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Equity & Excellence in Education

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713770316>

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Online publication date: 29 October 2010

To cite this Article Rosser, Vicki J.(2003) 'Faculty and Staff Members' Perceptions of Effective Leadership: Are There Differences Between Women and Men Leaders?', *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 36: 1, 71 – 81

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/10665680303501

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10665680303501>

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Faculty and Staff Members' Perceptions of Effective Leadership: Are There Differences Between Women and Men Leaders?

Vicki J. Rosser

As women begin to break through the midlevel ranks in academe, the empirical literature is beginning to emerge regarding the perceived differences in how women and men perform as leaders. Within this growing body of literature, researchers have found that there are important differences in the leadership styles, qualities, and priorities that exist between women and men as leaders (Astin & Leland, 1991; Cantor & Bernay, 1992; Eagly, Karau, & Johnson, 1992; Helgesen, 1995; Kezar, 2000; Nickeles & Ashcraft, 1981; Roesner, 1990). There are also a number of studies that contend that women do not function as leaders in the same way men do and that they behave differently in similar situations (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Billing & Alvesson, 1994; Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992; Shakeshaft, 1987, 1999; Statham, 1987). These studies come from a variety of scholarly arenas (for example, sociology, psychology, business, education), and they discuss at length the similarities and differences between female and male managers, their leadership styles, and different job reactions.

Despite the emerging literature on women in leadership, there are few studies that empirically examine the perceived differences in higher education leadership between men and women. Much of the prior research on leadership in academic organizations has focused primarily on analyses that involve the leader's perception of their own performance, leadership style, effectiveness, or the perception of their effectiveness as evaluated by their superiors. Although superiors' and subordinates' evaluations are perceptual and may well be subject to bias, learning the perceptions of those who work with and for leaders is vital to understanding their effectiveness. In addition to these self-assessments, the majority of leadership studies tend to focus on a few senior-level positions such as presidents, provosts, and chief aca-

demical affairs officers (Bensimon, Neuman, & Birnbaum, 1989; Birnbaum, 1989; Bowen & Shapiro, 1998; Martin, Samels, & Associates, 1997). Few studies exist that specifically examine midlevel academic leadership, such as deans, through the assessment of subordinate evaluations. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine faculty and administrative staff members' perceptions in the way female and male deans lead their academic units.

PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

The effectiveness of leaders in higher education is, for the most part, a matter of perception (Fincher, 1996). There are few shared norms about appropriate outcome measures for leaders in higher education, unlike the area of business in which leaders' performance may be assessed based on profit and growth. In fact, there is no commonly accepted definition of effective leadership in higher education, and even less agreement about which aspects of a definition may be most important to leadership effectiveness (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989; Birnbaum, 1992; Dill, 1984; Fincher, 1996; Whetten & Cameron, 1985).

Individual perceptions of effectiveness are based on what leaders say and do; that is, perceptions are grounded in the individual's experience with the leader's behavior, either directly or indirectly. From these experiences, individuals determine whether they believe leaders are effective or ineffective. Perceptions then are crucial to the viability of the leader's position within the institution. Perceptions may even be collected from a defined group of individuals in order to "evaluate" the leader's performance. Such measurement of perceptions may constitute a "high stakes" evaluation for the individual leader (Heck, Johnsrud, & Rosser, 2000), because they can lead to decisions about promotion and dismissal. In order to accurately and fairly determine the effectiveness of those in leadership positions, we must understand

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how individuals, as well as groups of individuals, construct their notions of effective leadership within complex organizations.

DIFFERENCES IN LEADERSHIP BY GENDER IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Examining the perceived differences in leadership by gender has been an important issue to investigate in higher education, though not fully developed. In one study, Astin and Leland (1991) provide in-depth descriptive accounts of women leaders within the context of education. They gathered the personal recollections and stories of 77 women in leadership positions at colleges and universities, foundations, and other educational organizations and public service agencies. The study examined the social and historical context of women in leadership, their formative influences (for example, family, mentors, role models), the forces that shaped their commitment to social justice and involvement in leadership activities, and their contribution and establishment of educational initiatives within the academic community (for example, publications and journals, legislation and national policy). In their work, they found that these women provided a significant illustration of leadership that is non-hierarchical and collective. These women were most effective in leading their units and organizations through empowering others and enabling groups to take action. Moreover, these women describe important elements of their leadership effectiveness as: networks (for example, organization, community), collective action (for example, collaborative interaction), and the capacity for self-analysis (for example, critical reflection). This area of research supports the widespread notion that women's strength in leadership lies in their ability to collaborate and foster interpersonal relationships.

