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Women as College and University Presidents: Sharpening the Needle

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Women as College and University Presidents: Sharpening the Needle

by

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the courageous women who smashed through glass ceilings and fell off glass cliffs to obtain college/university presidencies within a male dominated field that to this day exhibits oppression and lack of opportunity for women.

> It's not the ceiling that's holding women back; it's the whole structure of the organizations in which we work: the foundation, the beams, the walls, the very air. The barriers to advancement are not just above women, they are all around them…. We must ferret out the hidden barriers to equity and effectiveness one by one. (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000, p. 136)

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Abstract

Women are underrepresented as college and university (school) presidents and currently hold about 30% of school presidencies. In 2014, the American Council on Education (ACE) launched an initiative to achieve gender parity among U.S. school presidencies by 2030. To support this initiative, Dr. Belle Wheelan, president of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), challenged member institutions to support ACE's initiative in achieving gender parity among school presidents by 2030. The boards of trustees hire school presidents and play a pivotal role in achieving gender parity. The research addresses a gap in literature examining if there is a connection between the gender disparity of school presidents and the lack of female trustees and chairpersons on school governing boards. This study employed a feminist theoretical framework and a non-experimental quantitative method to examine if there are differences in the gender proportion of school boards of trustees based on the gender of school presidents and if there is an association between the gender of board chairpersons and the gender of school presidents. Statistical tests conducted on a census population of 780 SACSCOC member institutions identified a difference in the gender proportion of school boards of trustees based on the gender of school presidents and confirmed an association between the gender of board chairpersons and the gender of school presidents. The results of this study help to identify action steps necessary to move the needle toward achieving gender parity among school presidents by 2030.

Chapter 1: Women as College and University Presidents

Women are underrepresented as college and university (school) presidents. According to the latest American College President Study (ACPS), women hold about 30% of school presidencies (Gagliardi et al., 2017). In 2009, women held about 23% of school presidencies, and in 1989 women held about 9.5% of the positions (Lapovsky, 2009). The percent of women holding school presidencies increased approximately 0.68% a year from 1989 to 2009 and 0.88% a year from 2009 to 2017. At this sluggish growth rate, it could take 22 years for women to occupy half of the school presidencies. Based on the current percentage of women presidents and the rate at which women are moving into school presidencies, women will not achieve gender parity in U.S. school presidencies until 2039.

Background

The American Council on Education (ACE) launched an initiative in 2014 to achieve gender parity in school presidencies by 2030 (Davis & Gray, 2014). ACE's initiative, *Moving the Needle: Advancing Women in Higher Education Leadership*, declared a mission of increasing the number of women in senior leadership positions in higher education through programs, research, and resources (Davis & Gray, 2014). The vision is for women to occupy at least half of the U.S. college and university presidential positions by 2030 (Davis & Gray, 2014). To support its mission and vision, the *Moving the Needle* initiative adopted goals to (A) generate a national sense of urgency elevating the need for advancing women in higher education leadership positions, (B) encourage governing boards and other higher education institutional decision- & policy-making bodies to consider practices for recruiting and hiring women to chief executive offices,

(3) achieve women's advancement to mid-level and senior-level positions in higher education administration by building capacities in women and in institutions, and (4) suggest practices and models that recognize success in advancing women in higher education (Davis & Gray, 2014). Despite ACE's efforts to move the needle, the gender gap is not narrowing quickly enough. U.S. higher education institutions are going to miss the mark by at least nine years, and women in the U.S. will continue to hit the glass ceiling when striving for higher education presidencies. It is time to sharpen the needle and take more aggressive steps to achieve gender parity among higher education's chief leaders.

Statement of the Problem

In the 21st century, almost 100 years after the introduction of the Equal Rights Amendment to Congress in 1923 and approximately 49 years after passing the Equal Rights Amendment in 1972, women are still oppressed and do not have equal opportunity in the workplace. Despite data indicating women have earned more than 50% of all doctoral degrees since 2006 and more than 50% of all master's degrees since 1987 (Johnson, 2017), 70% of higher education presidencies are held by men (Davis & Gray, 2020). Why don't we have more women as school presidents?

Multiple researchers, higher education groups, and government agencies tackled this problem in hopes of identifying why more women are not achieving school presidential positions. Initial assumptions specified there was a lack of women prepared for the top leadership positions, and higher education institutions and women's leadership groups began efforts to formalize leadership training to prepare women for the presidency role (Wilkinson, 2018). Data, however, verified that there were more than enough women

to fill these roles, and the sparse pipeline notion became known as the Pipeline Myth (Johnson, 2017). With more women than men earning doctoral degrees and more women than men holding chief academic officer positions (Gagliardi et al., 2017), more women should have been moving into school presidencies. The problem is significant in that our higher education institutions need to model a more equitable distribution of men and women in the top leadership position. Education and acknowledgment are keys to increase opportunities for women, yet the highest educational system in our nation does not represent gender parity.

The slow growth of women moving into school presidencies is concerning and relevant based on the 2017 American College President Study (ACPS) findings that 54% of school presidents plan to leave their positions within five years (Okolo, 2019). The ACPS is now four years old, so this statistic may become a reality in 2022. It is even more concerning that 80% of the presidents surveyed reported their institutions have no succession plans in place (Okolo, 2019). If more than half of the school presidents leave their positions by 2022, and 80% do not have succession plans; the U.S. will experience a significant number of new higher education leaders in the chief executive position. Based on the slow growth rate of women moving into presidential positions, more men may move into the presidential positions and further push out the timeline for gender parity among school presidents.

The major focus of the *Moving the Needle* initiative has been on moving more women into school presidencies. The question remains “How do more women move into this role?” Much of the research centers around preparing women for higher education leadership roles, examining women’s lived experiences as higher education leaders,

identifying factors that contribute to women's success in higher education leadership roles, and identifying obstacles to women attaining school presidencies, but very little research has focused on who hires the presidents. The boards of trustees or regents hire college and university presidents, and most boards consist of more men than women. In 2009, the White House Project report on *Benchmarking Women's Leadership* identified that women account for less than 30% of the board members on college and university boards (Lapovsky, 2009). The researchers challenged that we need a critical mass of women, not just within organizations, but in senior levels of leadership and on boards to make a difference (Lapovsky, 2009). The concept of a critical mass of women in organizations was addressed in 1977 by Harvard academic Rosabeth Moss Kanter. In *Men and Women of the Corporation*, she reasoned that once women reached a critical mass in an organization, people would stop seeing them as women and start evaluating their work as managers (Kanter, 1977). At this point, women would be viewed through a similar lens as their male counterparts in the workplace. The question then became how many women are needed to achieve a critical mass (Kramer et al., 2006). A study of corporate boards by the Wellesley Center for Women determined that boards benefit the most from having three or more women on them (Kramer et al., 2006). Respondents said that women board members make three distinct contributions: (1) they broaden boards' discussions to include the concerns of a wider set of stakeholders, including shareholders, employees, customers, and the community at large; (2) they are more persistent than male directors in pursuing answers to difficult questions; and (3) they often bring a more collaborative approach to leadership, which improves communication among directors and between the board and management (Kramer et al., 2006).

Purpose of Study

This study has two purposes: (a) examine differences in the gender proportion of school boards of trustees based on the gender of school presidents, and (b) explore the association between the gender of school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents. Since the board of trustees hire the president, they play the most pivotal role in the U.S. achieving gender parity among school presidents. In *Purposeful Inclusion*, published by The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), Jefferson (2019) explains that boards should care deeply about hiring more women as college presidents, because higher education needs the talent of women to solve difficult problems. Boards impart a strong message to the college community, mainly students, by not hiring more women as college presidents (Jefferson, 2019). When students of all genders see mostly one gender representing the college presidency, it imparts an inaccurate image of what leadership signifies (Jefferson, 2019). Jefferson (2019) concludes that trustees serve not only as hiring boards but also as educators by teaching students who school presidents are and can be.

Higher education accrediting bodies may also influence the future of higher education leadership by encouraging boards to achieve gender parity among presidencies. In the opening address of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) 2016 Annual Meeting, Dr. Belle Wheelan, President of the Commission, challenged SACSCOC member institutions to hire more women presidents in an effort to achieve gender parity (Wheelan, 2016). She declared a goal that women would occupy 50% of the school presidencies in the SACSCOC region by 2030 and asked member institutions to join her in working toward this goal (Wheelan, 2016).

SACSCOC is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as an accrediting body for institutions of higher education that award associate, baccalaureate, master's, or doctoral degrees in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Latin America (SACSCOC, 2019-a). SACSCOC declares a mission to assure the educational quality and improve the effectiveness of its member institutions and a vision to serve as the premier model for shaping and ensuring the quality of higher education throughout the world (SACSCOC, 2019-a). With a vision to serve as a premier model for shaping and ensuring the quality of higher education and a goal to achieve gender parity among school presidents within its region, SACSCOC could positively impact our nation's efforts in ACE's initiative to achieve gender parity in all U.S. college and university presidential positions by 2030.

Research Questions

This study seeks to examine differences in gender proportion of school boards of trustees based on the gender of school presidents, and to explore the association between the gender of school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents by answering the following questions:

RQ1: What is the difference between the gender proportion of school trustee boards based on the gender of school presidents?

RQ2: What is the association between the gender of school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents?

Hypotheses

The hypotheses are as follows:

Null Hypotheses

$H1_0$: There is no difference between the gender proportion of the school trustee boards based on the gender of school presidents.

$H2_0$: There is no association between the gender of the school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents.

Alternative Hypotheses

$H1_A$: There is a difference between the gender proportion of the school trustee boards based on the gender of school presidents.

$H2_A$: There is an association between the gender of the school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents.

Theoretical Framework

This study primarily seeks to examine differences between the gender proportion of the school trustee boards based on the gender of school presidents and the association between the gender of the school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents. An investigation of theoretical frameworks led to the selection of Feminism Theory to provide an understanding of why women are underrepresented as college/university presidents. Much of the literature focuses on gender, role congruity, and feminist theories to explain why more women have not attained school presidencies.

Gender theory examines masculinity and femininity as a set of mutually created characteristics shaping lives of men and women (Smith, 2020). This theory focused on characteristics as learned instead of previous views that gender roles are biologically

determined (Smith 2020). Gender refers to the categories of social expectations, roles, and behaviors associated with feminine or masculine traits and behaviors (Jule, 2014). Literature indicates that gendered power relations exist within many colleges and universities allowing for inequalities and traditional masculine views of leadership (Randall, 2019).

Role congruity theory describes ways in which gender roles disadvantage women (Peszek, 2016). Some researchers have argued that women are not recommended for promotions at the same rate as men due to conflicting stereotypes between being a "leader" versus being "female" (Loughlin et al., 2012). Feminist theory examines how structures of gender difference subordinate women as women and seeks to understand how gender oppression impacts specific events and opportunities for women (McCann & Kim, 2017). The theoretical framework considers how women's subordination as women is connected to related oppressions based on race, ethnicity, nationality, class, sexuality, ability, and gender identity (McCann & Kim, 2017). Feminist theories focus on how women can resist subordination and what kinds of changes are needed (McCann & Kim, 2017); thereby providing a theoretical framework for change that must occur to decrease and eventually prevent the oppression of women in the higher education arena of occupying school president positions. The needle must move to attain gender parity among U.S. school presidents. Feminism Theory will provide a framework for understanding the oppression of women in higher education thus leading to changes providing equal opportunity for women and men within this sector.

Feminism Theory

Feminism theory helps us understand why women are underrepresented as school presidents. Multiple studies demonstrate that women still experience discriminatory and oppressive practices resulting in a lack of opportunity in the workplace (Lapovsky, 2009; Lepkowski, 2009; Brescoll et al., 2010) even though they are often among the highest performers (Lennon, 2013). Feminist theories provide tools to examine injustices, build knowledge, and demand change regarding the oppression of women (McCann & Kim, 2017). Feminist theorists strive to inform effective politics, meaning the explanation and understanding of women's oppression should make sense of women's situations and point to effective strategies for change (McCann & Kim, 2017).

Simone de Beauvoir, a leading feminism theorist, summed up the lack of regard for women's experiences by describing men as both positive and neutral representations of society, while women epitomize the negative elements as defined by limiting criteria (Parshley in McCann & Kim, 2017). Beauvoir's theory described humanity as male and suggests that man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him (Parshley, 1953). Women were not regarded as autonomous beings. They were viewed as sexual beings who existed for men's pleasure. Men are the "Subject" and the "Absolute," while women are "the Other" (Parshley, 1953, p. 16). To obtain a global perspective of how women's lives must change, we must understand women's experiences as they pertain to society as a whole.

The framework of "Women's Experiences" falls under the second wave of feminism that occurred between the 1960's and 1980's. No social movement has had greater impact than the reemerging women's movement (Reed, 2005). The second wave

occurred about fifteen years after World War II ended and focused on the workplace, sexuality, family, and reproductive rights (Cavanaugh, 2018). The U.S. was in the process of rebuilding itself, and it was perceived by many that women achieved equality even though the Equal Rights Amendment did not pass until 1972 (Cavanaugh, 2018). Women supporters of the second wave movement did not feel their voices were heard (Cavanaugh, 2018). They had not achieved equality in the workplace or parity regarding sexual, family, or reproductive rights (Cavanaugh, 2018). Supporters believed that to gain opportunity and respect in the workplace, our nation had to address gender equality issues (Cavanaugh, 2018). Women fought hard for equality and concentrated on the Equal Rights Amendment, which passed during the second wave. This was a landmark period for women and the feminist movement.

The Women's Experiences framework asserts that women's identity as a unique and individual social group begins with their "lived experiences" as women (McCann & Kim, 2017). Women are independent beings whose "lives, rights, opportunities, pleasures, and responsibilities are often dictated by the value their cultures give to their perceived gender as distinct from that of men" (McCann & Kim, 2017, p. 25). The shared "common experiences" of oppression define women as a social group that joins forces to resist gender oppression and enhance their lives (McCann & Kim, 2017). It is imperative to critically examine women's "lived experiences" to understand the values, beliefs, and behaviors exhibited by women. Feminist theory posits the value and meaning of women's lives must be understood from women's points of view instead of examining their lives from previous male-dominated points of view (McCann & Kim, 2017). This second wave feminism framework asks questions that lead to a deeper understanding of the

underrepresentation of women as school presidents. The following questions, adapted from the work of McCann and Kim (2017), invite researchers to gain knowledge and bring about change regarding the conflict of gender inequality among school presidents:

- How does higher education subordinate women as women?
- How can we understand the ways fewer women in college presidencies is the result of gender oppression?
- How can we be sure that we have clear understandings that fewer women in college presidencies results from oppressive situations?
- How is women's subordination as women connected to related oppressions based on race, ethnicity, nationality, class, sexuality, ability, and gender identity within higher education?
- How can women in higher education resist subordination?
- What kinds of changes are needed to promote more women into school presidencies?

In conclusion, utilizing the second wave of feminism theory to explore gender inequality among school presidents will contribute to a deeper understanding of the oppression experienced by women in higher education. The Women's Experiences Framework poses questions that examine injustices, build knowledge, and demand change regarding the oppression of women (McCann & Kim, 2017). The history and context from the perspective of women's experiences will provide a richer analysis for this study examining the difference between the gender composition of the school trustee boards based on the gender of the presidents and the association between the gender of the boards' chairpersons and the gender of the presidents.

Context of Researcher

My experiences as a woman working in higher education leadership and serving as a trustee for two universities piqued my interest in women serving as school presidents. I entered the higher education field in 2001 as an adjunct psychology instructor. Over the past 20 years, I served in a variety of roles including faculty, program director, department chair, dean, regional vice-chancellor, vice president, vice provost, and am currently a provost and chief academic officer. I also had the opportunity to live abroad and teach at Moldova State University in Chișinău, Moldova, which provided the unique experience of teaching students educated in the Soviet system. Throughout my career, I have interacted with a multitude of higher education leaders and stakeholders such as deans, provosts, presidents, publishers, learning technologists, accrediting bodies, and government organizations. I have worked with more men than women and found that most men are receptive and supportive of working with a female executive, but some have made it clear that top leadership is still a man's world. When attending trustee meetings, I observe my fellow trustees gathered around the boardroom table and notice gender, age, race/ethnicity, and experience. On the first board of trustees, I served as one of three women on a board comprised of 11 trustees. On the second board, I am one of four women serving on a board of 16. Women comprise 27% and 25% of the trustee positions respectively, and both universities have white, male presidents. When attending higher education conferences, I find myself looking for successful women leaders. Since beginning Nova Southeastern University's Ph.D. program in Conflict Analysis and Resolution, I have read a plethora of studies discussing women's experiences, triumphs, and obstacles as leaders in higher education. I am passionate about studying how our

nation can foster the advancement of more women in college and university president positions. We need to do more than "move the needle." We need to sharpen it.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study is to examine differences in the gender proportion of the school boards of trustees based on gender of school presidents and to explore the association between the gender of the school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents in SACSCOC accredited colleges and universities located throughout Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Latin America. SACSCOC currently has 792 member institutions throughout the southern region (SACSCOC Accredited and Candidate List, 2021). The research will involve collecting data from all SACSCOC school websites to classify the gender of each trustee serving on the board, the gender of board's chairperson, and the gender of the school president. All of these data are available on public websites and do not require permission or consent to collect.

This study's non-experimental design aligns with the utilization of quantitative research to explore categorical data sets to examine differences between the dichotomous variable of gender proportion of the school boards of trustees based on the interval variable of gender of school presidents (RQ1) and the association between two naturally dichotomous variables of the gender of the school boards of trustees' chairpersons and gender of school presidents (RQ2). The researcher will utilize IBM's SPSS Statistics program to examine descriptive statistics related to the research questions. To examine RQ1, the researcher proposes using a between groups research design and an Independent Samples t-test with no control variables. To examine RQ2, the researcher proposes using

a 2 x 2 cross tabulation to determine if there is an association and a Chi-square test to measure the strength of the association. The results of this study will identify if there is a difference and the size of the difference between the gender composition of the school trustee boards and the gender of school presidents. It will also determine if there is an association and the strength of the association between the gender of school board chairpersons and the gender of school presidents in SACSCOC accredited colleges and universities.

Assumptions

This work is based on the assumption that school websites correctly identify up-to-date information about the members of their board of trustees and school presidents. This research also rests on the assumption that SACSCOC provided current information regarding candidate and member institutions as identified by their July 2021 file. The list of SACSCOC candidate and membership institutions fluctuates as schools may be granted or lose candidacy, may be placed on probation, and may be granted or lose accreditation. The fluctuation is small in that candidates and members deviate by a few schools each year.

This study is predicated on the assumption that gender is identified as male or female. The identification did not account for transgender, multi-gender, gender neutral, or nonbinary gender categories. Gender is used in the context of sex assigned at birth. Identification of gender is based on names with accompanying photographs published on college/university websites. In the event that photographs did not accompany the published name, the researcher searched for pictures and articles of the individual via LinkedIn, Facebook, and Google.

Scope and Delimitations

The boundaries of this study consist of the census population of SACSCOC candidate and accredited colleges and universities in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Latin America. The researcher chose a census population to conduct a summative analysis of data within the SACSCOC region. The analysis of these data will provide information on the size of the effect. Gathering data from a sample population would necessitate the use of statistics to make an inference about a population based on the sample. The researcher can obtain data on all published SACSCOC institutions resulting in a comprehensive analysis of the entire population.

The researcher chose to focus on SACSCOC accredited schools based on an 18-year history of working at SACSCOC accredited higher education institutions and Dr. Belle Wheelan's challenge for women to occupy 50% of the school presidencies by 2030. SACSCOC is recognized as one of the United States' largest and most rigorous higher education accreditors (Abole, 2016). Schools seeking SACSCOC accreditation must demonstrate compliance with approximately 100 standards under one of three categories: core requirements, comprehensive standards, and federal requirements (SACSCOC, 2019-b). Accreditation permits an institution to participate in Title IV federal funding for student financial aid and reflects the quality of an institution by defining its resources and programs and commitment to continuous quality improvement (SACSCOC, 2019-b). SACSCOC is a preeminent college/university accreditor with a vision to serve as a premier model for shaping and ensuring the quality of higher education (SACSCOC, 2019-a). Dr. Wheelan's drive to achieve gender parity among school presidents within

the SACSCOC region could positively impact our nation's efforts in ACE's initiative to achieve gender parity in all U.S. school presidential positions by 2030. This study may discover information that leads to proposed changes in the gender proportion of school boards of trustees and chairpersons necessary to move the needle more toward gender parity among school presidents.

Limitations

As noted in the scope and delimitations, conducting an analysis of the entire population within the SACSCOC region provides data revealing the size and extent of the relationship between the variables within those regional boundaries, but it does not provide a cross-section of the relationship between variables of institutions throughout the entire country. The study is limited to data obtained from institutions within the SACSCOC region, and therefore, results may only apply to this region.

In addition to the regional boundaries of the study's population, this study is limited by the classification of gender as male or female. Gender is used in the context of sex assigned at birth and did not account for a multitude of gender categories. Identification of gender involved the assumption of male or female based on the trustees' name, photograph, and gender category identified on college websites.

Finally, this study is limited to the snapshot of data gathered from college/university websites from July 2021 through September 2021. School presidents and trustees change, so there may be a variation in data collected during this time frame.

Significance of the Study

This study will address a gap in literature examining if there is a difference between the gender proportion of school trustee boards based on the gender of school

presidents and if there is an association between the gender of the school boards' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents. The boards of trustees hire school presidents; therefore, they play the most pivotal role in the U.S. achieving gender parity among school presidents by 2030. Higher education institutions need to model a more equitable distribution of men and women among top leadership positions. Education and acknowledgment are keys to decrease oppression and increase opportunities for women. If more than half of the school presidents leave their positions by 2022, and 80% do not have succession plans; the U.S. will experience a significant number of new higher education leaders in the chief executive position (Okolo, 2019). The results of this study may provide an opportunity to identify action steps necessary to move the needle and support ACE's initiative to achieve gender parity in college and university presidencies by 2030.

Definition of Terms

- *Accreditation:* Accreditation in higher education is a collegial process of self-review and peer review for improvement of academic quality and public accountability of institutions and programs. This quality review process occurs on a period basis, usually every three to ten years (CHEA, 2021).
- *ACE:* The American Council on Education is a membership organization that assembles the higher education community to shape effective public policy and foster innovative, high-quality practice. Membership includes approximately 1,700 colleges and universities, related associations, and other organizations in America and abroad (The American Council on Education, 2020).

- *ACPS:* The American College President Study is a comprehensive examination of American college and university presidents and the presidency pipeline. The first study was published in 1988, and the most recent study was published in 2017. The 2017 study is based on a national survey of 1,546 college and university presidents, chancellors, and CEOs at various types of public and private institutions across the United States (Gagliardi et al., 2017).
- *AGB:* The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges is a membership organization that strengthens higher education governing boards and the strategic roles they serve within their institutions and foundations (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 2020).
- *Board of regents:* In public higher education, some state colleges and universities call their board of trustees a board of regents. The board of regents performs the same duties as the board of trustees. The board is comprised of an appointed or elected group of individuals who have overall responsibility to develop and approve the institution's mission, strategic goals and objectives; to establish policies related to programs and services; and to ensure fiscal health of the institution (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 2020).
- *Board of trustees:* In higher education, a board of trustees is the governing body of the institution. The board is comprised of an appointed or elected group of individuals who have overall responsibility to develop and approve the institution's mission, strategic goals and objectives; to establish policies

related to programs and services; and to ensure fiscal health of the institution (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 2020).

- *CHEA:* A U.S. association of degree-granting colleges and universities that recognizes institutional and programmatic accrediting organizations and serves as a national and international authority on accreditation and quality assurance (CHEA, 2021).
- *SACSCOC:* The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges is the recognized accrediting body in the eleven U.S. Southern states (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia) and in Latin America for those institutions of higher education that award associate, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, 2019).
- *School(s):* The term *school* is used to represent colleges and universities as one group.
- *TIAA Institute:* Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association of America is a financial planning company that conducts research, provides access to a network of thought leaders, and advises nonprofit and public higher education leaders on trends and future strategies to maximize opportunities for success (Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association of America, 2020).

Summary and Organization of Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five parts plus appendices. The first chapter introduces the underrepresentation of women as college/university presidents, indicates

why this is a problem, identifies the purpose and significance of this study, clarifies the higher education context of the researcher, states the research questions, and provides the theoretical framework to explain this conflict. The second chapter examines the literature concentrated on (1) the historical context of women as college/university presidents, (2) the obstacles women face when achieving college/university presidencies and how higher education perpetuates the gender gap, (3) preparing women for higher education leadership roles, job desirability, and motivation, (4) women's experiences in higher education leadership roles, (5) factors that contribute to women's success in higher education leadership roles, and (6) factors impacting board of trustee presidential appointments. It identifies a gap in the literature that may be narrowed by the study. The third chapter describes the study design and research methodology, the role of the researcher, the study population, and the plan for data collection and analysis. The fourth chapter provides participant demographics, a description of data collection, an analysis of the data, and a discussion of the results. The fifth chapter concludes with an overview of the study's results, the application of theory, research findings, implications, and contributions to the field of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, limits of the study, recommendations, and future studies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction and Literature Research Process

This chapter examines the literature relevant to the underrepresentation of women as school presidents. The goal of this literature review is to provide an in-depth understanding of the research conducted by scholars and practitioners who attempted to explain why more women do not occupy college/university presidential positions and how higher education professionals can move the needle to propel more women into this chief executive role. The researcher utilized Nova Southeastern's library, ResearchGate, Google Scholar, Google, and Amazon to identify studies, journal articles, and books on women as college/university presidents and leaders in higher education. The research was organized using an annotated bibliography that identified author, year of publication, title, theme, source type, method 1, method 2, in text citation, reference, and a summary of relevant information. The research encompassed a plethora of topics and approaches resulting in the selection of six overall themes that examined women as school presidents as well as women in other higher education leadership positions. Most of the research focused on the selected overarching themes; therefore, the researcher categorized each study, article, or book into one of the identified themes: (1) the historical context of women as school presidents, (2) the obstacles women face when achieving school presidencies and how higher education perpetuates the gender gap, (3) preparing women for higher education leadership roles, job desirability, and motivation, (4) women's experiences in higher education leadership roles, (5) factors that contribute to women's success in higher education leadership roles, and (6) factors impacting board of trustee presidential appointments. This method of research collection provided an opportunity to

sort information in a variety of orders such as chronological, source type, and topic/theme. It also provided the ability to view the literature through different lenses, which helped to identify similarities, differences, categories, and research gaps.

Organization of Literature Review

After extensive inquiry, the researcher chose to organize the literature review in topical order by using the selected themes throughout the research process. This strategy led to the development of a narrative based on themes to examine why more women are not school presidents. The researcher organized themes in the following order: (1) the historical context of women as school presidents, (2) the obstacles women face when achieving school presidencies and how higher education perpetuates the gender gap, (3) preparing women for higher education leadership roles, job desirability, and motivation, (4) women's experiences in higher education leadership roles, (5) factors that contribute to women's success in higher education leadership roles, and (6) factors impacting board of trustee presidential appointments. Even though this study utilizes a quantitative method to examine differences in the gender proportion of school boards of trustees based on the gender of school presidents and the association between the gender of school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents, it is paramount to understand the historical context, obstacles women face, perpetuation of the gender gap, and women's experiences in relation to why more women are not school presidents. This chapter tells the story of a substantial gender inequity among school presidents, identifies a noteworthy gap in the literature investigating the lack of gender parity, and solidifies the need for this study examining the gender composition of college and university trustee boards and the gender of the president.

Why More Women are not School Presidents

The Historical Context of Women as School Presidents

The history of women as school presidents began in 1871 when Frances Willard became the president of Evanston College for Ladies in Evanston, Illinois (The Center for Women's History and Leadership, 2015). She is recognized as the first woman president of a U.S. college and held this position until 1873 when Evanston College for Ladies merged with Northwestern University (The Center for Women's History and Leadership, 2015). After the merger, Willard became the first Dean of Women of the Women's College but resigned in 1874 after a disagreement with the university president who happened to be her former fiancé (The Center for Women's History and Leadership, 2015).

Women's colleges opened in the 1800's due to a need for advanced education for women who were not admitted into most higher education institutions (Parker, 2015). Women were denied the opportunity to obtain a college education, because a college education was seen as necessary to advance males but not females (Parker, 2015). Conservatives feared that college educated women would destroy the roles of women as homemakers, wives, and mothers, while liberals claimed that college educated women would be better homemakers, wives, and mothers (Parker, 2015). Societal trends such as an increase in labor-saving devices in the home, a shortage of teachers due to the growth of common schools, an increase of reading materials for women, and growing employment opportunities for women due to the Civil War led to an increased demand for higher education for women (Harwarth, Maline, & DeBra, 1997). The first women's colleges offered a liberal arts education, because the general belief at the time was that

women could not possibly obtain an education in professional programs such as medicine, law, and business (Parker, 2015). As more women entered coeducational institutions, college presidents began to hire females as faculty, advisors, and counselors for female students (Parker, 2015). “Dean of Women” was the first administrative title given to female leaders in coeducational colleges, and Alice Palmer, appointed as Dean of Women at the University of Chicago in 1892, was the first woman to hold this position at a coeducational institution (Parker, 2015). Ten years before serving as the Dean of Women, Palmer, age 27, served as the president of Wellesley College for women (Kenschaft, 2020). She resigned in 1887 after marrying George Herbert Palmer, a professor of philosophy at Harvard University (Kenschaft, 2020). She spent the next several years touring the country avidly speaking about women in leadership while affirming that educated women can remain beautiful, graceful, witty, and attentive (Kenschaft, 2020).

The Seven Sisters. Women continued to gain traction as leaders in higher education with the forming of the Seven Sisters, a consortium of prestigious northeast women’s colleges that organized in 1927 to discuss financial aid and curriculum issues plaguing the elite liberal arts colleges (The Seven Sisters, 2020). The Seven Sisters encompassed Mount Holyoke, Vassar, Smith, Wellesley, Bryn Mawr, Barnard, and Radcliffe and were considered equivalent to the male Ivy League colleges (The Seven Sisters, 2020). These elite women’s colleges were instrumental in paving the way for women to obtain higher education leadership positions, and many launched women into presidential roles.

Mount Holyoke, the first of the Seven Sisters, was founded in 1837 as a female seminary by Mary Lyon, a chemist and educator (Mount Holyoke, 2020). She served as principal, the institution's chief leader, until her death in 1849 (Mount Holyoke, 2020). The institution continued to operate with female principals until 1937 when the first male president was appointed (Mount Holyoke, 2020). Two more men served as president until the trustees appointed Elizabeth Topham to the role in 1978 (Mount Holyoke, 2020). The remaining presidents have all been women, and today, the liberal arts college operates under the leadership of a female president.

Vassar, founded in 1861, was the first women's college in the United States to become coeducational (Vassar College, n.d.). The college had five male presidents for the first 85 years, and the trustees finally appointed a female president, Sarah Gibson Blanding, in 1946 (Vassar College, n.d.). Five of Vassar's eleven presidents have been women, and the college is currently under the leadership of a female president (Vassar College, n.d.). Vassar was one of the first women's colleges to provide courses in male-dominated disciplines such as physical education, geology, astronomy, mathematics, and chemistry (Vassar College, n.d.). Vassar turned down an invitation to merge with Yale in 1967 and began accepting men in 1969 (Vassar College, n.d.). Men now comprise 45% of the 2,450-student population (Vassar College, n.d.).

Smith College was founded in 1871 by Sophia Smith, a New England woman, who donated $400,000 with plans to open a women's college that provided an education equal to men (Smith College, n.d.). She appointed a board of 11 men to be the first trustees of the college, and for the next 104 years, men served as the first six college presidents (Smith College, n.d.). In 1975 the trustees hired the first female president, and

four more women have served as college president since the first woman president (Smith College, n.d.). Currently, 29 women serve as trustees and comprise the entire board, and a woman holds the president position (Smith College, n.d.).

