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WFLDI: Women Faculty Leadership Development Institute

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WFLDI: WOMEN FACULTY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Flora Stone Mather Center for Women
Research Brief Series
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Introduction

The Women Faculty Leadership Development Institute (WFLDI) developed by the Flora Stone Mather Center for Women (Mather Center) at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) is an umbrella term for faculty development initiatives at the Mather Center. WFLDI has consisted of three main programs over the first 20 years of the Mather Center including programs for early career women faculty (*To Tenure and Beyond*) and mid-career women faculty (*What's Next?*) and a group mentoring focused programs for all women-faculty in collaboration with the Faculty Senate's Women's Committee (*WIN or Women in Network*). Dr. Diana Billimoria, Susan Freimark, and Dr. Lynn Singer played critical roles in the development and success of both *To Tenure and Beyond* and *What's Next?* Today, both programs, due to their success with women faculty, are offered to all faculty members at the University through The Office of Faculty Development. This information shared in this brief will focus on the *What's Next?* program for mid-career women-identifying faculty. To better understand the implications from lessons learned at the program for other colleges and university ability to transfer the knowledge to their context we share a short description of CWRU, the Mather Center, and the *What's Next?* program.

About Case Western Reserve University

Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) is a private research-focused institution in Cleveland, Ohio founded in 1826. It is highly selective and ranked 42nd in national universities by U.S. News and World Report, with engineering and biological and biomedical sciences being the most popular undergraduate majors (U.S. News, 2021). In Fall 2021, CWRU enrolled 5,697 undergraduate students and 6,035 graduate and professional students, 47% of whom identified as women (Case Western Reserve University, 2021). This is less than 57% of women enrolled in postsecondary institutions nationally (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). In 2021, women-identified faculty represented 39% of the total faculty at CWRU, with higher representation in instructor (61.31 % women) and senior instructor (54.55% women) when compared to associate (38.99% women) and full professor (22.05% women) (Hauser & Clark-Taylor, 2021). The executive leadership at CWRU encompasses 41% women-identifying folks with only 5% identifying as Women of Color (Hauser & Clark-Taylor, 2021). These numbers reflect the landscape of the faculty by gender, as mentioned earlier in this report. Nationally, 44% of tenure-track faculty and 36% of full professors are women, and only 30-33% of university presidents are women, with less than 5% are Women of Color. At CWRU, women comprise only 19% of department chairs with 4% identifying as Women of Color; however, zero Black women hold the position of department chair (Hauser & Clark-Taylor, 2021).

About the Flora Stone Mather Center for Women

The Flora Stone Mather Center for Women (Mather Center) at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) is a community space and a social innovator empowering women and advancing gender equity through research-informed action. One of the key goals of the center is to support women-identifying faculty and enhance their leadership development and guide them along their career paths. The Women Faculty Leadership Development Institute (WFLDI) is a signature program within the Center, developed to advance women-faculty into leadership positions withing their department, college, and field. In the next section, we introduce some of the data that led us to identify the necessity of such a program.

Cover Photo: (from left to right) Dr. Amy Hise, Dr. Usha Stiefel, Rena Seltzer, and Dr. Jennifer Cupar at Rena Seltzer's workshop series in Spring 2024, part of Women In Network (WIN)

Background: Women in Faculty Positions in Post-Secondary Education

Over 1.5 million faculty positions exist within the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022), and around half of those are full time positions (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021b).[1] Since 1991, the number of women faculty members has increased from 35.4% to 50.0% in 2018 (Colby & Fowler, 2020), and about 49% of all full-time faculty are women (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021b). However, women make up 53.9% of non-tenure-track positions and only 42.5% of tenured/tenure-track positions, and while they are 50% of assistant professors, they are only 45% of associate professors and 32.5% of full professors (Colby & Fowler, 2020).

The same patterns but to a far worse degree are present for women of color. While 35% of all full-time faculty in fall 2020 were white women, only 5% were Asian women, 4% were Black women, and 3% were Latina women (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). White women made up 28% of full professors, but Asian women made up only 4%, Black women 2%, and Latina women another 2% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). Looking at all tenure-track positions, white women account for 30%, Asian women 4%, and underrepresented minorities (Black, Latina, Native American, and associated identities) only 6% combined. However, white women are 42% of non-tenure track faculty, Asian women 3%, and underrepresented minorities are 8%.

