"We know that women, and others who historically have not been envisioned as leaders, face a higher bar to being chosen for and supported in senior positions, so [the female president] needs to be prepared for every dimension of the job, certainly to speak to those tests".





• Theme Three---Obligation to be a Role Model: A number of presidents believed that as a female leader in higher education, they need to serve as a role model to other females who aspire to great heights in higher education.

The follow presidential quotes support this theme:

"It is important that women leaders not only encourage the growth of young women leaders by their example, but also participate in educational activities, publicly raise human rights issues, and help to create an inclusive and harmonious society in which stereotypes about both women and men, as well as about all marginalized groups in society, disappear".

"Leading as a woman in societies where male leaders dominate...can be daunting. Remember, your role as a female president makes you a role model, especially to female students and faculty. Displaying confidence and resilience not only maintains your authority but all paves a hopeful path for other women".

 Theme Four--Normalizing Female Leadership: Several presidents mentioned the importance of 'institutional change' under female leadership, that it is not easy but it is essential. They also commented on the leadership attributes needed for females to be accepted and successful in the CEO role.

The follow presidents' quotes support this emergent theme:

"Such shifts [women accepted as presidents] do not happen overnight, but require a process of social maturation that requires patience, knowledge, and strategic planning."





"Breaking barriers and achieving leadership roles as a female in a traditionally male-dominated field requires courage, perseverance and commitment".

"Becoming a [female] president/rector/chancellor of a university or any significant institution requires dedication, resilience and strategic planning."

• Theme Five--Build Inclusion and Collaboration: All presidents commented on the importance of female presidents leading by example, creating an inclusive environment, and exhibiting those leadership attributes that maintain a culture of collaboration.

The follow presidents' quotes support this emergent theme:

"Gender has played a role in positions I have held across my career. Because I have often worked in a majority male environment, I have needed to develop strategies for success that focus on building inclusive communities- for myself and others. Gender is a lens through which I understand the lived experiences of others and the imperative for progress on the path to diversity, equity and inclusion'.

"I would stress empathy and the ability to manage human teams as two basic points to work on in order to perform better in a position such as [female] rector. "





#### **TOPIC FIVE:**

### Advice to Other Female Presidents and/or Aspiring Female Presidents

The following emergent themes were present across all or nearly all of the authors' advice to other females who are in the position of university president/chancellor/rector or who aspire to this position.

• Theme One--Listen, Learn, Gain Experience, Communicate Clearly: The most common advice the authors offered for current and aspiring female presidents was to continually listen, learn, communicate, and continue to gain experience.

The following quotes support this emergent theme:

"Listen to people all across your institution and beyond. Listen to understand the experience, what brought about the good or bad things you are hearing. Then use what you have heard and learned to formulate your goals, meet the needs, act, make change or provide comfort or whatever you deem necessary."

"If you think you want to be a chancellor/president, seek out chances to develop some of the core competencies and experiences that are likely to be called on-especially the ones that worry you or deter you from pursuing the role."

• Theme Two--Seek a Mentor or Coach: Several chapter authors suggested that it is important to engage a mentor and/or coach to help them, confidentially, through the presidential journey.





The following quotes support this emergent theme:

"I would highly recommend seeking out mentorship and an executive coach. As CEOs whilst showing vulnerability with our teams and our Board is a healthy thing to do, there are times that one needs someone disconnected from the institution with whom one can unpack challenges and determine how to be our best selves in different, and sometimes challenging contexts."

"Be open to mentors, advisors and promoters who share your experience and others who don't. Stay in regular touch-don't just call when you need something. Be clear about what you want- we all know it is hard to help someone who is vague and unfocused."

"Create a kitchen cabinet of advisors [outside the institution] who know your dreams and abilities, and who will be direct and honest with you."

• Theme Three--Prevalence of the "Imposter Syndrome": Several presidents named the "imposter syndrome" as something that continues to be present among female presidents. They had strong advice on how to recognize and overcome this syndrome. They needed to prove to themselves and others that they could excel in this leadership position. They often needed to convince themselves that they were "good enough" and that if they just worked harder, longer, more focused, and more diligently, they would then believe in their own abilities and others would as well.

The following presidents' quotes support this emergent theme:

"I encourage women leaders, when our imposter syndrome pokes his or her head above the surface, to balance self-criticism and actual evidence."





"We know that women can fall victim to the imposter syndrome. A Russell Reynolds (2023) study found in business settings that if a manager were to leave, nearly 70% of men believe that they have what it takes to do that job. Comparatively, only 50% of women express the same confidence and are more than twice as likely to believe they were not qualified for their manager's position.

Theme Four--Staying above Negativity and Skepticism: The authors were all aware that there may be skepticism directed toward them based on demographics or other variables. They each offered suggestions for ways to address this.

The following president quote supports this:

"My advice to female presidents is that if you believe that your gender, or other demographics, may be influencing how you are being treated, how seriously you are being taken, and how/ if others are following your lead, do not let that deter you from your vision or path. It takes tremendous courage, grit, fortitude and resilience to take the high road, believe in yourself and remind yourself that you were selected for this presidency because of your skills, experience, acumen, and vision."

Theme Five--Satisfaction Outweighs the Challenges: Several presidents highlighted that there are tremendous challenges in this position, and the challenges continue to emerge throughout the President's tenure. However, they also emphasized that the joys and satisfactions of the job can be even greater than the challenges.

The following presidents' quotes support this emergent theme:





"[The Presidency] will not be easy. It is fraught with challenges. However, with confidence, skills, resilience, grit and belief in yourself, it can and will be a position that will serve the future of the students, your region, your country and the world. Always be authentic, always be gracious. Always lead with vision. Always communicate. Always collaborate. Always give credit to those who are doing the hard work. Always praise publicly and criticize privately. And, always see the joy in the impact and the transformation you see in each student."

"[Presidents] must consider an essential thought: as women with such an important role, they will be a point of reference for many other girls and women who will find in them models of career and behavior that will help to make the world increasingly more egalitarian and, therefore, fairer."

"I advise [other presidents] not to give up, to have confidence in themselves, and not to be afraid to show all their qualifications and abilities, and that they really deserve to hold relevant positions.

#### **CONCLUSION**

#### **Leadership Roles and Responsibilities**

In our roles as male and female presidents of higher education institutions globally, I encourage each of us to recognize the significance of our leadership role in the context of our institutions, to embrace the notion that there is a purpose and obligation for our role which is much larger and more meaningful than the title we hold, and that we (male and female) have a responsibility to support and model for future female leaders the most ethical, authentic, and humble leadership. Resilience and tenacity may set female leaders apart and it may also make ascendancy fraught



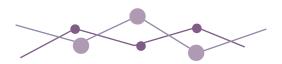


with greater challenges. However, it is these additional qualities that are needed in these positions and modeled for those who are embarking on these leadership pathways.





### **CHAPTER TWO**





## **Sue Cunningham**President and CEO

## Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE)



## A Short Overview the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE)

For 50 years, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) has been a trusted partner for those who seek to advance education. Today, CASE convenes, educates, guides, catalyzes, provides research to and shares knowledge with a membership of more than 3,000 educational institutions, including nearly 100,000 professionals, across 82 countries. Serving schools, colleges, universities, and related institutions worldwide, CASE is the preferred strategic partner and professional home for advancement (advancement services, alumni relations, communications, fundraising and marketing) professionals worldwide.

#### **My Tenure as President**

I have been President and CEO of CASE since March 2015. Before that I was a volunteer for CASE in the UK, Australia and Asia for nearly 20 years.

#### My Professional Path to this Position

The short answer is not an obvious one!

I studied Performing Arts at Middlesex Polytechnic (now a university) in London. Thereafter, I went to work in theatre as a stage manager at Theatr Clwyd in North Wales. It was an exciting time working in a repertory theatre with a wide range of productions, actors and directors. I remember, for example, whilst I was stage managing rehearsals of *Hedda Gabler* in the rehearsal room in town, the production of *Antony and Cleopatra* was in its final week of rehearsals at the theatre on the hill, with Vanessa Redgrave and Timothy Dalton in the lead roles. I met some amazingly creative people whilst working in theatre. One of



my favorite productions was *Little Shop of Horrors*, directed and designed by Clive Hicks Jenkins, Clive's design was very film noir stylistically and I remember tears in the rehearsal room when we first heard the actors singing *'Suddenly Seymour'*. It still sends shivers up my spine. Clive, a dear friend, is now a well-known artist and illustrator.

When I realized that not many stage managers, outside of the West End in London, were over 30, I started to explore roles in arts administration. I had a brief stint working as an actors' agent – not a position I enjoyed – a conversation for another day! Because of a family move from North to South Wales, I then secured a position at Wales' national photographic gallery, Ffotogallery. One of the joys of moving to the gallery, in the heart of Wales' capital city of Cardiff, was discovering that the gallery was but two minutes from the back door to Marks & Spencer's sandwiches!

My job included marketing and managing our touring exhibitions, our education programmes, the gallery administration, and fundraising. I particularly enjoyed the opportunity to work with some inspiring photographers and to gain a deeper appreciation of photography as an art form. I remember one particular exhibition, by the photographer William Tsui, which captured, through images, the warm spirit of the people in Aber/Blaengwynfi, a mining town in the Welsh valleys, as part of his work on *The Valleys Project*. His work documented a postmining community which was revitalized from within at a time when many similar communities had not yet rebounded from the closure of all of the mines - the main industry for the area.

I discovered, whilst at Ffotogallery, a firm appetite for fundraising, especially at a time when the gallery had ambitious plans for transition and growth. My next role provided me with the opportunity to focus and hone my fundraising skills at the National Museums and Galleries of Wales. The organisation consisted of ten museums across Wales, including museums about the wool and slate industries



and the magnificent National Museum which had a comprehensive collection, including a wonderful collection of impressionist and post-impressionist art forming one of the great British art collections of the 20th century which was donated by the Davies sisters. I remember when my son, Rupert, was about three years old, walking through the galleries after the museum had closed and him shouting with glee that Renoir's Blue Lady's eyes were following him!

At the end of 1997 I was appointed to my first role in a university, initially as Deputy, and several months later as Director of External Relations at St Andrews University. The town and the university are both stunning places to live and to work. We lived, in fact, in a small fishing village south of St Andrews, called Crail. In addition to preparing for a philanthropic campaign, and for my final year handling the media flurry of a high-profile student who would be starting at the university in the autumn of 2021, one of my most nerve wracking and exciting moments at St Andrews was giving the laureation address for the honorary graduation of JK Rowling. It was the first honorary degree that she had received. I remember meeting her, in preparation, at the famous 'Nicholson's Cafe' in Edinburgh, where she wrote parts of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's* Stone. On the day of giving her laureation address, in front of over one thousand graduates and their families, I sought to calm my nerves by reminding myself that the speech was neither about, nor for, me. Rather, it was for all those who were starting the next chapter of their lives that day and were celebrating their hard work and achievements at the university. It was also, of course, to honour JK Rowling, who brought about a renaissance in reading by children through her Harry Potter novels.

From the stunning historic surrounds of St Andrews, to another beautiful university and city, Oxford, where I spent five enjoyable years working at Christ Church, one of the thirty-nine Oxford colleges. There was a certain irony in moving from a place where King Henry VIII had dissolved the monasteries and left St Andrews cathedral in ruins, to Christ Church, where King Henry VIII took



over and renamed the college and cathedral in 1546, which originally had been established by Cardinal Wolsey. Christ Church, never known as Christ Church college because of its uniquely joint foundation between college and cathedral, is one of the most beautiful in Oxford. As Director of Development there, I had the opportunity to become a Fellow, or 'Student' as they are called at Christ Church, and sit on the Governing Body. We undertook a campaign for the College and built its first annual fund and parents' programme. The alumni community, and my colleagues at Christ Church, had a strong sense of connection and dedication. I am grateful to still feel a part of that community.

After five years at Christ Church, I became Director of Development for the University of Oxford where I was involved in developing, launching and raising the first £1billion of the Oxford Thinking Campaign. The Campaign to raise £1.25bn (ultimately over £3bn was raised), when we launched it in 2008, was the largest philanthropic campaign for a university outside of the United States. I learned an immense amount, working closely with faculty and colleagues across the university and colleges, and in building philanthropic support worldwide. An experience I remember fondly was the opportunity of leading the initiative to open our first office for the university in Hong Kong. One of our alumni based in Hong Kong helped identify an appropriate office space. I remember touring different options with him and being delighted to visit one in Central with spectacular views and half the price of the other properties we had visited. As we departed our alumnus, Chris, explained to me that we could not consider renting said property – it had bad Feng Shui. An early lesson in the importance of being culturally aware.

In the autumn of 2010, I was teaching, as a CASE volunteer, at the CASE *Asia Pacific Institute for Educational Fundraising*, just south of Melbourne, Australia. On the first morning one of the other faculty members passed a note to me asking whether I might be interested in considering a Vice Principal role at the University of Melbourne. After nearly ten years at Oxford I was pondering the next move. I sent back the note saying, 'Sure'!





