



Women and Leadership in Higher Education

– How Thick is the Glass Ceiling?

Monterrey, Mexico
General Rapporteur Report

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Structure of the Report

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Introductory Comments

- A synthesis of main points; not a summary of who said what
- Reporting on plenaries not on parallel discussion groups
- Overarching sense that we heard a chorus singing in harmony, despite vast regional differences



Recalling the Conference Objectives

- To acknowledge and recognize the role of women in higher education in positions of leadership
- To examine the extent to which full and equitable participation of women in higher education is a reality today in various regions
- To facilitate dialogue and exchange of ideas among leaders in higher education to improve the situation
- To share information and assess policies and incentives



Recalling the Conference Objectives

- To call upon national, regional and international university organizations including higher education institutions to remove obstacles that stand in women's way in teaching, research and management
- To call upon governments to legislate for equal opportunity and demand accountability from universities on the implementation of such policies

State of the Art – Where are we in 2003?

Many indications that all is not well, some painful images:

- Ceiling is thick enough to hurt our heads when we bump against it
- Our feet are stuck on sticky floors preventing us from reaching the ceiling
- Feels like thousand tiny paper cuts
- **But....**



State of the Art – Where are we in 2003?

- Women in higher education are **making progress, even if it is very slow**
- As students, **women often outnumber men** or come close to parity overall, but important differences remain with regard to disciplines and level of study
- Statistics from most regions show similar trends but the **pace and extent of progress differ** greatly
- **The higher up in the institutional pyramid the fewer the women** (as students, as faculty and as leaders)

State of the Art – Where are we in 2003?

- But there are **positive signs** including:
 - In several countries the number of women leaders and the spread of institutions they lead is growing
 - Policy framework to promote gender equity and equal opportunities is in place in most countries
 - Gender equity action plans at governmental and institutional levels exist
 - Growing awareness that policies without supports and without a cultural change (change in mindset) will not affect real transformation



Obstacles and barriers still in place

- **Cultural obstacles** - Attitudes, mindset, stereotypes – in society, in business in higher education, among men and women
- **Systemic obstacles** – lack of critical mass, marginalization, biases in evaluation criteria and promotion practices, basic male centeredness of universities and related scientific bodies (ex. academies of science), low numbers in doctoral level graduates and resulting small pool of women reaching levels required to access leadership posts
- **Personal obstacles** – balancing family and professional life, life cycle issues



Successful policies and initiatives

In a general sense, what is needed is a concerted effort at:

- Government level – policy, legislation and budgets
- Institutional level - programs, initiatives, monitoring and awareness raising
- National and International Organizational level - research, analysis, advocacy and networking



Successful policies and initiatives

- **Beware! Success stories are unevenly distributed around the globe**
- Legislation for equal opportunity and equity
 - Work if accompanied by budgets, incentives and sanctions
- Monitoring and institutional accountability measures
 - The need to report publicly creates pressure to comply
- Visibility of gender issues and women as role models
 - Encouraging for other women



Successful policies and initiatives

- **Beware! Success stories are unevenly distributed around the globe**
- Leadership development
 - Mentoring
 - Skills training
 - Confidence building
- Support infrastructure
 - Mentoring
 - Networks
 - Critical mass required for change



Challenges and Possible Actions

Must spread success stories more evenly and must work at all levels simultaneously

- Recognition that it is not a woman's issue but a higher education issue
- Build alliances with media, with business with women in politics
- Build alliances with men
- Protect gains made
 - Concern about regression on policies such as affirmative action



Challenges and Possible Actions

- Tell the story with facts and figures
 - Need more comprehensive and comparative statistics on gender, including in leadership in higher education
- Start building confidence and making the case early and continue throughout schooling
- Disseminate and share good practice
- Build networks and maintain the discussion
- In nutshell - generalize the formula of access + support + opportunity
- Leadership carries a responsibility

Concluding remarks

- A unique event
 - participants from Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe, Latin America, North America and the Middle East
- A new topic on agenda of two global higher education organizations
- A confirmation that while making progress, action not patience will move the issue forward



Concluding Remarks

- Papers provided us with **expertise**, much needed **data, analysis, information and suggestions**
- Discussions demonstrated more expertise, strong **commitment, enthusiasm and energy**
- The networking on the sidelines added real **pleasure and discovery**
- Together these show that women can be more than leaders, they can be **leading change agents**.



Concluding Remarks

- Started out with aches and pains
- End with more pleasurable matters
- Many thanks
 - to presenters, chairs and rapporteurs of parallel sessions and all participants
 - to CEU and UANL and all of their staff
 - to IDP and Santander Bank
 - to IAU's partner in this event - IAUP



Concluding Remarks

IAU and IAUP committed to helping to keep momentum created in Monterrey

Will create mechanism for sharing of information and networking:

**Virtual International College of Women
Higher Education Leaders (VICWHEL)**