Women earn more degrees than men at all levels, and have since the 2008-09 school year (when doctoral degrees finally broke the 51% for the first time), accounting for 61.4% of associate's degrees, 57.7% of bachelor's degrees, 61.4% of master's degrees, and 55.2% of doctoral degrees in the 2019-20 school year (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021a). Given that women are rapidly outpacing men in educational attainment, the gender discrepancy for faculty positions is concerning. The lack of women's representation in faculty roles continues to reinforce the paternalist, positivist, and bias perspective of postsecondary education research, teaching, and leadership (Heybach & Pickup, 2017; Ropers-Huilman & Winters, 2011).

Some, perhaps even most, of women's lack of representation among tenure-track faculty and among full professors can be explained by systemic barriers encountered by women in academia. The current structure for progression in academic careers relies on a model developed when most academics were white men, often from high socioeconomic status backgrounds, who could prioritize careers over family and household responsibilities (Thelin, 2004). For women who did enter the profession, they faced biases and discrimination regarding publishing and by extension the tenure process, their choices and desires around childbearing and childrearing, and gender-based harassment or violence from students, staff, and faculty peers. When they are able to continue in the profession, women face salary discrepancies, making around 91% of men's salaries at the assistant professor level and decreasing to 85% of men's salaries at full professor (Colby & Fowler, 2020); these discrepancies are of course further impacted by the intersection of race/ethnicity and gender. Given this ongoing climate for women faculty, the Flora Stone Mather Center for Women at Case Western Reserve University launched a Women's Faculty Leadership Development Institute to help women faculty excel in their careers.

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1 Although newer data has been released, we use 2021 data here to coincide with when the evaluation survey data was collected

About Women Faculty Leadership Development Institute: *What's Next?*

Driven by scholarship on emotional and social intelligence in leadership (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008), intentional changes (Boyatzis & McKee, 2006), and the needs of women faculty (Bilimoria et al., 2008), the *What's Next?* program supported mid-career women-identifying faculty (associate or full professors) who desired to focus on their career path and vision through enhancing their leadership skills with their academic department, college, discipline, and/or profession. The program alternated its participants' tenure and non-tenure status each year with the goal of developing their leadership skills to advance their careers. *What's Next?* provided leadership development workshops and professional coaching including a 360° Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI).

The program goals of *What's Next?* are: to provide a framework for mid-career women faculty to make career decisions; to better understand and develop their self-confidence and comfort with risk; to access their emotional intelligence and how best to use it to enhance their career; and to gain deep knowledge of interpersonal skills, political savvy, comfort with negotiation, and leadership potential. The three-session half-day series of workshops facilitated by Dr. Diana Bilimoria, the KeyBank Professor and Chair of Organizational Behavior at the Weatherhead School of Management at CWRU, and often a staff member from the Mather Center, used lecture as well as activities to achieve program goals. Activities in particular asked participants to identify organizational and personal barriers to career success, identify values and motivations (Hyun, 2006), and develop a personal vision to set career goals for the next five years.

In addition, participants received two or three coaching sessions from a professional coach (Smith, Van Oosten, and Boyatzis, 2009) to assist with the intentional change process including an analyzing and understanding their 360° ESCI survey (Korn Ferry, n.d.) feedback and setting career goals. The ESCI survey is designed to assess the demonstration of individuals' behaviors of self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, and relationship management through their perceptions and those of their colleagues and institutional leadership. The program closed annually with a panel of women-identified faculty who previously completed the program sharing their career journeys and how they implemented their career plan. It is these outcomes that we focus on in the program impacts.

The Women Faculty Welcome Reception, Fall 2023

Program Impact

Since fall 2012, 150 women-identified faculty from 51 departments have completed *What's Next?*. Currently, the Mather Center tracks representation of women-identified faculty both in and beyond WFDLI. Each year, the WFDLI cohort alternated between cohorts for tenured women faculty and non-tenured track women faculty. Table 1 shows the racial/ethnic breakdown of *What's Next?* participants, and comparison to CWRU and national faculty demographics. Asian women are slightly overrepresented compared to their proportion of CWRU women faculty, while Black women are slightly underrepresented, white women are significantly underrepresented, and Latina women are about on par with their representation in the faculty.