The following year, my husband and I started our next great adventure and we moved to Australia, where I took up the position of Vice Principal for Advancement at the University of Melbourne. We felt incredibly fortunate to have the opportunity of living and working in a new cultural context. My husband, Howard, a schoolteacher of Classics, was swiftly hired by University High School. I thoroughly enjoyed building the university's first campaign in over sixty years (the Believe Campaign to raise AU\$500 million) and working with a dedicated team and supportive colleagues across the university. Much as I imagine he will hate me for writing this, one of the most remarkable aspects of my time at Melbourne was working with the Vice Chancellor (Principal/President) Glyn Davis. He is the most impressive of leaders – deeply strategic, thoughtful and bold. I often reflect on his leadership when I am trying to improve my own.

As I reflect on my professional journey, it makes sense in retrospect, but the 21-year-old Susan Moses, as I was then, had no idea, nor plan, for the career that I have been incredibly fortunate to experience.

#### **Strategies for Successful Leadership in this Position**

There are several strategies that I use in my efforts to lead success at CASE.

First and foremost is the importance of investing in people. Surrounding myself with bright, dedicated colleagues who bring expertise and wisdom far greater than my own, has been a key part of my joy in this work.

When I was at college part of my honours project was on group dynamics. I value immensely interacting with people, learning from them and supporting their success as I experienced directly working, for example, on theatrical productions. I wanted to deepen my understanding of what the ingredients were that created the right chemistry and sense of belonging. I still do. This is increasingly true as one learns more about societal challenges and disparity and





the importance and great value of building teams which celebrate diverse lived experiences and work to create a culture of inclusion and belonging.

I am also keen for my colleagues to feel safe in being open and honest with me. I value their insights and counsel and know that I will be more effective if I hear them, undisguised in politeness. As CEO I know that this is a hard thing to ask; but, without that honesty it is easy for institutional leaders to become increasingly remote from what matters most organizationally.

Working with generous and inspiring leaders has also been key to my learning and career progression. In almost every job I have had there has been just such a person including: Glyn Davis, mentioned earlier; Colin Ford, the Director of the National Museums and Galleries of Wales who shared my love of theatre and gave me the confidence to grow; and Andy Hamilton who was an inspiring Vice Chancellor at Oxford and who now serves on the CASE Board and is Emeritus President of NYU. Further, seeking out mentors has proven key. When I moved to Australia, for example, I asked an Oxford alumnus to be my mentor. He is a highly regarded business leader in the city. I was keen to learn from him the culture, context and how I could be most effective in my new leadership role which positioned me at the university cabinet level. I also remember when I was transitioning from leading a team of six at Christ Church to a team of 150 at the University of Oxford, I asked my Campaign Board Chair, Sir David Scholey, for his advice. He memorably counseled, 'Only do what only you can do'.

Executive coaching has been very important for me in the last decade of my career. I met Rachel, my coach, when I was participating in a leadership programme at Columbia University. She has provided insightful counsel and guidance, holding up a mirror to my leadership style and helping me to shape my thinking and approach.



Finally, I would reflect on the importance of context. I was advised, many years ago, that one will be most effective in leading an organisation for which one cares deeply. I remember when I was in the process of applying for my current role, my executive coach suggested I write down the values and facets that would be important to me were I successful in acquiring the position. I remember, two years after I started, Rachel sent me back the list I had written. The stars had, and still do, very much align.

#### **Gender and the Presidency**

I have pondered this question more than any other and I think the honest answer is "I don't know". It would be naïve to suggest that women, broadly speaking, have equal opportunities. We know, even in the countries in which I have lived, that often women are paid less, promoted more slowly and occupy fewer senior positions than men.

Working in universities, I have experienced something of a divide between professional staff and academic ones. This has not played out necessarily in individual relationships but rather a sense, in some institutions, that academic colleagues have a more important voice. I remember when I first was hired by St Andrews and I asked my beloved father, an Emeritus Professor at that time, what he thought I should know about working in higher education. He told me that I should never forget that universities are academic institutions run by academics and for academics and that I should never be paid more than academics. To my mind the work of academic colleagues is the life blood of universities in providing teaching and research. At the same time, professional staff are strategically critical too for the myriad expertise that they bring. I would argue that both academic and professional staff have something significant to contribute to the successful advancement of education.



If there have been decisions made about my career opportunities relating to my gender (or my race - I am Jewish) I have not been in the room where it happened. I remember a schoolteacher once asking me to read the part of Shylock, at the age of 11 in an all-girls' school, because I was Jewish. I also remember a teacher at school telling me that I could not read a Bible lesson at the carol concert because, as a Jew, I could not possibly mean it. Distant memories that linger on. But has gender been a barrier, I am not sure.

#### **Advice for Other Female Presidents**

I would highly recommend seeking out mentorship and an executive coach. As CEOs, whilst showing vulnerability with our teams and our Boards is a healthy thing to do, there are times that one needs someone disconnected from the institution with whom one can unpack challenges and determine how to be our best selves in different, and sometimes challenging contexts.

I would also encourage women presidents to both recognize their imposter syndrome (methinks we all have one!) and put it in its place. Self-doubt is undoubtedly the better end of the spectrum than arrogance. That said, it can be undermining. If you have reached a leadership role, there is significant evidence of your effectiveness and success. I encourage women leaders, when our imposter syndrome pokes his or her head above the surface, to balance the self-criticism with actual evidence.

When I started at CASE, an association with a global community of professionals and circa 4,000 who volunteer each year, I spent a considerable part of my first year on a listening tour. The timing for this engagement work aligned with the development of our strategic plan. The relationships that have grown as a result of those early interactions have proven invaluable. We are incredibly fortunate to have such a significant body of dedicated and informed volunteers who are willing to give of their time and expertise in myriad ways to support the





advancement of education worldwide. There have been more occasions than I can count when engaging with members of our community has been key. For example, between 2017 and 2020 we went through a considerable governance transition, requiring much consultation and the building of consensus. It was a complex journey. Ultimately, we needed to take the recommended changes to the membership for a vote. The success of this work is, without doubt, because so many were consulted and involved.

As leaders there are times, particularly early on in our roles, when we feel the pressure of needing to know all the answers. I know that I never will and that I never have. What benefits my association most is having colleagues and volunteers whose counsel and expertise enable us to find the right path, the right opportunities, the right solutions. I have been fortunate to consistently work in environments where curiosity in seeking the right answer is encouraged.

One of my favorite leadership quotes is from Nelson Mandela 'It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership'. During the pandemic there were times when I did need to be more directive in my leadership. And there will always be decisions that we need to own and make as CEOs. The buck stops with us. But in my experience, there are many more occasions when I find myself supporting others in their decision making and in growing themselves as leaders.

#### **Advice for Females Interested in becoming Presidents**

A few thoughts.

First, ensure that in evaluating any leadership opportunity you assess the institutional culture and values and their alignment with your own. Leading a college or university is harder now than it has ever been. You will be managing





a breadth of stakeholders, inside and outside of the institution, in contexts of increasing polarization. You will be judged for all that you do and for actions taken throughout the community you lead. And, news spreads with great alacrity in our digitally connected world. These are 24/7 roles. So being sure that the opportunity you are pursuing is the right one for you, where you can be happy and successful, is of the highest import. It is also vital that you care deeply about the institution and its mission, or that you have the capacity to grow into so doing.

If you are in a search it is important that you have full sight of the fiscal status of the institution and that you do all that you are able to learn about the internal and external culture and ethos. You also need to feel excited about working with the Board, and therefore have the opportunity to interact with Board officers and the appointment committee. Where possible, having interactions with staff and students is also invaluable in assessing culture. To be successful you need to feel that you can belong.

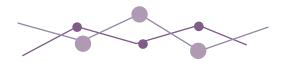
I would also seek out the counsel of existing women HE leaders. My experience is that they are supportive and can provide excellent insights on their journeys'.

Finally, I would seek out opportunities in your current role, to build the acumen that university and college leaders need. This might relate to getting more involved with external engagement working with advancement colleagues – on fundraising, alumni engagement, government relations and broader stakeholder engagement. You might want to develop your expertise in financial management. Or, you might wish to further develop your leadership skills. There are numerous educational associations, as we do at CASE, which run programmes for aspiring leaders. There are also, of course, executive education programmes. The year before I started at CASE, I signed up for a four-week leadership programme at Columbia University Business School – it was invaluable.





# **CHAPTER THREE**





Silvia E. Giorguli President

## El Colegio de México (COLMEX)



### **Overview of El Colegio de Mexico**

El Colegio de México (COLMEX) is a public research university founded almost 85 years ago. It focuses on humanities and social sciences. In its origins, it became a place of reception for Spanish scholars, intellectuals, university presidents, artists and writers who were forced to flee Spain during the civil war. All the expertise of the Spanish exile translated into the construction of emerging disciplines in Mexico, the publication in Spanish of academic texts and the formation of students, mainly at the graduate level. Today, COLMEX is grouped in eight research centers: Historical Studies, Literary and Linguistic Studies, International Studies, African and Asian Studies, Demographic Studies, Urban and Environmental Studies, Economic Studies, Sociological Studies and Gender Studies. We have 19 academic programs, more than 200 faculty members and close to 500 students, who go through a very strict selection process. Throughout its history, COLMEX has become a reference in social sciences and humanities in all Latin America as can be seen by its broad publication of books and its nine academic journals in its fields of study. Our alumni have been pioneers building academic institutions in several countries of the region or have had outstanding roles as officials and intellectuals, mainly in Mexico.

#### **Tenure as President**

To date, COLMEX has had eight presidents. I was appointed in 2015, becoming the first woman to lead the institution and women on my team were the first to hold executive positions in the President's office. Although women constitute almost half of the faculty, it took the institution 75 years to integrate women to high academic positions where they could lead initiatives and implement them.





#### My Path to the Presidency

In my case, I was hired at COLMEX in 2002, right after finishing my Ph.D. I received my Ph.D. from Brown University in the US and returned to Mexico during the final stages of my dissertation research. I assumed a position as professor in the Center for Demographic, Urban and Environmental Studies. COLMEX opened for me the opportunity of returning to one of my alma maters as a decade earlier I studied here for my Master's Degree in Demography. A couple of months after my integration to the academic cloister, I was invited to be the Academic Coordinator of the Master in Demography and, three years later, as Academic Coordinator of the Ph.D. in Population Studies. Afterwards, I was appointed Director of my Center; I was also the first woman holding this position at the Center for Demographic, Urban and Environmental Studies. Along with my colleagues, I advocated for initiatives in new research areas, changes in our academic programs and I established new collaborations with institutions throughout Mexico and in the international arena. The collaborations were in the fields of study covered by the Center and promoting an increase in student mobility.

Soon after completing my six-year term as Director, I decided to participate in the process for the appointment of the new President of COLMEX. There were six candidates, among which I was the only woman and the youngest. When I decided to participate in the process I was convinced that it was a good moment to present and to discuss ideas regarding: the organization of the institution, the opening of new research areas, the way our undergraduate and graduate programs had adjusted to the current contexts; and, the ways we could benefit from the technological changes to advance in the distribution and visibility of our research in Mexico, Latin America and at a global scale. I was appointed President—and surprised to be appointed—by our governing board for a five-year term, from 2015 to 2020. From my perspective, the community was also surprised as I was the youngest of all the candidates and



at a stage where I was still consolidating my research career. I was 45 at the time and I had worked at COLMEX for 13 years. Not young or inexperienced for the outside world, but unusually young for an academic institution, like COLMEX, with a long and solid tradition. In 2020, during the pandemic caused by COVID-19, I was appointed for a second five-year term.

#### **Gender and the Presidency**

I had not realized how gender played a role in academic management until I became president of COLMEX. Along with one of my colleagues from the University of Veracruz, Sara Lovera, we were the only women at the meetings of University Presidents of the main public institutions. In addition, my appointment as President was followed shortly by the mobilization of female students nationwide demanding the elimination of all forms of gender violence within universities and the implementation of specific actions to promote equal opportunities for men and women. I found great allies within and outside my institution who walked with me during my first years as president and with whom I shared my ideas around academic management and my concerns about emerging and old problems in higher education. I shared experiences with other women in top positions in universities in Mexico and in other parts of the world and with some men also in leading roles, such as the president of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), Enrique Graue, president of the largest public university in Latin America. Grounded in a profound sense of sorority, with some of my colleagues we built a space for women presidents, which increased in time as more women became presidents of public universities in Mexico. I shared with other women, whom I admired, our new protocols regarding gender related violence and how to respond to it, along with other initiatives. These exchanges were crucial in the definition of our normative behaviors and policies. Within our network of female presidents, we have also discussed and have expanded the agenda to include other initiatives, such as the policies regarding care work, that each of us were considering for our own institutions.