More recently, Rosser, Johnsrud, and Heck (2003) examined the leadership of deans and directors at a major Doctoral/Research-Extensive university. Almost 900 full-time faculty and staff members rated the effectiveness of 22 deans and directors. When controlling for sex and race/ethnicity of the respondent, Rosser et al. found faculty and administrative staff members perceived that, as a group, female deans were more effective leaders than their male counterparts. Moreover, the seven hypothesized domains of leadership contributed significantly to the definition and measurement of deans' effectiveness both at the within- (individual) and between- (group) unit levels in the academic organization. That is, the perceptions of leadership effectiveness exhibited an individual, as well as a "collective" or group, similarity in assessing deans' leadership. This study was an initial effort to measure and define deans' effective leadership from a subordinate perspective, and to ascertain if differences exist by sex of the leader. While

the results in Rosser et al.'s study found that perceived differences in deans' effective leadership exist by the sex of leader, this study examines more closely those aspects of effectiveness that account for the perceived differences in the way men and women lead their academic units.

The literature and research on leadership continue to produce ambiguous and conflicting results regarding the relationship between gender and leadership. Glazer-Raymo (1999) points out that when gender becomes part of the equation, leadership seems to take on a different meaning. Both gender and leadership are complicated social phenomena that have been constructed and reconstructed through history. Thus, by adding gender to the study of leadership, particularly in higher education, researchers are provided with an opportunity to capture the full range of characteristics that comprise effective leadership in complex organizations.

DIFFERENCES IN LEADERSHIP BY GENDER

The recent literature in other arenas (for example, business, psychology, sociology) on women's leadership describes, in some cases, a very different image of leadership from the traditional image of male leadership. For example, Helgesen (1995) discusses at length the ways in which men and women lead. She found many patterns of similarity and dissimilarity between men and women leaders. Men identified themselves with their jobs and position, and characterized their days by interruption, discontinuity, and fragmentation. They had difficulty sharing information, and spared little time for activities not related to their work. In contrast, women saw their own identities as complex and multifaceted—they did not view unscheduled tasks and encounters as interruptions. Women scheduled time for sharing organizational information and often made time for activities not directly related to their work. Their primary emphasis was to keep relationships in the organization in good repair. These differences in the way men and women are perceived to perform in their role as leaders seem to suggest that differences may exist in their effectiveness.

Eagly et al. (1992) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis on the evaluation of leaders by gender. Their sample included 61 studies that examined 147 units (15 were intact studies and 132 were subdivided parts of studies). Primary criteria for including studies in the sample were that: (1) leadership was portrayed or enacted, (2) subjects rated or reacted to more than one leader, (3) at least one of the subjects' ratings was evaluative, and (4) the study included the sex of the target person in a leadership position. Eagly et al. found that the empirical literature addressing the issue of whether women are devalued in leadership roles is substantial although divergent. In brief, their findings indicated that women leaders, regardless of the organization or

occupation, were evaluated more negatively than men when exhibiting autocratic behavior. They also found a tendency for female leaders to be especially devalued when they direct male subordinates. Their research suggests that a traditional leadership style (for example, autocratic or directive) is seen as more favorable for male leaders, while more a participative leadership style (for example, collaborative or collegial) are perceived to be more favorable for leaders who are women.

Eagly et al. (1992) suggest that the reason for these perceptual differences on leader effectiveness may be the result of traditional management practices and rigid forms of bureaucratic organizations. That is, they say that an attitudinal bias may take the form of disapproval directed specifically toward women. Thus, the apprehensiveness that individuals commonly express about women in leadership roles may be intensified when women in these positions take charge in an authoritative or directive manner. Therefore, the perceived effectiveness of the leader may be influenced by the gender or role expectations and biases subordinates may possess about their leaders.

In another study, Statham (1987) collected data from 22 women and 18 men managers and secretaries to provide insight into gender differences in managerial styles. In addition to the managers' self-evaluation of their leadership, the Statham study is unique in that it provides a subordinate examination of the perceived differences that exist between male and female managers in the performance of their role as leaders. The researcher contends that few studies have considered the possibility that women may in fact behave differently as managers in ways that enhance their performance. Statham argues that although men and women may be equally effective as managers, they may not be perceived as such because of certain differences in their managerial style and approach. Her basic premise suggests that men and women may arrive at the same end by different routes. Statham attempts to draw such a picture by systematically exploring the leadership strategies used by women managers. Her findings suggest that sex-differentiated management may exist, that women may use a more task-engrossed and person-invested style, while men may use a more image-engrossed and autonomy-invested style. Women were perceived as focusing more on the task to be done and the people working for and with them, paying careful attention to what is happening in their areas of responsibility and interacting with others a great deal. Men were seen as focusing on themselves and the need to "back away" from those who work for them, emphasizing the power they have and the contributions they make in a situation. They felt the ideal way to manage is to "stay out of it." Such an examination of subordinate perceptions, in addition to the leader's self-assessment, furthers our understanding of how and why men and women are perceived to dif-

fer as leaders, or in this case, faculty and staff members' perceptions of their deans' effective leadership.