Wellesley College, founded in 1870 by Henry and Pauline Durant, began under the leadership of Ada Howard, Wellesley's first president (Wellesley College, n.d.-a). Wellesley emphasizes that all 14 of its presidents have been women, which played a role in the college's commitment to providing women with an exceptional education (Wellesley College, n.d.-b). Similar to all of the first women's colleges, Wellesley was founded as a liberal arts institution; however, in 1890 the third president, Helen Shafer, developed programs in the major sciences and established one of the first psychology laboratories in the U.S. (Wellesley College, n.d.-a). It is interesting to note that Wellesley's fifth president, Caroline Hazard, was the first president to receive a formal inauguration (Wellesley College, n.d.-b). She served from 1899 to 1910, had no formal college degree, and is recognized for putting the college in a sound financial position. (Wellesley College, n.d.-b). The college's 11th president, Nannerl Overholser Keohane, left Wellesley in 1993 to become Duke University's first female president (Wellesley College, n.d.-b).

Bryn Mawr College was established in 1885 by the Religious Society of Friends with a goal of offering the most rigorous education to women of all of the women's colleges (Bryn Mawr College, 2020-a). The Religious Society of Friends, formally the Quakers, believed in spiritual equality for men and women (History.com, 2017). This was unusual for a religious sect that emerged in 17th century England. When Quakers came to the United States, they fought for Native American rights and did not believe in buying or

selling slaves (History.com, 2017). In the 19th century, many Quakers, such as Lucretia Mott and Alice Paul, were notable leaders in the women's suffrage movement (History.com, 2017). The fundamental beliefs of parity among men and women led Bryn Mawr's founders to unapologetically advocate for women's advancement (Bryn Mawr College, 2020-a).

The college's first president was male, but the second president, a female named Martha Carey Thomas, laid the foundation for Bryn Mawr's progressive beliefs that often landed school leaders at odds with conservative society officials (Bryn Mawr College, 2020-a). Despite the founding abolitionist and gender egalitarian visions, Thomas embraced the eugenics movement and excluded African American and Jewish women from attending the institution (Bryn Mawr College, 2020-a). She adamantly supported women's advancement in the sciences, but her ethnic and anti-Semitic biases harmed the college's legacy (Bryn Mawr College, 2020-a). The detrimental foundation resulted in Bryn Mawr focusing on a current mission of equity and inclusion (Bryn Mawr College, 2020-a). The college is currently under the leadership of a female president, and seven of the college's nine presidents have been female (Bryn Mawr College, 2020-b).

Barnard College opened in 1889 after two years of petitioning by a group of women from New York City who protested that women could not attend classes at Columbia University. At the time, Columbia University created a syllabus for women who wanted to follow along and study, but the university would not admit women (Barnard College, n.d.-a). Annie Nathan Meyer, a self-taught student who utilized the syllabus but was not allowed to attend classes, led a group of women who convinced the Columbia Board of Trustees to open an affiliated college for women (Barnard College,

n.d.-a). The college opened and was named after Columbia's president, Frederick A.P. Barnard (Barnard College, n.d.-a). Meyer, who served as a Barnard Trustee from 1889 to 1951, advocated throughout the northeast for higher education for women and offered a place to Barnard's first black student, Zora Neale Hurston in 1925 (Barnard College, n.d.-a).

Barnard's first five leaders were women who held the position of dean of the college, and Barnard hired its sixth leader in 1962, Rosemary Park, to be the college's first president (Barnard College, n.d.-b). Barnard is currently under the leadership of its eighth female president, and all of Barnard's chief executive leaders have been women (Barnard College, n.d.-b). Barnard's legacy is rooted in the many women who relentlessly fought for women's rights to vote and earn a college degree. Josephine Paddock, a Barnard graduate in 1906, was one of the suffragists who picketed the White House in 1917 demanding for women to have a voice (Barnard College, n.d.-a). A succession of strong women pushed the restrictive societal boundaries forging paths for women to be strong leaders, scholars, and activists. In 1981, Barnard's Board of Trustees selected the college's fifth president, Ellen V. Futter, who at the age of 31 was the youngest person appointed to the presidency at a major American college (Barnard College, n.d.-b).

Radcliffe College was founded in 1879 by Elizabeth Cary Agassiz, the first president, and a group of women who were driven to establish the college due to Harvard prohibiting female students (Harrison, 2020). The women's education center, formally named the Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women, consisted of a few rented rooms on Harvard's campus and was referred to as "Harvard Annex" or "The Annex"

(Radcliffe, 2020-a). In 1894 the Massachusetts state legislature chartered the institution, and it became Radcliffe College (Radcliffe, 2020-b). Agassiz served in her presidential role from 1882 to 1903 (Radcliffe, 2020-a). Five other women and two men served as Radcliffe's presidents through 1999 when the college became the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study and fully merged with Harvard University under the leadership of Drew Gilpin Faust (Radcliffe, 2020-b).

Dr. Faust became the first dean of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study and made history on July 1, 2007, when she became Harvard University's first female president (Radcliffe, 2020-b). Dr. Faust's presidential appointment gained worldwide recognition as it was the first time in Harvard's 371-year history that a woman led the renowned Ivy League university. She proclaimed that she hoped her appointment was a symbol of opening opportunities for women that were not possible a generation ago (Alderman, 2007). Dr. Faust powerfully declared at a news conference on campus, "I'm not the woman president of Harvard, I'm the president of Harvard" (Alderman, 2007). Dr. Faust continued to blaze a trail for women in higher education when she appointed Dr. Tomiko Brown-Nagin as the first African American dean of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study (Bolotnikova, 2018). Dr. Brown-Nagin, a civil rights historian and expert on constitutional and education law and policy, earned a J.D. from Yale Law School, a Ph.D. in history from Duke, and a bachelor's degree from Furman University (Bolotnikova, 2018). Dr. Brown-Nagin continues to lead Radcliffe's team consisting of eight female administrators (Radcliffe Institute, 2020-c).

The Seven Sisters substantially contributed to women obtaining higher education leadership positions. During a time when few colleges allowed women to attend, four out

of seven prestigious women's colleges appointed a female for the first president. On the other hand, three of the seven women's colleges chose a male as the first executive leader, thereby demonstrating that in the late 1800s, founders and trustees selected males as the preferred leaders over the all-female institutions. As time progressed, the founders and trustees hired more women to lead the institutions. To date 19 males and 70 females have held presidential positions among the Seven Sisters colleges. Women lead all seven of the institutions today. Table 1 displays the gender history and current gender of college presidents among the Seven Sisters.

Table 1

Numbers of Male and Female Presidents of the Seven Sisters Colleges

College	Gender first president	Number of male presidents	Number of female presidents or deans	Gender of current president	Year appointed to presidency
Mount Holyoke	F	3	16	F	2016
Vassar	M	6	5	F	2017
Smith	M	6	5	F	2013
Wellesley	F	0	14	F	2016
Bryn Mawr	M	2	7	F	2014
Barnard	F	0	13	F	2017
Radcliffe	F	2	10	F	2018
Total		19	70		

Note. The researcher compiled the numbers of male and female presidents from the historical pages of each college website during October 2020.

The prevalence of women leaders among the Seven Sisters charted the course for women leaders among the Ivy League colleges. Dr. Faust's appointment as the first female president of Harvard resulted in gender parity among the eight Ivy League institutions (June, 2017). Brown University, Princeton University, and the University of Pennsylvania all had women presidents in 2007 (June, 2017). Ruth J. Simmons, Brown

University's first female president, was also the first African American president of an Ivy League institution (June, 2017). Achieving gender parity among Ivy League college presidents was an outlier, as nationwide, women held about 25% of the college president positions (June, 2017). Once women achieved the top college/university position, they worked to provide other women the opportunity to advance to the top leadership role. However, the Ivy League universities have a long history of male dominated presidential roles, and the achievement of gender parity in 2007 should not mask the significant oppression and lack of opportunity afforded to women for two to three hundred years.

The Ivy League Colleges. A woman currently holds the president position at Brown University, and historically, two out of the nineteen college presidents have been women (Brown University, 2020). Columbia University currently has a male president, and no women have served as president in Columbia's 266-year history (Columbia University, 2020). In addition to the absence of women serving in the chief executive role, Columbia also had no female students until the winter of 1982 when the trustees signed an agreement to admit females (Columbia College, 2020). In 1982, 357 of the 800 first-year students were female, and the university had its first graduating class with women in 1987 (Columbia College, 2020). A woman presently leads Cornell University as the 14th president and second woman to hold this office since the university opened in 1865 (Cornell University, 2020). Dartmouth College is currently under the leadership of a male president, and no women have held any of the 18 president positions since the college was founded in 1769 (Dartmouth, 2020).

Harvard University shares the male-dominated Ivy League leadership history with men serving in 28 of its 29 president positions (Harvard University, 2020). The university

is currently under the leadership of a male president, but Harvard broke barriers when it appointed Drew Gilpin Faust as its first woman president in 2007. She served in this role for 11 years (Harvard, University, 2020). Princeton University follows a similar pattern with its current leadership under a man; however, the university beat Harvard by six years when it appointed a woman to the presidency in 2001 (Princeton University, 2019). Men served in 19 of Princeton's 20 president positions (Princeton University, 2019).

Princeton was chartered in 1746 and is the 4th oldest college in the US. The university has had 20 presidents, and one was a woman who served from 2001 to 2013 (Princeton University, 2019). The university currently has a male president.

The University of Pennsylvania claims the longest standing record of women serving in the presidential role (Penn University Archives, 2020a). The university has had three women presidents consecutively since 1993, and its current president, Amy Guttman, has held the position since 2004 (Penn University Archives, 2020a). In addition, the archives indicate the University of Pennsylvania was the first of the Ivy League colleges to appoint a female president, Claire Fagin, in 1993 (Penn University Archives, 2020a). Dr. Fagin served as the Interim President for 11 months, and she was followed by another female president, Dr. Judith Rodin, who was appointed to the role in 1994 (Penn University Archives, 2020a). The office of the president was formed at the University of Pennsylvania in 1930; therefore, the total number of 7 male and 3 female presidents appears skewed when compared to the university's opening in 1754 (Penn University Archives, 2020a). Prior to the presidency, 14 male Provosts led the college (Penn University Archives, 2020b). In totality, men account for 21 of the 24 university leaders (Penn University Archives, 2020b).

One woman and 22 men have held presidential positions at Yale University since its founding in 1701 (Yale University, 2020). Hanna Holborn Gray served as acting president from 1977 to 1978, but not all of the other Ivy League colleges consider an acting president to be the same as the permanent president (Yale University, 2020). When the University of Pennsylvania appointed Judith Rodin to the presidency in December of 1993, they received a lot of publicity that a woman had finally ascended to the top position at an Ivy League school (Needham, 2009). Yale pointed out that it had already had a female president over a decade earlier, but the University of Pennsylvania asserted that an acting president is not a full president (Needham, 2009). Regardless of semantics over acting president and full president, Yale University did choose a woman to its top post 30 years before Harvard University selected its first woman president.

Table 2 displays the gender history and current gender of college presidents among the Ivy League institutions.

Table 2

Numbers of Male and Female Presidents at Ivy League Institutions

College	Gender first president	Number of male presidents or leaders	Number of female presidents or leaders	Gender of current president Oct. 2020	Year appointed to presidency
Brown U.	M	17	2	F	2012
Columbia U.	M	22	0	M	2002
Cornell U.	M	12	2	F	2017
Dartmouth College	M	18	0	M	2013
Harvard U.	M	28	1	M	2018
Princeton U.	M	19	1	M	2013
U. of Pennsylvania	M	21	3	F	2004
Yale U.	M	22	1	M	2013
Total		159	10		

Note. The researcher compiled the numbers of male and female presidents from the historical pages of each college website during November 2020.

When examining the number of male and female presidents at the Ivy League colleges, it is clear that there is a long history of male dominance in the top leadership position. Men held 94% of the president positions among the Ivy League colleges from their inception through today. Even though multiple articles claim Ivy League colleges are shattering the glass ceiling with achieving gender parity among presidents (Gasman, M., Abiola, U., & Travers, C., 2015; June, 2017; Moody, 2018), in totality, only 6% of Ivy League college presidents have been women. The statistics paint a daunting picture of several hundred years of oppression and lack of opportunity for women in higher education. Despite the lack of women historically serving as president of an Ivy League institution, three of the eight current presidents are women. The president positions are high visibility positions deemed as powerful across academia. These leaders are demonstrating that women successfully lead the nation's most elite institutions, and their role is helping to propel more women into college/university president positions.

World War II. Even though women were accepted as principal leaders in women's colleges, they were not established as leaders in coeducational higher education institutions. Women slowly gained traction as "Dean of Women" in some coeducational institutions; however, men still dominated the higher education space as leaders, faculty, and staff. The needle moved in 1939 when World War II broke out, and men had to go to war. Higher education institutions in the United States experienced diminishing numbers of male enrollment and male faculty, and women filled the vacated roles and positions (Parker, 2015). The war provided an opportunity for women to step into higher education leadership and prove their capabilities at coeducational and women's colleges (Harwarth, Maline, and DeBra, 1997). Many women took this opportunity to step into college

leadership positions (Parker, 2015). Despite their success filling the higher education leadership gap for six years during the war, women only occupy 30% of school president positions nearly 75 years after World War II ended (Davis & Gray, 2020).

Obstacles to Women Achieving College/University Presidencies and How Higher Education Perpetuates the Gender Gap

The gap between men and women hired as school presidents inspired studies as to why there are not more women serving in this role. Despite the historical accounting of women successfully leading higher education institutions, women continue to face obstacles achieving college/university presidencies. Multiple studies describe that higher education perpetuates the gender gap by embracing systemic barriers that impede women's progress (Brescoll et al., 2010; Bonham, 2019; Gomez, 2020). The effects are far reaching in that gender segregation in higher education is acknowledged as a key factor to explain the persistence of gender inequalities in the workplace (Barone & Assirelli, 2020). More men than women choose higher education courses of study in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), which leads to more men entering high labor market prospect fields (Barone & Assirelli, 2020). Women are systemically underrepresented in STEM fields, which results in less women entering higher labor market prospect fields (Barone & Assirelli, 2020). Since more men are educated and working in the high labor market demand STEM fields, more men are available to teach STEM disciplines in colleges and universities. The STEM fields are among some of the highest paying fields, and throughout the workforce and academia, more men work and teach within the most lucrative fields. The cycle continues to result in more men

occupying the most prestigious and highly paid university positions (West & Curtis, 2006; Martin, 2011).

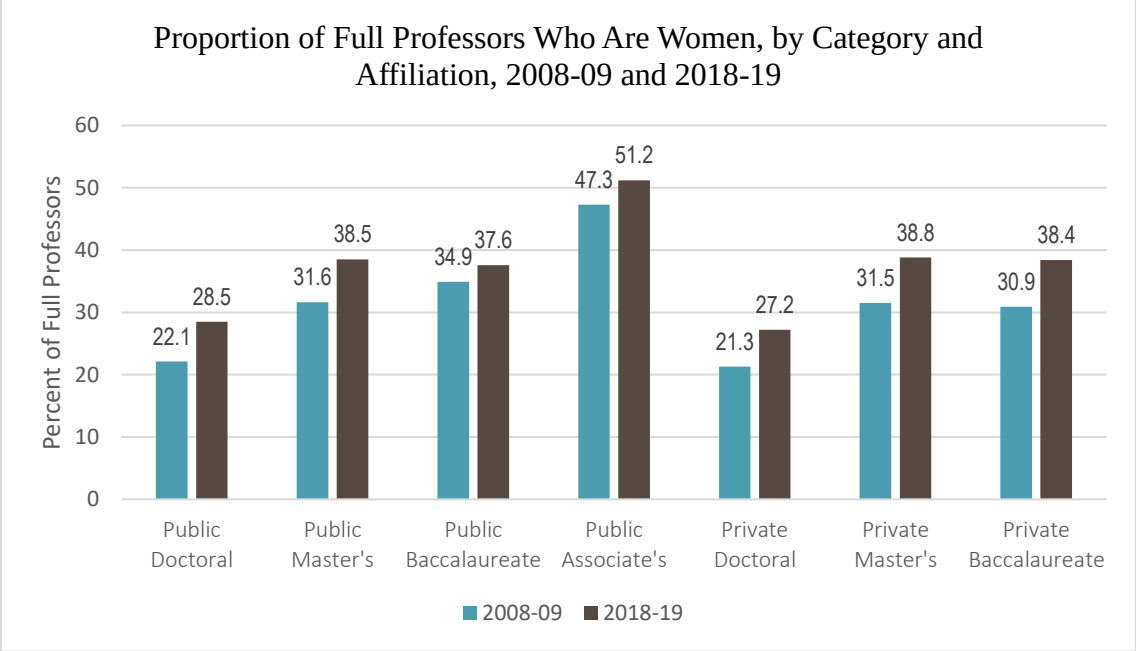
The American Association of University Professors identified that women are often paid lower salaries than men of equal rank, which ultimately discourages women graduate students from pursuing academic careers (West & Curtis, 2006). The salary gap between men and women in higher education not only raises questions of basic fairness, but places serious limitations on the success of educational institutions themselves (West & Curtis, 2006). When ACE released the 2017 numbers indicating women held about 30% of the school presidencies in the U.S., one researcher reported his higher education colleagues enthusiastically proclaimed how well women are doing instead of pointing out that higher education is far off the 50% mark (Jefferson, 2019). In the book titled *Women as Leaders in Education: Succeeding Despite Inequity, Discrimination, and Other Challenges*, Dr. Martin concludes that the most prominent challenge women in higher education face is representation (2011). Despite the gains women have made in higher education over the past few decades, women remain underrepresented in tenure-track positions (Martin, 2011). The underrepresentation of women in tenure-track positions leads to lower availability for advancement into leadership roles.

In addition to Dr. Martin's research describing the decades of underrepresentation of women in tenure-track positions, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) compared the proportion of women who were full professors in public and private doctoral, master's, and baccalaureate programs, as well as, public associate's programs in 2008-09 and 2018-19 (Curtis, 2019). The comparison over the ten-year span demonstrated the proportion of women who are full professors increased by 6.4% in the

public doctoral and 5.9% in the private doctoral categories, by 6.9% in the public master's and 7.3% in the private master's categories, by 2.7% in the public baccalaureate and 7.5% in the private baccalaureate categories, and by 3.9% in the public associate's category (Curtis, 2019). Public institutions with associate degrees reported the highest proportion of women who are full professors, while private and public doctoral institutions reported the lowest proportion of women who are full professors (Curtis, 2019). Figure 1 displays the proportion of full professors who are women, by category and affiliation in 2008-09 and 2018-19.

Figure 1

Proportion of Full Professors Who Are Women, by Category and Affiliation, 2008-09 and 2018-19



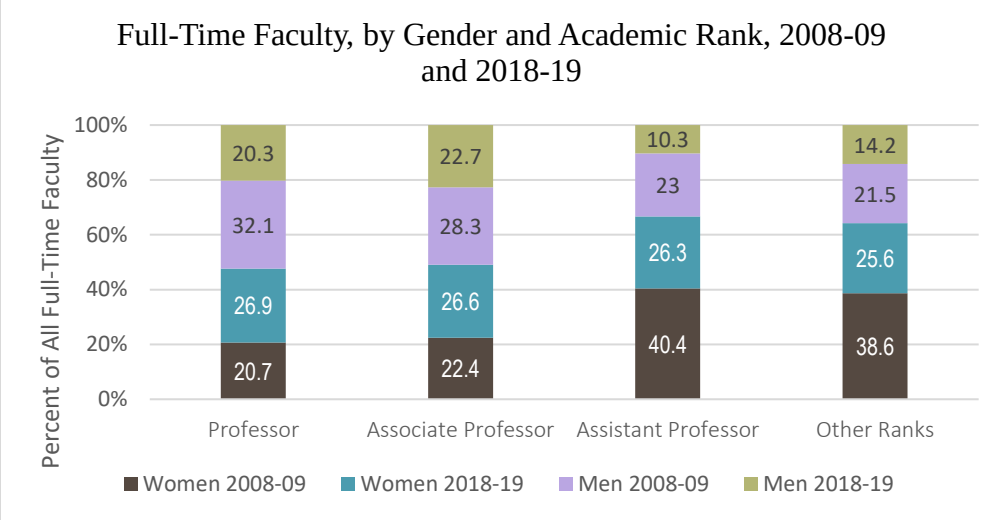
Note: The figure includes only institutions submitting data in both years, with adjustments for institutions that combined after 2008-09. Category is for the 2018-19 survey.

Source: (Curtis, 2019, AAUP Faculty Compensation Survey, 2018-2019).

The AAUP also compared the percent of full-time faculty by gender and academic rank in 2008-09 and 2018-19. Even though women professors experienced a slight increase from 2008-09 to 2018-19, male professors significantly outnumber female professors (Curtis, 2019). Both women and men associate professors experienced a slight decrease from 2008-09 to 2018-19, and women slightly outnumber men as associate professors (Curtis, 2019). Assistant professors also experienced a decrease from 2008-09 to 2018-19, and women outnumber men in the lower academic rank (Curtis, 2019). Figure 2 displays full-time faculty by gender and academic rank in 2008-09 and 2018-19.

Figure 2

Full-Time Faculty, by Gender and Academic Rank, 2008-09 and 2018-19



Note: The figure includes only institutions submitting data in both years, with adjustments for institutions that combined after 2008-09.

Source: (Curtis, 2019, AAUP Faculty Compensation Survey, 2018-2019).

The AAUPs Annual Report also compared women's and men's average full-time faculty salaries by category and academic rank in the 2008-09 and 2018-19 academic years. The full-time faculty salaries of women were 80.5% of the salaries for men in 2008-2009 and 81.5% of the salaries for men in 2018-29 (Curtis, 2019). The problem is

that during a ten-year span when higher education was supposedly working to promote more women into leadership roles, the gap only narrowed by 1%. Table 3 displays the average full-time faculty salaries of men and women by degree category and academic rank for the 2008-09 and 2018-19 academic years. The *women percent* column indicates the percent of men's salaries women make.

Table 3

Women's Average Full-Time Faculty Salary Compared to Men's, by Category and Academic Rank, 2008-09 and 2018-19

	No. of Institutions	2008-09			2018-2019		
		Women	Men	Women (%)	Women	Men	Women (%)
CATEGORY I *(Doctoral)*	227						
Professor		113,593	125,586	90.5	143,142	160,166	89.4
Associate Professor		78,960	85,131	92.8	97,501	104,529	93.3
Assistant Professor		67,993	72,961	93.2	85,019	92,655	91.8
All Ranks Combined		75,627	97,075	77.9	95,397	120,160	79.4
CATEGORY IIA *(Master's)*	358						
Professor		87,886	91,688	95.9	101,804	107,214	95.0
Associate Professor		69,240	71,691	96.6	83,065	84,970	97.8
Assistant Professor		58,483	60,232	97.1	71,792	74,766	96.0
All Ranks Combined		64,978	72,981	89.0	78,244	86,473	90.5
CATEGORY IIB (*Baccalaureate)*	358						
Professor		89,601	94,627	94.7	105,232	108,069	97.4
Associate Professor		69,072	70,361	98.2	80,454	82,510	97.5
Assistant Professor		56,956	58,581	97.2	67,617	69,246	97.6
All Ranks Combined		66,159	74,277	89.1	78,957	86,390	91.4
CATEGORY III *(Associate's)*	68						
Professor		75,258	78,014	96.5	89,812	92,174	97.4
Associate Professor		60,111	62,758	95.8	73,392	75,152	97.7
Assistant Professor		53,478	54,573	98.0	63,277	63,696	99.3
All Ranks Combined		58,990	61,685	95.6	71,236	72,872	97.8
ALL INSTITUTIONS	864						
Professor		102,043	115,137	88.6	125,428	143,635	87.3
Associate Professor		74,346	79,683	93.3	90,625	96,570	93.8
Assistant Professor		63,716	67,303	94.7	79,207	84,821	93.4
All Ranks Combined		71,016	88,227	80.5	87,973	107,981	81.5

Notes: The table includes only institutions with faculty ranks submitting data in both years, with adjustments for institutions that combined after 2008-09.

"All ranks combined" includes instructors, lecturers, and unranked faculty members.
Source: (Curtis, 2019, AAUP Faculty Compensation Survey, 2018-2019).

The data in Table 3 demonstrate the slow growth of women's faculty salaries over the ten-year period. The slow growth is undesirable but not surprising. The AAUP has been tracking gender differences in salary since the mid-1970's, and the progress toward more equitable salaries has been remarkably slow (Curtis, 2019).

The gender pay gap in higher education is synonymous with the gender pay gap throughout the United States. The US Census Bureau determined that women are paid 80 cents for every dollar men are paid (Gould et al., 2016). It is noteworthy that the higher education gender salary pay gap mirrors the national gender salary gap. Gould et al. (2016) examined a variety of gender pay gap measures and found that some report the gap at different parts of the wage distribution, some report on different demographic subgroups, and some are adjusted for factors such as education level and occupation. Measuring the gap differently can create a misconception that data are unreliable; however, the data on the gender wage gap are clear and consistent regarding the scale of the gap (Gould et al., 2016). In addition, Gould et al (2016) claim that measures for the gender pay gap cannot gauge the full effects of discrimination. Data examine gender discrimination along one dimension, differential pay for equivalent work, but miss all the possible variations in opportunities for men and women that impact the choices they make before they negotiate a wage (Gould et al., 2016). While multivariate regression can be used to distill the role of discrimination in a circumscribed sense, it cannot capture how discrimination affects variances in opportunity (Gould et al., 2016).

The lack of opportunity for women's advancement in higher education drew significant concern in 1993 when a group of 77 feminist psychologists met at a conference to explore future agendas central to feminist psychology (Madden, 2005). Dr.

Margaret Madden, a social psychologist, college administrator, and participant at the conference, indicated that much of the literature was more anecdotal than empirical (Madden, 2005). She spent the next decade researching women in higher education and explained that the field is making progress toward equity, but women are nowhere near achieving equal status with men (Madden, 2005). In one article, Dr. Madden explained the American Psychological Association's Task Force findings that discriminatory practices such as lesser start-up funds for new faculty hires, biases against certain kind of research, overburdening women with committee and other service obligations, and the underrepresentation of women in senior administrative positions may be less overt but still exist (Fouad et al, 2000 in Madden, 2005). A group of senior women faculty at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) explained they had been slow to recognize inequities and stated, "It did not look like what we thought discrimination looked like" (MIT, 1999, p. 9 in Fouad et al., 2000). Hidden and indirect forms of discrimination continue and can have profound impact on women's lives (Fouad et al., 2000). In researching efforts to equalize opportunity for black and minority ethnic women in higher education, Jones' (2006) concludes that managing diversity is often more about business appeal than a real commitment to challenging structural power relations that result in inequalities. Even though Jones' study focused on black and minority ethnic women in relation to white women in higher education, the findings are symbolic of the oppression experienced by all women in higher education. Women, in general, may earn or be placed in a higher education leadership position, but it is reasonable to question if the institution is truly ready to face decades of overt and covert discriminatory practices that impact women.

In considering if academic institutions are ready for women in leadership, Dr. Tracy Johnson interviewed 12 women who held positions of vice president or above in eight Southern California community colleges (Johnson, 2016). She sought to identify barriers to women's upward career mobility and the ways they overcame these barriers. The results determined these female leaders faced barriers of communication, mentorship, and perseverance and overcame the barriers by demonstrating enthusiasm, character, and hard work; being a good communicator about the ability to grow; and preparing for the next role (Johnson, 2016). Overall, Dr. Johnson concluded that women leaders must practice good communication skills with a willingness to discuss difficult situations, identify strong mentors, and persevere as leaders with their own leadership styles (Johnson, 2016). Although this study focused on the actions women can take to overcome the barriers to obtain higher education leadership positions, a question arises as to why men do not have to overcome similar barriers. Women are held to a different standard, even when exhibiting similar leadership behaviors to men. In a study examining transformational leadership behaviors in organizations, Loughlin et al. (2012) concluded the same organizational behavior does not lead to the same outcomes for male and female managers and specifically influences women's opportunities for career advancement. Women are not recommended for promotions at the same rate as men due to conflicting stereotypes between being a leader and being female (Loughlin et al., 2012).

Women are also held to a different standard when examining leadership outcomes and mistakes. Brescoll et al. (2010) conducted a study of 75 males and 127 females to examine how making small mistakes on the job is damaging to individuals in gender incongruent occupations. Interestingly, one of the occupations they chose for the study

was a president of a women's college. The researchers also chose a police chief due to the job's strong association with men. Researchers determined both occupations are equivalent in status and gender congruity and utilized a 2 x 2 x 2 between-subjects design to examine (target's gender) x (job performance: mistake vs. no mistake) x (occupation: gender congruent vs. gender incongruent) (Brescoll et al., 2010). Results showed that when no mistakes were made, male and female police chiefs, along with male and female women's college presidents, were given similar status (Brescoll et al., 2010). When female police chiefs and male women's college presidents made a mistake, they were given significantly less status, and viewed as less competent, than their gender-congruent counterparts (Brescoll et al., 2010). This study was replicated with female targets using two other careers pretested as gender incongruent for women, CEO of an aerospace engineering firm and chief judge (Brescoll et al., 2010). The results demonstrated that individuals in gender-incongruent occupations are viewed as less competent than their gender-congruent counterparts after making a single mistake (Brescoll et al., 2010). Since men hold the majority of the college/university presidencies, women start this role at a disadvantage and are often penalized in a harsher manner for making mistakes similar to those of their male counterparts. As McCann and Kim (2017) emphasized, feminist researchers must continue to gain knowledge and bring about change regarding the conflict of gender inequality. Brescoll et al.'s study (2010) contributed to evidence that women's subordination as women is related to oppressions based on race, ethnicity, nationality, class, sexuality, ability, and gender identity within multiple occupations, including higher education.

Research identifies that women leaders are held to a different standard when making mistakes, and academic leadership is not immune from this practice. Dr. Peterson (2016) interviewed higher education female executives in Sweden and identified an emerging academic leadership pattern requiring heavy administrative work, professionalism, and innovation instead of the traditional scholarly research. Evidence pointed to a trend where men are not interested in or abandon academic management due to the heavy workload (Peterson, 2016). Other factors leading to women landing higher education leadership positions include the institution's attempt to demonstrate equality, and men's privilege to turn down positions (Peterson, 2016). Dr. Peterson's study utilized the "glass cliff" theoretical framework suggesting that women are more likely to be appointed to unstable leadership roles in times of crisis (Ryan & Haslam, 2004). Several studies have demonstrated that women are more likely to rise in the professional hierarchy in difficult and potentially harmful situations (Kulich & Ryan, 2017; Ryan et al., 2010; Cook & Glass, 2014; Peterson, 2016). For example, compared to their male peers, women are seen as more desirable for managerial or political leadership positions in times of instability and crises, or following scandals (Kulich & Ryan, 2017). Such appointments expose women to a higher risk of failure, criticism, and psychological distress, thus a danger of falling off an "invisible cliff" (Kulic & Ryan, 2017). In examining women in politics, Ryan et al. (2010) identified that women are preferentially selected to challenge hard-to-win seats. In the United States, Cook and Glass (2014) analyzed all CEO transitions in Fortune 500 companies between 1996 and 2010 and found that appointments of female CEOs were more likely to occur following lower company performance than appointments of white male CEOs. Further studies revealed

that female CEOs were promoted to high-risk leadership positions, which in situations that were defined as scandals, declining sales, low growth, strategic missteps, or awareness of major problems (Kulich & Ryan, 2017). Higher education exhibits similar patterns of "glass cliff" behaviors in placing women in leadership roles during unstable circumstances increasing their risk of failure and blame for negative events (Peterson, 2016).