#### **Advice for other Female Presidents**

I would say that being a woman facilitated the implementation of some of the actions that I undertook in the past years. It facilitated the communication with the young generation of female students and the understanding of the context of social violence to which they referred. It allowed me to be more empathic and open to think about the best institutional strategy to support our students through the mental health problems that emerged during and after the COVID19 pandemic. It gave me strong surrounding support to further initiatives such as opening a Gender Studies Center, promoting new topics in the research agenda at COLMEX or developing projects such as the "Biographical Dictionary of Women in the Construction of El Colegio de México" (just published a week ago). This last project became part of our gender model intended to give visibility to the role that women in different positions—students, researchers, administrative staff, library staff—played in the construction of the institution. Since the field of history is one of our main fields of study, it is surprising that the books written about COLMEX have very few references to women dating back to the founding of the institution and during the following decades. The coordinators of the dictionary had literally to dive deep into our archives to find the stories of women in the founding of the first research centers, in the organization of our library or of our first alumni, many of them outstanding scholars and diplomats.

One of the most challenging processes within the institution that I have faced relates to the definition of institutional policies and normative instruments to respond to the demands of sexual harassment or of other expressions of gender related violence or harassment within the institution. As I mentioned, my first years as president coincided with the increase in the female students' movement, and COLMEX was no exception. By that time, we did not have any normative policies on sexual harassment and we were not prepared to respond as rapidly and efficiently as the community was



demanding. We went through a rapid process of creating a protocol, training members of the community to be first contact persons for those who have experienced any form of gender related violence or harassment and to implement our normativity policies regarding sanctions. We also conducted an assessment identifying the most common events of gender violence and the most vulnerable populations. I have to say that this construction has been a collective process; we decided to have a constant dialogue with several sectors of our community—academic staff, administrative staff and students. We also worked closely with the professors and administrative staff unions to build spaces that prevented gender related violence. I would not say it is a finished quest. We face new or unexpected challenges continuously. But in this process, I have learned the importance of building collective goals—even though they may take more time—in order to give a solid base to institutional change and hope they will endure well beyond my administration. I have also learned the importance of certain principles—such as the protection of the victims as well as the due process for all parties involved. From the space of exchange with other women presidents, we have also participated in what I consider a paradigm change moving towards the "restorative justice" model as a way to re-establish a healthy dynamic within the community. Esther liménez, former president of Lluch University in Barcelona, has shared with us the discussions and the work that is being conducted currently in Spain on this topic. I am not a lawyer, I am a demographer. So, although some of these issues might sound obvious, for me it was an unknown territory where the sanction was not the end of the process but had to be followed by the restoration of the cohesion of the community.

#### **Strategies for Successful Presidential Leadership**

There are some traits relevant for those in leading positions within universities that I first heard from other women and some men in such roles: **flexibility** to understand and to adjust to the specific situations that one faces



in academic management; **openness** to listen to the heterogenous opinions and feelings around topics which are difficult, upsetting or explosive and that can range from decisions regarding the research agenda or the structure of our academic programs to everyday relations among students, professors, other scholars and administrative workers; **confidence** and **assertiveness** to make decisions and move forward in implementing them. These all take balance, while, at the same time, being flexible and determined, open and assertive!

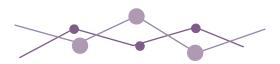
#### My Advice for other Females Interested in becoming Presidents

Today, I am about to finish my second term as president at COLMEX. According to our normativity, I cannot be renewed for another term. I think ten years is a period long enough to discuss, to develop and to implement ideas, initiatives and projects. Furthermore, I think it is important to renew the leading positions in academic institutions. I am proud to see a new generation of women in leading roles within higher education in Mexico. They will have to face challenges such as the polarization within and around our universities, the impact of technology in social relations and dynamics—with all its positive and negative effects, the rapid development of Artificial Intelligence and the need to think how it will influence our activities and interactions, along with the persistence of inequalities in opportunities and gender imbalance that needs to be settled. I have learned in these years that there is a great disposition to share our experiences and discuss the challenges each of our institutions face. Keeping these spaces of interaction, building on the sorority among women leaders in higher education and sharing the good practices as well as the mistakes would be my main advice for other women who are interested in occupying leading roles in academic management.





## **CHAPTER FOUR**





# Carmen Z. Lamagna Vice Chancellor

# American International University Bangladesh (AIUB)



#### **Overview Of AIUB**

Private Universities in Bangladesh in the early 1990's were a novelty and were struggling to make their mark in the academic field as the government, only in 1992, enacted the Private Universities Act. American International University-Bangladesh (AIUB) is a government-authorized leading private university located in Dhaka – Bangladesh's capital. It was founded in 1994 by Dr. Anwarul Abedin with the strategic goal of developing the country's human resources by fostering innovation, research, and teamwork, as well as by offering high quality education. As a student-focused university, AIUB is at the vanguard of nurturing, producing and graduating highly skilled professionals who possess a strong ethical sense and are prepared to participate in the competitive fields of business, science, technology, social science, and the arts. Functioning as an independent entity with its Board of Trustees, AIUB obtained its initial approval for establishment and operation on November 6, 1995. A significant achievement was made on October 25, 2023, when the institution received the Certificate of Permanent Establishment and Operation from the People's Republic of Bangladesh's Ministry of Education, a distinction achieved by only a few private universities in Bangladesh.

AIUB's inspirational journey began with a modest number of students to not just nurture leaders but to also cultivate them. Since the beginning, the university has since grown into a vibrant academic community, presently educating 13,000+ students. With 36,000+ graduates making their mark globally, AIUB offers 19 academic programs across 4 faculties, demonstrating a dedication to academic excellence and comprehensive education. Not only producing world class graduates, AIUB has made its mark in the higher education sector of the country with many pioneering contributions. Being the first university in the country to have internationally accredited Business and Arts programs, technological adaptations in education with the in-house University Management System,



educational alliance with global technology giants, like Microsoft, SAP, Cisco, and the largest virtual laboratory setup in the South Asian region are just a few of the forward focused achievements of AIUB.

AIUB is celebrating 28 incredible years of achievement, a journey ignited by the founder, Dr. Anwarul Abedin and which I spearheaded. The enduring guidance and support have forged a familial bond and propelled the organization to excellence. The stalwarts' continuous commitment has been pivotal in shaping AIUB's triumphant trajectory.

#### **Length of Time Serving as Vice Chancellor**

I was directly involved in the founding of the institution; from 1994 to 1996, I oversaw AIUB as project director. I had the responsibility of preparing the project proposal including the formulation of the curriculum and infrastructure needed for the approval of the University's establishment, from the Ministry of Education and University Grants Commission. I was appointed as a Vice Chancellor from 1997 till 2021. The first female and the first foreigner at the time of my appointment; it was a challenging journey. Being first for anything imposes a bit of uncertainty in itself. The growth of AIUB affirmed my dedication and replaced any of my concerns with confidence and pride. I am currently a member of the AIUB Board of Trustees and adviser to the university's academic leadership. I have seen and can proudly state that I am an integral part of the initiation, growth and rise of American International University-Bangladesh (AIUB). Seeing the university expand daily has been rewarding.

Over my tenure at AIUB, I have introduced new faculties, programs, and courses, all of which are time relevant and needed. Under my guidance, AIUB increased access to higher education, initiated industry-driven and diverse curriculum, brought innovation in teaching and learning, facilitated international collaborations, research and development, supervised



infrastructure development and made an overall greater contribution to GDP growth in Bangladesh. AIUB now has four faculties, Faculties of Science and Technology, Engineering, Business Administration and Arts and Social Sciences, with 17 programs specifically addressing the rapid expansion of global demand.

#### My Professional Path to this Position

The path to becoming a university president typically involves a combination of academic qualifications, leadership experience, and demonstrated commitment to higher education.

After completing my Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from Adamson University, Manila in 1978, and passing the licensure examination for Chemical Engineers in the same year, I completed my Masters' degrees from the Philippines and the Doctoral degree from California Coast University, USA.

My achievements as an educator and manager may be gleaned from the positions held in prestigious international bodies. I was the Treasurer (2011-2014) and Executive committee member (2007-present) of the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP), Administrative Board Member (2017-2022) of the International Association of Universities (IAU), with the Association of Universities of Asia and the Pacific (AUAP) as an ex-officio board member (2010-2018) having served as the first female President for 2008 to 2010, AUAP Advisory Council member for 2021-2024, Asia Pacific Quality Network Label, member of the Board. I was also a member of the Board of Trustees of Adamson University, Manila Philippines from 2008 to 2018.

I was awarded one of the 2006 Presidential Awards for Overseas Filipinos. The award ceremony was held in Malacanang Palace, Manila, Philippines on





Dec. 7, 2006 and I delivered the acceptance speech on the said occasion on behalf of the 48 Presidential awardees. I was one of the 75 alumni awardees in the Adamson University Jubilee celebration in 2007 and best alumni of St. Joseph's Academy in 2016. I was selected as one of the top 100 women of the world under the education category by the International Alliance for Women (TIAW) in 2012 and one of the 100 most influential Filipinas in 2014 by the Filipina Women Network (FWN). I was honored with the Amity Global Academic Excellence Award in 2018.

As the Vice Chancellor I played a pivotal role in advancing the institution's educational standards and international reputation with my work which spans multiple facets of academia, including: leadership, curriculum development, and international collaboration.

As the inaugural woman Vice Chancellor in Bangladesh, I believe my path has served as an inspiring narrative, encouraging women to engage actively in advancing empowerment and progress throughout society. The exceptional accomplishments in promoting women's causes through educational programs, initiatives, or personal endeavors in the context of a developing country like Bangladesh have rightfully earned me recognition and acclimation.

The path is multifaceted and while there's no fixed formula for achieving this position, advanced education, academic leadership and experience, strategic career planning, demonstrated leadership and impact and community engagements are common elements of the journey.

#### **Strategies for Successful Leadership in this Position**

Successful leadership requires a combination of strategic thinking, effective communication, collaboration and a commitment to the institution's mission and values.





- To develop and communicate a compelling vision for the university's future that inspires faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders, to assess progress, adjust strategies as needed is a continuous process.
- To prioritize academic quality through innovation, research initiatives and academic programs that enhance teaching and learning outcomes which can contribute to the university's reputation and impact.
- To establish robust crisis management plans and protocols to effectively respond to emergencies, disruptions, and unforeseen challenges.
- To ensure responsible stewardship of financial resources and leading with integrity, transparency and ethical decision-making in the university's governance and operations.

My strategies for AIUB have always had four criteria, Quality Assurance and Accreditation, Global Collaboration, Inclusive Leadership and Adapting to the whirlwind of technological transformation. Throughout my leadership I ensured that AIUB upholds quality and gets acknowledged by international and local bodies for their effort towards quality higher education. AIUB is the first university in Bangladesh to establish a Quality Assurance Center among all private and public universities in Bangladesh in 2006. The primary function of the Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (AIUB-IQAC) is to oversee and lead the quality assurance activities of the university through a series of awareness and training programs for the academic and administrative personnel. This cell is one of my brainchildren, and it has successfully become a model for other Quality Assurance Cells of universities in Bangladesh. AIUB, was the first ever Bangladeshi university to be internationally accredited by the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges, and Universities (PAASCU). Both of our Computer Science and Engineering and Electrical and



Electronics Engineering programs are accredited by Board of Accreditation for Engineering and Technical Education (BAETE) of Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB). The Bachelor of Architecture program is accredited by the Institute of Architects, Bangladesh (IAB). AIUB also obtained ISO 9001:2008 Certification with SGS-UKAS under the scope "Quality Management Operation System for the University". These recognitions have been some of my small initiatives to place the university from a developing country onto the global map of academia.

In this era of global exposure and collaboration, I have always been on the lookout to form new relationships and collaborations for AIUB. AIUB is member of Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)'s International Quality Group (CHEA-CIQG). Another membership has been from Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN) and AIUB has also been awarded "APQN's Best/Model Internal QA Award" for the year 2016. The University is a Signatory to the Magna Charta Universitatum. I envisioned academic partnerships as being the key to responding to the changing global paradigm and hence AIUB is currently academic partners with universities and organizations here and abroad. Rankings has been the byword for educational institutes all over the world. Hence AIUB is now a QS, THE-Impact and SCIMAGO Ranked University.

#### The Impact of Gender on this Position

Gender can indeed play a role in a university president's position, although the extent to which it affects the role can vary depending on several factors such as culture of the institution, societal norms, and individual experiences. Gender stereotypes and biases may shape perceptions of a female leadership.

Being a female leader, I have the tremendous opportunity to create an equal opportunity for advancement for women workers and academicians. Diversity and inclusivity have been the key to my strategies at AIUB. The AIUB





board of trustees have 5 female members out of 9 total members. There are other prominent posts held by female employees. I formed AIUB Women Forum (AWF) in 2015 to empower women at all levels of decision-making with education, entrepreneurship, and leadership. AIUB has a structured policy to provide scholarships to both undergraduate and graduate students, with a special scholarship dedicated to female students which is "The Dr. Anwarul Abedin Scholarship Grant for Female University Students". Other than education, sports play an important role at AIUB, and I made sure that females do not get left out. AIUB has dedicated female cricket and football teams. The policies at AIUB have ensured that every female employee has equal pay and equal opportunities with their male counterparts.