ACADEMIC DEANS AND THEIR "MIDDLENESS"

Academic deans have long been viewed as committed and competent teachers, scholars, colleagues, faculty leaders, and administrators (Abbott, 1958; McGrath, 1936, 1999; Tucker & Bryan, 1991; Wolverton, Gmelch, Montez, & Nies, 2001). They serve as academic facilitators between presidential initiatives, faculty governance, and student needs (Astin & Scherrei, 1980). As such, they are often referred to as the academic midlevel administrators in higher education (Matczynski et al., 1989; Moore, Slaimbene, Marlier, & Bragg, 1983; Morris, 1981; Roaden, 1970; Rosser et al., 2003; Wolverton, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 1999). By virtue of their midlevel placement within the organizational structure, they are in the center of controversy, conflict, and debate; they play the role of coalition builder, negotiator, and facilitator. Dill (1980) contends that the mid-management position of deans in most institutions is an amorphous, variegated, and perhaps ultimately, an indescribable role.

Much of the prior research on deans has been primarily descriptive in nature and refers to specific tasks or challenges (Gould, 1964; Morris, 1981; Tucker & Bryan, 1991). Often the focus is on specific topics such as deans' transition from research and teaching to academic management, their dilemmas in leadership, their management skills and mobility, and their role in governance and decision making (Arter, 1981; Baldridge, 1971; Feltner & Goodsell, 1972; Gmelch, Wolverton, Wolverton, & Sarros, 1999; Moore et al., 1983; Sagaria & Krotseng, 1986). In one recent study of deans' perceptions of their own effectiveness, Wolverton, Wolverton, and Gmelch (1999) found that role ambiguity (for example, knowing the job responsibilities of the position, feeling certain about the position's authority, knowing exactly the job's expectations, having clearly planned goals that exist for the job) had a small negative effect on deans' perceptions of their job satisfaction, effectiveness, and commitment to the institution. They contend that the less well articulated the role is, the less effective deans perceive themselves to be. Wolverton et al. (1999) suggest that senior administrators need to articulate clearly the job responsibilities, authority, goals, and expectations that go with the role, in order to assess the individual's effectiveness in performing those identified role-related functions. If the dean's role is not guided by firmly-established assessment practices that are systematic, fair, and accurate, then deans would be deemed effective—or ineffective—by informal and subjective assessments of their leadership style, individual traits, or qualities. While these studies are clearly important and add to the literature, there is little empirical

research that examines deans' effectiveness as leaders, least of all, as perceived by their faculty and administrative staff members.

Understanding how deans are evaluated by faculty is a relatively new and unstudied phenomenon (Heck et al., 2000; Matczynski, Lasley, & Haberman, 1989). Learning to work with significant others (that is, faculty and university administrators) is one of the essential tasks of deans (Matczynski et al., 1989). In their study of faculty members' perceptions of the qualities that deans should possess, Matczynski et al. found that education faculty ranked communication as the most important skill, and developing and implementing an affirmative action plan as the least important skills. Faculty members seek a dean who exhibits a capacity to articulate the unit's mission and define the purposes of the unit and the major issues of the profession to various constituencies. Faculty members also feel that deans should be held accountable for the academic standards of the unit. They expect deans to recruit a high quality faculty and ensure that faculty members maintain high academic standards in their classrooms. Although it is important for deans to understand what faculty and staff members perceive as pertinent criteria to be an effective leader, there must also be a systematic and well-articulated understanding of the dean's role.

A CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP

Numerous frameworks and lenses have been developed and used to explain the differences in status between men and women within organizations. Many writers have pointed out the multitude of theories which exist in the field of research on the situation of women (Ayman, 1993; Billing & Alvesson, 1994; Eagly et al., 1992; Morrison & Von Glinow, 1997). By studying these conceptual frameworks, we are better able to understand the unique properties that exist within social organizations, which in this case may offer a promising viewpoint for the examination of gender and leadership. While the frameworks presented here are not exhaustive, they do address the importance of organizational cultures and perceived gender roles. The aim of this research, therefore, is to draw more generally from those frameworks that help guide our understanding of how women and men are perceived differently as leaders by those subordinates (faculty and administrative staff members) evaluating the effectiveness of their performance.