Also of note is that CWRU has a lower percentage of women faculty than the national average. Asian women are overrepresented compared to their national average, as are white women, while Black women and Latina women are underrepresented at CWRU compared to the national average. These numbers do continue to change, but the data used here is from 2021 in order to parallel the years from which the *What's Next?* participant data was drawn.

Category	Program % [a]	CWRU Women Faculty %	CWRU Faculty %	National Women Faculty %	National Faculty %
All Women	--	--	42%	--	49%
Asian Women	18%	13%	5%	9%	5%
Black Women	2%	5%	2%	8%	4%
Latina Women	3%	2%	>1%	7%	3%
White Women	54%	81%	34%	68%	33%

Source: CWRU Office of Institutional Research; U.S. Department of Education IPEDS Human Resources Survey 2021-22
a: Totals do not add to 100% due to rounding; 58 participants are missing or unknown. Percents are calculated on 120 that are identified by Institutional Research, but includes the 29 participants who are missing their race but present in internal data, not those who are missing from internal data entirely.

In spring 2022, we surveyed *What's Next?* alumnae about their experiences with the program. We received 22 responses. Due to the low number of responses, demographic data cannot be shared. Of the 22 respondents, seven were tenured prior to participation in the program, five did not have tenure but were tenure-track, and five were not in a tenure-track position. Five participants did not respond to this question.

Since completing the program, 9 respondents said they have begun a leadership role within the university, 6 have a leadership role within a professional organization, 7 have received a step-up or promotion including 2 who received tenure. Overall, the majority of respondents showed that after participating in *What's Next?* they increased their leadership positions in some manner.

Program Impact

The *What's Next?* program elements which we asked survey respondents about were the 360° ESCI feedback review, the career development plan, and professional coaching. Those who have been involved in leading the program over the years note that professional coaching often emerges in the end-of-program evaluations as the standout element of the program, which makes the program unique compared to other faculty programs. Yet in the (admittedly limited) data from the more recent survey, reviews of coaching were more mixed.

Some found the coaching not at all helpful, or helpful for only a specific work circumstance but not for broader career development or focus. Others, however, had a very positive experience with coaching. "An external coach was/is really valuable - to step outside of my program/role and have to explain it to someone who doesn't know what I do is really valuable," said one participant. Another participant described the specific skills coaching helped them to build: "At the time of the program I was grappling with many issues about my career in higher education. My coach was instrumental in helping me articulate what I wanted for my career, was a critical sounding board as I developed my strategy, and helped me with my negotiation skills."

Both the 360° ESCI feedback and the career development plan had similarly mixed results. For the 360° ESCI feedback, some really appreciated hearing from those they work closely with and being able to reflect and adapt and had continued to revisit it. One stated "I think reviewing the 360° ESCI feedback survey provided me with the confidence to accept a leadership role that was offered to me after What's next?" Others had limited responses and did not feel that what it brought up was particularly productive for them. For career visioning, many people felt the process of making the plan was beneficial, but did not revisit the plan or the skills in making it later on (or were unable to due to the disruption of COVID-19), or were not sufficiently confident in their career path to get the full benefits. "I have to say that this was a weak point for me, because at the time I was grappling with what direction I wanted my career to go," said one participant. Others felt it clarified their goals, and continue to go back to it for future goal setting – "I establish specific short and intermediate goals annually," one participant said.

Conclusion

The program evaluations show that everyone needed and got something different out of the program. Depending on what was happening in their individual career paths, the different offerings provided more or less benefit to them, and the feeling on the program overall was positive (an average score of 3.24 on a scale from 1-4 where 1 is strongly disagree and 4 is strongly agree, across six satisfaction measures).

Although *What's Next?* has evolved beyond the Mather Center, there is still a great deal to be learned from the program for others seeking ways to support women and other minoritized faculty. The first is, unsurprisingly, that not everyone's needs will be the same, and programming which is able to span across areas of personal and professional development will be more successful in providing what faculty need. The second is the importance of following up some time after the initial programming, as people will feel differently about what was beneficial after they have had time to implement what they have learned. Finally, the ability to both resolve immediate crises and plan for careers long-term is a vital balance, and making tools such as coaching accessible for these goals - accessible here meaning available, affordable, and appropriate to the professional structure (i.e., academia may differ from a corporation) - is important to supporting faculty as scholars and as employees. These lessons can and should be carried well beyond WFLDI, for faculty programs of all varieties.

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