Ultimately, a university president's effectiveness and success depend on their qualifications, leadership style, vision, and ability to traverse institutional dynamics. Addressing gender biases and promoting diversity and inclusion, institutions can create an environment where leaders, regardless of gender, can thrive and contribute to their fullest potential.

#### **Advice for Other Female Presidents**

To support female presidents in being a successful leader, here are some key pieces of advice based on my experience. Believe in your abilities and lead with confidence embracing your own unique leadership style and strength. Lead by example by demonstrating transparency, integrity, professionalism, and ethical behavior. Encourage experimentation and risk-taking, and support initiatives that drive positive change and growth. There are times that there will be pressure to conform to traditional expectations or stereotypes. Authenticity and confidence in your leadership approach will resonate with your team and stakeholders. Develop strong communication skills to articulate your vision, goals, and expectations clearly. Listen actively to the concerns and perspectives of others. A positive relationship with your team, colleagues, stakeholders, and



community members can facilitate collaboration and cooperation in achieving organizational objectives. Develop strong emotional intelligence to navigate interpersonal dynamics and effectively manage relationships. Recognize the importance of delegation and empower others to make decisions. Foster an inclusive culture where diverse voices are heard, valued, and represented at all levels of leadership.

Leadership can be challenging, and setbacks are inevitable. Be resilient to bounce back from adversity and persevere in achieving your goals. Boost your morale by recognizing the progress you've made and the impact you've had as a leader. Navigate the complexities of leadership with confidence, resilience, and authenticity.

#### Advice for Other Females Interested in Becoming Presidents/ Rectors/Chancellors?

Becoming a president/rector or a chancellor of a university or any significant institution requires dedication, resilience, and strategic planning. Foremost is to focus on obtaining relevant academic qualifications and continually invest in your personal and professional development. Advanced degrees in education, management or public administration can be beneficial. Build experience through various roles within the academia or related fields, cultivate relationships with mentors, colleagues and professionals who can provide valuable insights, support, and opportunities for advancement. Enhance your leadership abilities such as decision-making, communication, negotiation and conflict resolution through training, workshops, and seminars. Establish a strong professional presence through publications, presentations, and participation in events. Leadership roles are challenging especially in a male-dominated world. One must develop resilience to overcome setbacks and obstacles along the way. Stay focused on your goals and remain adaptable to change. Foster an inclusive environment that values and supports individuals





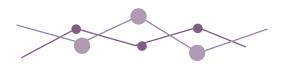
from diverse backgrounds. Pursue your aspirations with determination and persistence and most importantly strive for a healthy work-life balance. Prioritize self-care, and allocate time for relaxation, hobbies and spending time with the family.

Breaking barriers and achieving leadership roles as a female in traditionally male-dominated fields requires courage, perseverance, and commitment.





## **CHAPTER FIVE**





## Eun-joo Lee President

## **Seoul Cyber University**





## **An Overview of Seoul Cyber University**

Seoul Cyber University (SCU) has been a pioneering force in online education in Korea since its inception in 2000. As the country's first online university, SCU has consistently maintained accreditation from the Korean Ministry of Education, reflecting its commitment to excellence. SCU's dedication to quality online education has been recognized through achieving the highest grade in the Ministry of Education's evaluation of online universities for three consecutive years. Currently, SCU serves a diverse student body of 17,000 students across 11 schools and 43 departments and majors as well as graduate programs. From 2012 to 2016, SCU played a crucial role in the ASEAN Cyber University Establishment Projects, serving as the office of the secretary-general alongside 10 ASEAN countries and universities. SCU's focus has been on capacity building its commitment to enhancing the quality and accessibility of digital learning.

#### **Length of Time Serving as President**

I have served as the President of Seoul Cyber University from 2017 to 2021, and from 2023 and continuing.

#### My Professional Path to this Position

After obtaining a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Texas at Austin, I returned to Korea and joined Seoul Cyber University (SCU) as a professor. My academic journey at SCU has progressed through various roles, from assistant professor to associate professor, full professor, and then to positions of administrative leadership such as Deputy Dean of the Graduate School, Director of Admissions, Dean of Academic Affairs, Vice President, and, currently as becoming the President.





The decision to start my professorial career at an online university was driven by two main reasons. First, I was intrigued by the social contribution of online universities in expanding educational access to adult learners who were deprived of educational opportunities during their youth, especially in challenging environments and locations. In the past, many women in Korean society had to forgo higher education opportunities in favor of their brothers, working to support their education and living expenses. The prospect of working at SCU, which supports learners in balancing work and study through online education, was particularly appealing to me as a sociology graduate. Further, my innate curiosity and interest in new challenges was piqued by the opportunity to participate in the innovation and challenges of higher education through online learning. I was excited about the potential of online universities to shape the future of higher education.

My transition from teaching and research to administration was significantly influenced by the unique characteristics of online universities. Established in 2000, SCU, Korea's first online university, was an education-centric institution. We had to devise new teaching methods and educational models since the principles and regulations designed for traditional universities did not align well with an online setting. This necessitated all faculty members, including myself, to engage in both educational and administrative roles actively. We spent countless hours in meetings and debates to find and experiment with excellent educational models. I enjoyed participating in these innovative efforts and constantly discussed, with my colleagues, how to create the best online university possible. While such an approach might have been considered risky or reckless in a traditional university setting, at our university, someone willing to boldly explore new paths like myself was crucially needed.

#### **Strategies for Successful Leadership in this Position**

In managing the university, I consider it crucial to provide clear direction to all university members. To accomplish this, I actively listen to and reflect upon





their opinions in planning and execution, and then drive results with strong momentum. Moreover, I strive to maintain an open and innovative mindset to reflect and lead in this rapidly changing era. This can be detailed as follows:

- First, I repeatedly present and emphasize to its diverse members a clear vision and direction for the future of our university. I believe there's a significant difference when the university's key holders and members operate with clear direction compared to when they don't. Having a preconceived image and blueprint of the outcomes before achievements not only steadies the goal-reaching process but also facilitates active cooperation.
- Second, I actively listen to and incorporate members' feedback. I continually seek their thoughts on the university's goals and practices, striving for alignment while adjusting and compromising plans as needed without losing sight of the objective. This approach ensures that from planning to execution, we can proceed with full understanding and active cooperation from all members. Even if their opinions aren't directly included in the plans or actions, explaining the rationale can significantly reduce resistance.
- Third, once goals are shared and plans are established with ample feedback, I lead with strong momentum. This trait is vital in today's fast-paced world, where swift execution enhances members' sense of achievement and confidence, strengthening their perception of the university's progress and service improvement to students. I believe strong leadership is essential, especially given the relatively short tenure of presidents in Korea's academic landscape.
- Fourth, I quickly respond to calls for improvement and embrace constructive feedback. Promptly addressing needs for better work



environments and adapting university policies or regulations fosters a trusting relationship. I view critical feedback as an opportunity to enhance my leadership and capacity, striving to accommodate and improve wherever possible. Embracing constructive criticism, even from dissenting groups, is a critical virtue for a leader.

- Fifth, I constantly pursue innovation to ensure the university does not stagnate but continues to evolve. Our university, over the last 20 years, has grown from 1,000 students to 17,000. This has been driven by continual innovation and adaptation to societal trends and learners' needs. I use technological advances to push for innovation, challenging the status quo and familiar notions with skepticism and questions.
- Sixth, I demonstrate strong crisis management skills. During my tenure as president, I've faced various crises, but thorough crisis management has garnered significant trust and recognition from our institutional members. Transparently sharing the crisis resolution process enhances empowerment and strengthens our community. Facing crises isn't always negative; the key is in how they're managed and turned into opportunities.

#### **Gender and the Presidency**

Despite Korea's low representation of female leaders compared to its economic status, especially in higher education where female presidents are about 5% compared to 30% in the West, our university stands out with four female presidents, including myself, and seven female vice presidents over the past 20 years. This is testament to our inclusive leadership culture. Leading the university through significant changes, including the establishment and expansion of new colleges and majors, has helped dissipate any doubts about women's leadership capabilities.



Moreover, we've led in breaking down academic silos and introducing interdisciplinary majors and programs, contributing to innovative and excellent education. This achievement, facilitated by my willingness to embrace diverse opinions and foster consensus, underscores the unique strengths women bring to leadership.

#### **Advice for other Female Presidents**

Despite my relatively brief tenure as a university president and acknowledging my own need to learn from more experienced female presidents, I see value in sharing some critical insights on addressing contemporary challenges in higher education:

- Embrace an Open Mind: Universities thrive on the diversity and unique contributions of their members. However, genuine understanding and appreciation of this diversity is rare. Prejudices and stereotypes inevitably arise over time, leading to a narrowed perspective that may overlook or undervalue some individuals. It is imperative for leaders to foster an inclusive environment that provides opportunities for all members to showcase their talents, facilitating both personal growth and institutional development.
- Innovate Leadership: With diminishing resources and declining societal confidence in higher education, innovation becomes crucial. Leaders must navigate through myriad challenges and crises with a forward-thinking approach. The ability to manage meticulously while innovating offers a powerful advantage, particularly now as the introduction of online education and Alenhanced learning systems becomes essential. This requires bold, pioneering efforts to stay ahead of technological advancements and educational trends.



• Engage in Global Activities: The realm of international engagement often presents a narrower path for female presidents, given the dominant presence of male leaders. Yet, it's vital for female leaders to venture beyond their comfort zones and actively participate in global academia. This not only benefits them personally but also enhances their institutions' prestige and global connections. Building a broad international network allows for the rapid exchange of ideas, learning from global trends, and the application of international best practices within their universities. Additionally, fostering a globally open university culture enables both students and faculty to connect and excel on an international stage.

These strategies highlight the importance of an open-minded approach, innovation in leadership, and active global engagement. They emphasize the need for female presidents to leverage their unique positions and capabilities to drive positive change and growth in their institutions, despite the challenges they may face in a traditionally maledominated leadership landscape.

#### **Advice for other Females Interested in becoming Presidents?**

For women aspiring to become a university presidency, my leadership experience and observations of female leaders culminate in the following advice:

Moderate Your Energy and Passion: Female presidents often
exhibit immense energy and passion, which, while contributing
to their success, can overwhelm others. It's important to balance
showing your enthusiasm without exhausting or demotivating your
team. Encourage others to invest their energy and passion, creating
a more sustainable and motivated environment.



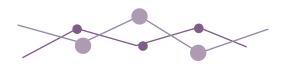


- Embrace Strategic Thinking and a Broad Vision: Daily tasks can
  detract from long-term strategic planning and big picture thinking.
  Despite time constraints, it's crucial for a president to maintain a
  broad perspective and engage in strategic thinking, keeping in mind
  the university's future direction and grounding every action in a longterm strategy.
- Avoid Creating Enemies and Foster Good Relationships: It's
  natural to gravitate towards supportive individuals, but excluding or
  sidelining dissenters can lead to a divisive environment. Even those
  resistant to change should be kept in the loop and given opportunities,
  as gradual engagement can transform skeptics into as passionate
  contributors as any supporter.
- Stand Tall Amidst Challenges in a Male-Dominated Society: Leading as a woman in societies where male leaders dominate, such as in Asia and specifically in Korea, can be daunting. Remember, your role as a female president makes you a role model, especially to female students and faculty. Displaying confidence and resilience not only maintains your authority but also paves a hopeful path for other women.
- Delegate Authority Liberally: Hoarding responsibilities reduces
  efficiency and increases workload. Empower capable deputies to
  handle tasks autonomously, focusing on the most critical issues
  yourself. This strategy of delegating authority and responsibility is
  crucial for effective operation and promotes organizational health
  and democracy. Direct involvement might seem quicker, but broad
  empowerment ensures distributed responsibility, preventing burnout
  and fostering a democratic work environment.





# **CHAPTER SIX**





## Devorah Lieberman President Emerita

## **University of La Verne**



## **Overview Of The University Of La Verne**

The University of La Verne is a private, not-for-profit, comprehensive university, located in Southern California. The university was founded in 1891 (133 years ago) by the Church of the Brethren (a peace centered Christian denomination). Though the university is no longer affiliated with the Church of the Brethren, its values are still present in the ethos of the university- a focus on community engagement, service to others, and acting in ways that enhance society. It has five colleges: The College of Arts & Sciences, The College of Business, The La Fetra College of Education, The Castulo de la Rocha College of Health & Community Well-Being, and the College of Law & Public Service. The university serves approximately 5,500 students with 70% students from underrepresented populations (60% Hispanic, 10% African American, Asian Pacific islander, Native American). The university is federally designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution because of its significant Hispanic population. It is accredited by the Western Association of State Universities and the following units are fully accredited: Law, Public Administration, Education, and Legal Studies. In US News & World Report, the university is ranked as the #1 private institution nationally for student social mobility and by the Wall Street Journal as #33 in the country and #5 for private institutions.