A number of studies have been inspired by a cultural framework in studying the different aspects and meaning of gender and organizational culture. Cultural theories are described as pointing collectively at shared patterns of meanings, values, assumptions, and expectations that guide perceptions, cognitions, and emotions

(Alvesson & Berg, 1992; Ayman, 1993; Calas & Smircich, 1992; Keesing, 1974; Mills, 1988; Mumby & Stohl, 1991; Smircich, 1983; Symons, 1986). Thus, the culture creates and guides a collective, subjective logic that forms the unspoken, often unconscious subtext of social life. These cultural assumptions and values, in this case, are seen as meaningful in the understanding of how gender and effective leadership can be perceived by faculty and staff members within a given college or academic unit.

Role theories have some similarities with culture theory because they both draw attention to expectations and norms (Billing & Alvesson, 1994). Role theories are concerned with the differences between sexes as expressed through different expectation and behavioral patterns and possibly psychological characteristics (Billing & Alvesson, 1994). In this case, a role is the constellation of behaviors we expect of a person in a specific position as a male or female. Roles are normative, and it is a primary basis of social judgment used to infer an "ideal" behavioral pattern (Ayman, 1993). Role theory allows us to contrast and compare the perceived norms and behaviors that men and women exhibit as leaders. When these differences are explained empirically, the potential to recognize the gendered role expectations of leadership within complex organizational cultures becomes more attainable.

Effective leadership is critical to the future of higher education, and yet our ability to assess the effectiveness of leaders through college and university participants (for example, faculty, staff, students) within academic organizations is not well-developed. This research will examine faculty and staff members' perceptions of effective leadership that may account for the way men and women deans lead their academic units.

PROCEDURES

Sample

Faculty and staff members at a major public doctoral/research-extensive university were asked to evaluate the performance of their deans based on several dimensions of their leadership role. In an effort to determine each dean's overall effectiveness, surveys were mailed to all 1,950 faculty (instructors, researchers, specialists, librarians) and staff members (executive/managerial staff, administrative, professional and technical staff, clerical/secretarial employees) reporting to 22 deans. The deans' units consisted of various colleges, schools, and programs within the areas of arts and sciences, professional schools, organized research groups, and service and support areas. Three mailings yielded 865 usable responses from deans' faculty and administrative staff (a 54% return rate). The faculty and administrative staff respondents in this study proportionately represented the

demographic populations of the institution (*Faculty and Staff Report, 1999*).

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Of the faculty and staff respondents, 405 (47.3%) are female and 451 (52.7%) are male. Their position categories consisted of 68 (7.9%) instructors, 116 (13.4%) assistant professors, 128 (14.8%) associate professors, 243 (28.1%) full professors, 15 (1.7%) managerial/executives, 150 (17.3%) administrative, professional, and technical staff, and 89 (10.3%) clerical/secretarial or civil service employees. Of those faculty and staff members that reported their race/ethnicity, 383 (45.6%) are classified as ethnic minorities¹ and 456 (54.4%) were classified as white. It should be noted that the number of ethnic minority faculty and staff members is considerably higher at this university than in most other doctoral/research-intensive institutions.

The academic deans and directors who were evaluated consisted of 16 males and 6 females. Additionally, six of the deans and directors are ethnic minority males, and two are ethnic minority females. Overall, therefore, 36% of the deans are members of ethnic minority groups and 27% of the deans in this study are female. The deans managed units of varying sizes and academic types (for example, units within arts and sciences, professional schools, organized research groups, and service and support units). In a few cases, support units were run by directors. Only those directors who held positions equivalent to deans and who reported directly to vice-presidents were included in this sample.

Instrumentation and Variables

The instrument was designed to gather information about deans' effectiveness in fulfilling their leadership roles and responsibilities as perceived by their faculty and staff. In developing the instrument, there was extensive consultation among all deans and a university-wide committee (consisting of deans, faculty members, administrative staff, and senior administrators). Seven domains of leadership responsibility were agreed upon by the committee based on the professional literature on deans and a review of existing evaluation instruments. The centrality of these specific domains has been generally supported in research on leadership in higher education administration (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Bensimon et al., 1989; Birnbaum, 1992; Dill, 1984; Fincher, 1996; Whetten & Cameron, 1985), and on the leadership of deans more specifically (Dill, 1980; Feltner & Goodsell, 1972; Gmelch et al., 1999; Griffiths & McCarty, 1980; Morris, 1981; Sagaria & Krotseng, 1986; Seldin, 1988; Tucker & Bryan, 1991; Wolverton et al., 1999). Thus,

drawing from the empirical research, effective leadership is broadly defined as the ability to articulate and communicate the unit's vision and goals, define the purposes and the major issues of the profession to various constituencies, enhance the academic standards of the unit, recruit and support a high quality faculty, ensure the fair distribution and allocation of resources, and garner the respect and confidence of faculty and staff members within the unit they oversee.