The literature demonstrates that women have encountered significant obstacles to achieving college/university presidencies, and higher education perpetuates the gender gap. Systemic barriers include gender inequalities through simplistic and unconscious hiring practices (Gomez, 2020), underrepresentation of women in high labor market demand STEM fields (Barone & Assirelli, 2020), lower salaries for women faculty (Curtis, 2019), less recommendations for promotions for women (Loughlin et al., 2012), and inaccurate assessments of less competence for women in leadership positions who make a mistake (Brescoll et al., 2010). When envisioning women leaders in higher education today, it is reasonable to assert that higher education should be ahead of the curve in shaping gender congruity among top level leaders. Researchers, practitioners, and higher education professionals engage in studies to gain knowledge about closing the academe gender gap, yet the needle is not moving quickly enough. Women continue to face obstacles achieving college/university presidencies, and higher education continues to perpetuate the gender gap.

Preparing Women for Higher Education Leadership Roles, Job Desirability and Motivation

The state of inequity faced by women in higher education necessitated urgent action to prepare women to navigate this career landscape. In their book *Women of Academe: Outsiders in the Sacred Grove* (1988), Aisenberg and Harrington interviewed 62 academics and concluded that women rarely received effective career counseling; failed to develop career strategies; neglected to establish professional credentials early on; were unfamiliar with networking; and rejected self-promotion as "calculated, even cold-blooded manipulation" (p. 57). Women in academe were hindered at mid-levels by old norms preventing them from entering professional fields (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988). They were trapped between two sets of rules and criticized for whichever set they followed (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988). To compete in a male dominated field, women needed to follow the rules of competition and aggression but doing so contradicted the old conventions defining womanly virtue (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988). When women followed the behavioral rules expected of them, they appeared patient, soft-spoken, deferential, and ultimately weak (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988). It was a no-win situation. Professional women struggled to fit either mold and had a difficult time gaining occupational respect from male counterparts (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988).

Multiple researchers, higher education groups, and government agencies continued to examine why women faced obstacles achieving higher education leadership positions and how more women could be developed for senior executive roles. Initial assumptions specified there was a lack of women prepared for the top leadership positions, and higher education institutions and women's leadership groups began efforts

to formalize leadership training to prepare women for the presidency role (Wilkinson, 2018). Human Resource departments collaborated with women's centers to develop robust programs aimed at preparing women for higher education leadership roles (Bonebright et al., 2012). The oldest campus-based women's center in the United States was established in 1960 at the University of Minnesota (Bonebright et al., 2012). The center, named the Minnesota Plan for the Continuing Education of Women, was started in response to the needs of married educated women from the 1950s and became known as the *Rusty Ladies* program due to the 28- to 42-year-old age range of its participants and mission to "rust proof" the minds of its members (Bonebright et al., 2012). The program focused on two predominant research questions from the 1950s that sought to answer (1) Can women be leaders? And (2) Who is the woman leader? (Bonebright et al., 2012). The Minnesota Plan for the Continuing Education of Women morphed into The Women's Center at the University of Minnesota and dedicated resources to women leadership, salary inequities, discriminatory policies, and strategies for improving the campus environment for women (Bonebright et al., 2012). In 1998, the Women's Center offered its first Women's Leadership Institute (WLI) for a cohort of 25 women who were likely to move into senior leadership positions (Bonebright et al., 2012). A 2010 study conducted by a program graduate on WLI program effectiveness found women participants developed increased self-confidence as a leader, built professional networks, and learned from others' experiences (Bonebright et al., 2012). Today, the WLI continues to offer programs for women staff and faculty who aspire to develop outstanding leadership skills (The Women's Center, 2021). Seventy years ago, the first *Rusty Ladies* programs sought to answer if women could be leaders, while today the WLI programs

focus on developing “inclusive, participatory, strategic, articulate, reflective women leaders who make a difference in the world” (The Women’s Center, 2021).

Robust women’s leadership development programs appeared throughout the U.S., because universities struggled to find qualified, effective women for key positions (Madsen, 2011). Madsen concluded that women were not prepared to move into key administrative positions, because few women occupied these roles (Madsen, 2011). This hindered women’s ability to connect with other women, which is a key element in preparing women for chief executive roles (Madsen, 2011). It was not about women’s lack of leadership skills but more about the absence of networking and mentorship for women by women. Madsen (2012) continued her research of women’s higher education leadership development programs by examining six case studies involving the HERS Leadership Institute (HLI) by Judith White; New Zealand Leadership Programs by Harris and Leberman; Preparing Women for Faith-Based Higher Education by Longman and Lafreniere; Leadership Programming at ACE by Baltodano, Carlson, Jackson, and Mitchell; Developing Women Leaders at the University of Minnesota by Bonebright, Cottledge, and Lonnquist; Leadership Development for Faculty at The Ohio State University by Hornsby, Morrow-Jones, and Ballam; and Women’s Leadership Development in Higher Education: Conclusions and Implications to HRD by Longman and Daniels. She concluded that connections among human resources development, leadership development for women, and higher education leadership development for women are instrumental in providing women with the holistic preparation needed to succeed in key higher education leadership positions (Madsen, 2012). Additionally, researchers identified the need for training in budget and finance due to a perceived a gap

in resource management among community college presidents, which were comprised of mostly males at that time (McNair et al., 2011). Women pursuing college/university presidencies benefitted from acquiring budget and finance skills.

In 2012, researchers at the Higher Education Resource Services (HERS) institute indicated that many college/university presidents would be retiring within the next ten years, and the institute needed to provide leadership training to prepare women to succeed in these roles (White, 2012). At that time, the HERS institute provided leadership development for more than 4,300 women, and institute educators determined they needed to modify the approach to include more practitioner faculty and less scholarly presenters (White, 2012). HERS also utilized faculty from a variety of personal and family backgrounds, with an emphasis on women of color (White, 2012). The goal was for women to experience diverse role models and develop inclusive leadership teams (White, 2012). The new format gave participants the opportunity to work with presenters to create their own interdisciplinary assignments and case studies, share experiences in a panel format, and develop at their own level (White, 2012). A study of 71 women who attended the Women's Leadership Development Institute revealed that collaborative workshop sessions had the greatest influence on meeting participants' expectations of leadership development training (Longman & Lafreniere, 2012). The opportunity to network and share experiences clearly holds value for women participating in leadership development programs.

The myriad of women's leadership programs should have increased the level of women entering college/university presidencies, but in 2021, the field does not have enough women filling these roles. The current state of higher education presents

substantial opportunities for women to further progress as institutional leaders (Okolo, 2019). Building on the HERS institute study indicating many college/university presidents would be retiring within ten years (White, 2012), the 2017 American College President Study (Okolo, 2019) hypothesized that 54% of presidents plan to leave their position by 2022. Approximately 80% of presidents surveyed reported their institutions have no succession plan in place to fill these positions (Okolo, 2019). There are women candidates who are equipped to meet this pressing need for incoming presidents, yet nearly 70 years after recognition of gender equality among school presidencies and multiple women's leadership programs aimed at preparing women for presidential roles, higher education is not moving the needle quickly enough. The urgent need for qualified leaders supports the importance of bringing women into higher levels of institutional leadership and, in particular, the presidency (Okolo, 2019). Scholars and practitioners must continue to question if the lack of gender parity in college/university presidency positions is due to a lack of women prepared for the role, or if another variable is influencing the slow progression of gender equity among the role.

One such scholar, Dr. Radecka Appiah-Padi (2014) utilized the Job Choice Decision Theory framework to analyze reasons that Chief Academic Officers (CAOs) chose not to pursue school presidencies in the 2009 CAO census published by ACE (Eckel et al., 2009). The census is a sister survey to ACE's *American College President Study* (University World News, 2009). Data from ACE's study revealed that about 45% of the CAOs indicated no interest in the presidency and 25% were unsure (Eckel et al., 2009). The CAO is often the number two position at a university and a common pathway to move into a presidency. It is perplexing to understand why women driven to achieve

the second highest university position chose not to move into the highest university position. Dr. Appiah-Padi's (2014) research revealed that the subjective attributes of the job encompassing balancing family and job, nature of work, and time demands have more impact on job desirability than objective or critical contact attributes such as compensation, search process, and does not know enough about position. In other words, women are choosing not to move into presidencies due to time demands and struggles of work-life balance. It is a monumental conflict for women wishing to obtain executive leadership roles while ensuring a balance between job and family. A wide expanse of practitioners and scholars are continuing to research gender inequity and oppression of women in the workplace to gain more knowledge about societal solutions to provide equity and opportunity for women.

Women's Experiences in Higher Education Leadership Roles

The lack of female CAOs choosing to move into college/university presidencies combined with the 2017 American College President Study (Okolo, 2019) hypothesizing that 54% of school presidents plan to leave their position by 2022 necessitates an examination of the literature looking at women's experiences in higher education leadership roles. Are women's experiences preventing them from choosing to apply for president positions, or are women applying and not getting chosen for the position? The feminist theory framework centering on women's experiences contributes to an understanding of how women's experiences in higher education leadership roles may impact their decision to move into or be considered for college/university presidency roles. The framework of women's experiences falls under the second wave of feminism that took place between the 1960's and 1980's (Reed, 2005). Feminist theorists avowed

that women's identity as a distinct and specific social group begins with their "lived experiences" as women (McCann & Kim, 2017). "Women's lives, rights, opportunities, pleasures, and responsibilities are often dictated by the value their cultures give to their perceived gender as distinct from men" (McCann & Kim, 2017, p. 25). As a result, the shared common experiences of oppression, subordination, and inopportunity define women as a social group who can unify to counteract gender oppression and progress their lives (McCann & Kim, 2017). By sharing experiences, the common elements rise and illuminate the systemic nature of women's subordination (McCann & Kim, 2017).

The women's experiences framework provides an understanding of how women's shared experiences in higher education leadership tell the story of oppression, subordination, and inopportunity within the field. From the 1800's when women's colleges opened due to a need for advanced education for women (Parker, 2015), to the Civil War which led to an increased demand for higher education for women (Harwarth, Maline, & DeBra, 1997), to the opening of the Seven Sisters because women were not allowed to attend the Ivy League colleges, and to 2021 where women still only occupy 30% of college/university presidencies (Gagliardi et al., 2017), women have had to fight their way for opportunities to advance into higher education leadership roles. By sharing experiences, women leaders in higher education identify common obstacles to achieving college/university presidencies, highlight leadership programs and mentors aimed at preparing women for higher education leadership roles, and specify factors contributing to women's success in higher education executive positions.

To gain an understanding of women's experiences in higher education leadership roles, researchers conducted a variety of qualitative studies providing opportunities for

women leaders to share their views. In addressing the earlier question as to if women's experiences are preventing them from choosing to apply for president positions, or if women are applying and not getting chosen for the position, Kelly (2011) interviewed twelve women CAOs to study their career advancement. As the women advanced, their gender, along with family influences, socioeconomic factors, racism, and societal expectations, impacted their ability to pursue their educational goals or limited their career aspirations (Kelly, 2011). Half of the women in the study expressed no interest in pursuing a presidency; however, all of the women felt that they could obtain a presidency if they applied for one that was a good match for their personal needs and professional aspirations (Kelly, 2011). The results from Kelly's study warrant further investigation as to why half of the women expressed no interest in pursuing a presidency. Women overcome many barriers to obtain a CAO position, and multiple factors may influence the decision to advance into the presidency role. It seems that after years of extensive effort, women would want to obtain the chief executive position, yet many choose not to move forward.

Although many female CAOs chose not to pursue a school presidency, several have chosen the path leading to the top higher education leadership role. How did these women perceive themselves as leaders? Hertneky (2012) examined this question by exploring the concept of leadership self-identity in 12 women college presidents. The researcher assumed that a woman must perceive herself as a leader to be effective in a formal leadership position and sought to discover how these women described and defined themselves as leaders, what personal attributes they believed allowed them to be leaders, what were their past and future career intentions, how have their relationships

with others influenced their leadership and self-identity, and what stories they told about themselves and leadership (Hertneky, 2012). Results revealed a pattern of unintended leadership development as positions were based more on opportunity and mentorship than career planning (Hertneky, 2012). Participants explained that leadership meant relationships and strategic connections, and the women described leading from within rather than having to be positioned out front as men are (Hertneky, 2012). The results are synonymous with other research documenting a nonlinear and unintentional career path with female chief executives, university presidents, state governors, and presidents of nations (Richardson, 1996; Gersick & Kram, 2002; Hewlett, 2005; and Eagly & Carli, 2007). In the book *Through the Labyrinth: The Truth About How Women Become Leaders*, the authors describe women's career path as a labyrinth comprised of varied challenges and twists and turns confronting women as they navigate through unchartered territory on their way to leadership positions (Eagly & Carli, 2007). The labyrinth metaphor is more representative of the pathway women embark on when pursuing top leadership roles.

Discoveries that women's leadership was somewhat unintended and resulted from opportunity and mentorship (Hertneky, 2012) necessitates continued examination of women's experiences. Tolar (2012) conducted a case study of 71 high-achieving women in higher education to explore what kinds of support, inputs, or advantages women acknowledge as having an impact on their leadership development. A little more than half of the respondents reported having a mentor, and they indicated mentors provided opportunities and challenges (Tolar, 2012). Opportunities encompassed things like opening doors, providing inspiration, being a sounding board, and serving as a role

model. Challenges included things like not having enough time or access to mentors, conflicting messages, lack of understanding financial and personal challenges, and mentor's style of communication (Tolar, 2012). Overall, the high-achieving women in the study experienced mentoring as a help and hindrance, but all agreed it was a critical factor in their development (Tolar, 2012).

Additional experiences include the barriers and obstacles women face while in higher education leadership roles. How do these experiences impact women pursuing top leadership positions? In exploring how women leaders in higher education make meaning of adversity, Diehl (2014) concluded that adversity had a generally positive effect on the women's identity and disparate effects on self-esteem, power, connections to others, and worldviews. Hannum et al. (2015) identified that women in higher education experienced barriers encompassing a lack of leadership identity, deficient opportunity and support, discouragement, sabotage, and different expectations for men and women. Women also experienced support for leadership such as formal leadership development, early leadership experiences, encouragement, and support, and having a role model (Hannum et al., 2015). Negative experiences included scrutiny and criticism, time demands of the job, pressure of ultimate accountability, broad scope of the job, isolation, and not fitting in or being heard, and positive experiences included having an influence, making an impact, broad scope of the job, power, authority, and autonomy, and being a role model (Hannum et al., 2015). Peszek (2016) also concluded that mentors played an instrumental role in the career trajectory of female university presidents. Through her narrative inquiry to explore the lived and told stories regarding gender and role congruity of four female university presidents, she determined a mentor or sponsor was a large part of shaping the

women into the type of leader they became (Peszek, 2016). Each female leader described her strengths as a president, and all used words such as communicative, collaborative, authentic, team-building, and strategic (Peszek, 2016). The author concluded by sharing four paramount phrases of advice from the participants: be a proponent of your own career trajectory, obtain a doctorate, find a mentor, and be capable of making decisions without having all the information (Peszek, 2016).

In exploring women's experiences as school presidents, Randall (2019) interviewed 17 recently retired women college presidents in the U.S. to understand how the women made sense of the mentoring circles they have had throughout their careers. All participants identified strong mentors who provided influence along career pathways (Randall, 2019). The author identified shared themes that mentoring circles are diverse and come from a wide variety of sources, contain family members as essential parts, provide a wide range of benefits, and that barriers faced by women leaders in higher education match the barriers faced by women in any industry (Randall, 2019). It is interesting to note that white women view leadership experiences differently than minority ethnic women (Showunmi et al., 2016). When examining how ethnic and gender identities influenced leadership experiences among 130 white, black, Asian, and mixed ethnicity British women, results demonstrated that white women define leadership using contemporary leadership models, while minority ethnic women defined leadership through ethno-cultural lenses (Showunmi et al., 2016). White women described historical gender and class barriers to enacting leadership, while minority ethnic women described barriers linked to ethnic and religious identities (Showunmi et al., 2016). Results from this study necessitate further examination of how women leaders of different races and

ethnicities synthesize experiences. Self-concept and identity play a role in one's interpretation of experiences. To gain a more in-depth understanding of women's experiences as college/university presidents, researchers need to consider factors of race and ethnicity. Women's lived experiences and cultural history will contribute to their interpretation of unique experiences in a college/university president role.

Factors that Contribute to Women's Success in Higher Education Leadership Roles

The examination of women's experiences provides an opportunity to learn more about factors that contribute to women's success in higher education leadership roles. Numerous studies conclude the mentoring relationship is one of the most significant factors in contributing to women's success and advancement in higher education leadership roles (Glover 2009; Airine et al., 2011; Waits, 2016; & Jensen, 2019). Glover (2009) utilized a cross-sectional survey of 341 women to identify factors that lead to success, barriers that impede advancement, and the impact of positive role models and mentoring relationships in the career advancement of women at two and four-year institutions of higher education. The researcher concluded that obtaining a doctorate degree, mentoring relationships, formal and informal learning experiences, networking opportunities, hard work, and the desire to grow and learn were the major factors influencing the women's career paths (Glover, 2009). Role models and mentors played an important role in the women's advancement with 64.5% having one to three mentors at some point during their career in academia (Glover, 2009). Airini et al. (2011) explained that collegial relationships with seniors, collegial relationships with peers, and unsupportive collegial relationships all contributed to or hindered women's success in advancing roles. In a study of 26 women in higher education positions in New Zealand,

positive outcomes from collegial relationships with seniors include appreciation of the role that positive relations can play in advancing one's career; realization that one project done well can lead to bigger projects; increased confidence; greater recognition for research and leadership; realization of the benefits that come from operating collaboratively; and access to further job opportunities (Airini et al., 2011). Positive outcomes from collegial relationships with peers included increased confidence, increased resilience and job retention, improved negotiation skills for better job conditions, reciprocity towards peers leading to further opportunities being shared with each other, and improved writing skills for journal publications (Airini et al., 2011).

In addition to skills and achievements, leadership style plays a role in women's advancement in higher education leadership. A study of 66 female higher education vice presidents identified that senior leaders displayed a collaborative and transformational leadership style (Waits, 2016). Findings also revealed that female vice presidents in higher education expect other female leaders to exhibit a collaborative and transformational leadership style similar to their own (Waits, 2016). In the competitive, male dominated STEM fields, women striving to achieve the rank of full professor were motivated by status, prestige, and recognition; expectations of the profession; encouragement from an advocate; and career advancement (Jensen, 2019). Women who move into the presidency role indicated they were cognizant of the rules within the culture of higher education, grasped the message given by mentors or senior leaders offering career advice, and opted-in when provided a challenge and given the opportunity to demonstrate initiative (Reis & Grady, 2018). A Chronicle of Higher Education article titled *What Happens When Women Run Colleges* identified that women focus less on the

individual, more on the institution, and are more democratic than their male counterparts (Gardner, 2019). Women exhibit a style of leadership that builds trust with and empowers subordinates, and women tend to display more communal, less self-centered behavior than men (Gardner, 2019).

When examining factors that contribute to women's success in higher education leadership roles, it is helpful to understand the barriers that women face when advancing into these roles. Although the barriers faced by women in higher education leadership roles differ, multiple studies over several decades identified common themes (Glover, 2009; Airini et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2012; Tolar, 2012; Carly & Eagly, 2016). In Glover's (2009) empirical study investigating the key success factors among 341 women in higher education, maintaining work-life balance was the most significant barrier. Additional barriers included needing specific credentials for the promotion and understanding expectations of the new position (Glover, 2009). Women in Airini et al's. New Zealand study (2011) reported a negative outcome from collegial relationships with some seniors in that not everyone acts with the best motives when encouraging women to take on more responsibility. Negative outcomes from collegial relationships with peers included peers stigmatizing and challenging the academic integrity of a colleague (Airini et al., 2011). When examining unsupportive collegial relationships, participants identified bullying, inappropriate advances by a former research supervisor, intimidation, and overly critical criticism under the guise of peer review (Airini et al., 2011). Participants reported that unsupportive collegial relationships were often destructive and negatively impacted women's advancement in leadership (Airini et al., 2011). In a study examining mentoring experiences of high-achieving women, some of the participants identified not

having enough time or access to mentors presents a barrier to advancing women in leadership (2012). Although usually supportive and positive, some women leaders described risks accompanying the mentoring relationship such as lack of awareness or sensitivity to one's circumstances, lack of shared values, and potential for manipulative behavior (Tolar, 2012). Additional challenges include conflicting messages, lack of understanding of financial and personal challenges, and the mentor's style of communication (Tolar, 2012).

Since women entered the workforce, they experienced significant barriers advancing in managerial and leadership positions. Researchers utilized metaphors to describe the perpetual challenges women faced rising to top positions. Smith et al. (2012) along with Carli and Eagly (2016) indicate that metaphors help to provide a common understanding of a situation, and they have been used to describe the negativity women face in the workplace. Metaphors are a powerful communication technique and have the capability of shaping social perception, which alters attitudes and behaviors toward other people (Carli & Eagly, 2016). Marilyn Loden coined the "glass ceiling" metaphor in 1978 when speaking at the Women's Action Alliance Conference in New York City to describe the invisible advancement barriers many women managers face (Marilyn Loden, n.d.). Since her identification of the metaphor, researchers have suggested additional metaphors such as glass cliff, glass floor, sticky floor, glass escalator, and maternal wall to emphasize specific problems and obstacles related to the careers of women (Smith et al., 2012). The glass cliff refers to women who break through the glass ceiling and attain leadership positions in precarious situations (Ryan & Haslam, 2004). The newly promoted female leaders face a higher risk of failure due to perilous circumstances and

are described as falling off the "glass cliff" when they fail (Ryan & Haslam, 2004). The "glass floor" is used to describe a situation that occurs at the lowest levels of organizations where staff have low educational qualifications and little likelihood of promotion (Barnet-Verzat & Wolff, 2008). The authors posit that gender inequality at the lower level is more prevalent than at the top levels of organizations where glass ceilings exist (Barnet-Verzat & Wolff, 2008). The "sticky floor" also exists at the lower levels of organizations and refers to women being held back in low paying jobs at the bottom levels of organizations (Kee, 2005). The term was initially used to describe how the careers of women in academic medicine were stalled due to a lack of institutional resources and support, and it morphed into a theme implying that women self-sabotage their careers and are responsible for self-imposed barriers in workplaces (Kee, 2005). And if it is not enough for women to face barriers of "glass and sticky floors," women can stand on the ground floor and watch men ride the "glass escalator" to the top floor. The term "glass escalator" describes discrimination against women in female dominated occupations where men, primarily white and heterosexual, quickly advance by receiving more rapid promotions than their female colleagues (Ng & Wiesner, 2007). Professions such as nursing and primary and secondary school teaching provide opportunities for glass escalators (Ng & Wiesner, 2007). And finally, the "maternal wall" metaphor drew attention early in the 21st century when researchers examined how women's careers were negatively affected by the disruptions in employment necessary for motherhood (Crosby et al, 2004).

Do women fall off glass cliffs, stand on glass floors, stick to sticky floors, watch men ride glass escalators, and get blocked by maternal walls? The answer is, "yes,"

women face all the situations described by these metaphors that label the inequities and oppression women face in the workplace. Carli and Eagly (2016), however, suggest that these metaphors do not accurately represent the conditions for contemporary women leaders, because the challenges women face are complex and nuanced, but not insurmountable. They conclude that the labyrinth is the most accurate metaphor to illustrate contemporary leadership opportunities for women (Carli & Eagly, 2016). The labyrinth is a maze of multiple paths, and leadership resides in the center (Carli & Eagly, 2016). Some paths to leadership are more direct than others, and some paths lead nowhere or are dead ends (Carli & Eagly, 2016). The labyrinth suggests that women encounter complex twists and turns throughout their careers and discovering a successful route to the center is not a given and necessitates navigation and determination (Carli & Eagly, 2016). The labyrinth metaphor presents a more positive perspective than its predecessors, because it does not prevent women from obtaining top leadership positions. The labyrinth is both optimistic in its acknowledgement that women do succeed as leaders and realistic in its reflection of the uncertainty of success (Carli & Eagly, 2016). As our nation moves forward to elevate more women into executive leadership positions, and specifically, attain gender parity among college/university presidents, we need to straighten out the complex pathways of the labyrinth and establish more direct routes with fewer barriers for women striving for top leadership positions.

Factors Impacting Board of Trustee Presidential Appointments

The examination of more direct pathways for women to achieve school presidencies requires an in-depth look at who hires school presidents. The board of trustees/regents hires the school president. Boards of trustees/regents are comprised of

multiple members, and each board has its own by-laws specifying the minimum and maximum number of members allowed on the board. When examining boards, it is reasonable to question why there are not more female school presidents. Some experts conclude that a lack of diversity in hiring practices, bias, and family life account for a lack of women in leadership roles (Moody, 2018). Bristol Community College President Laura Douglas suggests that a lack of diversity on boards is a major factor (Moody, 2018). She described that board members may not have a lot of experience working with women leaders as senior executives, and therefore, do not choose women for top leadership positions (Moody, 2018). President Douglas asserts that board members choose leaders they are comfortable with (Moody, 2018).

The fundamental question of why we do not have more women presidents is applicable to boards of trustees when questioning the lack of women serving on boards. Why don't we have more women serving as trustees? Deloitte Global's sixth edition of Women in the Boardroom reports that women hold just 16.9% of board seats globally, a 1.9% increase from the report's last edition published in 2017 (Deloitte Global Center for Corporate Governance, 2019). Women are significantly under-represented on corporate boards, and progress to change this trend is sluggish (Deloitte Global Center for Corporate Governance, 2019). Sharon Thorne, Deloitte Global Board Chair proclaims, "If the global trend continues at its current rate of an approximately 1% increase of women on boards per year, we will be waiting more than 30 years to achieve global gender parity at the board level," (Deloitte Global Center for Corporate Governance, 2019).

Economics play a role regarding women serving on higher education boards. Trustees are often asked to financially support colleges and universities, yet those serving on corporate boards often receive compensation. The financial obligation limits many individuals from being nominated for or accepting trustee positions on higher education boards. The gender pay gap becomes a factor in the pool of women able to financially support institutions. Yavorsky et al. (2019) studied 40,418 households over a twenty-year period to explore if men's or women's income is mainly responsible for pushing households into the top one percent income bracket ($394,000 to $859,000) and whether women have individual pathways to earning one percent status based on their income. Results indicated that women's income is enough for one percent status in 1 in 20 of the studied households (Yavorsky et al., 2019). Higher education and self-employment increase the likelihood a woman will earn enough income for one percent status but marrying a man with high income is a woman's main route to the one percent (Yavorsky et al., 2019). In contrast, men's one percent status is closely associated with their own characteristics (Yavorsky et al., 2019). The gender gap in earning in the one percent income bracket has not narrowed since the mid-to late-1990s (Yavorsky et al., 2019).

Politics play a role in women's nomination and election to higher education boards. Martin (2010) examined 4-year public institutions of higher education and how the gender and political characteristics of those appointing and confirming trustees to the boards affect their decision to appoint a female versus a male trustee. Results showed that having a Democratic or female governor increases the probability of a female trustee being appointed by 6 to 7 percentage points (Martin, 2010). The results also showed that when there are more female legislators, they are more likely to appoint and confirm

female trustees (Martin, 2010). The study identified that even though corporate and higher education boards have seen a steady increase of female trustees, very few of the boards of trustees are more than 50% female (Martin, 2010). Corporations and higher education institutions still have a long way to go to establish equal representation of men and women serving on boards.

The slow movement of gender parity on boards of trustees opens conversations to consider quotas of women required for board positions. Norway established a gender quota requiring women to hold 40 percent of the director positions on corporate boards, which sparked a worldwide debate as to if requiring more women on a board would impact the number of women in top leadership positions (Wang & Kelan, 2013). One study found a correlation between corporate governance gender composition and the gender equality within an organization. Researchers concluded that requiring a gender quota may be a useful tool in helping businesses achieve greater gender parity and women obtain top leadership positions, but the small sample size of women occupying board positions in Norway could skew results of similar studies in larger countries (Wang & Kelan, 2013). The researchers posit that despite limitations, a gender quota for corporate boards can cause organizational changes, such as encouraging women to take top leadership positions as bord chairs and CEOs (Wang & Kelan, 2013).

In addition to examining factors such as gender quotas for board trustees, researchers examined senior leadership at Ivy League institutions due their elite and highly selective status (Gasman et al., 2015). White males occupied most president and provost positions, and the researchers indicated the system is set up to perpetuate and reinforce white males in power (Gasman et al., 2015). One solution is for boards of

trustees to create task forces and consult with outside evaluators and hiring committees to dismantle systemic hiring practices leading to a lack of diversity (Gasman et al., 2015). When informed boards of trustees understand the value of diversity to the bottom line of a company or institution, they can hold presidents accountable by making diversity part of performance expectations (Gasman et al., 2015).

The world of Ivy League education influences many students, families, and corporations throughout our county, but community colleges also make a large impact due to the numbers of students attending them. Michael Levenson wrote an article for the *Boston Globe* in 2017 titled *Where Are All the Female College Presidents*? He described a case at Springfield Technical Community College where three out of four presidential candidates were women, and the board of trustees selected the only male for the role (Levenson, 2017). He explained that the decision fit a pattern among colleges and universities in Massachusetts and nationwide where women are often named as finalists but are rarely chosen as president (Levenson, 2017). Only 35% of the 80 private colleges and universities in Massachusetts have female presidents, and only 31% of the 29 state public institutions have women leaders (Levenson, 2017). The women Mr. Levenson interviewed stated the gender disparity is not a surprise due to the leadership of boards of trustees (Levenson, 2017). During this time, only five women served as chairs of the 25 boards that govern the public higher education system in Massachusetts (Levenson, 2017). Laura Douglas, who was selected as president of Bristol Community College explained that higher education needs to change up the diversity on boards to change up the diversity in leadership (Levenson, 2017). She continued to explain that some trustees

may not have a lot of experience working with women leaders as senior executives, and therefore, do not select leaders out of their comfort zone (Levenson, 2017).

Despite a lack of women occupying board positions, Deloitte Global Center for Corporate Governance (2018) reports a connection between the rise in the number of women serving on boards and the desire for a more inclusive kind of capitalism. The case for boardroom diversity has been made numerous times, but there are benefits that extend beyond any single organization or institution (Deloitte Global Center for Corporate Governance, 2018). A solid representation of women in the boardroom has a trickle-down effect in breaking down stereotypes (Deloitte Global Center for Corporate Governance, 2018). Female leaders are role models and mentors to other women and girls, and to many men, and women's presence in the boardroom encourages girls to pursue careers in business, science, technology, engineering, and math (Deloitte Global Center for Corporate Governance, 2018). These are important steps in achieving greater economic opportunity for women, narrowing the wage gap between genders, and establishing more inclusive societies (Deloitte Global Center for Corporate Governance, 2018).

Conclusion and Identified Gap

The goal of this literature review was to provide an in-depth understanding of the research conducted by scholars and practitioners who attempted to explain why more women do not occupy school presidential positions and how higher education professionals can move the needle to propel more women into this chief executive role. The literature review provided a historical context of women as school presidents, described the obstacles women face when achieving school presidencies and how higher

education perpetuates the gender gap, examined studies about the preparation of women for higher education leadership roles, job desirability, and motivation, narrated women's experiences in higher education leadership roles, discussed factors that contribute to women's success in higher education leadership roles, and identified factors impacting board of trustee presidential appointments.