#### **Length of Time Serving as President**

I was appointed the president of the University of La Verne in July, 2011 and served as president until August, 2023, when I became President Emerita. I was appointed the 18th president of the university and the first female president. I was also the first president who was not affiliated with the Church of the Brethren.



#### My Professional Path to this Position

In hindsight, my path to the presidency was strongly influenced by my personal life journey coupled with my academic and disciplinary studies. During my undergraduate years, I spent a year in Israel and began to develop a belief that effective communication across cultures was the key to cultural competence, reducing bias, and successful cross-cultural respect, empathy, and collaboration. When I returned from my time in Israel, I chose to continue my studies and to major in Communication Studies and ultimately in the field of Intercultural Communication for my Master's degree. Following my Master's Degree, I spent a year teaching in Switzerland and approximately 5 years teaching at the university level in Athens, Greece. These international experiences continued to reinforce my commitment to the importance of embracing effective communication skills to successfully cross lines of difference (whether they were differences based in political, cultural, ethnic, religious, or gender differences). At the time, I believed that being a professor at the university level, in the area of Intercultural Communication, was my calling. During my time as a tenured professor at Portland State University (1987-2004), I was fortunate that the University administration gave me the opportunity to have a broader impact across the university by bringing me into an administrative role resulting in the position of Vice Provost. During my time as an administrator at Portland State University, I came to understand that a continuing administrative trajectory in higher education would allow me to further realize my commitment to successfully serve students in higher education. This personal mission led me to serve as the Provost and Chief Academic Officer (2004-2011) at Wagner College on Staten Island, New York.

In 2010, I received a call from a search firm encouraging me to apply for the Presidency of the University of La Verne. As I researched the history,



mission, and vision of the University of La Verne, I came to understand that my personal commitment to higher education and the mission of the University of La Verne were very much aligned. The University of La Verne, from its founding in 1891, was committed to four values: civic and community engagement, lifelong learning, ethical decision making, and diversity and inclusion. The university's evolution led to serving undergraduate and graduate students who were predominantly the first in their families to attend college, from middle- and low-income families, and from underrepresented populations. The majority of the students come from Southern California and after graduation return to the region career ready. I saw this as the "brain remain"- students returning to their neighborhoods with the skills, values, and employment to help lift the region and the state. With this in mind, when I was offered the University of La Verne presidency, I believed that I had been preparing my entire professional life for this position, and I did not hesitate accepting the position. I enthusiastically began the presidency in July, 2011 and remained in the position until August, 2023.

#### **Strategies for Successful Leadership in this Position**

There were several strategies and attributes that I sought to maintain throughout my presidency.

I understood that a private not-for-profit institution in California, like the University of La Verne, was surrounded by public higher education institutions that were attractive, available and accessible to the same students who might choose the University of La Verne. Within this Southern California catchment area, there are several two-year community colleges, multiple four-year institutions that are part of the California State University system, two institutions that are part of the University of California system, and more for-profit institutions than I can count. With these higher education options



available to all students, I consistently and continually posed these three visionary questions to the board of trustees, the faculty, and the staff:

In order for the University of La Verne to survive and thrive long into the future, we must ask and answer the following questions:

- How can we be distinctive from other institutions so that students choose to attend the University of La Verne?
- How can we be relevant to the students so that they choose to attend and graduate from the University of La Verne?
- How can we be competitive with other institutions so that the students choose to attend, graduate, and become lifelong supporters of the University of La Verne?

With these visionary and guiding questions, we sought the answers through strategic planning. I understood that not every single campus constituent would agree on the answers to each of these questions; however, it was critical to have the Board, the faculty, the staff, and the students involved in these iterative conversations so that the first strategic plan (called the 2020 strategic vision) would be a roadmap for us to follow.

The strategic plan, in answering the three questions included a number of paths: (1) Identifying new academic programs that positively answered the 3 questions posed; (2) identifying a comprehensive campaign that would help to fund the outcomes of the strategic plan— student scholarships, academic programs, physical infrastructure, academic and administrative positions; (3) creating a campus master plan that supported the future of the academic programs and student life.





Though there were times of push-back for the contents of this strategic plan, through a nimble and flexible approach, several academic programs were created and implemented, the \$125m comprehensive campaign was exceeded, and multiple buildings were constructed or renovated. In reflection, I would say that the university met and exceeded most of the initiatives adopted in the 2020 Strategic Plan.

In 2018, the next strategic plan (the 2025 vision) was created and will be completed in 2025. Again, this was an iterative process including the Board of Trustees, the faculty, the staff, and the students. This plan, became an extension of the 2020 strategic vision, and resulted in three foci: a transformative initiative, a bridge initiative, and incremental initiatives. The transformative initiative focused on the creation of a new college: The College of Health & Community Well-Being. The Bridge Initiative focused on a new model for the university's regional campuses. The Incremental Initiatives focused on identifying ways that processes and policies could be more efficient, more effective, and fiscally sound.

The leadership strategies I employed during my 12 years in the presidency at the university were focused on leading with vision, listening well, continuing to move the university and the initiatives forward, treating everyone with respect, continually and authentically giving others praise and credit when it was earned, and reminding everyone that we were a university that was meant to serve and support our students.

The period during Covid-19 was particularly challenging for the university and for me as the president. None of us had a roadmap for this time, we didn't know the extent of the pandemic and the university was depending on me, as the president, to lead everyone through the uncertainty. This began with sending all faculty, staff and students' home mid-March, 2022, training all faculty and staff to deliver courses and services virtually, continuing to move the 2025 strategic vision forward, and having constant communication with



the Board, faculty, staff, students (and their families). The communications included: regular updates to the Board, monthly State of the University virtual town meetings, regular town meetings with all the graduate and undergraduate students, and regular communications to the parents and families of the students. The communications always began with "how do we keep our campus community safe throughout this pandemic?" and "What more can we do to support you as faculty, staff, and students as we move through the pandemic to the other side?" Thankfully, we were able to move through the pandemic with adjustments to our virtual learning and delivery of coursework, flexible expectations for time spent in person on campus, and a focus on the importance of community and camaraderie.

#### **Gender and the Presidency**

Either knowingly or unknowingly, I believe gender played a role in my presidency. I was the 18th president of the University and the first female. Every time I was introduced to an audience, the introduction began with "Let's welcome the first female president of the University of La Verne, Dr. Devorah Lieberman". Whether I wanted it or not, even this introduction put gender as a significant element of my presidency. I recall one of the first times I was introduced to the faculty by a senior faculty member, he said, "I would like to introduce you to our new President. This is the first president who has long curly hair, is female and wears nail polish." Hmmm. How did I react to that introduction? I came to the podium, graciously thanked the faculty member and delivered my speech. After my presentation, I asked the faculty member who introduced me if I could speak with him privately for a few minutes. I said to him, "I assume you meant to compliment me in your introduction. However, I've worked my entire professional career to be seen as a scholar, a visionary, and a professional. When you ONLY spoke about my gender, my hair and my nails, I assume that is the only thing the audience focused on." He said he was terribly sorry and thanked me for talking with him. This was a lesson for me....



There will be many who treat me differently (for better or worse), intentionally or unintentionally, because of my gender, religion, age, or other demographic. However, I took it upon myself to take these as educational moments to kindly, gently, and firmly, share my thoughts. This stemmed from my training in intercultural communication: understanding others' perspectives, don't blame, don't assume, and find ways to educate myself and the others to respect and collaborate together.

As I reflect, I find that my personal faith may have had more of an impact during my presidency than my gender. The University of La Verne was founded by a Christian denomination called the Church of the Brethren. The values that drew me to the University are steeped in the teachings and beliefs of the Church of the Brethren. When I interviewed and saw those values in action, I believed that they were deeply aligned with the Jewish values with which I was raised. I found that when I accepted the Presidency, not everyone understood the alignment of these values and several questioned why a university that was founded by a Christian denomination (though no longer affiliated) would hire a Jewish president. I discovered this early from comments made to me by campus members, incredibly mean-spirited letters from some alumni, and some community members. Whenever I was confronted with these issues, I consciously chose to use these as educational moments to explain why I came to the University and the ways that I was seeking to uphold the same values that founded the university.

### **Advice for other Female Presidents**

I believe that being a president today may be one of the most difficult jobs that anyone can assume--- this ranges from skepticism from the public for the value of higher education, questioning if the president is leading effectively, the future enrollment decline, the need for fundraising, as well as constantly navigating the political waters with the Board, the faculty, the staff and the



students. The list goes on. The joys also abound: watching students major in a mission so that they can make the world a better place, seeing students graduate with values that will serve them for the rest of their lives, talking with alumni who tell stories of how much they loved their university time, and, sharing nationally and locally the value and beauty of the institution.

My advice to female presidents is that when you believe that your gender may be influencing how you are being treated, how seriously you are being taken, and how/if others are following your lead, do not let that deter you from your vision and path. It takes tremendous courage, grit, fortitude, and resilience to take the high road, believe in yourself and remind yourself that you were selected for this presidency because of your skills, experience, acumen and vision. There will certainly be those who will not support you or your presidency for many different reasons, and gender may certainly be one of them. However, as you consistently demonstrate that your leadership is making change and making a difference, the university will advance. It is that advancement that will be your legacy!

People often say, "the presidency is a lonely job". I never really knew what that meant until I became a president. It was nearly impossible to find colleagues at the university with whom I could share my thoughts, my concerns, my own insecurities, and from whom I could receive honest answers. It became critical for me to rely on my husband and our children with whom I could share my stress, my joys, my concerns, my exhaustion and my vision. I knew I could always count on their unwavering support, advice, and love.

### Advice for other Females Interested In becoming Presidents/ Chancellors/Rectors

As you move through your journey to the presidency, with eyes wide open, finding a mentor/coach/confidante who is not a family member or a





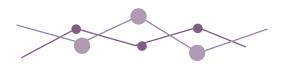
university colleague is a critical element. Years ago, hiring/having a coach was perceived as a weakness. As I look back, having a coach during my early professional years, would have been an asset to me. I strongly encourage women (and others) to hire or identify a coach that will be an honest partner and sounding board as one encounters the high points and low points and is always authentically available throughout the journey toward the presidency.

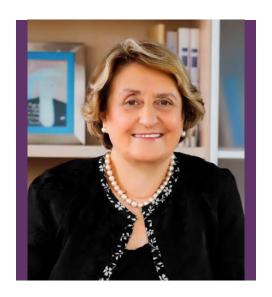
I often advise women who ask me if they should consider becoming a president. My advice is always the same. It will not be easy. It is fraught with challenges. However, with confidence, skills, resilience, grit, and belief in yourself, it can and will be a position that will serve the future of the students, your region, your country and the world. Always be authentic. Always be gracious. Always lead with vision. Always communicate. Always collaborate. Always give credit to those who are doing the hard work. Always praise publicly and criticize privately. Always see the joy in the impact and the transformation you see in each student.





## **CHAPTER SEVEN**





## Gülsün Sağlamer Rector

## **Istanbul Technical University**



### **An Overview of Istanbul Technical University**

Istanbul Technical University was established in 1773 as a military engineering school (Mühendishane-i Bahri Hümayun + Mühendishane'i Berri Hümayun) and converted into a Civil Engineering School (Hendese-i Mülkiye Mektebi) in 1909 and, then, transformed into a university structure named "Istanbul Technical University" (ITU) in 1944. ITU is celebrating its 250th Anniversary in 2023-2024. It has always been one of the best universities, if not the best in the country throughout its history. ITU offered 5-year educational programs until 1974. In 1974 ITU went into another reform program and changed its system into two levels 4+2 (Bachelor+Master). The last reforms were realized between 1996-2004 reducing the teaching hours from 200 credits to 150 for the first degree, including English as a compulsory language, restructuring all the teaching, learning, research, innovation activities and related infrastructures. Istanbul Technical University is still one of the top 3 universities in Turkey and is known world-wide, especially across Europe, as a technical university.

### **Length of Time Serving as Rector**

In 1992 the Higher Education Authority changed the system of the appointment process of rectors in Turkish HE into a more democratic system where we (all the academics) enjoyed being able to elect 6 candidates to be sent to the Higher Education Council (HEC). The HEC selects 3 candidates among 6 and this short list was sent to the President of the Country. The President then appoints the rector among these 3 candidates. President Süleyman Demirel was a believer in democracy and he was always appointing the person as the rector who is at the top of the list, according to the votes of the academics.

In 1992, the first elected rector after this change proposed me to be the vice rector of ITU in charge of "Research", "investments" and "Foreign Relations".





The rector for 1992-1996 declared that he was not going to run for the next period in 1995. The academics suggested that I should be the next rector of the university. Consequently, I felt that it would be ethical to resign from my position of "Vice Rector" at least 6-8 months before my mandate and prepare my program to run for "rector" for the period of 1996-2000. By the end of 1995, I stepped down from my Vice Rector position and coordinated my strategy with my team until the election. I received the majority of votes and naturally I was on the top of the list of the 6 and the 3 candidates. The President of the country then appointed me as the first female rector of Istanbul Technical University. On the 6th of August 1996, the President directly called and congratulated me as the first Women Rector of ITU. I have to confess that the 6th of August 1996 was a turning point in my life.