The domains of effective leadership were defined by a total of 58 Likert-type items. A response of "1" indicated that the respondent had an unsatisfactory assessment of the dean's performance on that item, and a response of "5" indicated an outstanding level of performance on that item. Choices of NA (not applicable) and DK (don't know) were also available as a response to each item. In addition to the scaled leadership items, demographic characteristics (sex, race/ethnicity, tenure status, years worked with the dean, being a department chair, faculty, or staff role) of the respondents also were collected.

A confirmatory factor analysis (not reported here) was conducted to identify the underlying structure in the data by reducing a larger set of items from the questionnaire to a smaller set of factors or domains. Each leadership domain, therefore, was defined by a series of items. All leadership domains were judged to be highly reliable, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients (a measure of internal consistency) above .9. Seven leadership dimensions² or constructs were confirmed to provide reliable measures for further analysis: (1) vision and goal setting, (2) management of the unit, (3) support for institutional diversity, (4) interpersonal relationships, (5) the quality of education in the unit, (6) communication skills, and (7) research and community/professional endeavors.

After defining the variables through confirmatory factor analysis, a discriminant analysis was performed to determine which dimensions best distinguish female and male deans' effectiveness as leaders.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Discriminant Analysis

The purpose of discriminant analysis is to find a linear combination of variables that maximizes the differences between groups, or in this case to find a minimum number of variables (leadership domains, respondent characteristics) needed to differentiate or distinguish the effectiveness of leadership between female and male deans. The direct method of discriminant analysis was used, and all leadership dimensions and demographics were entered into the analysis simultaneously. Through preliminary analysis, several nonsignificant demographic characteristics (predictors) were dropped from the study (department chair, years worked with the dean, tenure

status, faculty, or staff role). Those demographic characteristics describing the faculty and staff respondents that were retained in the final analysis and shown to contribute moderately to the classification of female and male deans were sex, ethnic minorities,³ and being a full professor.

Once faculty and staff members' perceptions of the two dean groups (females and males) were classified,⁴ descriptive data of each dean group could be examined. As shown in Table 1, means and standard deviations are provided for female and male deans to aid in understanding the coefficients. In this study, faculty and staff members rated female deans higher on all seven leadership dimensions. Female deans were rated most effective in the dimensions of communication skills (mean = 4.22), research, community, professional endeavors (mean = 4.15), interpersonal relations (mean = 4.07), and the management of the unit (mean = 4.06) than male deans (mean = 3.99, 3.78, 3.87, and 3.74, respectively).

The strength of the structure coefficients also can be examined. Unlike the descriptive information (means and standard deviations) provided on each dimension of leadership, structure coefficients (Table 2) indicate the correlation between each variable and the discriminant function in classifying these deans after controlling for the effects of the other predictors.⁵ The primary goal of

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations of Variables (*N* = 865)

Variables	Group 1		Group 2	
	Male deans		Female deans	
	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>
Vision and goal setting	3.77	1.06 ⁺	4.02	.93
Management of the unit	3.74	.99	4.06	.83
Interpersonal relations	3.87	.96	4.07	.91
Quality of education	3.23	.44	3.50	.36
Research/community/ professional endeavors	3.78	.82	4.15	.59
Communication skills	3.99	.90	4.22	.66
Support for institutional diversity	2.71	.28	2.83	.24 ⁺
Sex of respondent (female = 1)	.29	.45	.46*	.50
Ethnic minority (ethnic minority = 1)	.34*	.47	.30	.46
Full professors (full = 1)	.47*	.50	.37	.48

*These means indicate that more women rated women deans and more minorities and full professors rated male deans.

⁺The differences in standard deviations of the subscales (.24 to 1.06) may suggest that there is more (or less) agreement by the respondents in their perceptions of leaders' effectiveness in these domains.

Table 2
Predictors of the Effective Leadership Between
Female and Male Deans

Leadership dimensions	Structure coefficients ⁺
Quality of education	.68
Research/community/professional endeavors	.50
Support for institutional diversity	.47
Management of the unit	.35
Communication skills	.28
Vision and goal setting	.24
Interpersonal relations	.22
Demographic variables	
Sex of the respondent	.36
Full professors	-.22*
Ethnic minorities	-.09*

*The negative coefficients indicate that more minorities and full professors rated male deans.

