

Great Leadership

STRATEGIES FOR LEADING HIGH-PERFORMING COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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Special Edition: Women in Leadership



In our preparation for this special issue focusing on Women in Leadership, *Great Leadership* had the opportunity to interview Dr. Ruth G. Shaw, who is an extraordinary example of the power of women in leadership. The richness of the conversation and depth of wisdom Dr. Shaw shared prompted the editorial staff to take the unusual step of devoting the majority of the content of this issue to information and perspectives she provided.

In the interview entitled *Uncommon Wisdom*, Dr. Shaw speaks to the differences and similarities in the cultures, leadership skills needed and disciplines of leadership in the academic and business sectors.

We were very fortunate to have access to Dr. Shaw's perspective on a white paper we reviewed that identifies *Qualities that Distinguish Women Leaders* (see page six). Dr. Shaw brings real-world cautions to the discussion and expands on the application of its findings.

Dr. Shaw's accomplishments, awards and recognitions are too numerous to enumerate here, but a brief review of her experiences demonstrate the validity of the opinion that she brings a unique perspective to any discussion of leadership and the impact one can have.

Dr. Shaw is a well recognized leader in the ranks of community college presidents. Her commitment to higher education is demonstrated by the marks she left as President of El Centro Community College in Dallas, TX and as President of Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, NC where she was honored with the establishment of the Ruth G. Shaw Academic Learning Center. Her contributions to education continue in her work as Chair of the UNC-Charlotte Board of Trustees.

Dr. Shaw moved from education to the business community as Executive Vice President of Duke Power in corporate communications in 1992. She was appointed Senior Vice President, corporate resources, in 1994, Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer in 1997, and served as President and Chief Executive Officer of Duke Power from 2003 until her retirement in 2006. Dr. Shaw remains active in the business community in her role as a member of the Board at MedCath, Dow Chemical, and DTE Energy.

Her commitment to the environment is demonstrated through her role as a member and past chair of the Foundation for the Carolinas board. She also serves on the Board of Visitors at the Nicholas School of the Environment at Duke University and as Governing Board Chair of the Carolina Thread Trail, an organization working to establish an interconnected trail system to preserve a natural resource that is open to all and free to all.

Dr. Shaw holds a Bachelor of Arts (magna cum laude) and a Master of Arts degree in English from East Carolina University, and a Ph.D. in higher education administration from the University of Texas at Austin, where she was a University Fellow.



The White House Project Report: Benchmarking Women's Leadership in Academia



The White House Project is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that aims to advance women's leadership in all communities and sectors. In November of 2009, it published a report that benchmarked women's leadership across 10 major sectors. They are academia, business, film & television entertainment, journalism, law, military, nonprofit, politics, religion, and sports.

Current Levels of Leadership

More women than ever are going to college and getting advanced degrees. In academia (even more than in some of the other major business and professional sectors examined in this report) postgraduate degrees are critical to advancement. But women still lag significantly behind men in status, salary and leadership positions.

Faculty

Women account for 42 percent of the full-time faculty at degree-granting institutions today, up from 32 percent in 1991. And, as in the past, the number of women steadily declines as they move up the ranks. Today, women constitute 26 percent of full professors (15 percent in 1991), 40 percent of associate professors (28 percent in 1991), 47 percent of assistant professors (40 percent in 1991), 54 percent of instructors (47 percent in 1991), and 53 percent of lecturers (43 percent in 1991).

Women make up 30 percent of the faculty at research universities, 41 percent of the faculty at master's degree-granting institutions, 42 percent of the faculty at private liberal arts institutions and 49 percent of the faculty at public two-year institutions.

Presidents

Women make up 23 percent of the presidents at colleges and universities, up from only 9.5 percent two decades ago.

Women account for 29 percent of presidents at two-year colleges, compared to 14 percent at universities that grant doctoral degrees.

Forty percent of chief academic officers are women and among sitting presidents, four out of 10 came from the chief academic officer position.

Boards of Trustees

Among board members at 352 public colleges and universities 29 percent of voting board members are female. This percentage is quite similar across two-year institutions (32 percent), four-year institutions (27 percent) and governing/coordinating systems (26 percent).

Salaries

Women's salaries not only lag behind those of their male counterparts in academia, they have actually lost ground since the seventies. In 1972–73, women earned 83 percent of the salary of their male counterparts, compared to 82 percent in 2007–08.