After completing the first 4 years with great successes in: (1) reforming all the educational programs; (2) inserting English as a second language into all of the educational programs at Bachelors and Master's Degrees; (3) extending International links; (4) achieving ABET accreditation for all the engineering programs; (5) achieving NAAB accreditation for the Architecture + EUA Institutional Evaluation; (6) increasing visibility of ITU across international higher education; (7) raising significant funds from alumni; (8) receiving additional funding from the Government agencies by presenting very important projects to upgrade all the research and teaching facilities together with student facilities (such as over 3200 bed capacity dorms and student centers at very high standards); and, (9) implementing new management systems for the "ITU Library" INNOPAC, for Student Administration system "SCT Banner 2000. These are just a few examples of what was accomplished during those first four years.

Since my team and I were very ambitious about completing our dream projects, I decided to run for a second term and this time there were only 3 more candidates put forward. Again, I got the majority of votes and was appointed by the President of the Country for a second period. There is a



limitation in the HE System of Turkey; "One person cannot be appointed as the rector of the university for more than two terms". Therefore, I served two terms (a total of 8 years) with great pride and enjoyment.

### My Professional Path to this Position

When I was 9 years old, it was my dream to go to Istanbul Technical University and study Architecture. I dreamed of becoming an Architect designing and constructing buildings. In 1962, my dream came true as I was in first place on the list of the accepted students after having two days of exams.

In 1967 I graduated first place from the Faculty of Architecture and my professors asked me to continue with my PhD. But, I replied that I would like to go into practice. My professors told me that after I get my PhD I will be able to practice as well in the university system. In the end I thought this offer was an honor for me and I accepted their proposal, completed my PhD and remained in the ITU Faculty of Architecture. In 1976-1977, I completed my postdoc at Cambridge University in the UK in 1978 was appointed as an Associate Professor and later Full Professor. During those years I designed and constructed multiple buildings and entered architectural competitions with my group and received several awards and recognitions. When I accepted academic life, the academy became my highest priority.

I have had several administrative positions throughout my academic career starting with the representative of Research Assistants in the Faculty of Architecture's Executive Committee and Senate.

Then, being elected as the Chair of the Architectural Design Methods Group, the largest academic group in the faculty, and 1986-1989 becoming the Vice Dean. In 1992, I was asked to be Vice Rector of ITU and continued in that role until 1996. I dreamt of becoming the "Dean" of my faculty as there





was no female rector in ITU's history but we had a very successful female dean when I was doing my PhD in my faculty. She was a great woman Prof. Hande Suher and she was my "role model".

During my vice rectorship period, I began to identify the ongoing problems in the university that nobody had dared to address. I persuaded the rector to make particular changes; however, he was very conservative and hesitant to undertake major changes. I believed that although he was brave enough to appoint me as the first female "Vice Rector of ITU", he was not intending to change the status quo. After I reached this conclusion, my position became less interesting. My rector declared that he was not going to run for the second term. It was then, 8 months before my planned recruitment to run for the rectorship in 1996, that I decided to step down.

I was very interested in the new developments and the focus on international higher education. Based on this, I created a draft Strategic plan and then formed a very active young group to evaluate my draft and together developed the detailed program spanning 1996-2000. It was a very enjoyable and successful period and I decided that if I am elected and appointed, these young and forward-thinking colleagues would become my "Advisory Board".

I competed against 10 male candidates and many colleagues told me that as a female I did not have a chance of being elected, especially because this was such a male dominated technical university.

My answer was very clear; "If I am not elected I will be one of the 10 losers. But, think about it, if I am elected I will be the first female Rector of Istanbul Technical University in its 223 years history."

I was elected and appointed by President Süleyman Demirel on the 6th of August 1996. As I had originally intended, after I took the position the





young academics became members of my Advisory Board. It was a dynamic group and additional young forward-thinking academics joined us. However, interestingly, there was a reaction coming from the older generation of professors. They came and visited me. After having our cup of coffee, one of them raised his hand to express his thoughts;

He said, "Dear Rector, your advisors are very young academics. You should have appointed your advisors among professors of this university"

My reply was very simple; "My dear Colleagues, I know what you know but I do not know what they know", "We are preparing our university for the future and Future is their Future not ours".

I was elected and appointed again for the second "4-year" period until 2004. Altogether, I served 4+4= 8 Years as the Rector of ITU with great pride and honor.

### **Strategies for Successful Leadership In this Position**

I think I can be defined as a "Transformational Leader". My university's history dates back to 1773 and successfully made the necessary changes throughout centuries to adjust and adapt to the changing environment. Since the end of the second millennium, the pace of the change has been accelerating and we had to make the necessary changes or adjustments in a timely manner. Otherwise, we would have faced the considerable risk of losing our excellent human research as well as our outstanding student profile.

We made strong statements to support our focus on the future; "Change" is a fact, "Transformation" is a must, "Time" is short.

It is critical for the University leadership to anticipate future developments and take the actions necessary to be in front of the changing conditions. ITU has





always been a leading institution as a "Technical University" in its environment not the follower of others.

Further, in my leadership position, I sought to select the best and most suitable approach. This was "adaptive leadership" making the necessary changes for successful collaboration with team members. Adaptive leadership opens the way for flexibility, resilience, and the ability to adjust strategies based on evolving circumstances. I would like to highlight that recognizing the significance of being flexible in response to changing circumstances is crucial. This approach ensures a dynamic response to the challenges and opportunities that may arise.

In summary, this collaborative approach, integrating both adaptive and transformative leadership styles, provided me with the necessary instruments to navigate the complexities of various situations and steering the university toward positive outcomes.

### **Gender and the Rector Position**

Gender is a double-edged sword; you should be aware of the problem of inequality in your institution but never use it as "a double-edged sword" or a "weapon".

During my period 1996-2004, the ratio of female professors increased from 16% to 29% -- a13% increase. In 8 years, my existence as a "woman rector" created a kind of environment where all the Senate members were sensitive to opening the doors for female Jury members. Therefore, without any direct measures, but indirectly, we made tremendous progress. During this 8-year period ITU as a technical university nearly reached the critical mass of female academics at all academic levels. I am proud of my University. Between 2005-2023, the ratio of women professors increased from 29% to 36%-- only a 7% increase in 18 years.





During these years (2004-2023), we had 4 consecutive male rectors.

None of them paid attention to General Education. I believe that the existence of female rectors, even if they do not create certain measures and rules to be accepted by the Senate of the University, continue to make contributions towards increasing female academics across the university.

Creating certain measures to provide balance between female and male academic staff is an important step. However, if one institution only has the measures in place to achieve "gender equality "in their institution but does not monitor the developments then the result will be little to no improvement in achieving the expected developments in terms of General Education. The most important example is "the implementation of GEPs Gender Equality Plans" to be eligible to apply for funding from EC Programmes in the European HE&R Area.

### To answer this question, I posit the following:

Having a "Female Rector" in a university can make remarkable improvements in terms of Gender Equality, if she devotes her time and energy to doing her best to develop and support both the female and male academic staff. This is especially true for providing greater visibility to female academics. There will be a natural process to reach the balance and achieve General Education in the university for all the stakeholders.

It is obvious that positioning female academics to be role models "Role Models" will create enormous impact across the University. These academic role models are more visible and are in certain positions that empower them at Rector level to successfully address academic issues and communicate with the academics across the university.



### Advice for other Female Presidents/Chancellors/Rectors

"To be successful leaders" the question should be coupled with "the area where we expect her/him" to be successful. Leaders may not be able to show great success in each and every one of the areas that she or he is responsible for. But, if we are considering the overall impression of the women rectors' successes I believe that women have great capacity to listen to all the stakeholders and decide the best actions instead of dictating to them. Decisions that are taken in advance are not "God made". If there is great resistance and the people who are resisting have logical explanations there should not be any resistance from the top management not to make any change. Without consensus a leader cannot achieve what she/he is expected to achieve. If a female rector would like to make big changes she has to make all or the majority of the stakeholders own the ideas they are suggesting for change in their institution?

My recommendation for future leaders who are intending to initiate wide institutional changes is to design the change process based on open dialogue, shared values, and collaborative efforts. Fostering a culture of communication and collaboration is instrumental in decreasing resistance to new developments.

### Advice for Other Females Interested In becoming Presidents/ Chancellors/Rectors

My advice might be outdated as I was the rector of ITU between 1996-2004. However, this is the advice that may also be appropriate and timeless (for both male and female future rectors):

 First of all, if one person is intending to be a rector she should equip herself with past and present experiences together with potential future developments in Higher Education and Research areas.





- If you are intending to be a "rector" of a university you should deeply
  understand the basic facts about that institution; conduct a SWOT
  analysis to learn what kind of problems the university has and
  what kind of opportunities that you can provide to help solve those
  problems.
- You should be an active leader, providing conditions to find solutions to the emerging problems under the legal and financial limitations.
   Postponement of the solutions damages trust between the rector and the university staff.
- You should be a good listener of everyone in the system. The more
  you learn about the staff and their problems/successes/failures, the
  more your solution space will be extended.
- Create and structure a type of discussion environment for finding solutions to the problems that you and your university constituencies are trying to solve.
- More than that; Love people, love your institution, make your community happy and your institution successful. That will create and build trust.

"If a University elects or appoints a woman rector, it means that the university is looking forward to big changes"

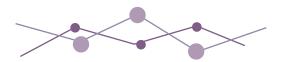
"That is why most of the women rectors are Transformational Leaders"







## **CHAPTER EIGHT**





# Elizabeth (Beth) J. Stroble Chancellor

## **Webster University**



### **A Short Overview Webster University**

With its main campus in St. Louis, Missouri, USA, Webster University comprises an action-oriented global network of faculty, staff, students and alumni who forge powerful bonds with each other and with their communities around the globe. Webster is an independent nonprofit university with students studying at campus locations in North America, Europe, and Asia and in a robust learning environment online. The University is committed to ensuring high-quality learning experiences that transform students for global citizenship and individual excellence.

Our institution was founded by the Sisters of Loretto in 1915. Our founders created one of the first women's colleges west of the Mississippi River dedicated to providing bachelor's degrees that prepared women for careers and lives of service. Over its 100+ year history, Webster transitioned from Roman Catholic origins to lay governance and independence from religious affiliation; welcomed both men and women; took education to students on U.S. military installations, U. S. metropolitan and corporate locations; and, created American-style residential campuses in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Central Asia. Nearly 15,000 students are completing certificates and degrees at Webster University campuses and online. Living alumni exceed 200,000.

### **Tenure as Chancellor**

At the conclusion of this academic year, I will complete fifteen years as the CEO of Webster University, having begun my presidency in 2009. In 2019, the Board of Trustees restructured the titles for executive leadership to reflect the university's status as a global university system. As the head of this global system, my title then became Chancellor. I will transition to Chancellor Emeritus in Summer 2024.



### My Professional Path to this Position

As I began my tenure at Webster University in 2009, I joined the campus community as a career-long educator with ten years of experience as a public high school teacher, followed by faculty appointments as a teacher-educator and in administrative roles at college and university levels. I have worked in U.S. schools and universities, public and private, in Midwestern cities and suburbs, the Arizona High Desert including the Navajo and Hopi reservations, the Virginia Piedmont, Illinois farm country, and urban and suburban Louisville and St. Louis.

As the first generation of my immediate family to be raised outside the southern United States and to graduate from college, I have made my home in at least twelve places, beginning with Newcastle, Wyoming. Generations of my family have always been willing to move to take advantage of opportunity and to make themselves at home in multiple locations, geographies, cultures, and communities. With new homes and roles come new adventures, new learnings, and new growth to be welcomed and relished.

The willingness to move for opportunity has been key to my professional path to this position, beginning with the transition from K-12 teaching to advanced study, including a Ph.D. in Curriculum Studies that prepared me as a faculty member in teacher education. Faculty positions in Arizona and Kentucky opened doors for participation and leadership in public-private partnerships for education reform and research.

Support for curriculum and accreditation activities then led to my first administrative appointment as Associate Dean in the School of Education at the University of Louisville. As I aspired to advance in my career, the opportunity to serve as Dean of the School of Education at The University of Akron provided experience in leading a large academic unit while increasing partnerships with local, regional, and state initiatives to expand student access and success.





After three years in the role of Dean, I was asked to assume the role of Senior Vice President, Provost, and Chief Operating Officer at the university, a role I then held for six years. During this time, the university expanded federal and state support for STEM initiatives, created new ventures such as an Early College and Academic Leadership Forum, established an Office of Diversity, and increased student enrollment and retention.

As I sought a presidency, I was interested in institutions that were mission-focused, entrepreneurial in spirit, and seeking a leader with my background, skills, and experiences. I found that at Webster University and thus made the transition to yet another new community and institution and from public higher education to independent.