Despite extensive research about the history, obstacles, preparation, experiences, and factors surrounding women as school presidents, there is minimal research examining the differences in the genders of trustees on school boards based on the gender of school presidents or the association between the gender of board chairpersons and the gender of school presidents. A few studies and female school presidents identify that boards need more women serving on them (Martin, 2010; Wang & Kelan, 2013; Gasman et al., 2015; Levenson, 2017; Moody, 2018; Deloitte Global Center for Corporate Governance, 2019), but none perform a comprehensive exploration of the genders of trustees and the gender of the school president. Since the board of trustees hire the school president, they play the most pivotal role in the U.S. achieving gender parity among college/university presidents.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Women are underrepresented as school presidents. Despite data indicating women have earned more than 50% of all doctoral degrees since 2006 and more than 50% of all master's degrees since 1987 (Johnson, 2017), 70% of higher education presidencies are held by men (Davis & Gray, 2020). With more women than men earning doctoral degrees and more women than men holding chief academic officer positions (Gagliardi et al., 2017), more women should be moving into school presidencies. ACE's initiative to achieve gender parity among school presidents by 2030 (Davis & Gray, 2014) and Belle Wheelan's (2016) challenge for SACSCOC member institutions to hire more women presidents to support ACE's initiative necessitate higher education trustee boards to question current practices and develop strategies to place more women into school presidencies. Since the board of trustees/regents hires the president, they are instrumental in moving the needle for the U.S. to achieve gender parity among school presidents. But boards of trustees have been and still are comprised of more males than females (Lapovsky, 2009), and women are not achieving school presidencies at a rate that will result in gender parity by 2030 (Okolo, 2019). Noteworthy questions involve examining if there is a difference between the gender proportion of the boards of trustees and the gender of the school president and if there is an association between the gender of the boards' chairpersons and the gender of the presidents.

Purpose of Study

This non-experimental study has two purposes: (a) examine differences in the gender proportion of school boards of trustees based on the gender of school presidents, and (b) explore the association between the gender of school boards of trustees'

chairpersons and the gender of school presidents. Since the boards of trustees hire the school presidents, they play the most pivotal role in the U.S. achieving gender parity among college/university presidents. The results of this study will provide information as to if there are differences in the gender proportion of school boards of trustees based on the gender of school presidents, and if there is an association between the gender of school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents. The results will also identify the size of the difference and the strength of the association.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following questions:

RQ1: What is the difference between the gender proportion of school trustee boards based on the gender of school presidents?

RQ2: What is the association between the gender of school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents?

Hypotheses

The hypotheses are as follows:

Null Hypotheses

$H1_0$: There is no difference between the gender proportion of the school trustee boards based on the gender of school presidents.

$H2_0$: There is no association between the gender of the school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents.

Alternative Hypotheses

$H1_A$: There is a difference between the gender proportion of the school trustee boards based on the gender of school presidents.

$H2_A$: There is an association between the gender of the school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents.

The first research question aligns with the problem and purpose of the study by exploring the difference between the gender proportion of school boards of trustees based on the gender of school presidents. If the null hypothesis is rejected, a comparison between the means will indicate if the size of the difference is small, medium, or large.

The second research question aligns with the problem and purpose of the study by exploring the association between the gender of school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents. If the null hypothesis is rejected, comparison of gender proportion will facilitate strength of the association between the gender of school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents in SACSCOC member institutions.

Research Methods and Design

This study utilizes a quantitative, non-experimental method to examine the difference in the gender proportion of the school boards of trustees based on the gender of school presidents and the association between the gender of the school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents. The researcher selected the quantitative method due to this study's large number of categorical dataset observations and the ratio of males-to-females on the school boards. Gerring (2017) defines the quantitative method as "any inference based on large numbers of dataset observations" (p. 362), and this study examines the difference and association between binary variables at 792 distinct colleges and universities. A binary variable is a type of categorical variable that names two distinct types of things such as being male or female (Field,

2013); therefore, this study uses binary variables by categorizing trustees, the board chairperson, and college/university president as male or female. The researcher selected a non-experimental method, because the study explores existing data sets and does not involve manipulating an independent variable (Field, 2013). The researcher will use IBM's SPSS Version 27 Statistics program to explore research questions. This study also defines the term "gender" as sex at birth.

Data Analysis Plan

The first research question examines differences between the dichotomous variable of gender proportion of the school boards of trustees based on the interval variable of gender of school presidents (RQ1). The null hypothesis ($H1_0$) forecasts there is no difference between the gender proportion of the school trustee boards based on the gender of the school presidents. The alternative hypothesis ($H1_A$) forecasts there is a difference between the gender proportion of the school trustee boards based on the gender of the presidents. To test the null hypothesis, the researcher used a between groups research design and an Independent Samples t-test (IS *t*-test). The IS *t*-test is used for a between groups research design when there are two experimental conditions and different participants are assigned to each condition (Field, 2013). The researcher selected this parametric test to measure the difference in ratio of the gender proportion of the trustees compared to having a male or female president. The IS *t*-test requires data to contain a continuous, normally distributed dependent variable and a categorical independent variable. In addition, the variances of the dependent variable for each group should be homogeneous and contain no outliers (Field, 2013).

Outliers, which are defined as observations abnormally distant from other values in a population or sample (Tukey, 1977), can influence the distribution of a variable. A boxplot will be used to identify if outliers are contained in a variable. If outliers are detected, a decision will be made to retain or remove the records. Next, the distribution of the dependent variable by gender of school president will be explored. The Shapiro-Wilk (S-W) Test of Normality will be used. The null hypothesis of this test is that the data is normally distributed (Shapiro & Wilk, 1965). Thus, if the p-value is less than .05, the null hypothesis can be rejected, and an assumption can be made the data are not normally distributed. If this situation occurs, a nonparametric test (e.g., Mann-Whitney) will be used for hypothesis testing. In addition to the S-W Test of Normality, a Q-Q plot could be used to compare the distribution of data against a theoretical distribution. A Q-Q plot uses the quantiles of the sample and plots them against the quantiles of a theoretical normal distribution (Wilk & Gnanadesikan, 1968). The quantiles of a normally distributed sample should be similar to the quantiles of the theoretical normal distribution (Wilk & Gnanadesikan, 1968).

Once outliers are addressed, and the dependent variable is determined to follow a normal distribution, the homogeneity of the variance in the dependent variable will be examined. The Levene Test for Equality of Variances (1960) will be used to assess homogeneity. If the p-value of the test is greater than .005, equal variances are assumed. In this case, the IS *t*-test will be used as the test statistic. However, if the p-value is $< .05$, equal variances are not assumed, and the Welch *t*-test (Albright, 2021) will be used as the test statistic. If the null hypothesis is rejected ($p < .05$), the researcher will report the size of the difference following guidance from Cohen (1988, 1992). Cohen's *d* is an effect

size measurement of the magnitude of the observed effect (Field, 2013). Cohen (1988, 1992) posited that effects can be classified as small ($d < 0.2$), medium (d between 0.2 – 0.5), and large ($d > 0.50$).

The second research question examines the association between the gender of the school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents (RQ2). The null hypothesis ($H2_0$) forecasts there is no association between the gender of the school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of the presidents. The alternative hypothesis ($H2_A$) forecasts there is an association between the gender of the school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of the presidents. To test the null hypothesis, the researcher will use a 2 x 2 cross tabulation to examine the association between the nominal variables. A Chi-square test (X^2) will be used as the test statistic. The researcher selected a cross tabulation research design since data, in the form of dichotomous variables, are being measured at one specific point in time without direct manipulation (Field, 2013). The Chi-square test requires data to be random, categorical, and contain at least five sample observations for each cell (Field, 2013). Similar to the first null hypothesis, if the second null hypothesis is rejected ($p < .05$), the researcher will report the size of the association following guidance from Cohen (1988, 1992). Cohen's w is an effect size measurement for Chi-square tests. Cohen (1988, 1992) posited that effects can be classified as small ($w < .10$), medium (w between 0.10 – 0.30), and large ($w > 0.50$).

Population

The population for this study encompasses a census of the 792 SACSCOC member colleges and universities (SACSCOC, 2021). A census involves collecting data

about all members of a population whereas a sample includes collecting data about a portion of that population that is used to represent the entire population (Surbhi, 2017). The researcher considered a variety of factors when selecting to use a census instead of a sample. A census is time consuming and expensive but is more reliable and accurate (Surbhi, 2017). A sample is less time consuming, more economical, and is less reliable and accurate due to the margin of error in the data collected (Surbhi, 2017). Due to the importance of the widespread societal conflict of a lack of women serving in higher education leadership positions combined with the slow growth of achieving gender parity within these positions, the researcher chose to invest the time and financial resources into collecting data and studying all SACSCOC member institutions. The results could have a widespread impact throughout the SACSCOC region if the study identifies a strong relationship between the gender of a college/university president and the genders of the trustees on the board or the gender of a college/university president and the genders of the board chairperson. The results could also lead to the strategies necessary to move the needle more toward gender parity among U.S. school presidents. This shift among the region of a powerful higher education accrediting body necessitates the examination of all member institutions to portray as accurate a picture as possible at the time of the study.

Data Collection Process

The data collection process for this study involved collecting data from each college and university website to identify the president, board of trustees, and board chairperson. The process began with obtaining the list of alphabetized SACSCOC accredited and candidate institutions from the SACSCOC website. The list included the

following descriptors: name of the school, city and state of the school's location, date of initial accreditation, date of the last reaffirmation, date of the next reaffirmation, whether the school was private or public, whether the school was not-for-profit or for-profit, the degree awarding institutional level, the total number of trustees, the number of male and female trustees, the gender of the trustee chairperson, the gender of the trustee vice chairperson, the gender of the president, the gender of the provost, the date of the observation, and the URL of the college/university.

Ethical Considerations and Trustworthiness

This study is based on information displayed on public college and university websites within the SACSCOC region; therefore, there are no ethical implications regarding gathering these data. Accuracy is important as this study investigates if there is difference between the gender proportion of school boards of trustees based on the gender of school presidents and an association between the gender of the school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents. The researcher trusts that colleges and universities post current information about their president, trustees, and board of trustee chairperson. Due to fluctuations in higher education president positions, trustees, and the board of trustee chairperson, data could slightly change from the time data was gathered to this study's date of publication. The reason a slight change is used to describe the number of positions that may fluctuate is based on research of the average length of terms for presidents and trustees. ACE reported that college presidents served an average of 8.5 years in 2006, 7 years in 2011, and 6.5 years in 2017 (Davis & Gray, 2017). Even though the length of time in the position is decreasing, school presidents remain in office long enough to gather stable data. Trustees may remain in their position

even longer, since many higher education institutions do not impose term limits for trustees (Anderson, 2019). The lack of turnover provides a sense of stability for college/university boards but also decreases opportunities for diversity, cross-generational representation, and innovation (Anderson, 2019). For the purpose of this study, the lack of turnover in trustees increases confidence in the stability of data collected during a point in time.

In addition, the researcher trusts that SACSCOC provided up-to-date information regarding candidate and member institutions as identified by the July 2021 file on their website. Due to fluctuations in SACSCOC candidate and member institutions, data is based on the snapshot of institutions on the July 2021 membership profile. The process to become a member institution is lengthy and takes approximately three to five years, so the membership profile does not fluctuate by more than a few institutions a year (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, 2019-b). The loss of membership is also a lengthy process, thereby adding to the stability of the July 2021 membership profile.

In conclusion, this study has no ethical implications and a high level of trustworthiness in data published by colleges/universities and SACSCOC.

Limitations

As noted in chapter 1, this study utilizes data collected from a census of SACSCOC member institutions. Conducting an analysis of the entire population within the SACSCOC region provides data revealing the size and extent of the differences and association between the variables within those regional boundaries, but it does not provide a cross-section of the relationship between variables of institutions throughout

the entire country. The study is limited to data obtained from institutions within the SACSCOC region, and therefore, results will only apply to institutions within the SACSCOC region.

In addition to the regional boundaries of the study's population, this study is limited by the classification of gender as male or female. Gender is used in the context of sex assigned at birth and did not account for a multitude of gender categories. Identification of gender involved the assumption of male or female based on the trustees' name, photograph, and gender identified on college and university websites.

Finally, this study is limited to the snapshot of data gathered from college/university websites from July 2021 through September 2021. College and university presidents and trustees change, so there may be a variation in data collected during this time frame.

Summary

In summary, chapter 3 provides a detailed description of this study's research methodology. This study utilizes a quantitative non-experimental method to examine differences in the gender proportion of school boards of trustees based on the gender of school presidents and explore the association between the gender of the school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents. The population for this study encompasses a census of the 792 SACSCOC member colleges and universities. Data is collected from published information on college and university websites. This study identifies all variables as categorical. RQ1 classifies the genders of the school boards of trustees as a dichotomous variable and the gender of the school presidents as an interval variable. RQ2 classifies the gender of the school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the

gender of the school presidents as naturally dichotomous variables. This study utilizes descriptive statistics to provide a visual representation of data, measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion, and measures of association. To test the first null hypothesis, the researcher proposes using a between groups research design and an Independent Samples *t*-test with no control variables to measure the differences in the gender proportion of school boards of trustees based on the gender of school presidents and Cohen's *d* to measure the size of the difference. To test the second null hypothesis, the researcher proposes using a 2 x 2 cross tabulation to describe the association between the gender (male or female) of the school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender (male or female) of the school presidents and a Chi-square test to measure the strength of the association. This study presents no ethical implications, and the researcher has a high level of trustworthiness in data published by colleges, universities, and SACSCOC. Limitations include regional boundaries, lack of a cross-sectional analysis, the classification of gender as male or female, and the possibility of a slight fluctuation in collected data.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This study had two purposes: (a) examine differences in the gender proportion of school boards of trustees based on the gender of school presidents, and (b) explore the association between the gender of school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents. Since the boards of trustees hire the president, they play the most pivotal role in the U.S. achieving gender parity among school presidents. This study utilized a non-experimental quantitative method to examine two research questions:

RQ1: What is the difference between the gender proportion of school trustee boards based on the gender of school presidents?

RQ2: What is the association between the gender of school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents?

The hypotheses were as follows:

Null Hypotheses

$H1_0$: There is no difference between the gender proportion of the school trustee boards based on the gender of school presidents.

$H2_0$: There is no association between the gender of the school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents.

Alternative Hypotheses

$H1_A$: There is a difference between the gender proportion of the school trustee boards based on the gender of school presidents.

$H2_A$: There is an association between the gender of the school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents.

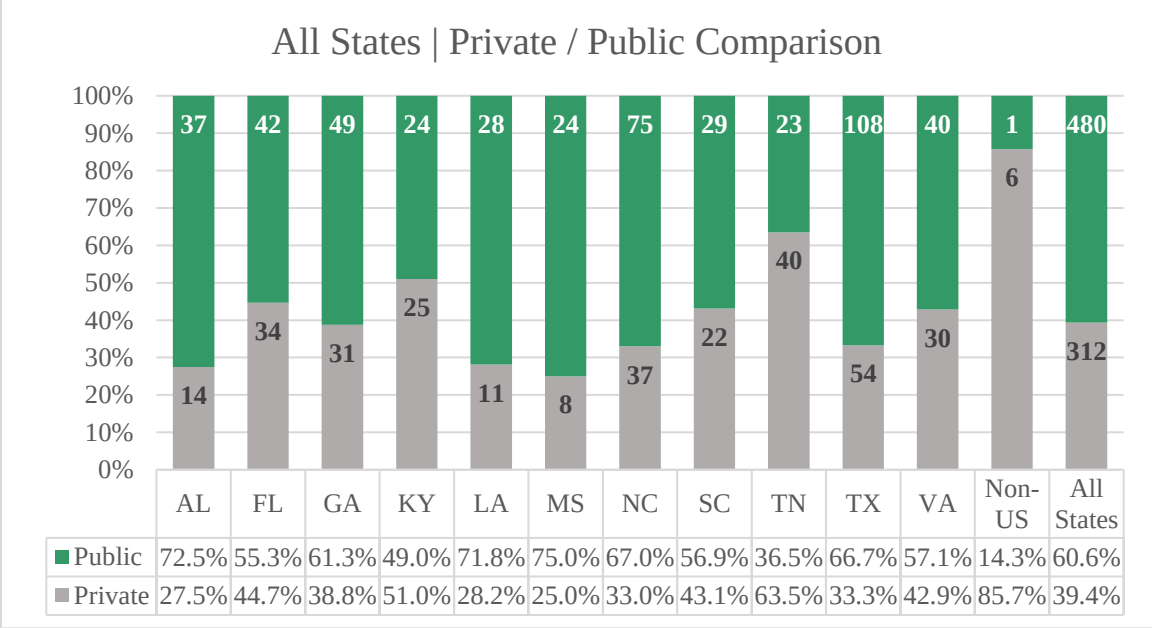
Demographic Data

As discussed in chapter 3, there were 792 SACSCOC member colleges and universities at the time of the undertaking of this study, and data were available on public school websites. Initial data examination involved comparisons of public and private schools, levels of school, total number of Male and Female Trustees by state, Gender of Boards of Trustees Chairpersons by State, Public, and Private schools, Gender of College Presidents Overall and by State, Male and Female Presidents with Male and Female Boards of Trustees Chairpersons Overall and by State, Male and Female Presidents with State Governor's Gender and Political Party, and Gender of Provosts.

Public schools comprised 60.6% of SACSCOC member institutions. In most states, the majority of institutions are public with the exception of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Non-US territories (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Comparison of Private and Public Institutions by State

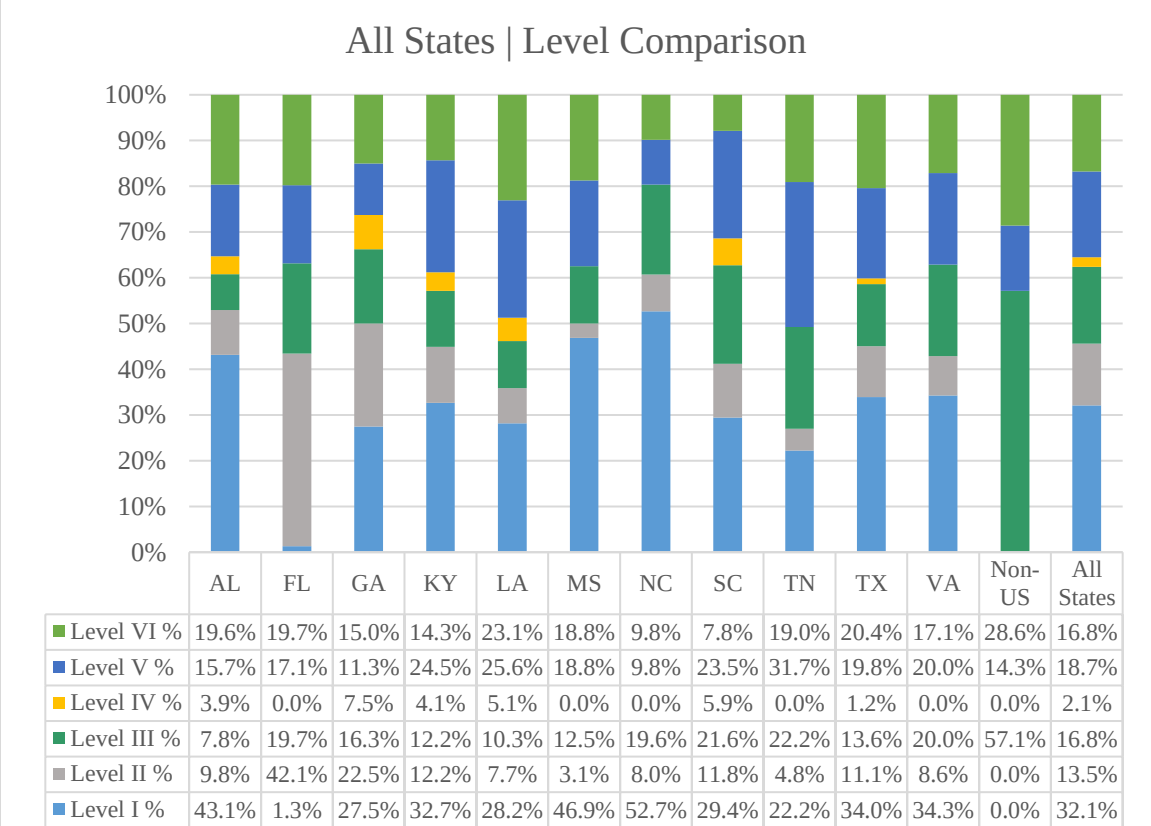


	AL	FL	GA	KY	LA	MS	NC	SC	TN	TX	VA	Non-US	All States
Public	72.5%	55.3%	61.3%	49.0%	71.8%	75.0%	67.0%	56.9%	36.5%	66.7%	57.1%	14.3%	60.6%
Private	27.5%	44.7%	38.8%	51.0%	28.2%	25.0%	33.0%	43.1%	63.5%	33.3%	42.9%	85.7%	39.4%

Data categorized Level I through VI institutions by state. SACSCOC (2021) uses roman numerals to designate the following institutional degree levels: Level I (Associate's degree), Level II (Baccalaureate degree), Level III (Master's degree), Level IV (Specialist's degree), Level V (Three or fewer doctoral degrees), and Level VI (Four or more doctoral degrees). Level I institutions comprise the largest percent (32.1%) followed by Level V institutions (18.7%) and Levels III and VI institutions are the third largest at 16.8% (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Comparison of Institutional Degree Levels by State



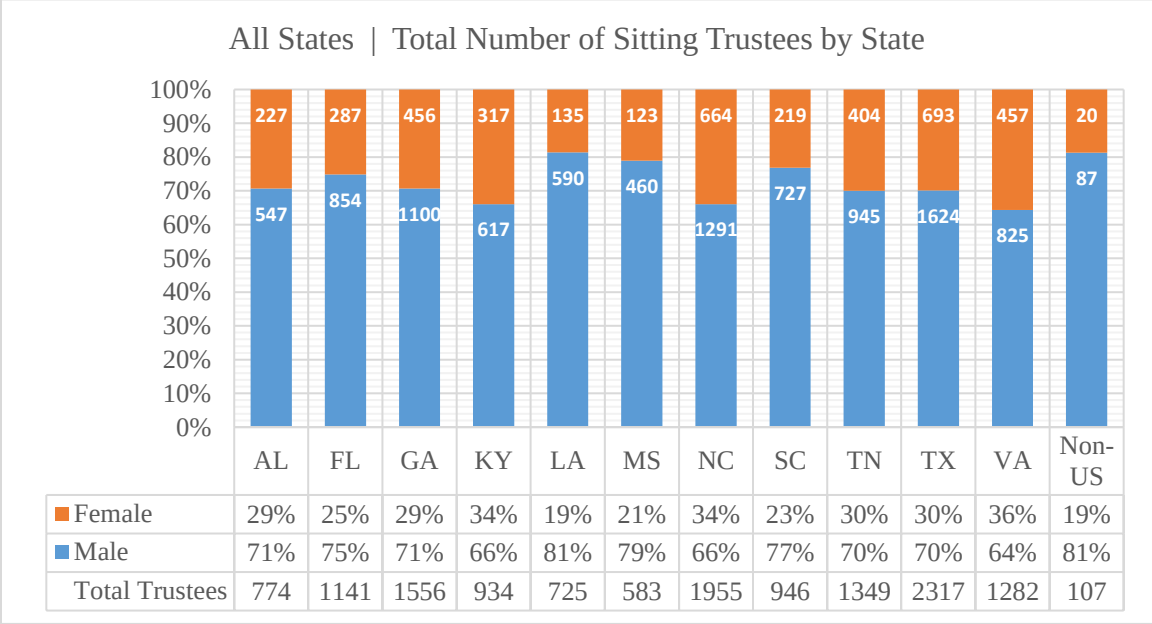
	AL	FL	GA	KY	LA	MS	NC	SC	TN	TX	VA	Non-US	All States
Level VI %	19.6%	19.7%	15.0%	14.3%	23.1%	18.8%	9.8%	7.8%	19.0%	20.4%	17.1%	28.6%	16.8%
Level V %	15.7%	17.1%	11.3%	24.5%	25.6%	18.8%	9.8%	23.5%	31.7%	19.8%	20.0%	14.3%	18.7%
Level IV %	3.9%	0.0%	7.5%	4.1%	5.1%	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%
Level III %	7.8%	19.7%	16.3%	12.2%	10.3%	12.5%	19.6%	21.6%	22.2%	13.6%	20.0%	57.1%	16.8%
Level II %	9.8%	42.1%	22.5%	12.2%	7.7%	3.1%	8.0%	11.8%	4.8%	11.1%	8.6%	0.0%	13.5%
Level I %	43.1%	1.3%	27.5%	32.7%	28.2%	46.9%	52.7%	29.4%	22.2%	34.0%	34.3%	0.0%	32.1%

The following chart displays the number of Male and Female Trustees by state. Women represent 29.3% of the Trustees (N = 13,669). Excluding the non-US territory institutions, female trustees range from 123 to 693. Males dominate the total number of

trustees and represent the majority of Trustees in each state. Excluding the non-US territory institutions, male trustees range from 460 to 1,624 (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Total Number of Male and Female Trustees by State



	AL	FL	GA	KY	LA	MS	NC	SC	TN	TX	VA	Non-US
Female	29%	25%	29%	34%	19%	21%	34%	23%	30%	30%	36%	19%
Male	71%	75%	71%	66%	81%	79%	66%	77%	70%	70%	64%	81%
Total Trustees	774	1141	1556	934	725	583	1955	946	1349	2317	1282	107

Note. This figure represents 779 out of 792 SACSCOC member institutions. At the time of observation, information was unavailable/unpublished for 13 institutions. For a list of those institutions, see Appendix B.

Excluding the non-US territory institutions, Louisiana has the lowest percent of Female Trustees (19%) (see Figure 6), and Virginia has the highest percent of Female Trustees (36%) (see Figure 7).

Figure 6

Total Number of Male and Female Trustees in Louisiana

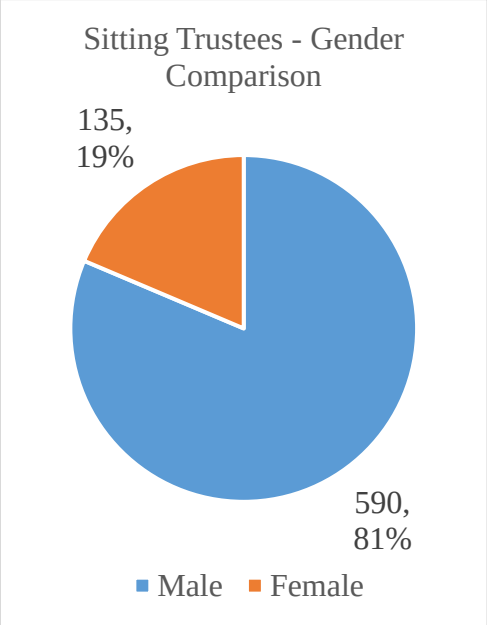
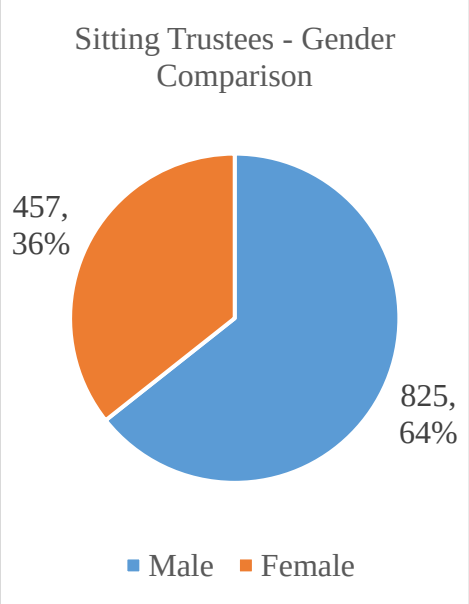


Figure 7

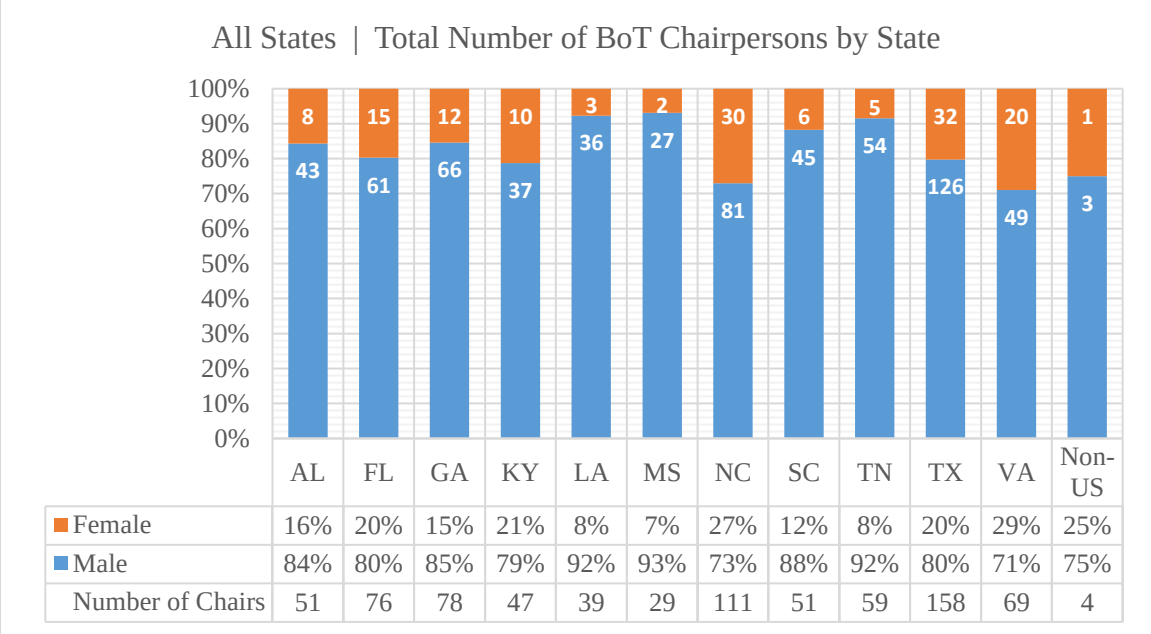
Total number of Male and Female Trustees in Virginia



Data exploration continued by looking at the number of Male and Female Boards of Trustees' Chairpersons by state (*N* = 772). Excluding the non-US territory institutions, the number of Male trustees ranged from 27 to 126, and the number of Female trustees ranged from 2 to 32 (see Figure 8).

Figure 8

Board of Trustee Chairperson Gender Comparison by State



Note. This figure represents 772 out of 792 SACSCOC member institutions. At the time of observation, information was unavailable/unpublished for 20 institutions. For a list of those institutions, see Appendix C.

Women represent 19% of the total boards of trustees' chairpersons (*N* = 772) (see Figure 9). In private schools, women represent 20% of the boards of trustees' chairpersons (*N* = 292) (see Figure 10). In public schools, women represent 18% of the boards of trustees' chairpersons (*N* = 480) (see Figure 11).