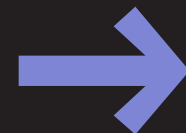
The gap is closing at two-year institutions, where women are most heavily represented, and which pay the least: women now earn 5 percent less than men, compared to 8 percent less in 1972–73. By contrast, at four-year public and private institutions, women make about 20 percent less than their male counterparts — and this gap has not changed over the last 35 years. Salary differentials reach all the way to the president's office.

Recommendations for Closing the Leadership Gap

There needs to be a commitment to specific targets for gender representation at all levels of the institution through the board and accountability for it.

- The governing board and the senior staff should annually review and assess the institution's commitment to diversity.
- Allow for some flexibility in the timing for achieving tenure.
- Review promotion and tenure policies to ensure that they are fair and equitable.
- Diversify search committees for presidential, senior leadership and faculty positions.
- Insist that pools of candidates for faculty and senior leadership positions be diverse.
- Look beyond sitting presidents and CAOs to increase the pool of potential presidential selections.

Source: The complete report can be found at www.thewhitehouseproject.org/join/benchmarks. ■



A Different Kind of Influence

By Mark Meadows, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Southwestern College, CA

Probably one of the most understated and least understood types of power is that of referent influence. Essentially it is that type of power that depends on the leader's personality rather than a title. But also essential to this type of leadership is the understanding of the "self." If referent influence is fundamentally the relationship between leaders and followers, it would best serve this approach in a self-referral process whereby understanding your subjectivity is a microcosm of the larger consciousness of those you lead. Said differently, and as posited from various Buddhist literatures, understand yourself, understand the world. Make a connection to yourself; you make a connection to others. This type of influence refers to the personality traits of empathy and affiliation.

It is understanding "self" that is the challenge in this field of interaction. Most leaders who never seek to understand themselves are destined for failure. Starting with understanding "who you are" is the first step toward referent power. The self-referral process is a lifelong effort and can result in a change in your interiority and an accompanied exterior field of relationships. "As within, so without" goes a Hindu proverb.

Most leaders who never seek to understand themselves are destined for failure.

The furthering of this "connection" you make with others is advanced if in your introspection and attempts at understanding, you are also accepting and non-judgmental towards that which you discover. Not accepting who you are leads to defensiveness and insecurity. Moreover, it is challenging to influence people with these behavioral traits. Most followers want their leaders to be authentically secure and confident. Most followers want to "refer" to that which is integral – the fundamental consistency between personal beliefs and leadership behaviors.

You might say that efforts towards personal understanding can be an effort to decide what or who you want to be. If at the core of who you are lies deeper potentials of that which is good,

truthful and beautiful (and many sacred traditions espouse this), these have the opportunity to inform your leadership. These potentials inform your personality. One now has a leadership personality that prompts followers' empathy, respect, and admiration – they want to refer to the leader.

It all comes down to a few simple points. Each of us holographically contains the collective – we share one consciousness. As an "influencer," your change in leadership personality can thus change those you lead. What you do as a leader and what you think, affects every other interaction in your work environment. Your efforts at self understanding can be an unfolding from egocentric to world-centric. This evolution can move to greater empathy, inclusiveness, synthesis and empowerment – that which many want to refer.

Self-understanding is a difficult task; however, it is my position that this task is the bridge to referent power – discovering one's own authentic core that others will follow. ■



Uncommon Wisdom: An Academic Icon Discusses Leadership Lessons from the Academic and Corporate Executive Suite



Dr. Ruth G. Shaw

By Vera Leonard, *Editor*

VL: Dr. Shaw, you have achieved the highest level of leadership in both academic and corporate America. Do you consider that a unique accomplishment?

RS: I think it is a distinctive experience but not a unique one. In fact one of my colleagues on the DTE board has a very similar background; so it does happen but it is unusual.

VL: What was the biggest challenge you faced with the transition?

RS: Well I think the biggest one is that I knew both the players and the content in the academic world. I had educated myself to prepare for the world of higher education administration and my experience was in that domain. I had a network of resources and colleagues that I could call on when I encountered situations. I had a tremendous comfort level in the academic world. When I made the move to the world of business I had essentially no network of experience to call on and it was very much like flying without a net, as the saying goes, for the first year.

VL: So given that experience, would you recommend that colleagues should work to build a broader network outside the academic world?