⁺Much of the literature on discriminant analysis suggests that the structure coefficients (rather than standardized coefficients) are better for interpretation (see Huberty, 1994; Marcoulides & Hershberger, 1997, for further explanations).

a discriminant analysis is to interpret the meaning of the discriminant function. The positive and negative coefficients can be useful in determining how the variables discriminate between male and female deans. For example, positive coefficients on the variables indicate that faculty and staff members perceive that male deans are assumed to be less effective in these domains and have lower means (as noted in Table 1).

One also can see that the quality of education in the unit (.68), research, community, and professional endeavors (.50), support for institutional diversity (.47), and management of the unit (.35) are dominant leadership dimensions that clearly discriminate female deans from male deans. Sex of the respondent (.36), a demographic characteristic, also contributes moderately to the classification of female and male deans. Further, negative coefficients suggest that those faculty and staff members are more likely to be a full professor (-.21) and an ethnic minority (-.20). The percent correct measures the accuracy of the discriminant function to classify.

Using the linear discriminant function, group membership also may be predicted. For example, the goal of the analysis is to correctly classify (or accurately measure) faculty and staff members' perceptions of effective leadership within the two dean groups (females, males). In this study, the model correctly measures or classifies 74% (against 50% chance using two dean groups) of the sample of faculty and staff members in the discriminant function. As Table 3 suggests, the model has better accuracy in predicting the leadership effectiveness of male deans than that of female deans.

Table 3
Faculty and Staff Correctly Classified by Female and Male Deans by Variables in the Model

Predicted group membership <i>N</i> = 542*		
Actual group	Male deans	Female deans
Male deans	306 (81.6%)	69 (18.4%)
Female deans	74 (44.3%)	93 (55.7%)
Correctly Classified = 74%		

*The analysis retains only those cases in which respondents provided data for all relevant variables.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The results indicate that the combination of deans' leadership dimensions and demographic characteristics of the respondents contribute to the group classification of male and female leaders. Of the demographic variables, sex, ethnic minority identity of the respondent, and holding the rank of full professor discriminate faculty and staff perceptions of effective leadership that exists between female and male deans. Although these variables contribute to the group prediction of these deans, the limitation in this analysis is that we are not able to determine to what extent these perceptions are positive or negative. What we do know is that more female respondents rated female deans, and more full professors and ethnic minority respondents rated male deans. This does raise the concern that with more females rating female deans the results could be skewed toward female deans. Further analysis (not reported here), however, indicated that when controlling for sex and race/ethnicity of the respondent, there were no differences by sex or race/ethnicity in the way these faculty and administrative staff members perceived the effectiveness of their deans (Rosser et al., 2003). While in the previous study controlling for sex and race/ethnicity of the respondent was nonsignificant, in this current study demographics such as sex and race/ethnicity are important to the overall group classification of leaders by sex.

Moreover, any effort to eliminate these demographic characteristics (sex, ethnic minority, full professor) from the analysis affects the classification of deans by group. Therefore, retaining the variables in the analysis indicates that faculty and staff members do perceive differences in the leadership effectiveness of their deans. Other demographics, however, such as years worked with the dean, tenure status, department chair, type of administrative position, and whether the respondents are from the faculty or administrative staff, do not explain the differences in perception of deans' leadership effectiveness and were subsequently dropped from the final analysis.

Among the leadership dimensions, this study suggests that faculty members and administrative staff evaluating the effectiveness of their deans perceive that

women and men reflect differing patterns in their role as leaders. More specifically, female deans are perceived to be more likely than their male colleagues to: enhance the quality of education in their units; engage in research, community, and professional endeavors; promote and support institutional diversity within their units; and manage personnel and financial resources fairly and effectively. These four dimensions of effective leadership contribute significantly to the way faculty and staff members discriminate between female and male deans. Although less dominant in the group classification of deans by sex, communication skills, vision and goal setting, and interpersonal relations also were important indicators that differentiate female from male deans.