Figure 9

Total Boards of Trustees Chairpersons Gender Comparison

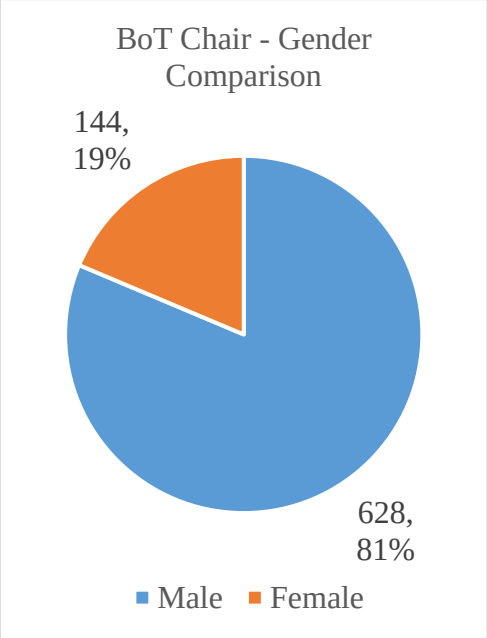


Figure 10

Boards of Trustees Chairpersons Gender Comparison in Private Schools

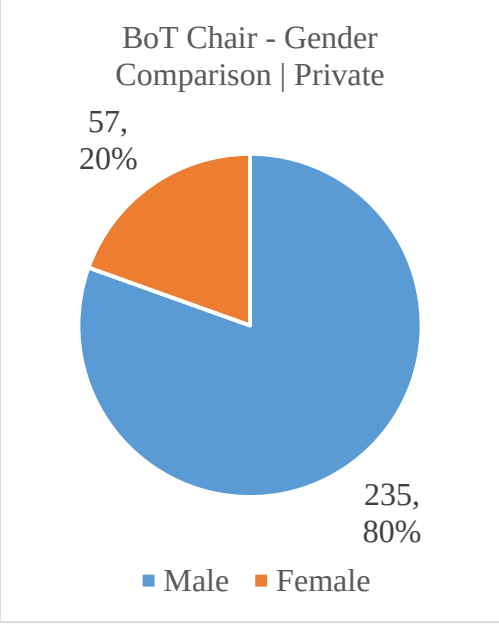
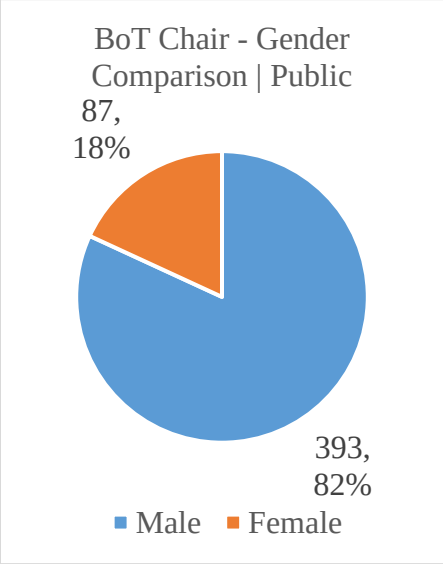


Figure 11

Boards of Trustees Chairpersons Gender Comparison in Public Schools



Excluding the non-US territory institutions, Mississippi has the lowest percent of Female Trustee Chairpersons (7%) (see Figure 12), and Virginia has the highest percent (29%) (see Figure 13).

Figure 12

Boards of Trustees Chairpersons Gender Comparison in Mississippi

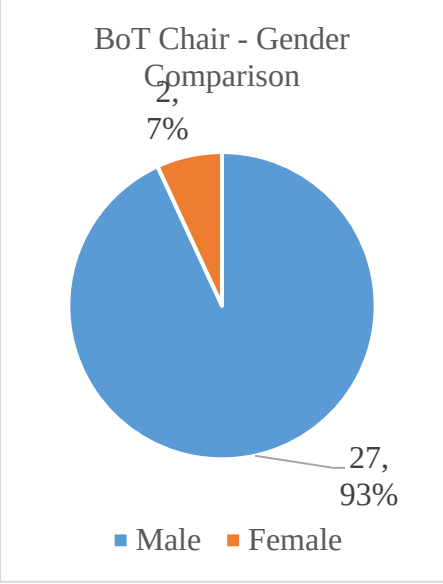
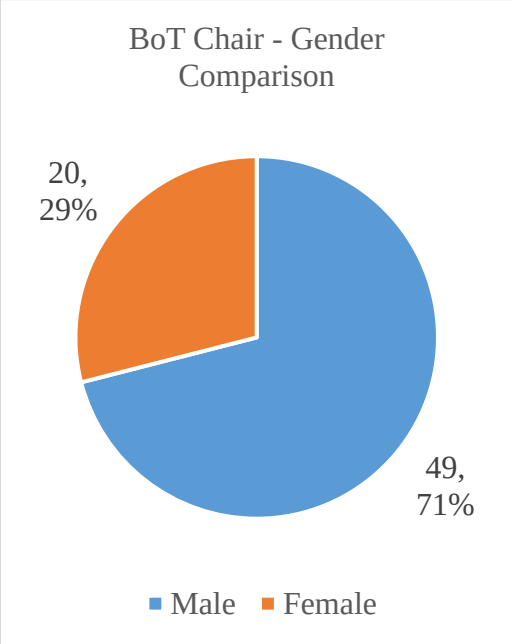


Figure 13

Boards of Trustees Chairpersons Gender Comparison in Virginia



The data examination continued with a Comparison of Male and Female Presidents. Overall, females comprise 24% of the presidents in SACSCOC member institutions (*N*= 790) (see Figure 14). When broken down by private (*N* = 310) and public schools (*N* = 480), females comprise 20% of the presidencies at private schools (see Figure 15), and 27% of the presidencies at public schools (see Figure 16). At the time of observation, information was unavailable for INCAE Business School (Non-US) and Memphis College (Closing).

Figure 14

Comparison of Male and Female Presidents

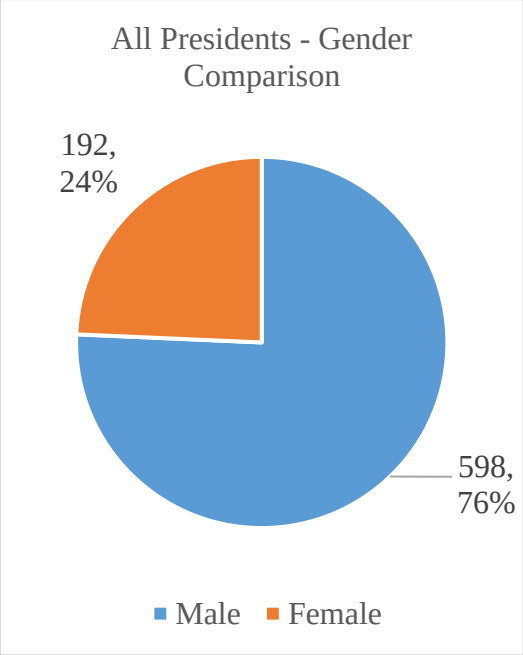


Figure 15

Comparison of Male and Female Presidents at Private Schools

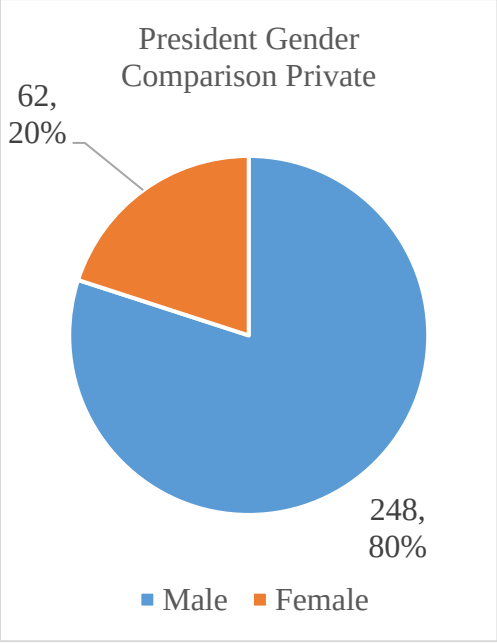
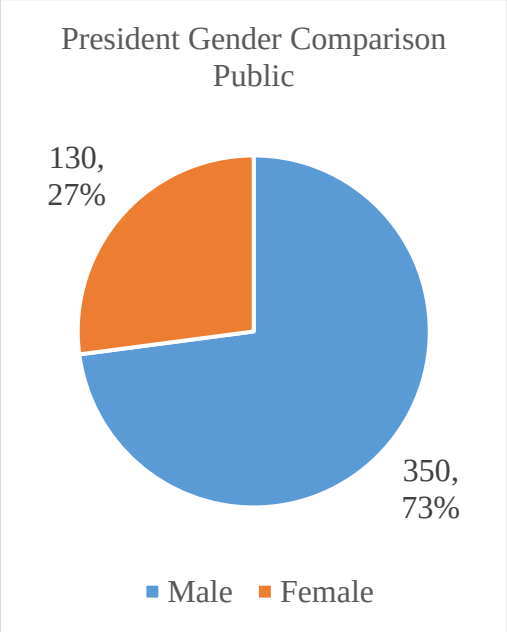


Figure 16

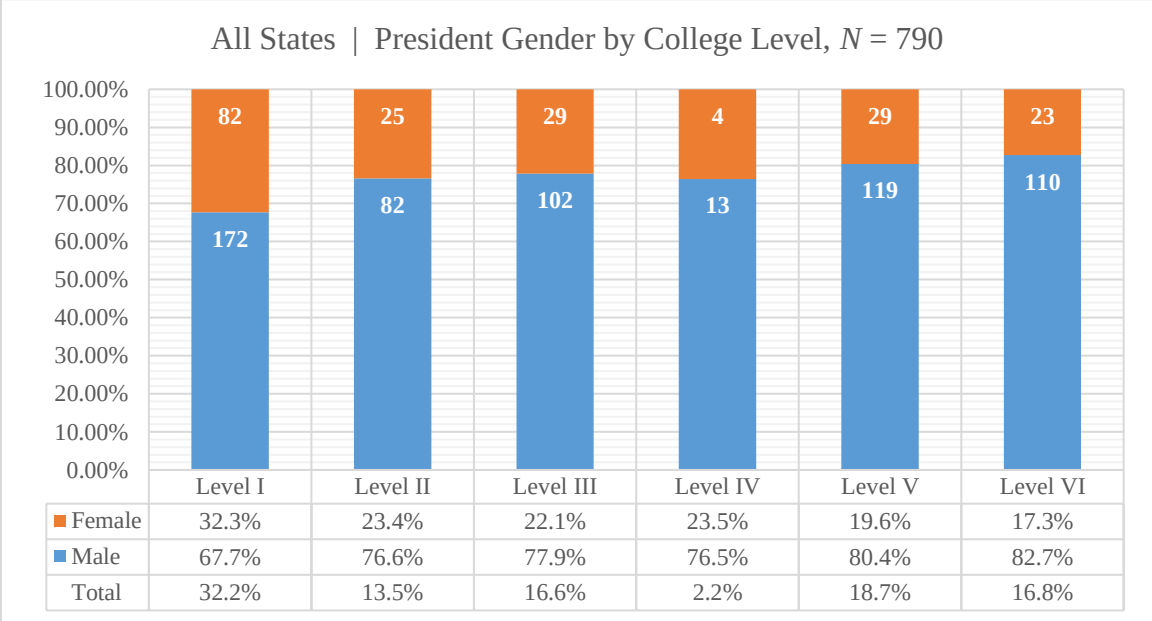
Comparison of Male and Female Presidents at Public Schools



The comparison of male and female presidents was examined by college level (*N* = 790). Level I institutions have the highest percent (32.3%), and Level VI institutions have the lowest percent (17.3%). When examining the percent of Female Presidents based on the overall population of presidents, Level I institutions have the highest percent (10.4%), and Level IV institutions have the lowest percent (0.5%). Overall, Female Presidents at Level VI institutions make up 2.9% of the presidencies within the SACSCOC region (see Figures 17 and 17a).

Figure 17

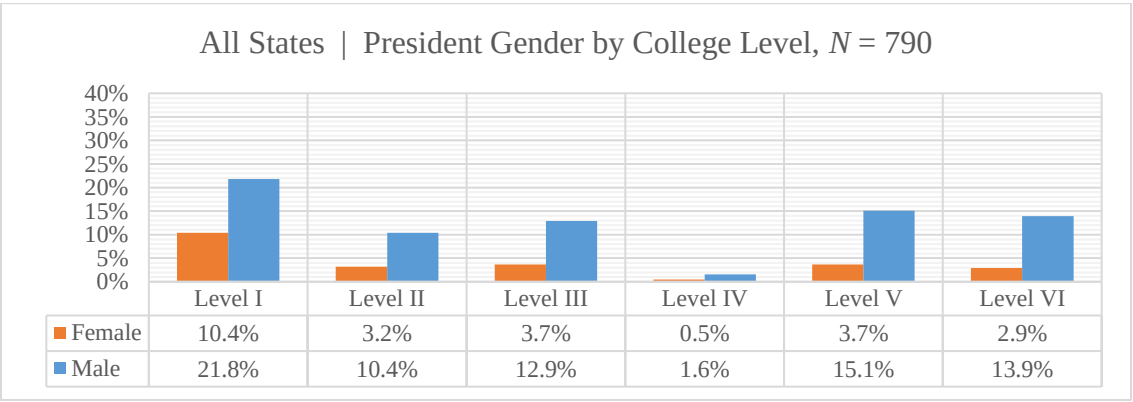
Vertical Comparison of Male and Female Presidents by College Level



	Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Level V	Level VI
Female	32.3%	23.4%	22.1%	23.5%	19.6%	17.3%
Male	67.7%	76.6%	77.9%	76.5%	80.4%	82.7%
Total	32.2%	13.5%	16.6%	2.2%	18.7%	16.8%

Figure 17a

Horizontal Comparison of Male and Female Presidents by College Level

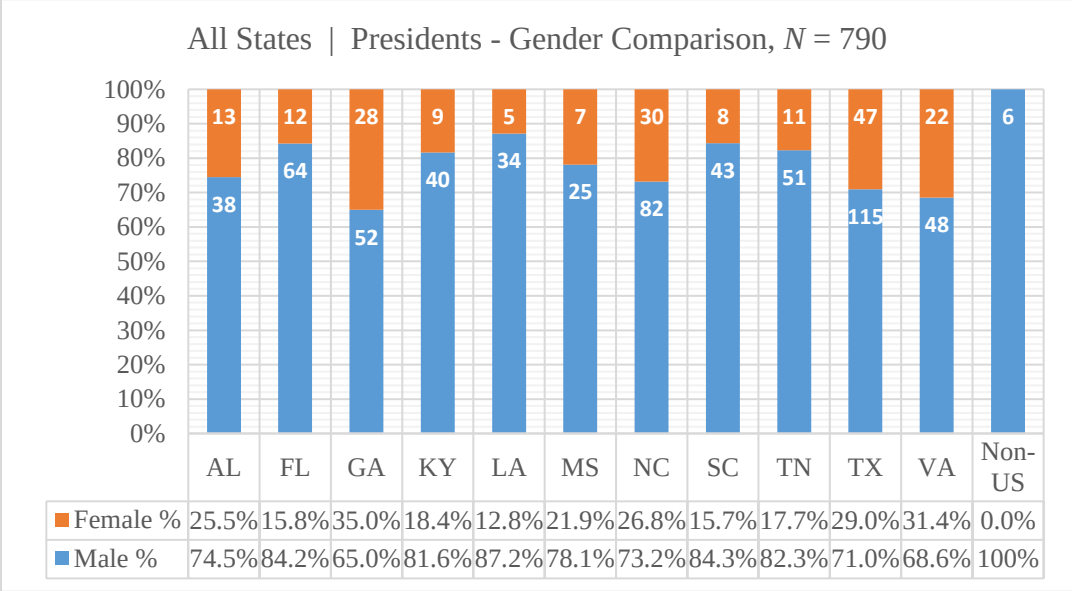


	Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Level V	Level VI
Female	10.4%	3.2%	3.7%	0.5%	3.7%	2.9%
Male	21.8%	10.4%	12.9%	1.6%	15.1%	13.9%

The comparison of male and female presidents was also broken down by state. Virginia had the highest percent of female presidents (31.4%), and Louisiana had the lowest percent of female presidents (12.8%). Non-US schools had no female presidents (N = 6) (see Figure 18).

Figure 18

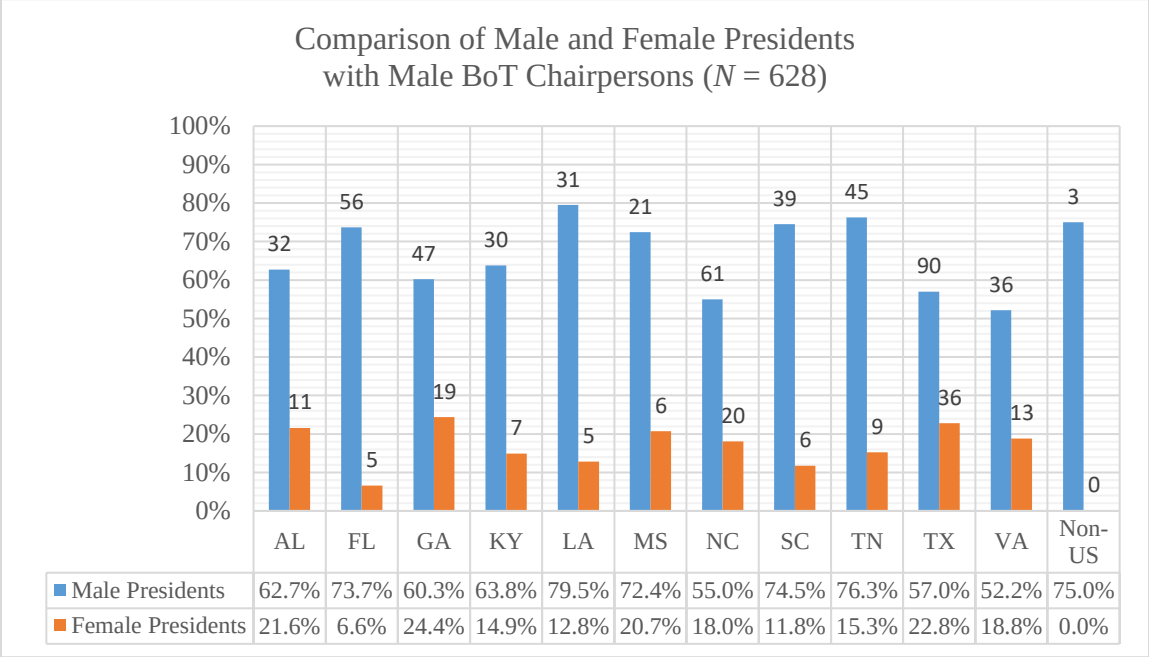
Percent Comparison of Male and Female Presidents by State



Data observation continued with comparing the percent of Male and Female Presidents with Male Board of Trustee Chairpersons (N = 628) and Female Board of Trustee Chairpersons (N = 144). At the time of observation, information was unavailable for 20 institutions. For a list of those institutions, see Appendix C. When looking at schools with Male Board of Trustee Chairpersons by state, Georgia has the highest percent of Female Presidents (24.4%), and Florida has the lowest percent (6.6%) (see Figure 19).

Figure 19

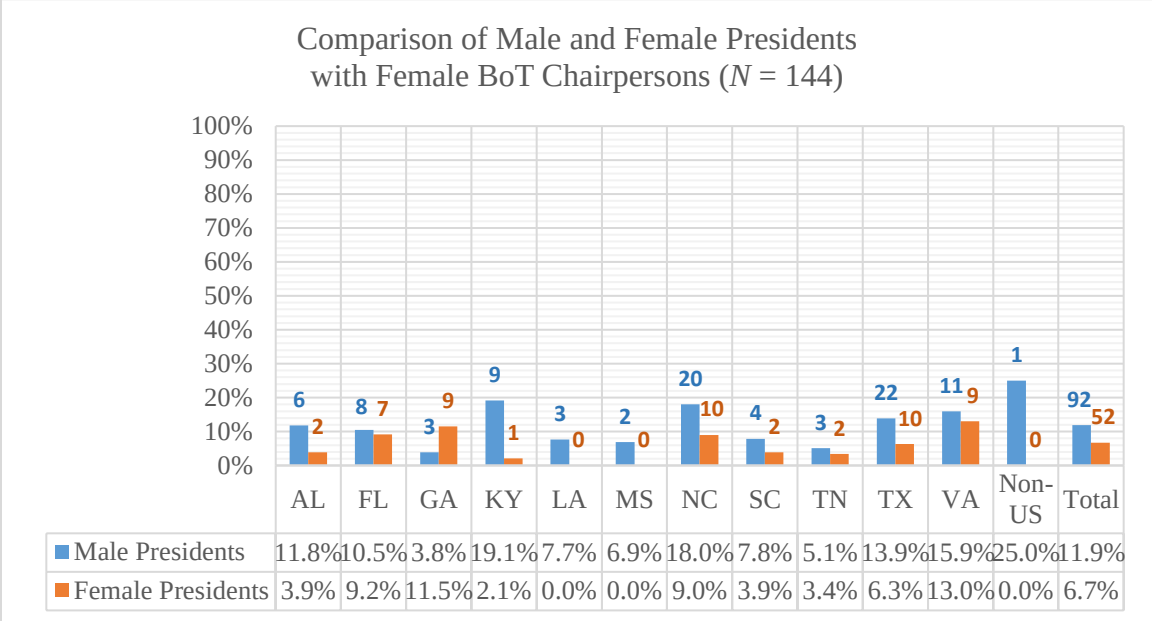
Comparison of Male and Female Presidents with Male BoT Chairpersons



When looking at schools with Female Board of Trustees Chairpersons by state, Virginia has the highest percent of Female Presidents (n = 9/69, 13%), and Louisiana (n = 0/39, 0%) and Mississippi (n = 0/29, 0%) have no Female Presidents. Georgia is the only state that has a higher percent of Female Presidents (n = 9/78, 11.5%) than Male Presidents (n = 3/78, 3.8%) with Female Board of Trustee Chairpersons (see Figure 20).

Figure 20

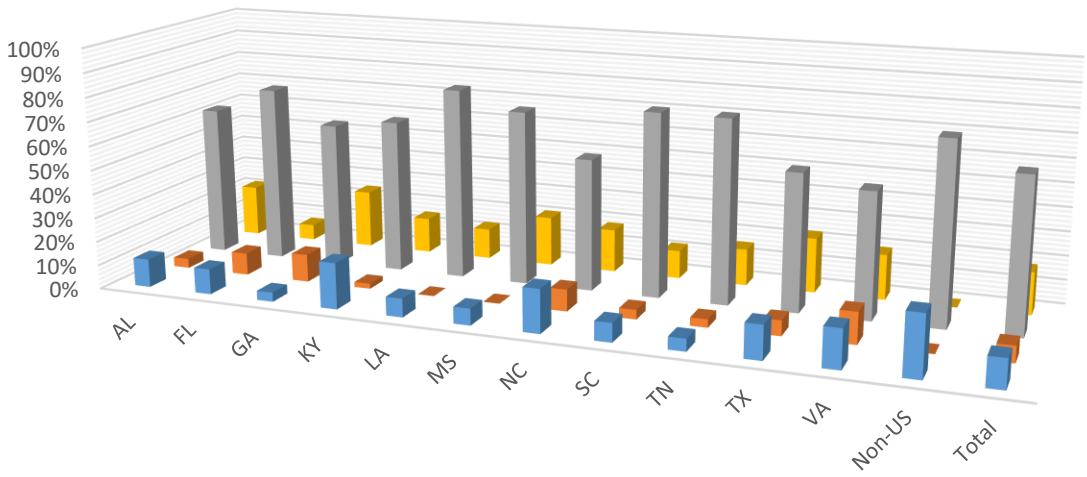
Comparison of Male and Female Presidents with Female BoT Chairpersons



To demonstrate the gender disparity among school presidents and board chairpersons, the following chart provides a 3-dimensional view of a comparison of Male and Female Presidents with Male and Female BoT Chairpersons. The visualization highlights the male dominance in president and board chairperson positions (see Figure 21).

Figure 21

3-D Comparison of Male and Female Presidents with Male and Female BoT Chairpersons

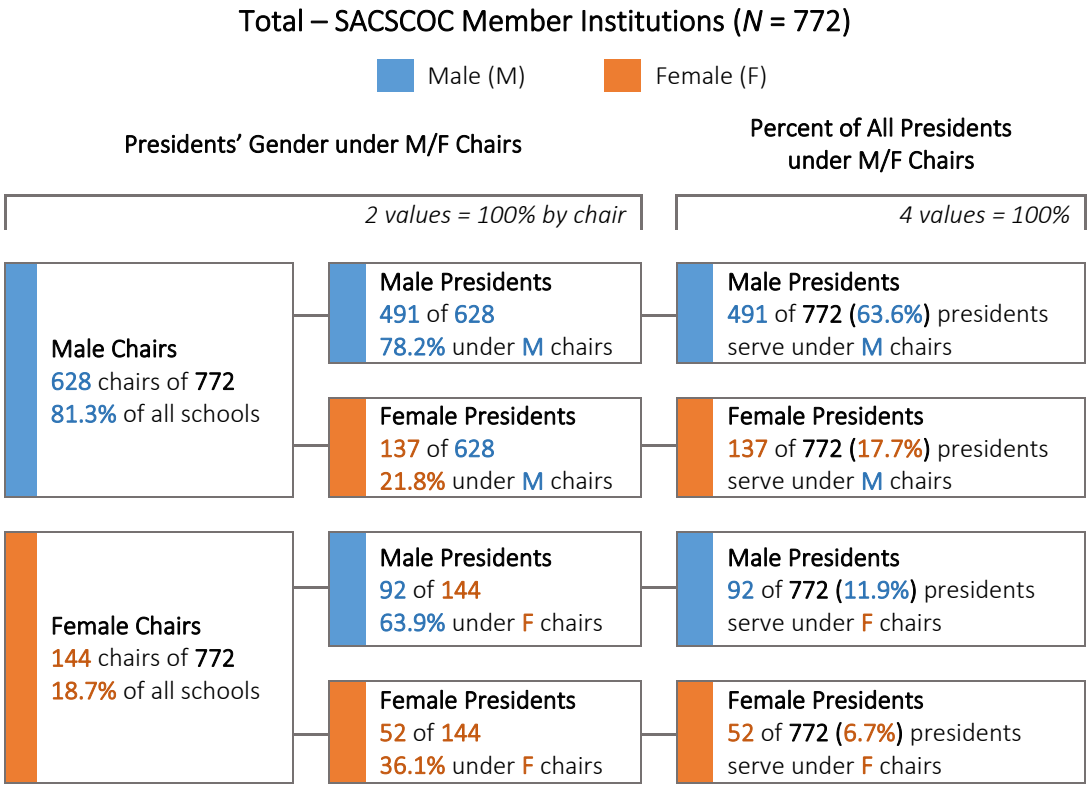


	AL	FL	GA	KY	LA	MS	NC	SC	TN	TX	VA	Non-US	Total
FC: M Presidents	11.8%	10.5%	3.8%	19.1%	7.7%	6.9%	18.0%	7.8%	5.1%	13.9%	15.9%	25.0%	11.9%
FC: F Presidents	3.9%	9.2%	11.5%	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%	9.0%	3.9%	3.4%	6.3%	13.0%	0.0%	6.7%
MC: M Presidents	62.7%	73.7%	60.3%	63.8%	79.5%	72.4%	55.0%	76.5%	76.3%	57.0%	52.2%	75.0%	63.6%
MC: F Presidents	21.6%	6.6%	24.4%	14.9%	12.8%	20.7%	18.0%	11.8%	15.3%	22.8%	18.8%	0.0%	17.7%

The following chart combines the Comparison of Male and Female Presidents with Male and Female Boards of Trustees (BoT) Chairpersons (Chairs) within the SACSCOC region (*N* = 772). Overall, schools have 628 Male and 144 Female BoT Chairs. The schools with Male BoT Chairs have 491 (78.2%) Male Presidents and 137 (21.8%) Female Presidents. The schools with Female BoT Chairs have 92 (63.9%) Male Presidents and 52 (36.1%) Female Presidents. Overall, schools with Male and Female BoT Chairs have more Male Presidents (see Figure 22).

Figure 22

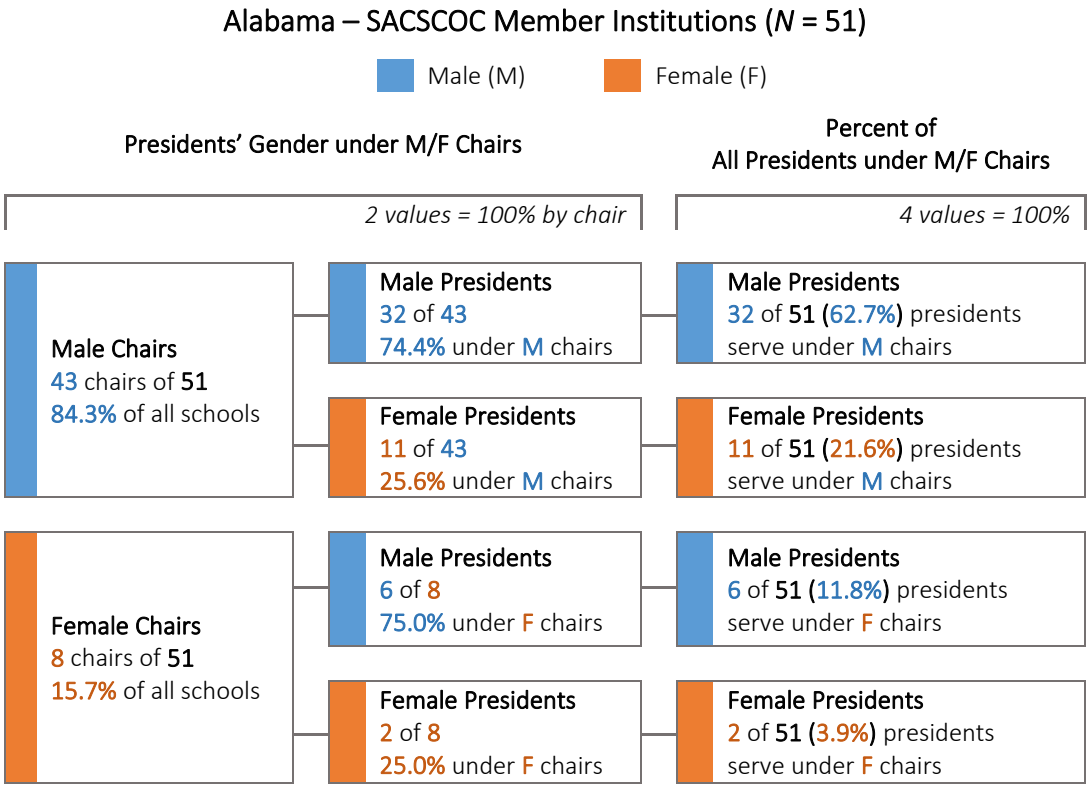
Combined Comparison of Male and Female Presidents with Male and Female Board of Trustee Chairpersons Overall



Alabama (*N* = 51) has 43 Male and 8 Female BoT chairpersons. The schools with Male BoT Chairs have 32 (74.4%) Male Presidents and 11 (25.6%) Female Presidents. The schools with Female BoT Chairs have 6 (75%) Male Presidents and 2 (25%) Female Presidents. In Alabama, schools with Male and Female BoT Chairs have more Male Presidents (see Figure 22a).