RS: Well I'm a strong believer in networks, period. In fact when we talk about how I made this transition it was the result of being, as most educational leaders are, highly involved in the community and in civic activities. Therefore I had many business relationships but they were different from those in the academic world. In the academic world I knew who to call; who thought similarly about issues as I did, or who would have a different perspective. I had a trust level on professional matters that I don't think you build up in a "let's build a network" kind of intentionality. I encourage people to build networks but not to think that you can go into a totally different environment with a ready-built professional network. You have to do it from inside the industry or the discipline.

VL: Would individuals who aspire to expanded opportunities for leadership be well served to reach into the community and get involved so that those relationships are in place now?

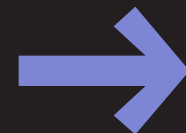
RS: Absolutely. I find that community colleges, in particular, have strong ties with the business world, through advisory committees, and through various relationships in their academic and technical programs. There are many opportunities for educational leaders to also become engaged that way as well as through civic work.

VL: I perceive some pretty significant differences in the cultures of the academic world and the business world. If my perception is accurate, what are the major differences you see in the two cultures?

RS: Well I'm always leery of over generalizing but I am going to because I do think that there are some general distinctions that are fair to make. One difference is the degree of freedom and accountability that you have in the two settings. By this I mean that in the academic world you really have narrower degrees of freedom than you have in the corporate world. You are bound within a network of particular regulations, particular processes, often as a part of either a state system or a local county jurisdiction that provides funding and you have a lot of specific constraints. Now there are certainly constraints in the corporate world, many to do with ethics reporting and what have you. But in terms of "what strategy do I want to use, what approach do I want to take, or who do I have to consult before I make this decision," it is a very different situation. And while I still think the best decisions are made with involvement, corporate entities are not quite as process-focused. They do not have as many levels of review to go through so things happen faster. And they are expected to happen faster with a clear line of accountability for the results.

I have had many friends who went from the business world to academia and I think in some ways it is harder to go in that direction. Assuming you like the faster pace and you like the accountability it's quite hard to understand the need for multiple levels of review over matters that seem to them to be of little consequence.

VL: Do those disciplines—clear lines of accountability, quarterly objectives and performance reviews tied to goals, common fare in the business world—have a place in the academic world?



RS: I think it does in some areas. I think it can be very, very useful. Oddly enough, and certainly in my own experience, I found that in the corporate world there is more of a real interest in people, and in staff as an asset. In the corporate world investing in people delivers dividends for your business. That to me was different because, while certainly there was staff development going on in the academic world, the business world is much more focused towards goals, towards specific skill building, towards filling in gaps or readying a person for another position. In academia the faculty was discipline-focus rather than institutional-focus. The focus is not on achieving institutional goals; certainly not to the extent it is in the business world.

VL: Would it be useful for academia to adopt some of those disciplines?

RS: I think that the fundamental discipline of knowing where you want to go and making sure that the investment of your resources help to get you there is useful anywhere. Still wholesale adoption of corporate approaches in the academic world wouldn't work. When the outcome is human knowledge, building human skills and that sort of thing, you are dealing with a different creature. So I don't think that you can just willy-nilly adopt it but I think that you can adapt it.

VL: I'm interested in your opinion on which leadership skills carry the most weight or the most value in the academic world and how they differ, if at all, in the corporate world?

RS: I suspect that the fundamental skills that would be on any leadership list for both the academic and the corporate world would be rather similar. But I think the academic world probably values much more highly the collaborative ability, the ability to work with faculty, with various constituent groups to achieve a goal. While I think the corporate world values those skills it would rank very different on the priority list. The corporate world would put a much stronger emphasis than the academic on managing for results. In the business world there is a strong results orientation and a strong emphasis on the bottom line. However, not at the expense of the triple bottom line; that is, responsibility to our environment, to our society, and to our individual customer. I think that managing for results and ensuring that the enterprise is successful and sustainable is a little bit different, well, not a little bit different, it is a lot different. The bottom line focus in the corporate world is very different from academia.

VL: Would there be a benefit to the corporate world if it had more involvement from, or perspective of, individuals from academia?

RS: I'm just somebody who believes it depends on the individual. There are some people in academia who would be a tremendous asset with the insight they would bring and there are others who would lead you to think, "What a disaster." Still,

I think any entity benefits from some varying perspectives around the table, period; whether its academia bringing people in from business or business benefiting from academic participation at some level. The Dow Chemical board on which I serve also has a chemistry professor and his involvement is wonderful. The DTE board, as I mentioned, has two of us who were former academics so whether it's at the board level, in the executive leadership or individual contributor level I think there is a lot to be gained by "putting a little pepper in the mix."

