

Women Community College Presidents: The Road to the Presidency

by

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(ABSTRACT)

In 2005, according to the American Association of Community College (AACC) and the National Institute of Leadership Development, women signify 259 community college presidents nationally. Hockaday and Puyear (2000), Weisman and Vaughan (2002) reported in 2002 that more women held presidencies at community colleges when compared to other types of higher education institutions. Statistically, the number of women holding the position of president more than doubled, yet, women continue to remain disproportionately under-represented in administrative and policy-making positions, according to Corrigan (2002). The purpose of this study was to identify the leadership styles, career path, effectiveness, and length of time from completion of terminal degree to presidency that identified the road to become a female community college president.

The Gregorc Style Delineator™ (Gregorc, 1982) was used to determine the styles of women community college presidents relating to leadership. The constructs, known as styles were displayed as Concrete Random, Concrete Sequential, Abstract Sequential, and Abstract Random. Descriptive statistics were used to address the preferred leadership styles. Contingency tables described the value obtained from the Gregorc Style Delineator™ (Gregorc, 1982), path of promotion, and length of time. The Participant Information Sheet collected information on institutional demographics, significant events that influenced the participant to become a community college president, and their effectiveness.

Five research questions guided this study and were interpreted using various research methods. Results from this study reflect that Concrete Random is the preferred leadership style of the participants. Furthermore, this research suggests that women community college presidents are multitaskers, visionaries, and motivators who inspire

those working with them to achieve all goals set for the institution. These attributes and skills are displayed in Concrete Random and Concrete Sequential styles. Moreover, it was identified that a successful president should develop the skills and competencies necessary to meet the growing needs of the community, culture, educational, and political climate.

The results of the study may serve as a guide to a community college engaged in a search for a president. In addition, these findings may provide direction for institutions that strive to offer leadership development opportunities for professors and administrators.

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DEDICATION

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