Figure 22a

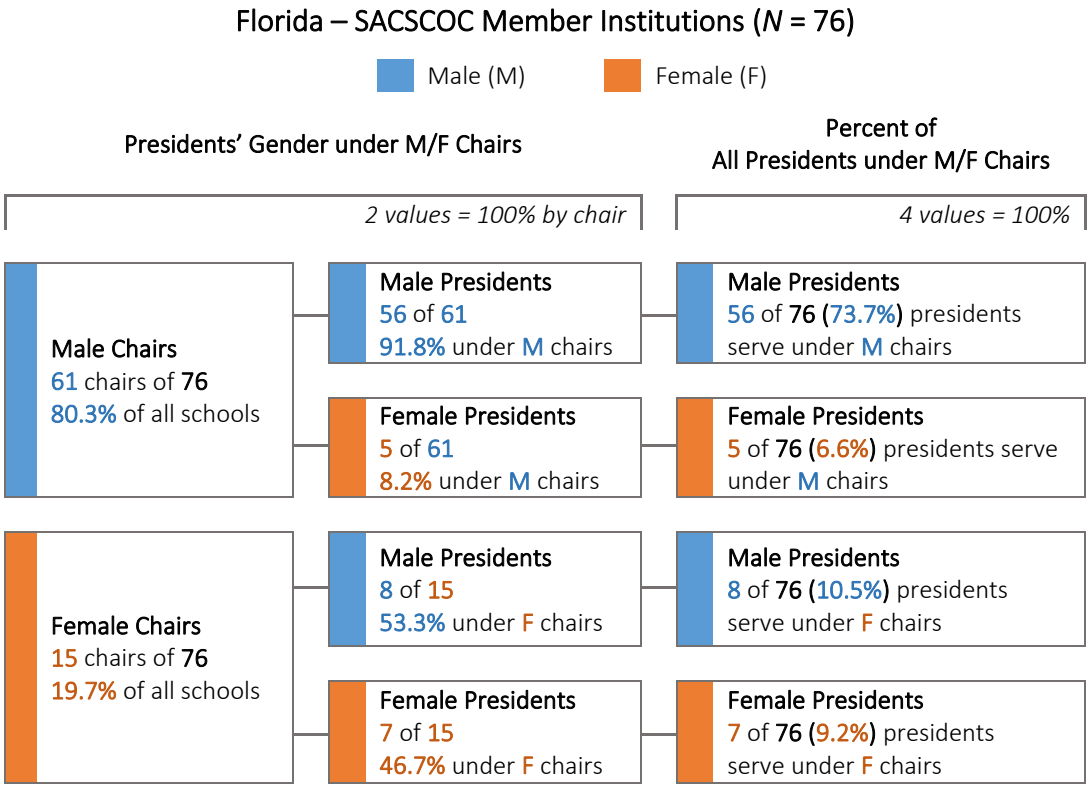
Combined Comparison of Male and Female Presidents with Male and Female Board of Trustee Chairpersons in Alabama



Florida (*N* = 76) has 61 Male and 15 Female BoT chairpersons. The schools with Male BoT Chairs have 56 (91.8%) Male Presidents and 5 (8.2%) Female Presidents. The schools with Female BoT Chairs have 8 (53.3%) Male Presidents and 7 (46.7%) Female Presidents. In Florida, schools with Male and Female BoT Chairs have more Male Presidents (see Figure 22b).

Figure 22b

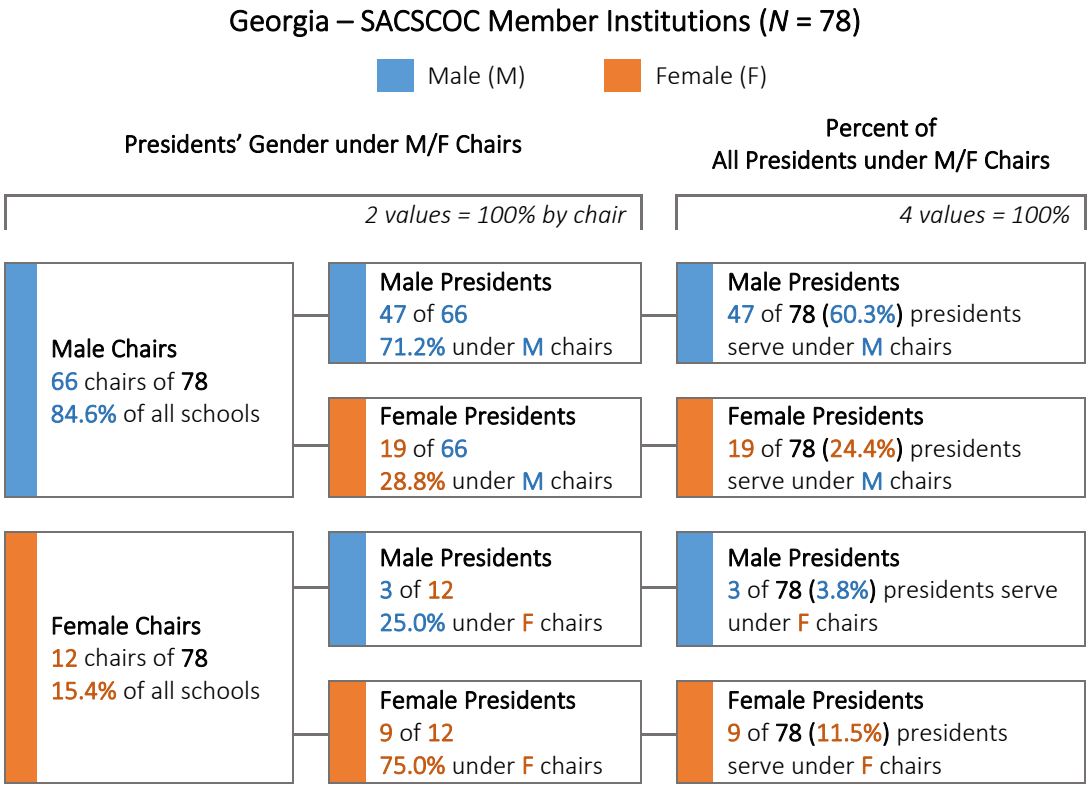
Combined Comparison of Male and Female Presidents with Male and Female Board of Trustee Chairpersons in Florida



Georgia (*N* = 78) has 66 Male and 12 Female BoT chairpersons. The schools with Male BoT Chairs have 47 (71.2%) Male Presidents and 19 (28.8%) Female Presidents. The schools with Female BoT Chairs have 3 (25%) Male Presidents and 9 (75%) Female Presidents. In Georgia, schools with Male BoT Chairs have more Male Presidents, while schools with Female BoT Chairs have more Female Presidents (see Figure 22c).

Figure 22c

Combined Comparison of Male and Female Presidents with Male and Female Board of Trustee Chairpersons in Georgia

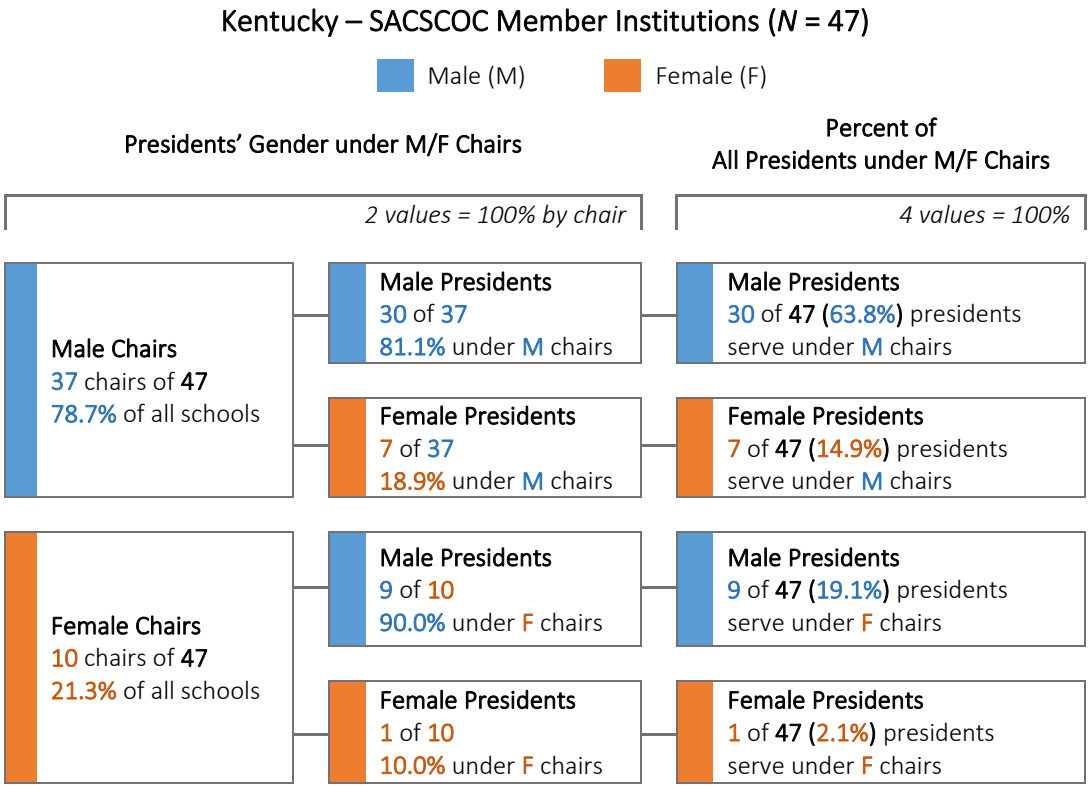


Note. At the time of observation, information was unavailable for one or more of the variables for Emmanuel College and Shorter University.

Kentucky (*N* = 47) has 37 Male and 10 Female BoT chairpersons. The schools with Male BoT Chairs have 30 (81.1%) Male Presidents and 7 (18.9%) Female Presidents. The schools with Female BoT Chairs have 9 (90%) Male Presidents and 1 (10%) Female President. In Kentucky, schools with Male and Female BoT Chairs have more Male Presidents (see Figure 22d).

Figure 22d

Combined Comparison of Male and Female Presidents with Male and Female Board of Trustee Chairpersons in Kentucky

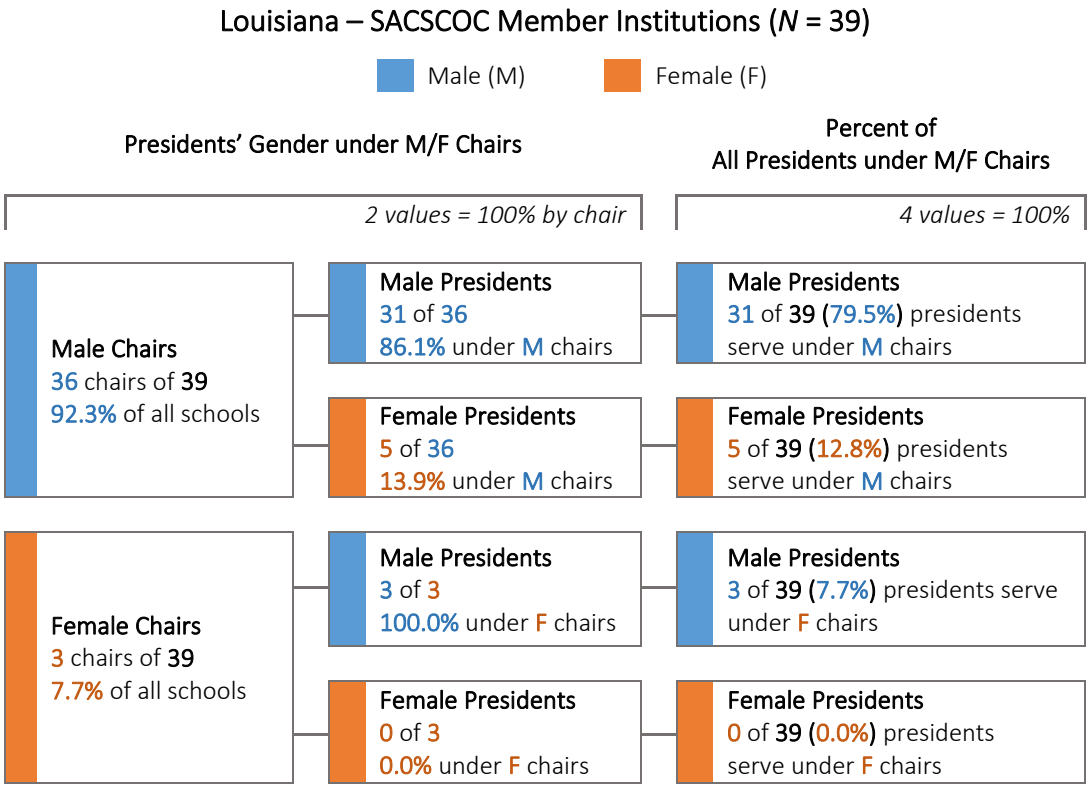


Note. At the time of observation, information was unavailable for one or more of the variables for Union College and University of the Cumberlands.

Louisiana (*N* = 39) has 36 Male and 3 Female BoT chairpersons. The schools with Male BoT Chairs have 31 (86.1%) Male Presidents and 5 (13.9%) Female Presidents. The schools with Female BoT Chairs have 3 (100%) Male Presidents and 0 (0%) Female Presidents. In Louisiana, schools with Male and Female BoT Chairs have more Male Presidents (see Figure 22e).

Figure 22e

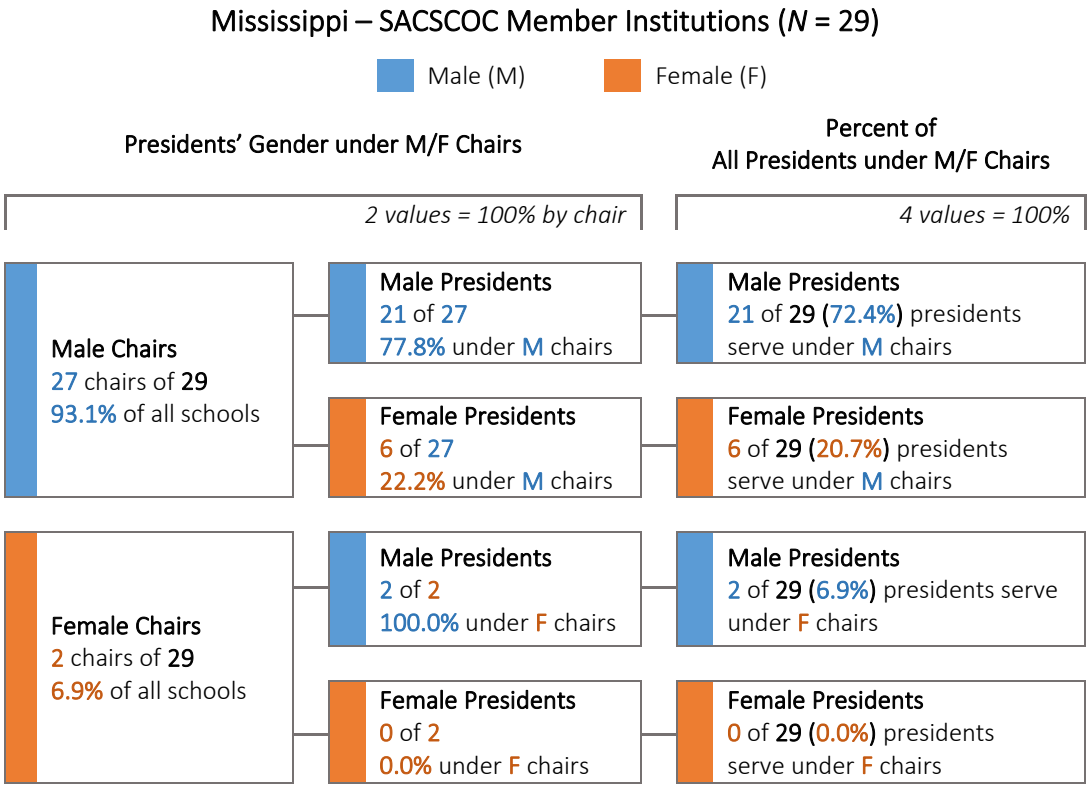
Combined Comparison of Male and Female Presidents with Male and Female Board of Trustee Chairpersons in Louisiana



Mississippi (*N* = 29) has 27 Male and 2 Female BoT chairpersons. The schools with Male BoT Chairs have 21 (77.8%) Male Presidents and 6 (22.2%) Female Presidents. The schools with Female BoT Chairs have 2 (100%) Male Presidents and 0 (0%) Female Presidents. In Mississippi, schools with Male and Female BoT Chairs have more Male Presidents (see Figure 22f).

Figure 22f

Combined Comparison of Male and Female Presidents with Male and Female Board of Trustee Chairpersons in Mississippi

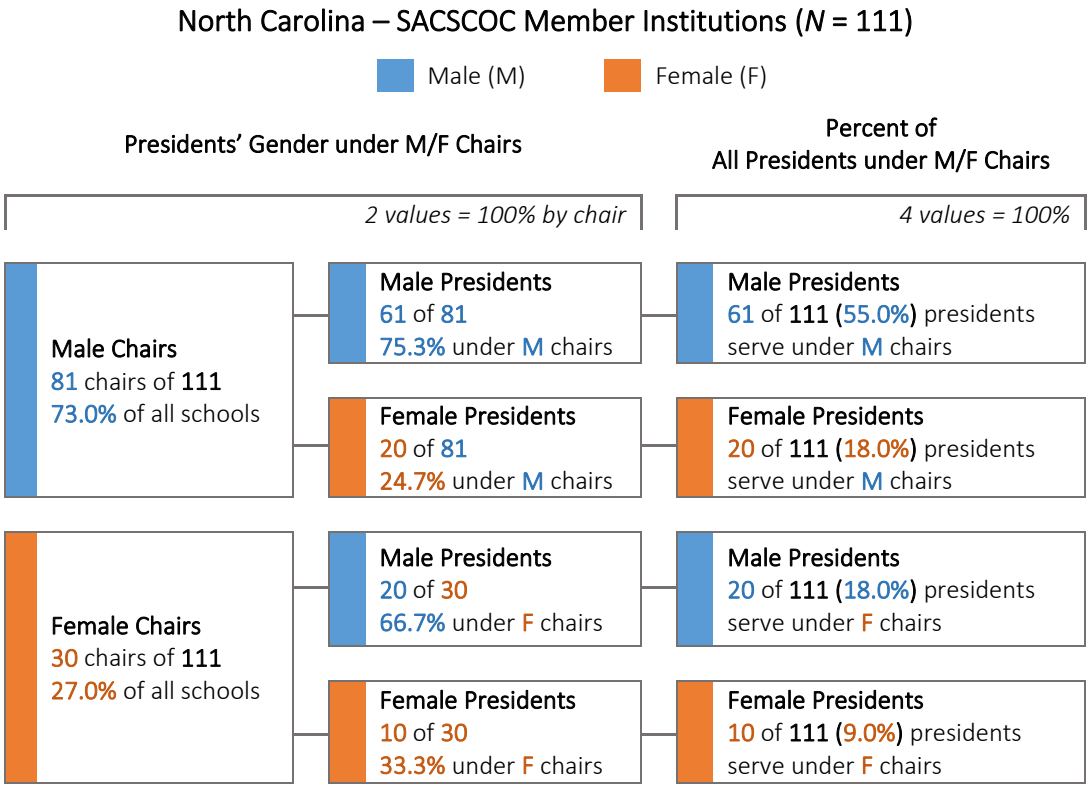


Note. At the time of observation, information was unavailable for one or more of the variables for Blue Mountain College, Millsaps College, and William Carey University.

North Carolina (*N* = 111) has 81 Male and 30 Female BoT chairpersons. The schools with Male BoT Chairs have 61 (75.3%) Male Presidents and 20 (24.7%) Female Presidents. The schools with Female BoT Chairs have 20 (66.7%) Male Presidents and 10 (33.3%) Female Presidents. In North Carolina, schools with Male and Female BoT Chairs have more Male Presidents (see Figure 22g).

Figure 22g

Combined Comparison of Male and Female Presidents with Male and Female Board of Trustee Chairpersons in North Carolina

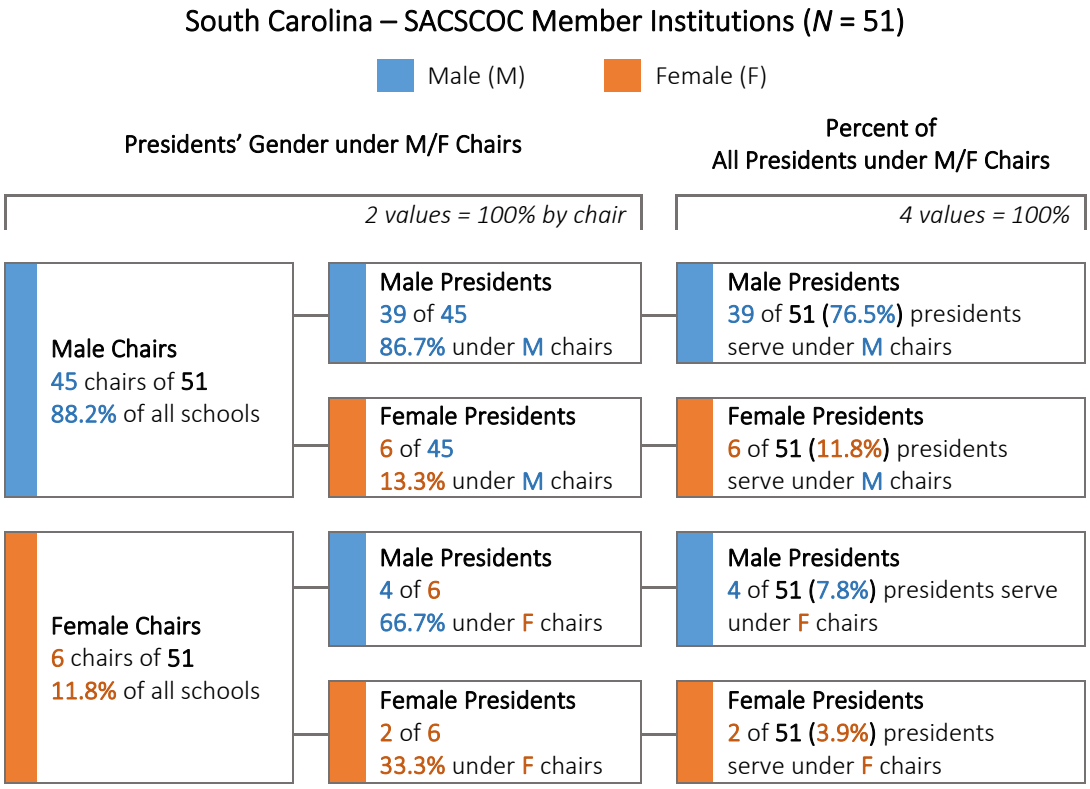


Note. At the time of observation, information was unavailable for one or more of the variables for Belmont Abbey College.

South Carolina (*N* = 51) has 45 Male and 6 Female BoT chairpersons. The schools with Male BoT Chairs have 39 (86.7%) Male Presidents and 6 (13.3%) Female Presidents. The schools with Female BoT Chairs have 4 (66.7%) Male Presidents and 2 (33.3%) Female Presidents. In South Carolina, schools with Male and Female BoT Chairs have more Male Presidents (see Figure 22h).

Figure 22h

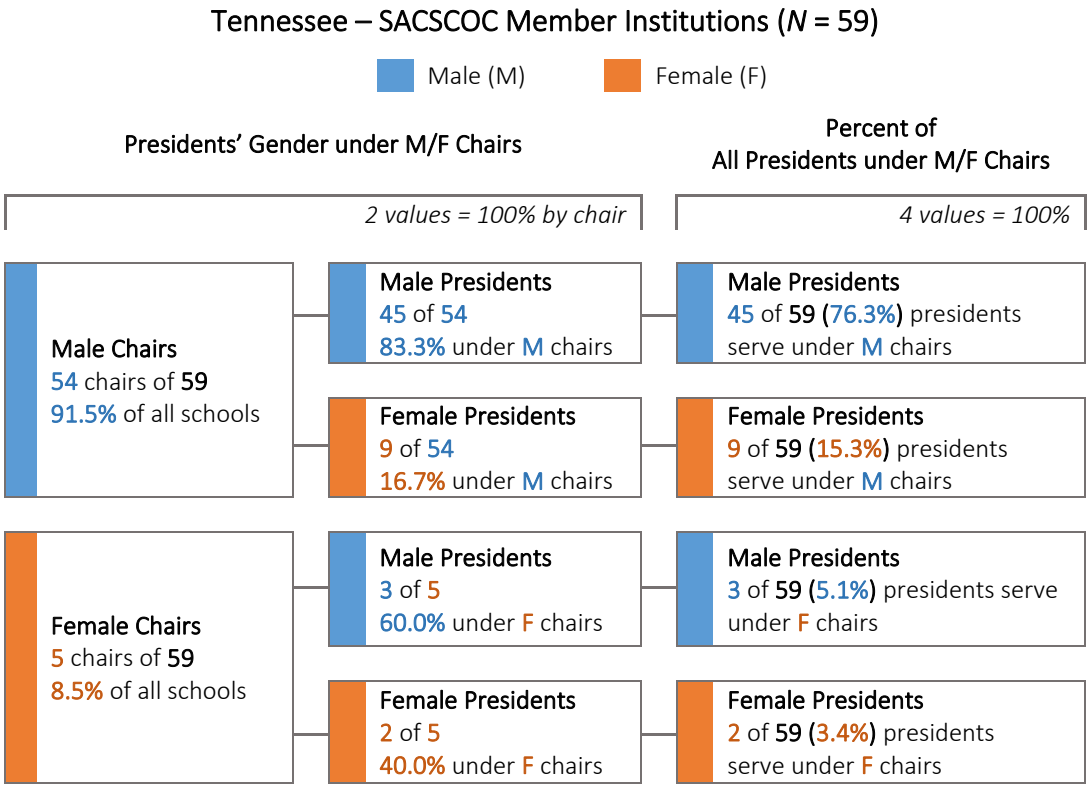
Combined Comparison of Male and Female Presidents with Male and Female Board of Trustee Chairpersons in South Carolina



Tennessee (*N* = 59) has 54 Male and 5 Female BoT chairpersons. The schools with Male BoT Chairs have 45 (83.3%) Male Presidents and 9 (16.7%) Female Presidents. The schools with Female BoT Chairs have 3 (60%) Male Presidents and 2 (40%) Female Presidents. In Tennessee, schools with Male and Female BoT Chairs have more Male Presidents (see Figure 22i).

Figure 22i

Combined Comparison of Male and Female Presidents with Male and Female Board of Trustee Chairpersons in Tennessee

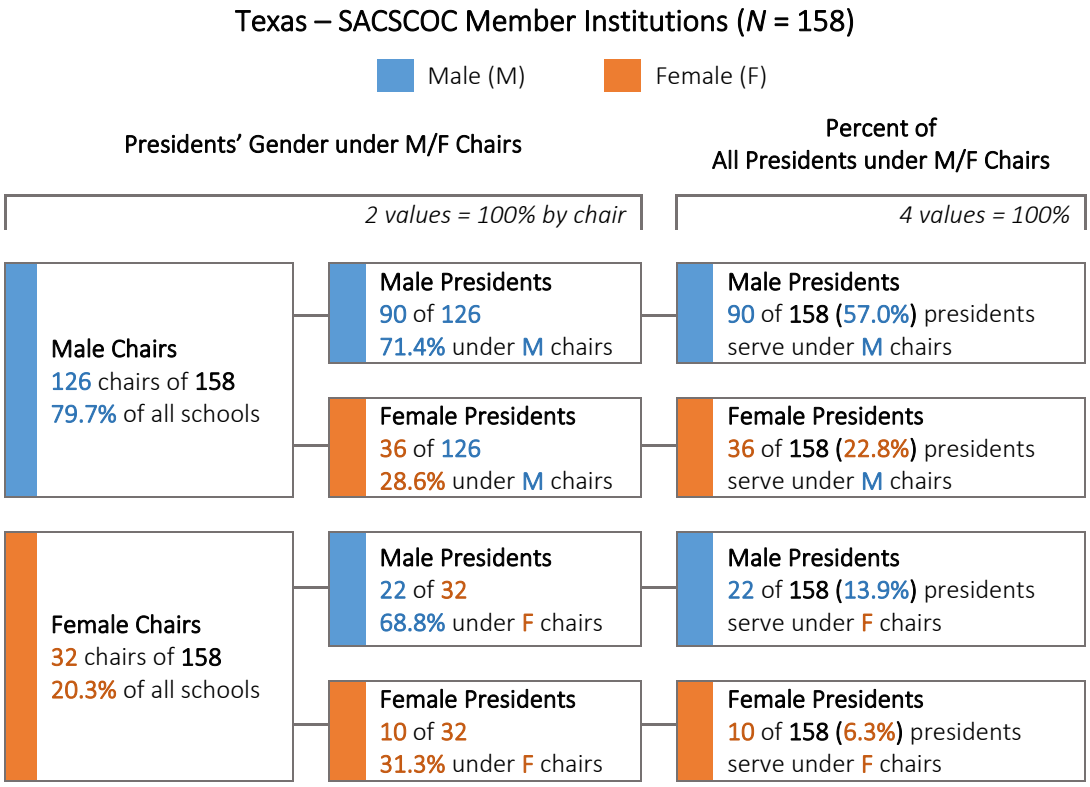


Note. At the time of observation, information was unavailable for one or more of the variables for Bethel University, John A. Gupton College, Memphis College of Art, and Pentecostal Theological Seminary.

Texas (*N* = 158) has 126 Male and 32 Female BoT chairpersons. The schools with Male BoT Chairs have 90 (71.4%) Male Presidents and 36 (28.6%) Female Presidents. The schools with Female BoT Chairs have 22 (68.8%) Male Presidents and 10 (31.3%) Female Presidents. In Texas, schools with Male and Female BoT Chairs have more Male Presidents (see Figure 22j).

Figure 22j

Combined Comparison of Male and Female Presidents with Male and Female Board of Trustee Chairpersons in Texas

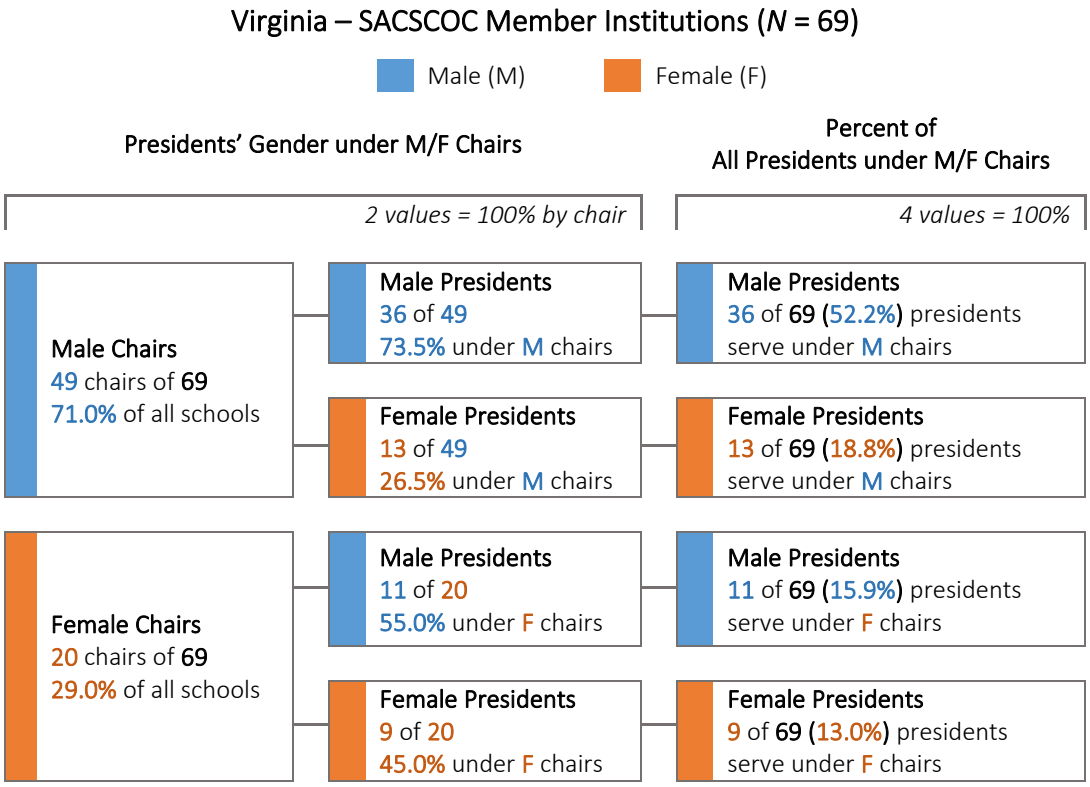


Note. At the time of observation, information was unavailable for one or more of the variables for Amberton University, Concordia University Texas, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and University of Mary Hardin-Baylor.