VL: Dr. Shaw this had been a very enlightening conversation. I am very grateful to you for taking the time to share these observations and the wisdom you have gained. As we close, is there a specific message you would like to send to leaders in community colleges?

RS: I think the message I would send to leaders in community colleges, and this is to them as individuals, not the community college itself. It's a message I share a lot. The short version of it is; "It's not about you, it's all about you."

VL: That's intriguing. Please expand on it.

RS: What that means is, When you move into a leadership position, whether it's Chancellor, President, Vice President, whatever it is, a lot of authority, a lot of invitations, a lot of recognition goes with the position. It comes to you for one reason, because you are in the position. So never get confused that it is about you. It's not. When you walk out and close the door the lights are not going to flicker. The next person behind you will get the same speaking invitations, the same awards, the same deference that you got because it goes with the position. The other side is that it is all about you. It is your life that you are out there living. It is your competencies you're building. Your networks and friendships you are building. Those are the things you will take with you when you go. Learn to know the difference, stay humble about the things that come your way because of your position and never think that it is all about you.

VL: Dr. Shaw that is so important and succinctly put.

RS: Well it is probably my most singular insight, Vera, to tell you the truth, figuring that out probably mattered more to me than anything else; staying pretty much the same person. Like it or not, colleagues throughout my career would know me as well today as the last time they saw me, in every way.

VL: You are warning people not to confuse success in career with success in life.

RS: Exactly, it is not at all the same. ■

Do Women Have the Leading Edge? Qualities that Distinguish Women Leaders

By Vera Leonard, Editor

In a white paper published by the Caliper organization, a global consulting firm, 4 key leadership qualities were identified that distinguish women leaders. The study sought to determine whether women executives possess stronger leadership qualities than men. *Great Leadership* took the opportunity to discuss the findings with Dr. Ruth Shaw and get her “real-world” perspective on the findings.

1: Women leaders are more persuasive than their male counterparts.

Study: Women leaders possess stronger people skills than men, along with the capacity to assess a situation accurately and from every angle. They empathize, hone in on various concerns or objections of others and effectively address them, resulting in greater persuasiveness. Female leaders see the points of view of others, making those they are leading feel understood and valued.

Shaw: My experience is that women probably are more persuasive and I think that gives them an edge in certain leadership settings; but not all. For example, in my experience working in a nuclear power company, I think women are more credible spokespersons particularly on the issues that touch people emotionally: my safety, my security, and my children. A potential downfall in the workplace is that women may spend time trying to persuade when people may be just looking for direction. In those cases persuasiveness may or may not be advantageous.

2: They are better able to shake off disappointments, rejections and setbacks, learn from adversity and move forward with an “I’ll show you” attitude.

Study: Women leaders feel the pain of rejection and may initially experience negative feelings and self-criticism, but they shake them off and go forward with more determination. The study analysis states that, “Essentially, when a woman has the talent and the ambition to move ahead, yet she receives signals – subtle or overt – that others think she will not make the grade, this can fuel her ambition further.”

Shaw: Learning from adversity; that may well be true but one of the reasons it is true is that, in my experience, often men do not see adversity where women see it. There is a great old saying that I have found often to be true. If a man cuts himself shaving, he blames the razor. If a woman cuts herself shaving, she blames herself. So I honestly think that one reason why women may be superior at this is that they see so much more of it. Men may see it as something difficult and think, “I’ll just push through it.” Women are thinking “I’ll show you” but sometimes nobody’s looking.

3: Women leaders utilize an inclusive, team-building style of decision making and problem solving.

Study: Women scored significantly higher in areas of empathy, flexibility, sociability, and urgency, which create a unique listening style. Women reflect upon what they hear from others, and then devise a plan that incorporates the best ideas of everyone. They also share information more freely. These factors make for a more inclusive approach to leadership.

Shaw: I think women generally are superior in inclusion and team building and the only thing I’d add to that is “sometimes to a fault.” Unless they are very adept at knowing when those skills have high value, it doesn’t necessarily give women a particular edge. There are times when inclusiveness is needed and there are times when it is important to take charge; knowing the difference is really the key issue. One must know when to use this skill and when to use that one. So just being better in certain areas won’t quite get it.

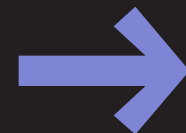
There are times when inclusiveness is needed and there are times when it is important to take charge; knowing the difference is really the key issue.