Despite the recent literature that describes differences in the way females and males lead their organizations (Billing & Alvesson, 1994; Eagly et al., 1992; Kezar, 2000; Powell, 1988; Statham, 1987), the results from this study suggest that not just some dimensions (for example, interpersonal skills, communication) of leadership are perceived by subordinates to be enacted better by women; rather these results indicate that all the leadership dimensions are perceived by this group to be more effectively practiced by this group of women deans. They are perceived to be, in this study, more effective leaders. The strong overall performance of these female deans provides empirical evidence that women are far more reaching in their leadership abilities than previously portrayed. Once perceived to be skilled primarily in the areas of collaboration (for example, participation, relational) and interpersonal communication, these results indicate that female deans are also perceived as effective leaders in quality and diversity issues within the unit, research and community endeavors, vision and goal setting, as well as the fair allocation of financial and human resources (overall management) to the unit. While the Rosser et al. (2003) study indicates that female deans were rated higher in their leadership roles, and thus perceived to be more effective leaders, this study extends that work by examining more closely what dimensions of deans' leadership account for the perceived differences in effectiveness between female and male deans. The answer is to look at not *which* dimension, but rather *to what* extent women exceed their male counterparts in all dimensions of effective leadership.

Cultural assumptions about the way men and women are perceived to lead their units and organizations continue to be powerful barriers to effective leadership. These cultural assumptions may ultimately affect the study of leadership or rather, the opportunity for women to move into or obtain leadership positions. In this case, understanding the cultural assumptions between men and women can enhance work relationships, effectiveness, and the organization's ability to reach common goals (Cox, 1993). The findings in this study provide empirical evidence that will test those cultural assumptions

that continue to categorize leaders only by their sex rather than by their effectiveness as leaders within organizations. Studies, such as the one presented here, emphasize that women do indeed possess a broad range of qualities that represent an effective leader. While the style of the leader to accomplish the goals and mission of the organization may differ (Astin & Leland, 1991; Roesner, 1990; Statham, 1987), the effectiveness of their overall leadership behavior may not. Leadership is a social interaction, and similar to all social interactions, perception and interpretation are critical to understanding the leadership process (Martinko & Gardner, 1987). Subordinate reports in this case are a measure or snapshot of that social perception. These results provide a broader understanding of those perceptions of effective leadership in organizations.

The findings in this study provide empirical evidence that in part explains the perceived differences in effectiveness by sex. The results in this study indicate that female deans were rated as more effective leaders in every dimension of leadership (as defined by deans, faculty members, administrative staff, and senior administrators). Therefore, the speculation and myths about women rating supervisors more favorably than men, or women tending to rate women more severely, are not supported in this study. Similarly, the commonly held view that men rate their supervisors and, specifically, women supervisors more critically, is not supported. Contrary to previous research on women and leadership (Astin & Leland, 1991; Eagly et al., 1992; Helgesen, 1995; Statham, 1987), these findings call into question the extent to which social constructions of leadership are gendered. This finding, however, parallels previous research conducted on the effectiveness of school principals — suggesting that female principals are rated as more effective leaders than their male counterparts (Eagly et al., 1992; Heck, 1995; Heck & Marcoulides, 1996). While women and men often bring different qualities to their professional roles as leaders, their ability to achieve organizational goals effectively may not be so different. For example, the women deans in this study were perceived as more effective in all aspects of their role as leaders than their male counterparts, however, neither the men nor the women, as a group, were perceived by their faculty and staff members' as ineffective. Therefore, it is important not to overstate the perceived differences in effectiveness that may exist between gender and leadership.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

This study has moved beyond the anecdotal and descriptive accounts of individual-level assessments to more explanatory measures of individual perceptions of leadership within academic organizations. In these times of fiscal austerity and external accountability, the pub-

lic is not content with simply understanding the role and function of academic leaders, but rather, they are concerned with how effectively and efficiently leaders, such as deans, manage and operate their units. In this research, the effective leadership of deans has been examined through the perceptions of their unit's faculty and staff members. Although more research is needed, this is a critical first step in evaluating and assessing the performance of academic leaders in higher education.

The evaluation of administrators in higher educational organizations is a relatively new area of study in the policy arena. Policy makers are just now beginning to understand institutional outcome measures for student and faculty performance (for example, graduation rates, career placement, national research recognition, refereed publications), but few norms have emerged on the measures that define the effectiveness of leaders in academic organizations. Effective leadership could be examined through a series of evaluations and assessment profiles administered over a period of time. This would allow the development of a useful and dependable procedure to utilize in the supervision of administrators for possible decisions about their retention and promotion (Heck, Johnsrud, & Rosser, 2000). Moreover, implementing a fair and accurate evaluation system would reassure policy makers that higher education is meeting acceptable standards of effective leadership.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The goal of this study was to examine faculty and staff members' perceptions of the effectiveness with which female and male deans lead their academic units. Much of the literature in higher education focuses on the "climate" that female faculty and administrative members experience within the academy (for example, Deats & Lenker, 1994; Glazer-Raymo, 1999; Johnsrud & Sadao, 1998). The finding in this study that female deans are more positively perceived as effective leaders adds substantively to the empirical literature on women in higher education.