### **Strategies for Successful Leadership in this Position**

My approach to leadership is based on a life approach of "bloom where you are planted." It is easy to love Webster—its mission, its values, its people, wherever they are in the world. Because I am an eager audience for stories, I found an abundance in this global university. I have embraced the stories of our history and how Webster always welcomed an amazingly diverse community of students, staff, faculty, friends and supporters. Knowing Webster in this way has fueled my commitment to advance its mission of meeting an unmet need.

Through sharing and telling those stories, I have sought to strengthen the ties among this globally distributed community. I made campus and community engagement a priority, particularly as Webster expanded its global reach and impact. As a student of electronic communications, I quickly embraced the use of social media to harness the power of story and to build community. #WeAreAllWebster conveyed our shared commitment and concern for each other.



Signature events, new structures, and creative approaches to philanthropy have provided opportunities to advance a spirit of welcome and inclusion. Among these are the celebration of Webster's Centennial, the elevation of the Chancellor's Student Ambassadors, Webster's annual DEI conference (now in its 9th year), and the creation of a Global Leadership Academy and Global Student Leadership Summit. We adopted online crowd-sourced fundraising as a result of the pandemic and launched two new giving societies: the Jackson & Thomas Giving Society, honoring the university's first two black graduates, and the Women of Webster.

My leadership is inspired by these insights from feminist theologian Sharon Welch, "What may we hope? Rather than a hope for eventual victory for a world without injustice or serious conflict, I describe the power of having a more modest hope, a hope for resilience, a hope for company along the way" (Sharon D. Welch, Sweet Dreams in America: Making Ethics and Spirituality Work, 1999).

### **Gender and the Chancellor Position**

Gender has played a role in positions I have held across my career. Because I have often worked in a majority male environment, I have needed to develop strategies for success that focus on building inclusive communities—for myself and others. Gender is a lens through which I understand the lived experiences of others and the imperative for progress on the path to diversity, equity, and inclusion. When I began the presidency at Webster in 2009, it had been 40 years since a woman had served as president. Yet, because of the institution's identity from its founding, Webster was and continues to be home to many strong women leaders.

Across my career, gender has been one of the focal areas of my research, leadership, and service. I have conducted studies of women in higher





education leadership and captured and preserved the stories of women of accomplishment. As the co-chair for higher education of the African Renaissance and Diaspora Network (ARDN), I led campus and community engagement efforts to popularize the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, with a focus on SDG 5 (Gender Equality).

For decades I have devoted time to women's organizations and to formal and informal mentoring roles for women colleagues and students, often with a global focus. Webster's history as a women's college made the creation of a new giving society, Women of Webster, a natural, which I launched as a member of the Founders' Circle in 2023. I take seriously the responsibility of being a role model for inclusive leadership and serving as Chancellor at Webster University has provided many opportunities for building strong networks to overcome barriers to success for all.

#### **Advice for other Female Presidents**

I offer this quip from Woody Allen as worthy of reflection: "If 90% of success in life is showing up, the other 10% is what you're showing up for." Joyfully and confidently being present, doing what needs to be done, living the role, meeting the demands of the position—these form the necessary foundation for success in the presidency, and there is no substitute for them. Truly impactful leadership depends upon the choices leaders make about how they show up, when, and for what purposes and causes. The integrity of values, words, and actions is embodied and expressed in all the nuances of "showing up."

### **Advice for other Females Interested in becoming Chancellors**

In a February 29, 2024 interview with Jinnie Lee of Chief, HuffPost's Editor-in-Chief Danielle Belton tells her story of facing many life challenges and



betting on herself "with a kind of confidence that accrues only after learning from many trials and tribulations." In Belton's words, "Not knowing how to do something isn't a reason not to do it."

We know that women can fall victim to the imposter syndrome, doubting their own capabilities to go to the next level. A Russell Reynolds (2023) study found in business settings that if a manager were to leave, nearly 70% of men believe they have what it takes to do that job. Comparatively only 50% of women express the same confidence and are more than twice as likely to believe they were not qualified for their manager's position.

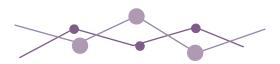
In these times that are disrupting higher education and creating an accompanying high degree of turnover in leadership, opportunity is present for those with confidence that they can do the job. Females who are interested in executive leadership should build portfolios of experiences and skills that show others (and themselves) that they know how to manage complex projects with diverse teams, demonstrating resilience through setbacks and failures, to improved results.

My experience is that the boldness to say yes when presented with an opportunity, including the willingness to move to a new institution, is as important as meeting the many criteria of the position posting—required elements, included. First and foremost, as females we must say yes to ourselves.





## **CHAPTER NINE**





# Jamienne S. Studley President and Chief Executive Officer

# WASC Senior College & University Commission (WSCUC)



# A Short Overview of the Western Senior Commission on Colleges and Universities

I have been President of the Western Senior Commission on Colleges and Universities (WSCUC- pronounced as WASC), an international higher education quality assurance organization and US federally recognized accrediting agency, since 2018. WSCUC is known as a leader in using evidence and student achievement outcomes to advance equity and for flexibility and encouraging innovation in applying standards of quality. As CEO I support a remarkable Commission, lead a small, exceptionally able staff that guides the peer review process and data initiatives, and currently chair the national collaboration of seven historically regional US accreditors.

### My Professional Path to this Position

Opportunistic, indirect, and ultimately quite fascinating. I've practiced law in the fields of food and drug and also antitrust. I've headed three different non-profit organizations in the fields of legal careers, reproductive freedom, and civil rights. I worked for three US federal government administrations, working on health and education law and policy. I was Associate Dean at Yale Law School, and President of Skidmore College, in Saratoga Springs, NY, a fine liberal arts college with the motto Creative Thought Matters. My board experiences include museum, civil rights, hospice, and public media groups. To a personnel director who described my career as "eclectic," I said she was very kind – and then explained that the "through lines" connecting my choices were advancing civil rights and justice, promoting educational opportunity, and encouraging involvement, efficiency, and trust in public systems.

The collection of values I carry and experiences and skills I developed have served me well in my last two roles. As deputy undersecretary of the US





Department of Education, I used my campus experiences to facilitate scores of public meetings about controversial policy proposals, including the College Scorecard, and drew on the policy and legal skills that I had developed in my civil rights work, law practice, and volunteer roles. I was attracted to take on my current leadership role at WSCUC by a job posting that began "seeking a passion for student success." This presidency has given me the chance to combine my campus and non-profit experiences, and a strange affinity for regulatory process, in a role that affects both students' lives across a wide variety of institutions and national policy. What strategies do you use for successful leadership in your position?

Because I have changed fields, gears, and organizations so often, I see myself always as a learner. Like a two-year-old, I say "why?" a lot: Why do we do it that way? Why do you think this works for those students but not for these? That can of course lead to "why not," and "how": how can we do this better? How can we engage more people, or influence the law? (I've learned to explain that I say 'why' to understand, not challenge, and also that 'what if we ...' is exploratory, not a decision or instruction. We need to remember that leaders' words are amplified.) In the process I find out who understands and can explain what's going on as well as who is open to exploring and willing to make change. That's a good way to build a team and identify people who can help create and move an agenda.

I'm an inveterate networker, bridge builder, and coalition creator. My first job at 16 was as a hotel switchboard operator, and I've said many times that I basically still do the same thing – connect people. In part it's a natural outgrowth of that eclectic background, and traversing multiple communities. I also enjoy different styles, expertise, ways of coming at an experience or a challenge. This is aligned with research that tells us that we create more effective organizations when drawing on different perspectives. Leaders have a special opportunity to build bridges and connections, across



functional areas, disciplines, generations, and ultimately across historic and cultural divides.

Know your bedrock principles. Make sure others do, too. I think of US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. When a conversation about a hard decision would get technical or mired in legal or budget issues, he would stop and say, "And what about the students?" (Often, he just said "kids.") At the farewell party when he concluded his service, it seems a dozen of us had that question embodying his values scribbled on the index card we clutched with our remarks. With one simple line, repeated often, he let us know why we were there and what mattered.

### **Gender and the Presidency**

In my current position, I don't think gender plays a noticeable role. An accrediting agency CEO has so much positional authority – and I now have long experience and silver hair – so I am taken seriously or at least granted formal respect.

It's hard to know which of my observations about leadership are universal and which should come under the questions about gender and advice for female leaders. We know that women, and others who historically have not been envisioned as leaders, face a higher bar to being chosen for and supported in senior positions, so the suggestions that follow about being prepared for every dimension of the job certainly speak to those tests.

Even as numbers are changing and stereotypes about gender roles are softening, women leaders often still operate on a knife edge, experiencing the challenge of Goldilocks of fairy tale lore: they need to be strong but not too strong, risking being thought of as too tough, and understanding – but not too nurturing, for fear of being thought too soft. You have to get it "just right," as the fable goes.



Judgments will be made, sometimes silently with hidden consequences. And since "just right" is subjective, judgments will be inconsistent.

The jobs of presidents and chancellors are even more visible and open to criticism than corporate leadership. Women business CEOs are scrutinized, to be sure, and maybe they too are appreciated if they serve midnight breakfast after a big company victory, but they probably aren't expected to live in a house owned by the company, sing with the acapella group or campus mascot, or bring their families to weeknight sporting events. Again, we know that people typically watch women and people of color who are leaders more closely, and judge them more critically. In that setting you'll have the tough job of being authentic, independent, and at least appear both relaxed and in charge. An interesting piece of advice I received from a seasoned faculty leader was to "choose what they tease you about: better something you pick, like bad puns or wearing unusual glasses," than something that touches or hurts you," like body image or how you speak.

#### **Advice for other Female Presidents**

Listen. Listen to people all across your institution and beyond. Listen to understand – to understand the experience, what brought about the good or bad things you are hearing. Then use what you have heard and learned to formulate your goals, meet the needs, act, make change or provide comfort or whatever you deem necessary.

Second, and this is a hard-won lesson: too many times I have recognized that someone is not effective in their position, but thought that if I were really a good leader and manager I could turn things around and get their best work. Try to make it work; don't be hasty, of course; but once you know the right course, act. You owe it to your organization and colleagues to have an effective team.



And don't go it alone, either on your way to or in a top leadership position.

- Create a kitchen cabinet of advisors who know your dreams and abilities, and who will be direct and honest with you. If you're reading this chapter you're at least contemplating leadership possibilities, so do it now. At least some of those people could – should! -- be from outside academia.
- Be open to mentors, advisors, and promoters who share your experience and others who don't. Stay in regular touch don't just call when you need something. Be clear about what you want we all know how hard it is to help someone who's vague and unfocused.
- Develop healthy habits for exercise, reflection, and getting away from campus. Standard advice, hard to follow. Except for some excellent vacations and various forms of dance classes, I didn't do very well on this one.
- If you have a partner, children, or others who matter to you, try not to let them or your relationships get trampled in the demands of your role. Make time, keep promises. I hope my husband, niece, and friends feel I honored this advice.

### **Advice for other Females Interested in becoming Presidents?**

If you think you might want to be a chancellor/president, seek out chances to develop some of the core competencies and experiences that are likely to be called on – especially the ones that worry you or deter you from pursuing the role. For example, find ways to develop an understanding of budgeting, finance, and investment basics. Look for chances to work on marketing,



communications, and press relations. Even with experts on those matters you need to be able to interrogate their advice, ask hard questions, insist on honest analysis and ethical standards, and ultimately make hard decisions.

Practice fundraising and development work and see how you like it. As a president I enjoyed getting to know people who cared about our school. Learning about donors' and foundations' interests in relation to our ambitions and needs, and explaining how their support could make a difference, drew on the advocacy and problem solving I liked best as a lawyer. Don't let fear of fundraising frighten you away from a presidency path – many presidents find it one of the most satisfying parts of their job. Look for a way to eliminate the mystery and test your skills: I volunteered to head my own 25th college reunion class fund committee largely to see how it felt.

Presidents and chancellors increasingly help people hear each other and find common ground, and are called on to create institutions where civil discourse and constructive interchange can happen. Seek out ways to develop relevant experience, not only for their resume value but also for confidence and to understand your own style. For me it included agreeing to lead a sensitive negotiation on a complex topic outside my expertise. When the lengthy process concluded, one of the negotiators said he'd never seen someone guide a group so divided to consensus, and asked if I'd ever thought of being a college president. "Funny you should say that," I replied.

Finally, when you get the interview and the possibility of leadership is in sight, be clear and honest about who you are, and rigorous in testing whether the position is a good fit. In the understandable urgency of putting your best foot forward, remember that the process is a two-way street. In interviewing for this position, I proposed a set of what some might call bold issues and projects, in part to test whether the board and I had a similar understanding of the role and potential for a leadership accrediting agency. The only thing



worse than not getting a job you think you want is to get a job and discover it is in fact not right for you in ways you might have seen but for the excitement of winning the contest. Value yourself enough to be clear and selective.