4: They are more apt to ignore rules and take risks.

Study: Women leaders are more likely to push back against an overabundance of rules and regulations, take more risks, and devise innovative solutions. They have a need to get things accomplished without much hesitation.

Shaw: In discussing the findings of this study that’s the only one where I thought...hmm what’s that about? It isn’t that I don’t see women pushing back and taking risks but I see men doing it as well. I have absolutely no empiric validity, but I certainly do not think women are more likely to take risks. My thought is that some of this may have to do with age. There is a huge generational difference in the women in the workplace now. There are plenty of women in the workplace who are my age; 62. So the women who are 50 plus would be, I believe, slightly more risk averse than most of their male counterparts. It is entirely possible that those on the other side of that age line are more likely to take risks. We forget that some of the women in the workforce now were women of the breakthrough. They were blazing new trails. In all fairness women who were part of that generation took a huge risk just by showing up. Maybe I’m

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Guiding Forces in the Success of Women Community College CEO's Research Report



A recent survey addressed seven areas that are thought to be guiding forces in the success of female community college presidents. Of the 59 questionnaires sent out to female African-American CEO's throughout the country, 33 were returned for a 56% return rate. Those areas queried were:

1. Motivation
2. Challenges
3. Factors contributing to success
4. Power of position
5. Description of current position
6. Prior experience
7. Demographic information

Motivation includes the opportunity to affect change from the highest level, to promote values and to make significant contributions to higher education.

The leading challenge was balancing the cost of preparing the underprepared for college work with the commitment to open access. Other challenges include too many high priorities that

cannot be adequately addressed, competing priorities, work/life balance, and feeling alone at the top.

Leadership skill was cited as the number one success factor with management style cited as the least critical. Religious beliefs and communication style were the number two and three answers respectively.

The CEO's described their leadership styles as "relations oriented, democratic, consensus building and wanting to make it right." Interestingly, those with multiple CEO experiences corresponded positively with a slight movement from "democratic" to "autocratic" and from "relations oriented" to "task oriented."

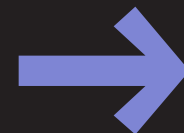
Leadership skill was cited as the number one success factor with management style cited as the least critical.

The power of their position was noted by 80% as offering them the ability to effect institutional change from the highest level and by 60% as mentoring or sponsoring aspiring higher education professionals.

In summary, Black female community college CEOs serve as tremendous role models as they transform lives and make a significant contribution to the community college system.

Source: Benjamin, H., Dukes, C., Gnage, M., Scott-Skillman, T. (2010). Black women community college CEOs In the 21st century: Summary of findings. ■





Do Women Have the Leading Edge? Qualities that Distinguish Women Leaders

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inferring too much but I don't think they were rule breakers in terms of huge innovators around business or academic processes; certainly not more than male counterparts.

Study: The results of the study indicate that women may be creating a new paradigm of leadership. It concludes, "These qualities combine to create a leadership style that is inclusive, open, consensus building, collaborative and collegial." It's a profile that is "much more conducive to today's diverse workplace, where information is shared freely, collaboration is vital and teamwork distinguishes the best companies."

Shaw: There is no doubt that women bring valuable and unique currency to the leadership role. The inherent talents women bring to the role will be increasingly recognized and valued as their opportunities to lead increase. Still when it comes to leadership there is a subtle aspect involved in getting the balance right. With that in mind I would add an additional leadership skill: self-awareness. One of the things I learned to look for later in my career is that if a person doesn't have an authentic, high degree of self awareness I really worry about them as leaders. I have found that if they're not able to look at themselves self-critically or to ask other people for feedback, their chances of getting stuck, or derailed, are much, much higher. And that holds true for men as well as women.

Source: www.caliperonline.com ■

Mission Statement

WCCCD's mission is to empower individuals, businesses and communities to achieve their goals through excellent and accessible services, culturally diverse experiences, and globally competitive higher education and career advancement programs.

Great Leadership Invites Guest Authors

Do you have an article you've written, the description of a successful work process, or the details of a leadership program that you want read by a broad audience of colleagues? The Great Leadership newsletter seeks to publish well-written, informative, forward-thinking articles and ideas. The topics we publish deal with leadership and leadership development. We also consider book reviews, reviews of videos and any other relevant leadership content. **Articles submitted should be 200-500 words in length.**

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