Virginia (*N* = 69) has 49 Male and 20 Female BoT chairpersons. The schools with Male BoT Chairs have 36 (73.5%) Male Presidents and 13 (26.5%) Female Presidents. The schools with Female BoT Chairs have 11 (55%) Male Presidents and 9 (45%) Female Presidents. In Virginia, schools with Male and Female BoT Chairs have more Male Presidents (see Figure 22k).

Figure 22k

Combined Comparison of Male and Female Presidents with Male and Female Board of Trustee Chairpersons in Virginia

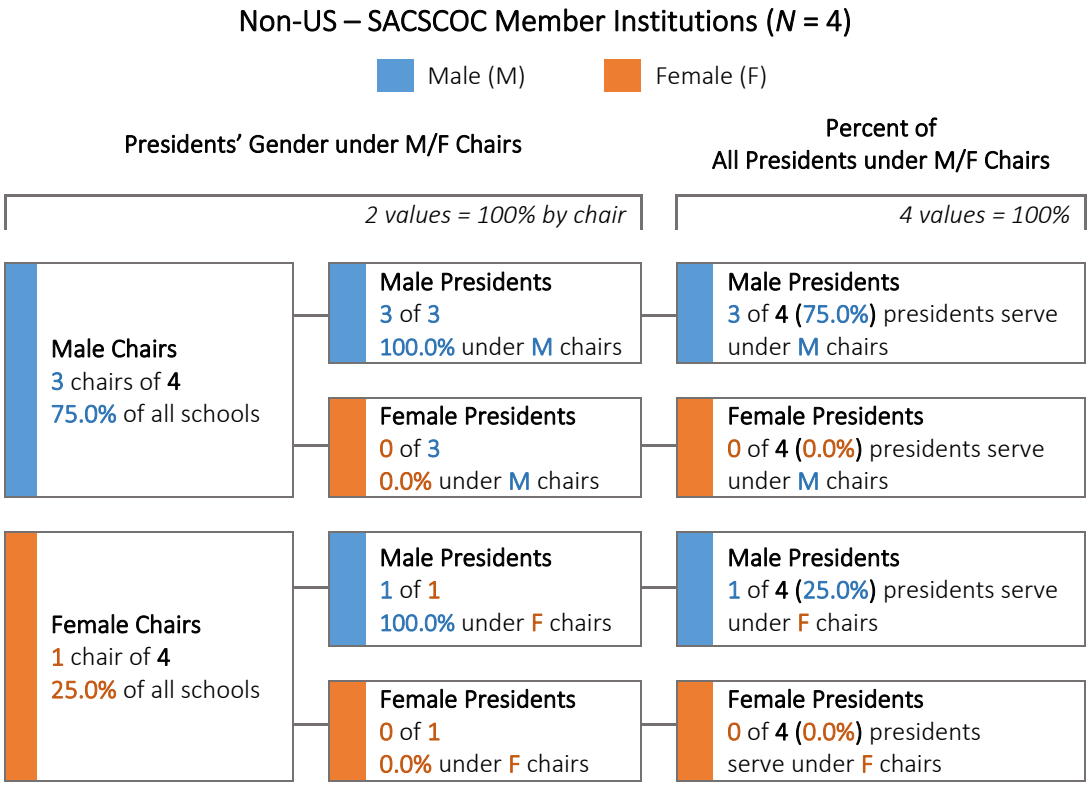


Note. At the time of observation, information was unavailable for one or more of the variables for ECPI University.

Non-US schools (*N* = 4) have 3 Male and 1 Female BoT chairpersons. The schools with Male BoT Chairs have 3 (100%) Male Presidents and 0 (0%) Female Presidents. The schools with Female BoT Chairs have 1 (100%) Male Presidents and 0 (0%) Female Presidents. The Non-US schools with Male and Female BoT Chairs have more Male Presidents (see Figure 22l).

Figure 22l

Combined Comparison of Male and Female Presidents with Male and Female Board of Trustee Chairpersons in Non-US Schools



Note. At the time of observation, information was unavailable for one or more of the variables for Universidad de las Americas and Universidad de Monterrey.

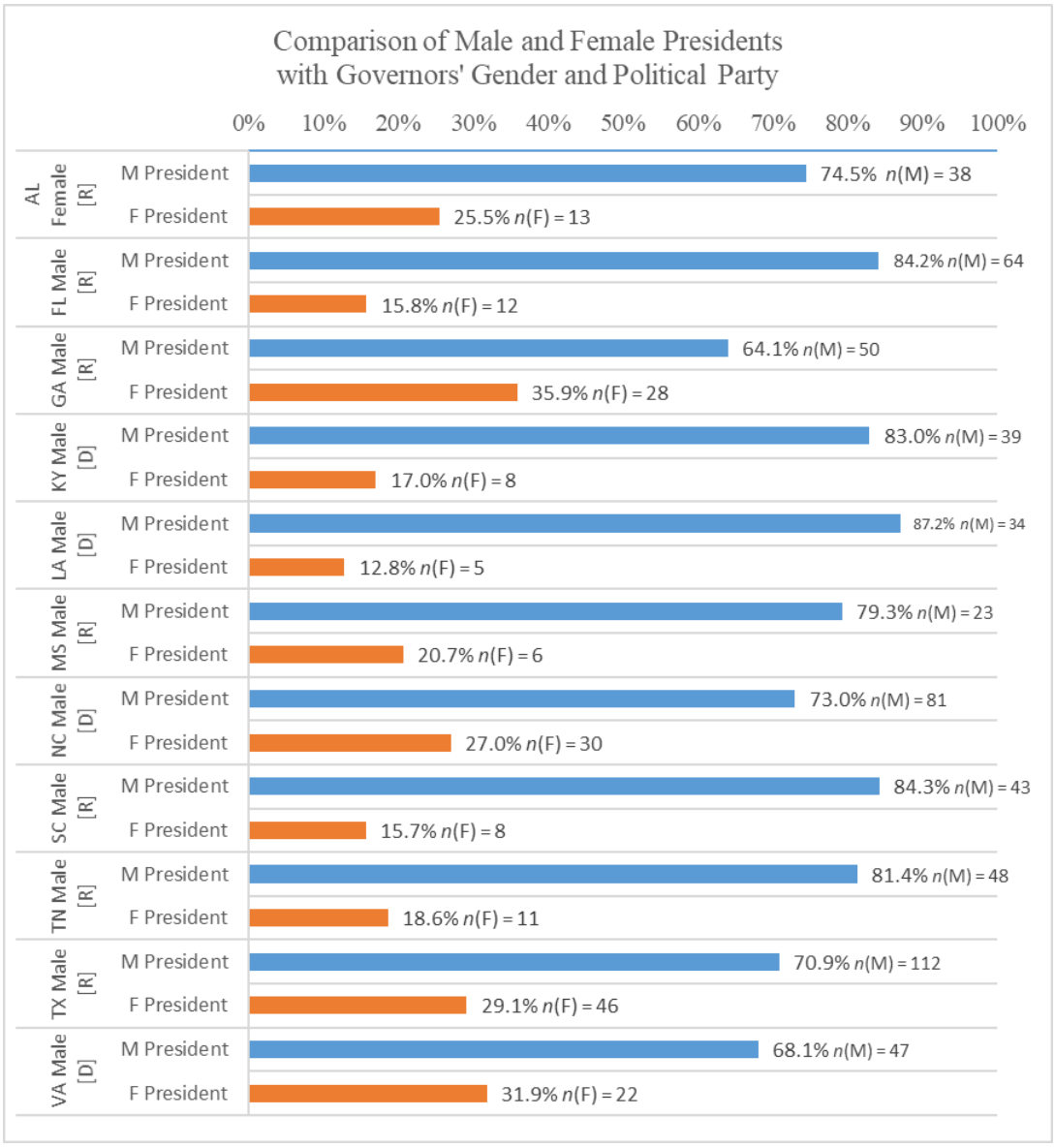
When examining the gender of presidents serving at schools with Male or Female BoT Chairpersons, Georgia is the only state that has more Female than Male Presidents in schools with Female BoT Chairpersons. All of the other states have more Male than Female Presidents regardless of the gender of the BoT chairperson.

Data observation continued by looking at the comparison of Male and Female Presidents with Gender and Political Party of State Governor in the SACSCOC region. Alabama is the only state with a Female Governor. Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, and Virginia have Democratic Governors, while the remaining 7 states have Republican

governors. Louisiana (D-Gov) has the highest percent (87.2%) of Male Presidents. South Carolina (R-Gov) follows with 84.3% Male Presidents, and Florida (R-Gov) is a close third with 84.2% Male Presidents. Georgia (R-Gov) has the highest percent (35.9%) of Female Presidents followed by Virginia (D-Gov) with 31.9% Female Presidents and Texas (R-Gov) with 29.1% Female Presidents (see Figure 23).

Figure 23

Comparison of Male and Female Presidents with Governor's Gender and Political Party

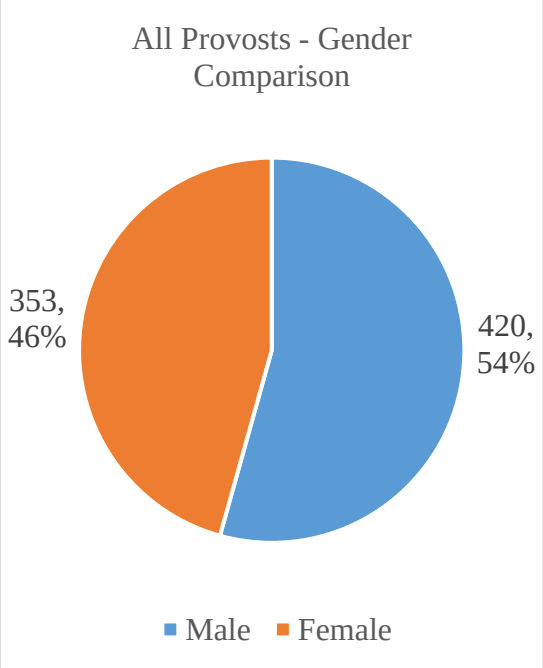


Note. This population includes 768 presidents and excludes Non-US presidents.

The final demographic data observation involved examining a comparison of the gender of Provosts in the SACSCOC region (*N* = 773). Males occupy 420 (54%) and Females occupy 353 (46%) of the Provost positions (see Figure 24).

Figure 24

Comparison of Male and Female Provosts within the SACSCOC Region



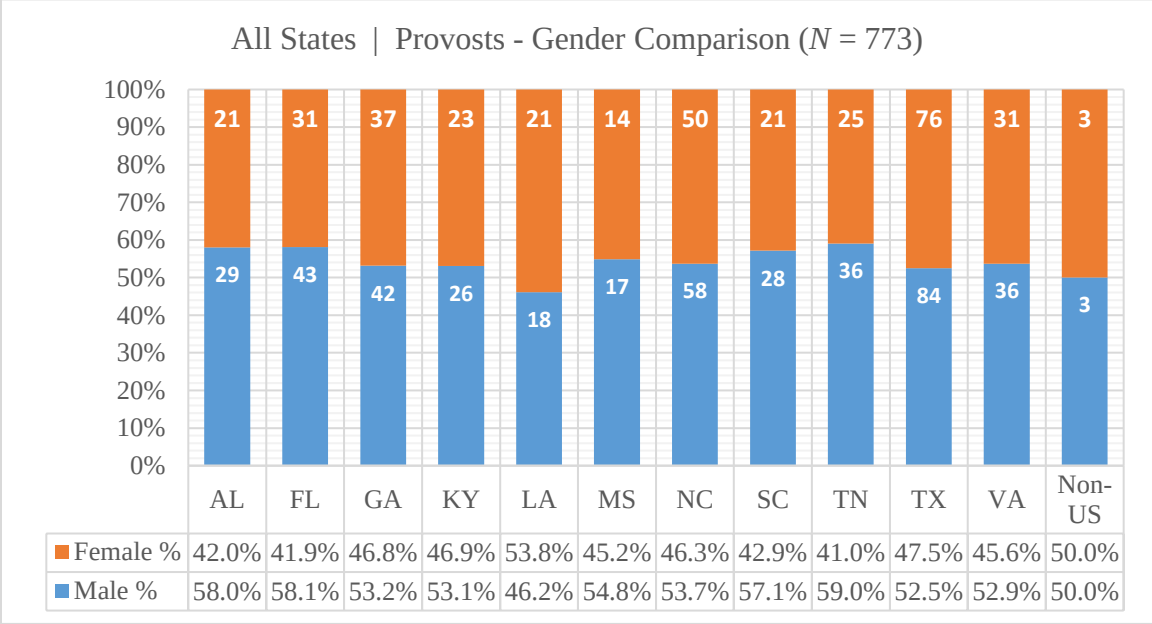
Note. This figure represents 773 out of 792 SACSCOC member institutions. At the time of observation, information was unavailable or unpublished for the provost for 19 institutions. For a list of those institutions, see Appendix D.

The following figure displays a comparison of the gender of Provosts by state (*N* = 773). Excluding the Non-US institutions, Female Provosts range from 14 (Mississippi) to 76 (Texas). Male Presidents range from 17 (Mississippi) to 84 (Texas). However, Mississippi has the least Provosts (31), and Texas has the most Provosts (160). Louisiana is the only state that has a higher percent of Female Provosts (53.8%) than Male Provosts

(46.2%). Tennessee has the lowest percent of Female Provosts (41%), and Florida has the second lowest percent of Female Provosts (41.9%) (see Figure 25).

Figure 25

Comparison of Male and Female Provosts by State



Note. This figure represents 773 out of 792 SACSCOC member institutions. At the time of observation, information was unavailable or unpublished for the provost for 19 institutions. For a list of those institutions, see Appendix D.

In conclusion, the demographic data provided numerous ways to observe characteristics of the study population. This resulted in opportunities to further explore connections, patterns, trends, and anomalies among the data. The next section reports descriptive statistics to further describe features of data in this study.

Descriptive Statistics

Research on the gender of the College President and Board President showed that over 75% of the regions' college presidents and board presidents were Male (see Table 4).

Table 4

College President and Board President by Gender

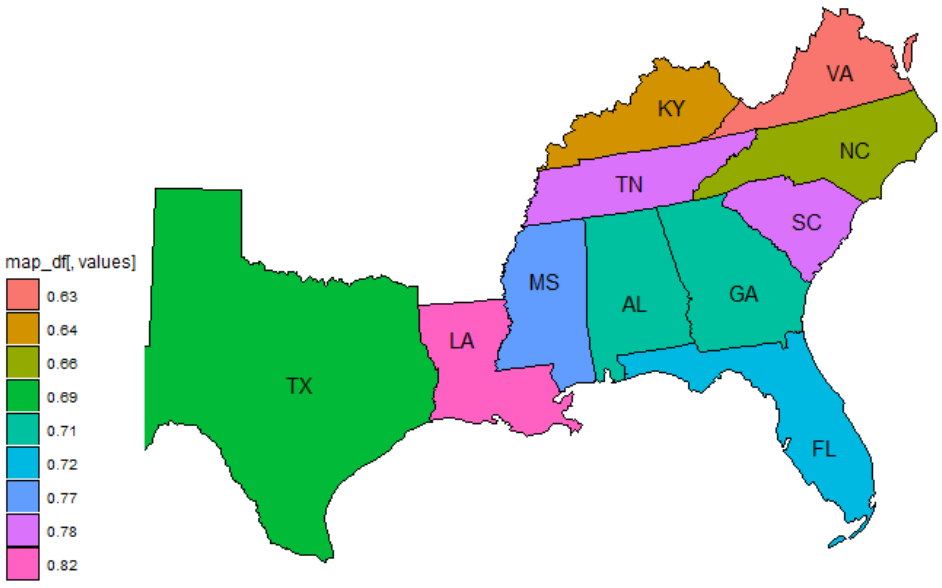
Category	*n*	%	Total %
College President			
Female	192	24.2	24.2
Male	598	75.5	99.7
Unavailable	2	0.3	100.0
Board President			
Female	144	18.2	18.2
Male	628	79.3	97.5
Unavailable	20	2.5	100.0

N = 792

Of the SACSCOC members, males dominate Board of Trustee positions (*M* = .70, *SD* = .15). Male dominance of Board of Trustee positions in SACSCOC ranged from .63 to .82 (see Figure 26).

Figure 26

Percentage of Males on Boards by State

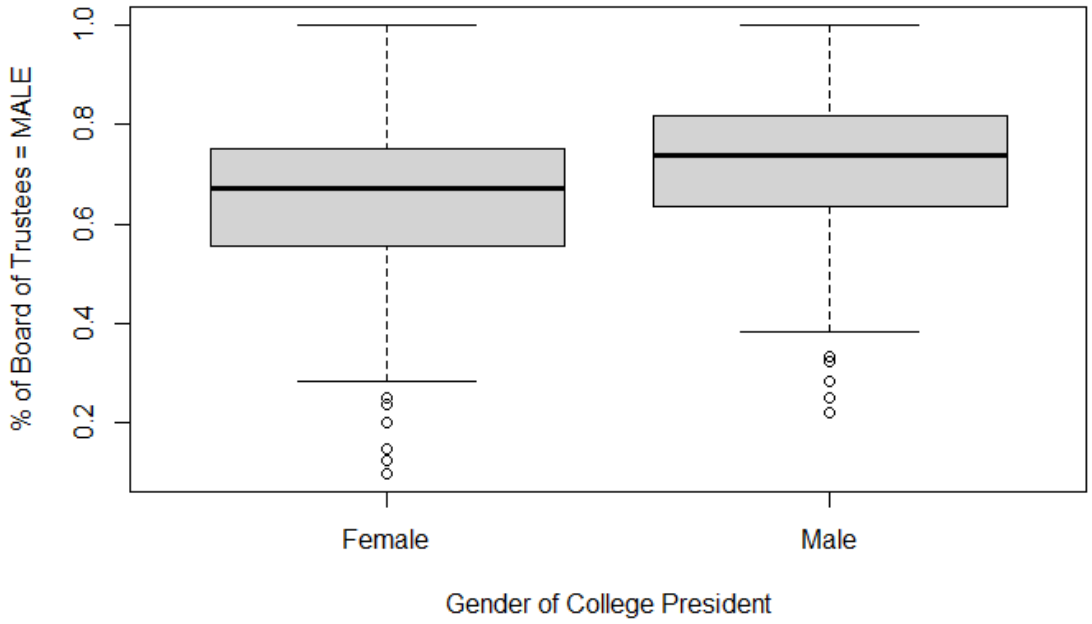


Exploratory Data Analysis

Since two variables of interest, Gender of School President and Gender of Board of Trustee President, are dichotomous, exploratory data analysis techniques focused on the interval variable Board of Trustee Male Percentage (BOT_M_PCT). First, a boxplot was used to identify potential outliers in BOT_M_PCT by Gender of College President (Figure 27).

Figure 27

Boxplot of Board of Trustee % by Gender of College President



A total of 15 potential outliers were detected; six associated with Female College Presidents and nine associated with Male College Presidents. Outlier thresholds of Male participation on the Board of Trustees were (a) less than 25% for Female School Presidents and (b) less than 38.5% for Male School Presidents. For a list of those institutions, see Appendix A.

Since outliers can influence the distribution of data, these 15 outliers were removed from the dataset prior to hypothesis testing. Once outliers were eliminated, the distribution of the BoT_M_PCT by Gender was explored by both statistical testing and graphical interpretation. First, the Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality was performed on the BoT_M_PCT based on Gender of the School President. If the p-value was greater than .05, the assumption of normality would hold (Shapiro & Wilk, 1965). The results of the tests were mixed (see Table 5).

Table 5

Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality on BoT_M_PCT by Gender of School President

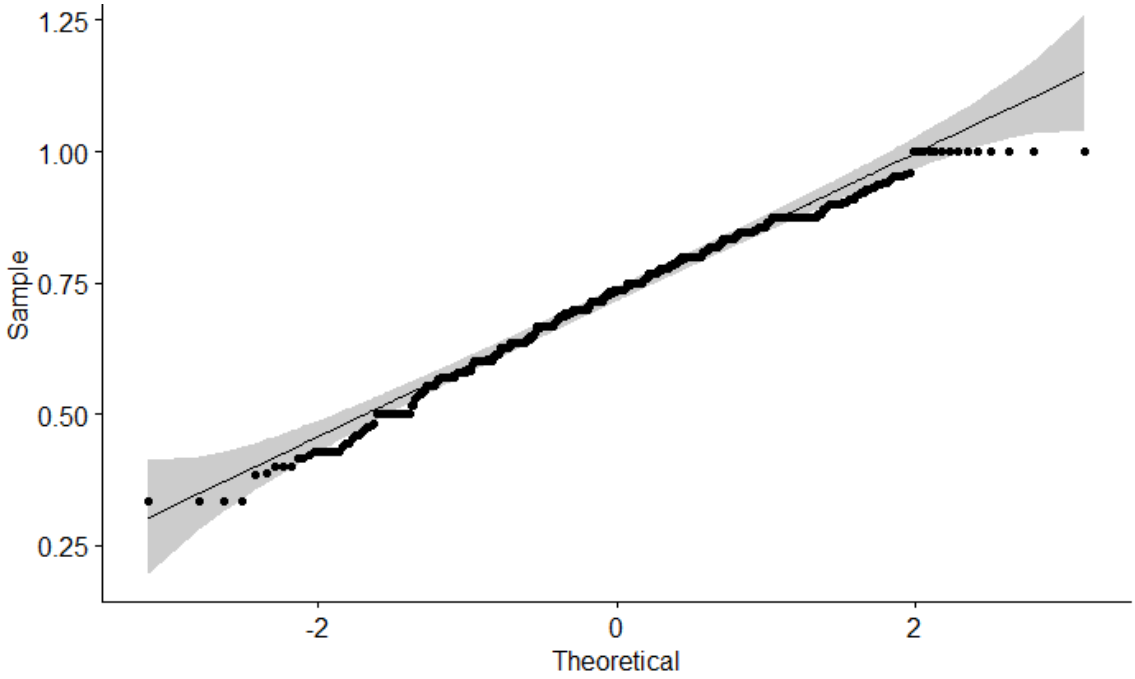
Gender	*W*	*p*
Female	.987	.080*
Male	.985	< .001

Note: Female (*n* = 184); Male (*n* = 583)

While the BoT_M_PCT variable was approximately normally distributed for the Female category, it was not for the Male category. A review of a Q-Q plot for the BoT_M_PCT variable showed that only a few records exceeded the 95% Confidence Interval at the high end of a theoretical normal distribution (Figure 28).

Figure 28

Q-Q Plot of BOT_M_PCT for Male College Presidents



As a result, a decision was made that the variable BOT_M_PCT for both genders was approximately normally distributed, and parametric testing would be performed for the first research question.

Hypothesis Testing

Board of Trustee Gender Proportion by School President

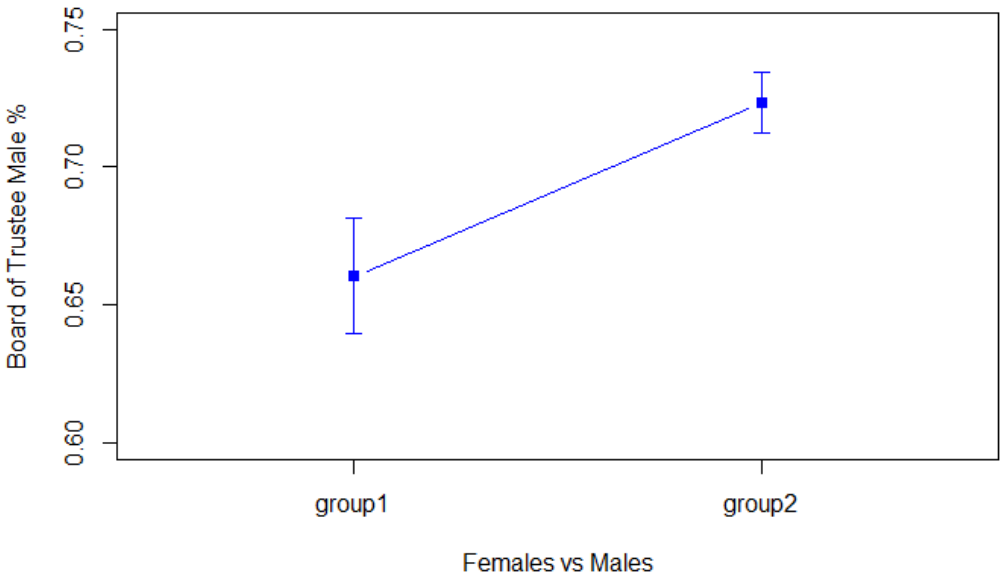
The first research question focused on the difference in Board of Trustee proportion based on the Gender of the School President. The null hypothesis was that there was no difference between the groups. Since Board of Trustee composition is being treated as normally distributed by School President gender, the Independent Samples (IS) *t*-test was used as the test statistic. One of the assumptions of this test is the homogeneity of variance between groups. The Levene Test (Field, 2013) was chosen to test homogeneity. The result of the test was significant, F (1, 765) = 1.565, p = .211. Since

the p-value is greater than .05, evidence suggests that the variance among the two groups was equal (Field, 2013).

Next, the IS *t*-test was performed to determine if the difference by group is statistically significant. The result of the test was significant, t (765) = -5.427, $p < .001$, with Female School Presidents having an $M = 66.03$ of Board of Trustee Male dominance and Male School Presidents having an $M = 72.32$ of Board of Trustee Male dominance. While there was a statistical difference, the size of the difference is considered small to medium, Cohen's $d = .46$, 95% CI (.29, .63). See Figure 29 for a graphical display of the mean values with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 29

Error Plot of Board of Trustee Male % by School President



As a result of the *t*-test, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis that there is a difference between Board of Trustee proportion based on the Gender of School President was accepted. A deeper discussion of this result will appear in Chapter 5.

Gender of Board President and of School President

The second research question focused on the association of the Gender of the Board President and the Gender of the School President. Since both variables are categorical, the Chi-square Test of Independence (Field, 2013) was used to determine if the differences between the two groups of categories was not based on randomness. For the crosstabulation, see Table 6.

Table 6

Crosstabulation of BoT Chairperson Gender and School President Gender

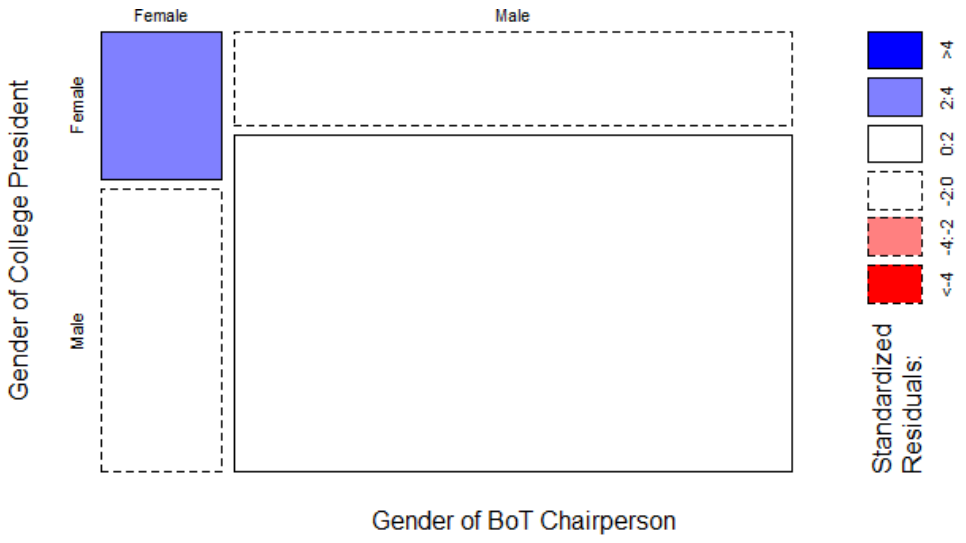
	Board of Trustee Chairperson Gender	
School President	Female	Male
Female	46	136
Male	88	486

$N = 756$

The result of the Chi-square Test of Independence was significant, $X^2(1) = 8.699$, $p = .003$, which represents a negligible to small effect size, $\Phi = .11$, 95% CI (.04, .18). See Figure 30 to see a graphical Mosaic plot of the data.

Figure 30

Mosaic of Gender of BOT Chairperson and Gender of College President



As a result of this test, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis that there is an association between the Gender of the Board of Trustee Chairperson and the Gender of the School President was accepted. The implication of this result will be discussed in chapter 5.

Summary of Results

Data was collected on 792 SACSCOC schools. Some data was not available, so data analysis was performed on complete school information. In examining the difference in the gender proportion of the school boards of trustees based on the gender of school presidents, gender proportion was deemed normally distributed; however, 15 schools were eliminated for that assumption to hold. An IS *t*-test provided evidence that the difference in male dominance on school boards were different based on the gender of the school president; however, the difference was small to moderate. In examining the association between gender of the school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents, a Chi-square test was used to identify a negligible to small, yet statistically significant, difference between genders. The implication of these results will be discussed in chapter 5.

The size is not large enough to conclude that more women serving as chairpersons of school boards of trustees will result in more women moving into presidential positions. There are a multitude of variables surrounding the problem of an underrepresentation of women as college and university presidents, and more research needs to occur to determine how to move the needle toward achieving gender parity among college and university presidents by 2030.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This study was inspired by the underrepresentation of women as college and university presidents, ACE's initiative to achieve gender parity among U.S. school presidencies by 2030, and Belle Wheelan's challenge for SACSCOC member institutions to also achieve gender parity among its region's presidents. The major focus of ACE's *Moving the Needle* initiative is on moving more women into school presidencies. The question remains "How do more women move into this role?" Much of the research centers around preparing women for higher education leadership roles, examining women's lived experiences as higher education leaders, identifying factors that contribute to women's success in higher education leadership roles, and identifying obstacles to women attaining school presidencies, but very little research has focused on who hires the presidents. The boards of trustees hire college and university presidents, and most boards consist of more men than women. This study sought to answer two research questions related to the gender of trustees on a board, the gender of the board chairperson, and the gender of the president in SACSCOC member institutions.

RQ1: What is the difference between the gender proportion of school trustee boards based on the gender of school presidents?

RQ2: What is the association between the gender of school boards of trustees' chairpersons and the gender of school presidents?

The researcher gathered data on 792 SACSCOC candidate and member institutions and conducted statistical testing of the hypotheses. The following chapter will focus on an overview of results, the application of theory, research findings, implications,

and contribution to the field of conflict analysis and resolution, limits of the study, recommendations, and future research.

Overview of Results

The first research question focused on the difference in Board of Trustee proportion based on the Gender of the School President. Results of the IS *t*-test and Cohen's *d* indicated statistical significance with a small to medium difference. The null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis that there is a difference between Board of Trustee proportion based on the Gender of School President was accepted.

The second research question focused on the association between the Gender of the Board President and the Gender of the School President. Results of the Chi-square Test of Independence identified an association with a small effect size. The null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis that there is an association between the Gender of the Board of Trustee Chairperson and the Gender of the School President was accepted.

Application of Theory

This study utilized feminism theory to help understand why women are underrepresented as school presidents. Feminist theories provide tools to examine injustices, build knowledge, and demand change regarding the oppression of women (McCann & Kim, 2017). Multiple studies demonstrate that women still experience discriminatory and oppressive practices resulting in a lack of opportunity in the workplace (Lapovsky, 2009; Lepkowski, 2009; Brescoll et al., 2010) even though they are often among the highest performers (Lennon, 2013). Through the lens of feminism theory, women are still not afforded the same opportunities of their male counterparts.