A next step is to assess leaders' impact on the organization's effectiveness through a set of definable and measurable institutional outcomes (for example, attaining external dollars, fostering legislative relationships, students' time to degree, career placement of graduates). To associate institutional outcomes with leadership effectiveness would make a substantive contribution to the evaluation and assessment of leadership in higher education organizations. More than ever, the public wants to know how their monies are being continually spent on higher education. Such assessments would reassure the public's support of higher education, and that their concerns for standards and accountability are being met.

CONCLUSION

Leadership, with its multiple theoretical approaches and applications, remains a powerful phenomenon, and our understanding of leadership within the complexities of social organizations continues to evolve. Most of the theoretical work to date suggests that effective leadership is best conceived as a multidimensional concept. It is important, therefore, to study how both men and women, through their social interactions and behaviors as leaders, influence individuals within the units they oversee. Throughout this study, a primary concern has been to further the understanding of how faculty and staff members' perceive the social behaviors and processes of their leaders. In pursuit of effectiveness, the academic leader needs to attend to the perceptions that individuals form as assessments regarding their performance. Such perceptual assessments are crucial to the viability of the leader's position within the institution.

Glazer-Raymo (1999) contends that the deanship affords incumbents a privileged position for gaining visibility and recognition en route to senior administrative positions, and therefore, the selection of women as deans is an important step toward their upward mobility in academic organizations. Deans serve a critical role in the academic organization. They have the ability to control information, accumulate and allocate resources, and assess the performance and productivity of their faculty and staff members (Rosser et al., 2003). The finding in this study that female deans are more positively perceived as leaders in all dimensions of deans' effectiveness adds to the empirical literature on women in higher education. Thus, it is in the best interest of institutions to understand how organizational cultures and gendered role expectations continue to exist as subtle or overt barriers that limit leadership opportunities for women. Further research is suggested in this area — researchers should strive to empirically define and measure those dimensions that continually make a difference (or do not make a difference) in the way women, as well as men, lead their academic units.

NOTES

1. The ethnic minorities in this population consisted of 307 Asians (Chinese, Korean, Japanese), 23 Filipinos, 18 Pacific Islanders, 15 Mixed/Other, 11 from India, 7 Hispanics, and 2 African Americans.

2. *Vision and goal setting* includes issues of vision, goal setting, faculty performance and development, teaching and curriculum, research, service, and resources for the unit. *Management of the unit* ensures fair and effective administrative procedures, exercises fair and reasonable judgment allocating resources, maintains an effective and efficient administrative staff, implements policies and procedures in a timely manner, and manages change constructively. *Support for institutional di-*

versity includes supporting equal opportunities, demonstrating a commitment to mentoring of women and faculty from underrepresented groups, and ensuring staff are educated in EEO/AA concerns. *Interpersonal relationships* concern the respect for faculty, staff, and administrators, accessibility, sensitivity to career and mentoring, and maintenance of productive and positive relationships. *Quality of the unit's education* is comprised of advancing undergraduate and graduate programs, advocating appropriate curriculum changes, handling internal/external accreditation, demonstrating a commitment to a fair tenure and promotion process, and recruiting new personnel skillfully. *Communication skills* include listening and effectively communicating with unit members, external constituencies, and senior administration. *Research/professional/community endeavors* consist of maintaining an active research/scholarly agenda, pursuing professional growth, and contributing services to professional, community, and campus projects.

3. To more closely examine ethnic minority populations, Asians (Chinese, Korean, Japanese) as a group were combined into a dummy variable and placed in the model for analysis. In this study, Asians did not contribute to the group classification of male and female leaders. Thus, all ethnic minorities were then collapsed into a single demographic variable called ethnic minorities in order to retain them in the analysis.

4. Evaluation of the homogeneity of the variance-covariance matrices between groups (using Box's M test) indicated no threat to the multivariate analysis. The a priori classification was examined first to identify the underlying structure of the data. One discriminant function was calculated with chi square (10 df) = 100.14 ($p < .000$). The canonical correlation of .41 indicated the discriminant function provided a moderate (and acceptable) degree of association. The group centroids (means) of $-.30$ and $.68$ suggest that the discriminant function separates the leadership effectiveness of female and male deans.

5. Huberty (1994) argued in favor of using the structure coefficients for two reasons: First, the assumed greater stability of the correlations in small- or medium-sized samples, especially when there are high or fairly high intercorrelations among the variables; second, the correlations give a direct indication of which variables are most closely associated with the latent variable the discriminant function represents, in this case, male and female deans.

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