Best wishes in achieving your aspiration. Higher education around the world needs your talents, energy, and dreams.





## **CHAPTER TEN**





## María Vicenta Mestre Rector

### Universitat de València



## A Short Overview of Universitat de Valencia

The Universitat de València is a public University created in 1499, which celebrates its 525th anniversary in 2024. Our university was founded by the City of Valencia, due to our civil origin, our university is rooted in the city and closely linked to its development.

It is a university that cultivates all areas of knowledge, and stands out in the most prestigious rankings in the world as one of the 5 best universities in Spain, and is also ranked in the top 200-300 universities in the world, leading international incoming students in exchange programs. In addition, it is the first university in Spain in the number of students with disabilities, and Spain's leading public university in university sports.

It has 18 faculties distributed over 3 large campuses in the metropolitan area of Valencia, and another one in Valencia region.

It currently has more than 50,000 students who fill, every year, the academic offerings that the institution is able to provide.

In addition, the historic building of the University is a first class cultural center within the social, cultural and artistic offerings of the city.

It is a key institution in Valencian society, with an educational activity that is recognized as excellent, but also the creator of pioneering research, a close collaborator of the most important bodies and institutes and a driving force for progress in all facets of society.





### **Length of Time Serving as Rector**

I was elected Chancellor, the first female Chancellor of the University, in 2018 for a 4- year term. Until then, I was vice-rector with the former rector, Professor Esteban Morcilla, and the previous one, Professor Francisco Tomás, so I had had valuable previous experience, but being a rector is a quite different experience.

After four years in office, in which I really tried my best, I was re-elected in 2022 for a second term of the same duration.

### My Professional Path to this Position

I always like to start by pointing out that my academic and professional career could not have existed without public education. I was born and raised in Oliva, a town in the south of the province of Valencia, and I have always used, and proudly defended, public education as a way to personal progress and social cohesion. Thanks to public education, and to an enormous effort over many years, I became what I am today.

Now directly addressing the question, I'm a professor of Basic Psychology that entered the University of Valencia fifty years ago and have remained there to this day. During my career I have combined academic and research activity with several management tasks: I was dean of the Faculty of Psychology and Speech Therapy, -the first woman to be so in the faculty-, vice-rector for three terms and, finally, rector.

In addition, on a more personal level, I have two daughters and five grandchildren, and they, along with my husband, of course, are such an essential support to me.



All in all, it has been a long and hard road, full of challenges and with some difficult moments, but tremendously stimulating and satisfying. Even if I could, I would not change anything about my career, as I have also learned a lot from the difficult moments.

### **Strategies for Successful Leadership in this Position**

I believe that in a position as important as that of rector of a university the size of the Universitat de València, it is essential to know the institution well in all its dimensions (the centers and groups that make it up, its strengths, the problems it faces, the aspects that can be improved, etc.) and also to know how to manage large working teams.

As for the first of these points, throughout my career, in the different positions I have held, as a lecturer, as dean and as vice-rector, I have had time and opportunity to get to know the different levels that make up an institution with more than five hundred years of history, as well as to experience, from different points of view, the issues that arise in the day-to-day running of the university and which we all have to deal with together. This requires empathy, making it easier to put oneself in the shoes of the people one is working with, which is fundamental to be able to manage the problems that arise in this type of position.

Likewise, and in relation to the second of the aspects I have mentioned, during the years I have been at the University I have had the opportunity to meet great professionals with whom it has been, and continues to be every day, a real pleasure to work, and who have helped me to develop skills in terms of the ability to manage teams, enhance the strengths of its members, delegate functions and other very important aspects related to the management of human groups.



So, I would stress empathy and the ability to manage human teams as two basic points to work on in order to perform better in a position such as that of rector.

#### Gender and the Rector Position

In my experience, both as an academic researcher and in public office, and both as a worker and as a mother, gender has a determining influence on career development.

Women have many more obstacles to overcome, many stereotypes to break, and many tasks that society expects us to take on that limit our ability to move up the academic career ladder.

This explains the so-called scissors diagram, which shows how, as one moves up the hierarchical ladder of institutions, men become more and more predominant.

A large part of my government programme is aimed precisely at reversing this trend, specially, for example, in terms of promoting women in management positions and encouraging female vocations in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects, where the predominance of men is more pronounced.

We have a great responsibility to promote equal opportunities and to fight discrimination, and we will continue to work along these lines.

### **Advice for other Female Presidents**

I would tell them that we must all support each other, that we, and our institutions, are stronger if we act together, if we share experiences and strategies and if we coordinate.



Initiatives such as the European Woman Rectors Association, created in 2015, are a magnificent example of how the joint work of women in managerial positions bears very important fruits that benefit the institutions to which we belong and the female gender itself, as it is a factor of reaffirmation and empowerment with few previous examples as relevant and successful.

Therefore, EWORA is a very interesting model to consider to replicate on a wider scale, and I would strongly recommend each and every woman to work in that cooperative dynamic. We are better if we are together.

### Advice for other Females Interested in becoming President/ Chancellor/Rector

I would tell them not to give up, to have confidence in themselves, not to be afraid to show all their qualities and abilities, and that they really deserve to hold relevant positions.

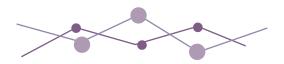
I would also tell them that the responsibilities inherent to the position are great, but much more so is the satisfaction that comes from being at the head of institutions that are very important for scientific progress, for human development and for people's well-being.

And finally, I would tell them that they must consider an essential question: as women with such an important role, they will be a point of reference for many other girls and women who will find in them models of career and behavior that will help to make the world increasingly more egalitarian and, therefore, fairer.





## CHAPTER ELEVEN





Inga Žalėnienė Rector

## **Mykolas Romeris University**



## If we want to defend women's rights, we must defend women's right to live in freedom, democracy and peace

### **An Overview of Mykolas Romeris University**

My professional career has been inseparable from Mykolas Romeris University (MRU), the youngest state university in Lithuania, established in 1990. It was a very special time – Lithuania had liberated itself from half a century of Soviet occupation. In the same year the Lithuanian Parliament established a new higher education institution which first set out to educate public security officers in line with European best practices.

We are proud that the Seimas resolution on the establishment of the Police Academy, the predecessor of our University, was signed by Prof. Vytautas Landsbergis, the first leader of Lithuania after the restoration of its independence, and now Honorary Doctor of MRU.

The beginning was dramatic – on 12 January 1991, at 3 a.m., OMON, a special Soviet militia squad sent by the Soviets (by the way, OMON still operates in Russia), seized the first building of our university. The academic community, with the help of other defenders of freedom in Lithuania bravely stood up to defend their Academy and joined the defenders of the Lithuanian Parliament. The defenseless people of Lithuania stood up against the Soviet tanks and defended their freedom, their own elected parliament, their country, and their Academy.

My Alma Mater has grown into the largest specialized university of social sciences in Lithuania, named after the eminent lawyer, educator and statesman Mykolas Pijus Pascal Römeris (1880-1945). Currently, MRU has about 6,000 students, almost 14% of whom are international students coming from more than 45 countries. We were among the first in Lithuania to integrate social



sciences and new technologies, and we have developed a network of social innovation laboratories. We have significant research programmes in the fields of environmental management, law and legal technologies, security, including cyber security, education, psychology, etc. We cooperate extensively with foreign universities, business and social partners. MRU is a member of the European Reform University Alliance (ERUA) and other international associations and academic networks.

I was still a teenager, but I remember well the indescribable joy when the Soviet army left Lithuania in 1993. With the freedom of Lithuania, academic freedom also took on real meaning. When Lithuania became a member of NATO and the EU, new opportunities opened up for the development of higher education and close cooperation with the international academic community. New opportunities have also emerged for women to take real leadership, not just to be rewarded with the "traditional" tulip bouquet on 8 March.

I share this story of the University's birth to emphasize the importance of the MRU academic community's mission to strengthen the democratic state of Lithuania, to defend universal human rights, and to help Ukraine defend its freedom.

### My Professional Path to this Position

I am happy that I studied, grew as a person and step by step made my academic career at my Alma Mater, which was created by people who wanted to ensure that Lithuanian youth would not only receive a European education, but also would adopt the values of Western democracy. After obtaining my Bachelor's and Master's degrees in law from this higher education institution, I completed my doctoral studies and defended my dissertation on the topic of representation in civil proceedings, obtaining a Doctorate in Social Sciences (Law). In 2000, I started working as an assistant at the University's Department



of Civil Procedure and became a lecturer, associate professor, professor, and vice-dean for science and projects. A decade later, I was appointed Vice-Rector for Science and International Relations, and seven years later – Vice-Rector for Education and Research. In 2019, I was elected Rector of MRU, and this year the MRU Council elected me Rector for a second five-year term.

Although such an academic career may seem rather boring to some, I have never had a dull day in these three decades. Let alone the last few years when all university leaders, women and men alike, have faced unprecedented challenges. But what could be more exciting than a meaningful activity in an academic community that fosters free and creative critical thinkers? Challenges are simply tasks that must be and will be solved.

#### Gender and the Rector Position

MRU is sometimes called the "most feminine" university in Lithuania, because women in leadership positions outnumber those taken by men. To me, such a remark sounds like a compliment, although I believe that gender is not a determining factor for success in any activity. The success of a leader in academia depends on his or her personal qualities. Leadership requires the ability to keep things in perspective and the perseverance to achieve goals, an understanding of the needs of the community and the patience to work long and hard, not for one's own personal career, but for the benefit of the whole university community. Both women and men can be leaders, but women still face artificial barriers which may be different in each case.

Although Lithuania is a democracy and there are no legal barriers to women's careers, in 2019 I was only the second woman in Lithuania to be elected Rector. As a result, together with my colleague, who was elected Rector of the Lithuanian Sports University in 2018, I had to break some of the stereotypes. Unfortunately, relics of stereotypical thinking still exist even in



the academic field. At my university, I felt and still feel the trust and support of most of my colleagues, both women and men, but it took some time for the academic and scientific elite to "let" women into their circle. Now, 4 out of 11 public universities in Lithuania are headed by women. Last year, I was elected Vice-President of the Lithuanian University Rectors' Conference.

#### Advice for Other Female Presidents/Chancellors/Rectors

Considering that the first university in Lithuania was established in 1579, it is fair to say that a real breakthrough for women has finally taken place in the sphere of academic leadership. In my country, it is no longer necessary to argue that leadership is not determined by gender, but by a person's ability to mobilize people towards a common goal. I try to foster an atmosphere of inclusive leadership, fair competition, attentive and respectful attitude towards each member of the community at the University. In 2021, the MRU Senate approved the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy, which we are successfully implementing. According to the Times Higher Education, in 2023, MRU was ranked among the 201-300 highest-impact universities in the world in terms of gender equality.

I have no doubt that women have also helped to change attitudes towards women's leadership by demonstrating their competence and leadership qualities in a wide range of fields of activity, despite visible and invisible barriers. It is important that women leaders not only encourage the growth of young women leaders by their example, but also participate in educational activities, publicly raise human rights issues, and help to create an inclusive and harmonious society in which stereotypes about both women and men, as well as about all marginalized groups in society, disappear.

Such shifts do not happen "overnight," but require a process of social maturation that requires patience, knowledge and sometimes courage. We, women, must not wait for change to happen, but initiate it ourselves.





The MRU academic community is also an active agent of progressive change. In 2023, on the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Equal Opportunities Act in Lithuania, I had the honor of accepting the gratitude to our University for its important and historically significant contribution to the achievement of equal opportunities in Lithuanian society. Acknowledgements were also given to Professor Toma Barbotine, Professor Danute Jociene and Professor Edita Žiobiene of the MRU Law School, who have made significant contributions to the implementation of equal opportunities in Lithuania.

Gender role stereotypes are first and foremost broken by our own professional achievements as women, our courage to speak the truth even when it is not to everyone's liking, and by our joint efforts to create the legal prerequisites and a harmonious environment in which no one is humiliated or discriminated against on the basis of their gender, race, ethnicity or other characteristics.

Of course, women's leadership can be overcome if women are free to realize their talents and pursue their dreams. For where there is no freedom and democracy, where human rights are not respected, women's rights are at best a paper declaration. It is not only women who suffer as a result – society as a whole suffers.

Last year, the Russian dictator also congratulated women on the 8th of March and even handed out state awards. Will the dictators who have seized state power traditionally congratulate women on the International Women's Solidarity Day this year as well, or will they, with the help of the OMON, chase away women who demand their rights, martyr women activists in prisons, and force them to flee from persecution and the horrors of war? As a woman, a lawyer and a university leader, I cannot help but see the hypocrisy and cynical attitude of such 'leaders' towards women.



Therefore, I want to remind future women leaders that if we want to defend women's rights, we must defend women's right to live in freedom, democracy and peace. Without these fundamental values, which have been developed by the brightest minds of humanity, even the greatest scientific discoveries will not create the good and the right conditions for your talents to flourish.