The lack of opportunity is highlighted throughout higher education in that women only hold about 30% of school presidencies (Gagliardi et al., 2017). Why is the chief executive position in higher education dominated by males? One of the questions adapted from the work of McCann and Kim (2017), invites researchers to bring about change regarding the conflict of gender inequality among school presidents by asking, "What kinds of changes are needed to promote more women into school presidencies?" (p. 1). Before answering this question, researchers need to identify the root cause of the problem. One root cause may be that male dominated boards of trustees hire college and university presidents. This possibility provided the framework to examine the gender proportion of the school boards of trustees, the gender of the boards' chairpersons, and the gender of the president to establish a difference and association resulting in male dominance among all three. If more women served on school boards of trustees and held more positions as chairpersons, it could result in more women obtaining college and university presidencies. This study seeks to contribute to identifying the kinds of changes that are needed to promote more women into college and university presidencies.

Research Findings

Answering this study's research questions involved collecting data from SACSCOC candidate and member institution websites to classify the gender of each trustee, chairperson, and president. The researcher elected to collect data from all 792 SACSCOC schools to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the census population. Demographic data provided a variety of ways to observe characteristics of the study population, which helped to synthesize information related to the study's problem. The first steps began with a wide lens involving the identification of general information

about the study's population. Steps graduated to a narrower view of specific characteristics about the population.

Findings Related to Demographic Data

Identification of general demographic data began by comparing the number of private and public institutions and degree levels in the study population. Results indicated that 60.6% of the schools were public, and 39.4% were private, (N = 792). The percent of institutional levels are categorized as follows: Level I (Associate's degree) = 32.1%, Level II (Baccalaureate degree) = 13.5%, Level III (Master's degree) = 16.8%, Level IV (Specialist's degree) = 2.1%, Level V (Three or fewer doctoral degrees) = 18.7%, and Level VI (Four or more doctoral degrees) = 16.8%. The designations of private, public, and institutional level provide opportunities to explore genders of presidents, trustees, and chairpersons by private, public, and levels of schools. This may help to identify patterns or trends when viewing data through various lenses. This may also provide opportunities for future studies with a more in-depth analysis of one of the variables.

The next step involved an analysis of the gender of school presidents based on private and public schools and institutional level. When comparing the number of Female and Male College and University Presidents in the SACSCOC region (N = 790), findings showed Women represent 24%, and Men represent 76%. In private schools (N = 310), Women comprise 20% of the presidencies, and in public schools (N = 480), Women comprise 27% of the presidencies. It is interesting to note that public schools have a higher percent of women serving as president, but the percent is nowhere near gender parity. Overall, women hold less than a quarter of the president positions in the SACSCOC region. The literature focuses on the entire country and identifies that women

hold about 30% of school presidencies in the U.S. (Gagliardi et al., 2017). This is 6% higher than the percent of women presidents in the south. Why does the south have a lower percent of women college presidents, and is this specific to higher education? An examination of the gender composition of boards of trustees may shed more light on the gender disparity among college presidents.

First Research Question. This study sought to contribute to an understanding of the gender disparity among college presidents by first examining if there is a difference between the gender proportion of school trustee boards based on the gender of school presidents. The first step in examining the gender composition of boards of trustees was to compare the numbers of Male and Female Trustees overall and by State in the SACSCOC region (N = 13,669). Findings indicated that Women represent 29.3%, and Men represent 70.7% of the Trustee positions. Even though these findings are based on the SACSCOC region, they are parallel to the 2009 findings of the White House Project report on *Benchmarking Women's Leadership* that identified women account for less than 30% of college and university board members (Lapovsky, 2009). In 12 years, women have not gained leadership positions on higher education boards. This study's data show the percent of Female Trustees is 5.3% higher than the percent of Female Presidents. Findings support the literature that even though the number of women appointed to higher education trustee boards is increasing (Martin, 2010), the number of women attaining president positions is not increasing at a proportionate level. Research suggests there is a lack of diversity on higher education boards (Moody, 2018), and higher education needs to change up the diversity on boards to change up the diversity in leadership (Levenson, 2017).

When looking at the numbers of Male and Female Trustees by State, Louisiana had the lowest percentage of Female Trustees (19%, *N* = 725), and Virginia had the highest percentage (36%, *N* = 1282). Other states with low percentages of Female Trustees included Mississippi (21%, *N* = 582) and South Carolina (23%, *N* = 946). States with higher percentages included Kentucky (34%, *N* = 934) and North Carolina (34%, *N* = 1955). Mid-range states encompassed Florida (25%, *N* = 1141), Alabama (29.3%, *N* = 774), Georgia (29.3%, *N* = 1556), Tennessee (30%, *N* = 1349), and Texas (30%, *N* = 2317).

The next step involved comparing the percent of Female Presidents and Female Trustees by State to determine if those states with low percentages of Female Presidents had correspondingly low percentages of Female Trustees. Findings indicated that Louisiana had the lowest percent of Female Presidents (12.8%, *N* = 39) and the lowest percent of Female Trustees (19%, *N* = 725). South Carolina had the second lowest percent of Female Presidents (15.7%, *N* = 51) and the third lowest percent of Female Trustees (23%, *N* = 946). Mississippi actually has a lower mid-range percentage of Female Presidents (21.9%, *N* = 32) but the second lowest percentage of Female Trustees (21%, *N* = 582). There seems to be a connection in that states with a low percentage of Female Presidents also have a low percentage of Female Trustees.

Georgia had the highest percent of Female Presidents (35%, *N* = 80) but had a mid-range percent of Female Trustees (29.3%, *N* = 1556). Virginia had the second highest percent of Female Presidents (31.4%, *N* = 70) and the highest percent of Female Trustees (36%, *N* = 1282). Texas had the third highest percent of Female Presidents (29%, N = 162) and a mid-range percent of Female Trustees (30%, *N* = 2317). There also

seems to be a connection in that states with a higher percentage of Female Presidents also have a higher percentage of Female Trustees. Even though data indicate a connection between the percentages of Female Presidents and Female Trustees within a state, more extensive studies need to take place to confirm if a relationship actually exists.

Second Research Question. This study sought to further understand the gender disparity among college presidents by examining the association between the gender of school boards of trustees' chairpersons and school presidents. Findings indicate that women are significantly underrepresented as Boards of Trustees' Chairpersons (F = 144, M = 628) within the SACSCOC region (N = 772). Women hold 19% of the total chairperson positions (N = 772), 20% of the private school chairperson positions (N = 292), and 18% of the public school chairperson positions (N = 480). There is not much difference in the percent of women BoT chairpersons in private, public, or all schools within the region. Data show the percent of Female Chairpersons (19%) is less than the percent of Female Trustees (29.3%). Approximately one-third of the trustees are women, yet less than one-fifth of the BoT chairpersons are women. Even though more women are serving as trustees, very few are attaining the executive trustee position. If more women move into board leadership positions, more women may be hired into school president positions. An examination of the association between the gender of the chairperson and the gender of the president could provide a deeper understanding as to if increasing the number of women chairpersons would increase the number of women school presidents.

Data show the percent of Female Chairpersons (19%) is lower than the percent of Female Presidents (24%). Within the SACSCOC region, less than one-fifth of the BoT chairpersons are women, while approximately one-fourth of the school presidents are

women. Women are moving more slowly into board of trustee executive positions than into school president positions. Even though more women are moving into school presidencies, the movement is slow (Lapovsky, 2009; Davis & Gray, 2014, Gagliardi et al., 2017). The slow movement of women into boards of trustees' chairpersons' positions could impact the sluggish rate of women moving into school presidencies. The literature supports that gender disparity among college presidents is not a surprise due to the lack of female leadership on boards of trustees (Levenson, 2017). A study of the Massachusetts higher education system revealed that 35% of the 80 private colleges and universities in Massachusetts have female presidents, and only 31% of the 29 state public institutions have women leaders (Levenson, 2017). During this time, only five women served as chairs of the 25 boards that govern the public higher education system in Massachusetts (Levenson, 2017), which parallels this study's findings that about one-fifth of the BoT chairpersons are women in the southern US.

To further examine gender associations between BoT Chairpersons and School Presidents, the data were examined by state. Comparing the percent of Female Chairpersons to the percent of Female Presidents by state provides a narrower scope regarding an association. Mississippi had the lowest percentage of Female Chairpersons (7%, $N = 29$), and Virginia had the highest percentage (29%, $N = 69$). Other states with low percentages of Female BoT Chairpersons included Louisiana (8%, $N = 39$) and Tennessee (8%, $N = 59$). Mississippi has two Female BoT chairpersons, which accounts for the lowest actual number and the lowest percentage of the southern states. States with higher percentages included North Carolina (27%, $N = 111$) and Kentucky (21%, $N = 47$). Texas has 32 Female BoT Chairpersons ($N = 158$), which accounts for the highest

actual number but not the highest percentage (20%) of Female Chairpersons. Mid-range states encompassed South Carolina (12%, *N* = 51), Georgia (15%, *N* = 78), Alabama (16%, *N* = 51), Florida (20%, *N* = 76), and Texas (20%, *N* = 158).

The next step involved comparing the percent of Female Presidents and Female Chairpersons by State to determine if those states with low percentages of Female Presidents had correspondingly low percentages of Female BoT Chairpersons. The percent of Female Presidents within states ranged from 12.8% to 35%, and the percent of Female BoT Chairpersons within states ranged from 7% to 29%. Findings indicated that Louisiana had the lowest percent of Female Presidents (12.8%, *N* = 39) and the second lowest percent of Female Chairpersons (8%, *N* = 39). South Carolina had the second lowest percent of Female Presidents (15.7%, *N* = 51) but fell in the mid-range of Female Chairpersons (12%, *N* = 51). Florida had the third lowest percent of Female Presidents (15.8%, *N* = 76) and also fell in the mid-range of Female Chairpersons (20%, *N* = 76).

Mississippi actually had the lowest percent of Female Chairpersons (7%, *N* = 29) but fell in a mid-range of Female Presidents (21.9%, *N* = 32). Louisiana is the only state where the percent of Female Presidents and the percent of Female BoT Chairpersons were in the lowest three percent.

Georgia had the highest percent of Female Presidents (35%, *N* = 80) but had a mid-range percent of Female Chairpersons (15%, *N* = 78). Virginia had the second highest percent of Female Presidents (31.4%, *N* = 70) and the highest percent of Female Chairpersons (29%, *N* = 69). Texas had the third highest percent of Female Presidents (29%, N = 162) and a mid-range percent of Female Chairpersons (20%, *N* = 158). North Carolina actually had the second highest percent of Female Chairpersons (27%, *N* = 111)

but fell in a mid-range of Female Presidents (26.8%, *N* = 112). Kentucky had the third highest percent of Female Chairpersons (21%, *N* = 47) but also fell in the mid-range of Female Presidents (18.4%, *N* = 49). Virginia is the only state where the percent of Female Presidents and the percent of Female BoT Chairpersons were in the highest three percent. There seems to be a slight connection in that states with lower percentages of Female Presidents have lower percentages of Female BoT Chairpersons, and states with higher percentages of Female Presidents have higher percentages of Female BoT Chairpersons. The relationship is not proportional, however, and more studies need to take place to confirm if a relationship exists.

Data exploration regarding an association between the gender of the BoT Chairperson and the gender of the School President continued by examining the number of Male and Female Presidents who serve under boards with Male Chairpersons and the number of Male and Female Presidents who serve under boards with Female Chairpersons. Literature suggests that women serving under women leaders in higher education may provide more pathways for women to move into presidencies (Peszek, 2016). It is reasonable to consider that there may be more Female Presidents serving under Female Chairpersons than under Male Chairpersons. Findings on the entire SACSCOC region indicated that schools with Male and Female BoT Chairs have more Male Presidents. The initial thought that schools with Female BoT Chairs may have more Female Presidents was not supported by the data. Overall, schools with Female BoT Chairpersons (*N* = 144) had 92 Male Presidents (63.9%,) and 52 Female Presidents (36.1%). Schools with Male BoT Chairpersons (*N* = 628) had 491 Male Presidents (78.2%) and 137 Female Presidents (21.8%). Schools with Male BoT Chairpersons had

14.3% more Male Presidents than schools with Female BoT Chairpersons. Findings reveal that schools with Male BoT Chairpersons had a higher percent of Male Presidents than schools with Female BoT Chairpersons, but overall, Male Presidents occupy 75.5% of the positions and are dominant regardless of the gender of the BoT Chairperson.

The analysis continued by reviewing the number of Male and Female Presidents who serve under Male or Female Chairpersons by state. The initial thought was that states with higher percentages of Female Presidents and Female BoT Chairpersons may have more Female Presidents serving under Female BoT Chairpersons. Findings revealed that the Georgia is the only state where schools with Female BoT Chairs have more Female Presidents than Male Presidents. Georgia had 12 Female BoT Chairs and 3 Male Presidents and 9 Female Presidents serving under those Chairs. Male Chairs (n = 66, N = 78) and Male Presidents (n = 50, N = 78) still dominate the state; however, Georgia is the only state where findings are supported by the literature stating that women serving under women leaders may provide more pathways for women to move into school presidencies (Peszek, 2016). In the other 10 states and Non-U.S. institutions, schools with Male and Female BoT Chairs have more Male Presidents. These findings do not support that having more women in board of trustee chairperson positions may result in more women presidents.

When using demographic data to explore the association between the number of female presidents and female chairpersons by state, there does not appear to be a strong association among female chairpersons and female school presidents. Even though Levenson's (2017) work suggests that gender disparity is not a surprise due to a lack of female leadership on boards of trustees, this study's demographic data did not identify a

strong association between the gender of BoT chairpersons and the gender of school presidents. This study's findings did identify, however, a connection between the number of female trustees and the number of female presidents.

Findings Related to Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to explore data and test hypotheses. Exploratory data analysis began by examining College President and Board President by Gender to determine male dominance. Findings showed that over 75% of the regions' college presidents and board chairpersons were Male, which supports this study's demographic data findings and national statistics (Gagliardi et al., 2017; Levenson, 2017). This study sought to contribute to the literature by looking for connections between the gender composition of boards of trustees, the gender of board chairpersons, and the gender of college presidents.

First Research Question. The first research question focused on the difference in Board of Trustee proportion based on the Gender of the School President. Findings of the IS *t*-test and Cohen's *d* indicated statistical significance with a small to medium difference. Even though the alternative hypothesis was accepted, the size of the effect was less than expected. The findings suggest that male dominant boards of trustees play a small role in the underrepresentation of women college presidents. Previous studies indicate that women experience discriminatory and oppressive practices resulting in a lack of opportunity in the workplace (Lapovsky, 2009; Lepkowski, 2009; Brescoll et al., 2010) even though they are often among the highest performers (Lennon, 2013). The lack of opportunity is highlighted throughout higher education (Gagliardi et al., 2017). Male dominated Boards of Trustees hire college presidents, which led to the supposition that

the alternative hypothesis would be accepted with a medium to large effect size. This was not the case. The small to medium effect size suggests that more women serving on trustee boards may slightly impact more women attaining college presidencies but will not majorly impact the movement. Future research may reveal additional variables resulting in a larger effect size when looking at boards of trustees and the selection of the president.

Second Research Question. The second research question focused on the association between the gender of school boards of trustees' chairpersons and school presidents. Findings of the Chi-square Test of Independence identified an association with a small effect size. Similar to the findings of the first research question, the alternative hypothesis was accepted, but the size of the effect was less than expected. The findings suggest that the gender of board chairpersons plays a small role in the gender of college presidents. The initial supposition that male dominant BoT chairpersons play a larger role in the underrepresentation of women college presidents was not verified by the small size of the association. Literature discussed that more women serving as board chairpersons may result in more women college presidents (Moody, 2018). This study's findings conclude that the association between the gender of chairperson and the gender of college president is small, and therefore, the strategy may only make a small dent in moving more women into college presidencies. There are a multitude of variables surrounding the problem of an underrepresentation of women as college and university presidents, and more research needs to occur to determine how to move the needle toward achieving gender parity among college presidents by 2030.

Implications and Contributions to the Field of Conflict Analysis and Resolution

The findings of this study provide higher education professionals, governing boards, and policy-making bodies with data showing that women are underrepresented as college presidents, board trustees, and board chairpersons in the SACSCOC region despite the initiative for member institutions to achieve gender parity among its presidents by 2030. Data show that schools within this region are lagging behind the rest of the nation in moving women into president positions. Data also parallel national studies that schools have gender disparity among trustees and board chairpersons (Levenson, 2017, Gasman et al., 2015; Martin, 2010; Lapovsky, 2009). This study's data provide actual numbers and percentages of male and female college presidents, trustees, and chairpersons. Approximately one-fourth of the presidents are women, one-third of the trustees are women, and less than one-fifth of the BoT chairpersons are women. The numbers educate school professionals, governing boards, and state governments as to the inequity regarding women leaders in higher education. Viewing these data will highlight the conflict surrounding the gender disparity of presidential and governing board leadership in higher education. Much of the literature provides a qualitative and subjective approach to the lack of women presidents. This research provides an empirical approach to understand gender disparity among executive school leadership and contributes to findings that male dominated boards of trustees play a role in the underrepresentation of women as college presidents. It also highlights the majority of college presidents, trustees, and board chairpersons are men.

The findings of this study also identify states with the lowest and highest numbers and percentages of women presidents, women trustees, and women chairpersons. This

provides higher education professionals, governing boards, and state governments the opportunity to implement strategies for change. For example, Louisiana has the lowest percent of Female Presidents, the lowest percent of Female Trustees, and the second lowest percent of Female Chairpersons in all SACSCOC states. The gender disparity is blatant and needs to be rectified. One strategy that may increase opportunities for women presidents is to appoint more women to school governing boards of trustees. Appointing more women trustees will advance opportunities for women in the southern states with the highest gender disparity among higher education presidents, trustees, and chairpersons. Even though the results of this study indicated small to medium effect sizes, there was a difference between Board of Trustee proportion based on the Gender of School President and an association between the Gender of the Board of Trustee Chairperson and the Gender of the School President.

Overall, this study contributes to the field of conflict analysis and resolution by providing a deeper understanding of the lack of opportunity for women in obtaining school presidencies. This is a collective call to action for higher education governing boards to place more women in chief executive roles. Publishing data comprised of the actual number of presidents, trustees, and chairs brings attention to the widespread inequity and societal problem of gender disparity among higher education leaders. The data is not about one school, and the resolution is not about "simply adding more women" to leadership positions. These data target many schools, states, and a region, which could facilitate change and significant movement toward gender parity in our nation's higher education system. This study is a snapshot in time displaying the current state of affairs accompanied by recommendations to bring about change. Education and

acknowledgment are keys to increase opportunities for women, not only in the field of higher education, but overall, in a country, that passed the Equal Rights Amendment approximately 49 years ago and still displays less opportunities for women in our nation's highest leadership positions.

Limits of Study

As noted in chapter 1, conducting an analysis of the entire population within the SACSCOC region provides data revealing the size and extent of the relationship between the variables within those regional boundaries, but it does not provide a cross-section of the relationship between variables of institutions throughout the entire country. The study is limited to data obtained from institutions within the SACSCOC region, and therefore, results may only apply to institutions within the SACSCOC region.

In addition to the regional boundaries of the study's population, this study is limited by the classification of gender as male or female. Gender is used in the context of sex assigned at birth and did not account for a multitude of gender categories. Identification of gender involved the assumption of male or female based on the trustees' name, photograph, and gender category identified on some college websites.

Finally, this study is limited to the snapshot of data gathered from college/university websites from July 2021 through September 2021. College presidents and trustees change, so there may be a variation in data collected during this time frame. Also, some schools did not publish data regarding one or more of the variables such as the Board of Trustee Chairperson. Unavailable data was noted under relevant figures and tables.

Recommendations

Outcomes from this study result in two recommendations that may increase the number of women college presidents in the SACSCOC region. First, school governing boards need to increase their numbers of female trustees. Overall, women represent 29.3% of the Trustees. Female trustees range from 19% in Louisiana to 36% in Virginia. School governing boards have a long way to go to reach gender parity among trustees, and they need to focus on the importance of hiring more women college presidents. As stated in the purpose of this study, boards should care deeply about hiring more women college presidents, because higher education needs the talent of women to solve difficult problems (Jefferson, 2019). Boards impart a strong message to the college community, mainly students, by not hiring more women as college presidents (Jefferson, 2019). When students of all genders see mostly one gender representing the college presidency, it imparts an inaccurate image of what leadership signifies (Jefferson, 2019). Trustees serve not only as hiring boards but also as educators by teaching students who school presidents are and can be (Jefferson, 2019).

Second, school governing boards need to increase their numbers of female chairpersons. Overall, women represent 19% of the chairpersons. Female chairpersons range from 7% in Mississippi to 29% in Virginia. School governing boards have a poor representation of women as chairpersons and need to implement action plans to appoint more women to the chairperson role. Whether the chairperson is placed by election or appointment, all entities involved with the selection of chairpersons must elevate the importance of women serving in the board executive role. To move the needle toward gender parity among school presidents in the SACSCOC region, higher education

professionals, governing boards, and policy-making bodies need to expedite placing women as trustees and chairpersons on school governing boards.

Future Research

Future research regarding the underrepresentation of women college presidents will further the understanding of actions necessary to obtain gender parity among college presidents. As discussed in the study limitations, conducting an analysis of the entire population within the SACSCOC region provides data revealing the size and extent of the relationship between the variables within those regional boundaries, but it does not provide a cross-section of the relationship between variables of institutions throughout the entire country. Future research could involve a cross-sectional study examining significant differences and associations of the genders of school presidents, trustees, and chairpersons throughout the country's seven regional accrediting organizations. Utilizing sample populations and a cross-sectional approach would provide a more holistic view of the underrepresentation of women school presidents throughout the country. It would also highlight if there is more gender disparity in certain regions, which will allow schools within regions to pivot in efforts to obtain gender parity among higher education leaders.

In addition to a cross-sectional study, future research could involve a longitudinal study of significant differences and associations among the gender of college presidents, trustees, and chairpersons. This study utilized a large snapshot of data at one point in time. A longitudinal study would provide snapshots at fixed intervals to compare if increases or decreases in women trustees and chairpersons are related to the number of women college presidents. A longitudinal study could focus on a particular region if trying to implement gender parity among college presidents within that region, or it could

expand to the entire country. A longitudinal comparative analysis would provide more information allowing for targeted strategies to address gender disparity among college presidents.

Another approach to examining why there are not more women school presidents could involve researching political party influences on college presidencies. Since the SACSCOC region contains 11 states, the researcher added the gender and political party of the governor of each state. This study's focus was not based on political influences, but the data provided a comparison of Male and Female Presidents with Governor's Gender and Political Party (see Figure 23). Alabama is the only state with a Female Governor, and 25.5% of its school presidents are women. The remaining states have male governors, and the percents of female school presidents range from 12.8% to 35%. Having a female governor in Alabama does provide an interesting opportunity to analyze data in that the percent of female presidents exceeds the 23.9% SACSCOC mid-range of female school presidents. More extensive research needs to take place to determine if there is a significant relationship between the gender of the governor and the genders of school presidents. Future studies could involve an in-depth analysis of the gender of Governors, Senators, and Congressional Representatives as they relate to the gender of school presidents.

Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, and Virginia have Democratic Governors, while the remaining 7 states have Republican governors. A comparison of the percent of Male Trustees (MT) and Female Trustees (FT) could indicate if one of the political parties has more Female Trustees or Female Presidents.

States with Democratic Governors include Kentucky (MT = 66%, FT = 34%, *N* = 934), Louisiana (MT = 81%, FT = 19%, *N* = 725), North Carolina (MT = 66%, FT = 34%, *N* = 1955), and Virginia (MT = 64%, FT = 36%, *N* = 1282). Female Trustees in states with Democratic Governors range from 19% to 36%. States with Republican Governors include Alabama (MT = 71%, FT = 29%, *N* = 774), Florida (MT = 75%, FT = 25%, *N* = 1141), Georgia (MT = 71%, FT = 29%, *N* = 1556), Mississippi (MT = 79%, FT = 21%, *N* = 583), South Carolina (MT = 77%, FT = 23%, *N* = 946), Tennessee (MT = 70%, FT = 30%, *N* = 1349), and Texas (MT = 70%, FT = 30%, *N* = 2317). Female Trustees in states with Republican Governors range from 21% to 30%. Even though the range of Female Trustees is higher in states with Democratic Governors, Louisiana (D-Gov) has the lowest percent of Female Trustees. Consequently, Virginia (D-Gov) has the highest percent of Female Trustees.

In examining data related to the gender of school presidents and the political party of the Governor, Louisiana (D-Gov) has the highest percent (87.2%) of Male Presidents. South Carolina (R-Gov) follows with 84.3% Male Presidents, and Florida (R-Gov) is a close third with 84.2% Male Presidents. Georgia (R-Gov) has the highest percent (35.9%) of Female Presidents followed by Virginia (D-Gov) with 31.9% Female Presidents and Texas (R-Gov) with 29.1% Female Presidents.

The literature states that politics play a role in women's nomination and election to higher education boards. Martin (2010) examined 4-year public institutions of higher education and how the gender and political characteristics of those appointing and confirming trustees to the boards affect their decision to appoint a female versus a male trustee. Results showed that having a Democratic or female governor increases the

probability of a female trustee being appointed by 6 to 7 percentage points (Martin, 2010). The results also showed that when there are more female legislators, they are more likely to appoint and confirm female trustees (Martin, 2010).

Preliminary data is not comprehensive enough to conclude that there is a relationship between the political party of the Governor and the number of Female Trustees or Female Presidents. Future studies could focus on the political parties of Governors, Senators, or Congressional Representatives to determine if political party is a factor regarding gender parity of school presidents.

The researcher of this study proposes one more future study involving a comparison of the gender of Provosts. The CAO is often the number two position at a university and a common pathway to move into a presidency (Eckel et al., 2009, Appiah-Padi, 2014). This study collected preliminary data on the gender of provosts within the SACSCOC region (see Figure 25). Data show much less of a gender disparity among provosts. Male provosts range from 46.2% to 59%, and female provosts range from 41% to 53.8% (N = 773). It is interesting to note that Louisiana is the state with the lowest percent of Female Presidents, Female Trustees, and Female Chairpersons, yet it is the state with the highest percent of Female Provosts. Could this be a turning point for the state? Future studies could identify if provosts provide a strong pipeline to the presidency, or if other factors influence the upward mobility.

Conclusion

This quantitative study was inspired by the underrepresentation of women as college and university presidents, ACE's initiative to achieve gender parity among U.S. school presidencies by 2030, and Belle Wheelan's challenge for SACSCOC member

institutions to also achieve gender parity among its region's presidents. Despite efforts to move the needle, the gender gap is not narrowing quickly enough. U.S. higher education institutions are going to miss the mark by at least nine years. Since governing boards of trustees hire school presidents, and most boards consist of more men than women, this study sought to answer if there was a statistical difference between the gender proportion of school trustee boards based on the gender of school presidents and an association between the gender of board chairpersons and the gender of school presidents. Statistical tests showed that there is a small to medium difference between the Board of Trustee proportion based on the Gender of School President and a small association between the Gender of the Board of Trustee Chairperson and the Gender of the School President. Even though the statistical tests yielded small to medium effects, the results are statistically significant. There is a connection between the gender of trustees and board chairpersons and the gender of school presidents.

ACE's *Moving the Needle* initiative adopted goals to (A) generate a national sense of urgency elevating the need for advancing women in higher education leadership positions, (B) encourage governing boards and other higher education institutional decision- & policy-making bodies to consider practices for recruiting and hiring women to chief executive offices, (3) achieve women's advancement to mid-level and senior-level positions in higher education administration by building capacities in women and in institutions, and (4) suggest practices and models that recognize success in advancing women in higher education (Davis & Gray, 2014).

This study supports ACE's initiatives by providing data that spotlight the lack of women college presidents in the SACSCOC region. It also displays the lack of women

serving as trustees and board chairpersons. It is not enough to encourage governing boards and other higher education institutional decision-and policy-making bodies to consider practices for recruiting and hiring women to chief executive offices. It is time for a collective call to action for school governing boards to establish gender parity among boards of trustees, and it is time for governing boards to hire more women presidents. This study highlights an ongoing problem of oppression and lack of opportunity for women. Acknowledging the problem and taking action are the keys to facilitating change. The field of higher education will benefit from having more women presidents, trustees, and board chairpersons. The researcher's hope is that this study will provide information leading to action to speed up the needle toward achieving gender parity among school presidencies in the southern U.S. and the entire nation.

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Appendix A: Universities with Low Female Participation on Board of Trustees

College President Gender	School	% Female Participation
Female	Texas Woman's University (TX)	10.0
	Salem College (NC)	12.5
	Spelman College (GA)	14.8
	Palm Beach College (FL)	20.0
	Wesleyan College (GA)	22.2
	Agnes Scott College (GA)	22.2
	Austin Community College (TX)	22.2
	Carolinas College of Health Sciences (NC)	22.2
	Galen College of Nursing (KY)	25.0
	El Paso County Community College (TX)	28.6
Male	Randolph College (VA)	32.3
	American College of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine (TX)	33.3
	Maysville Community and Technical College (KY)	33.3
	Stephen F. Austin State University (TX)	33.3
	Wake Technical Community College (NC)	33.3

Appendix B: Unavailable/Unpublished Board of Trustee information by Institution

Name of institution	State
1. Emmanuel College	GA
2. Shorter University	GA
3. High Point University	NC
4. Memphis College of Art – Closing	TN
5. Pentecostal Theological Seminary	TN
6. Amberton University	TX
7. Dallas Baptist University	TX
8. East Texas Baptist University	TX
9. Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary	TX
10. ECPI University	VA
11. Hampton University	VA
12. INVAE Business School	Costa Rica
13. Universidad de las Americas	Mexico

Appendix C: Unavailable/Unpublished Boards of Trustees Chairpersons by Institution

Name of institution	State
1. Emmanuel College	GA
2. Shorter University	GA
3. Union College	KY
4. University of the Cumberlands	KY
5. Blue Mountain College	MS
6. Millsaps College	MS
7. William Carey University	TN
8. Bellmont Abbey College	NC
9. Bethel University	TN
10. John A. Gupton College	TN
11. Memphis College of Art – Closing	TN
12. Pentecostal Theological Seminary	TN
13. Amberton University	TX
14. Concordia University	TX
15. Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary	TX
16. University of Mary Hardin Baylor	TX
17. ECPI University	VA
18. INCAE Business School	Costa Rica
19. Universidad de las Americas	Mexico
20. Universida de Monterrey	Mexico

Appendix D: Unavailable/Unpublished Provosts by Institution

Name of institution	State
1. Bevill State Community College	AL
2. INCAE Business School	Costa Rica
3. Hillsborough Community College	FL
4. St. Petersburg College	FL
5. Point University	GA
6. Northeast Mississippi Community College	MS
7. Beaufort County Community College	NC
8. Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute	NC
9. Catawba Valley Community College	NC
10. Salem College	NC
11. Benedict College	SC
12. Tri-County Technical College	SC
13. John A. Gupton College	TN
14. Memphis College of Art (Closing)	TN
15. Texas A&M University – Texarkana	TX
16. The Art Institute of Houston	TX
17. Christendom College	VA
18. ECPI University	VA
19. Southside Virginia Community College	VA

Appendix E: Regional Accrediting Organizations

Name of Regional Accrediting Organization	Acronym
1. Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges	ACCJC
2. Higher Learning Commission	HLC
3. Middle States Commission on Higher Education	MSCHE
4. New England Commission of Higher Education	NECHE
5. Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities	NWCCU
6. Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges	SACSCOC
7. WASC Senior College and University Commission	WSCUC

Source: (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2021, About CHEA. https://www.chea.org/about-chea)