

Teaching Women's Leadership as a Platform for Advancing Civic Engagement

Why Collegiate Women's Leadership Programs Are
Vital to Political Science Education

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Abstract:

Since the release of Sheryl Sandberg's "Lean In", there has been renewed interest in why there remains a persistent gender gap in leadership positions in the United States. Despite the increase in women's levels of education, expertise, and the removal of legal restrictions based on sex, men still far outnumber women in positions of power and authority- particularly in the realm of politics. Though women make-up roughly 50 percent of the population in the US, they constitute less than 20 percent of the members of Congress (CAWP), 19 percent of full university professors, and roughly 5 percent of Fortune 500 (and Fortune 1000) CEOs (Catalyst). In terms of advancing gender parity as a democratic objective, clearly obstacles remain. Several colleges and universities have begun to establish women's leadership programs to address the gender gap in positions of power, but there is little consistency on how to situate these programs by academic discipline (or if it is even an appropriately academic subject). As a result, there is minimal theoretical consistency grounding collegiate women's leadership programs. In this paper, I suggest that collegiate women's leadership programs are a vital platform for teaching civic engagement and the democratic values of inclusiveness, deliberation, and equality. The field of political science continues to expand to addresses how identity factors (such as race, ethnicity, and gender) affect the dynamics of power and authority. Thus, I suggest that political science education should also reflect these trends by developing and supporting collegiate women's leadership programs. This will offer an effective platform to advance civic engagement and democratic values, both in theory and in practice.

Introduction

Many factors challenge the effectiveness of the US democracy, such as the increased voter apathy, the growing income gap in the electorate, and the declining faith in the effectiveness of government (Schlozman, Verba, & Brady 2012). Two recent areas of concern are the 1) the persistent gender gap in positions of power and authority and 2) the decline of civic engagement and democratic education. In this paper, I argue that these two obstacles are interconnected, where fostering women's leadership not only addresses the gender gap but also advances civic engagement. Reducing the gender leadership gap is a critical issue not just for the status of women but also for the quality of the American democracy.

Business experts, educators, politicians, psychologists, community activists, and even parents have attempted to resolve the "women's leadership" problem. The term "women's leadership" has grown to be quite the catch phrase. When searching the term on Google, there are 49,800,000 results. Academics and universities are also addressing the gender leadership gap issue through the introduction of collegiate women's leadership programs (CWLP). Though these programs are a growing campus presence, there is minimal consistency with their execution. Women's leadership may get catalogued under Women and Gender Studies, Business and Management, Political Science, or as a dimension of career development and student affairs. At present, collegiate women's leadership programs are few in number, theoretically inconsistent, and lacking institutional support. These programs have the potential to be far more effective as channels of political science education and gender consciousness-raising.

This paper is based on my experiences working, researching, and directing collegiate women's leadership programs at Douglass College, Rutgers University and Barnard College, Columbia University. Minimal research has been conducted on CWLP and this paper is a first step towards creating a cohesive framework for CWLP evaluation and development nationwide. I have attempted to synthesize and analyze the state of collegiate women's leadership programs and argue that a stronger bridge between CWLP and the aims of civic engagement on college campuses needs to be built. I suggest that political science educators could do some of the heavy lifting in that construction.

The focus of my paper is to critically examine the status of CWLP and offer some preliminary suggests for their future direction. First, I will provide a general outline of the status of American women in leadership positions. Then, offer my analysis of the two central obstacles to women's advancement (institutional and individual gender bias). Next, I summarize the broad efforts to address the gender leadership gap, and then focus on collegiate women's leadership programs. I show how CWLP can be placed into four general types (Women's and Gender Studies, Career Development, Business, and Political Science). I argue that political science educators could play vital roles in all CWLP because these programs can serve as a platform to both reduce the gender leadership gap and foster civic engagement. I also offer a pedagogical structure for CWLP that will help build women's leadership identity (individual) and deepen civic engagement (institutional).

The gender gap in leadership is a troubling problem in the US. Despite the increase in women's levels of education, expertise, and the removal of legal

restrictions based on sex, men still far outnumber women in all positions of power and authority. This gender imbalance persists despite the fact that qualified, educated women have entered the fields of business, politics, the arts, and the sciences in masses. The lack of American women's voices, perspectives, and intelligence creates a loss not only for women's representation as a group but also hinders the advancement of the broader community and weakens democracy.

Status of American Women's Leadership in 2015

The US women's movement of the '60s and '70s (sometimes referred to as the second wave of US feminism) focused on gaining women's equal rights as citizens, particularly in terms of the workforce and reproductive freedom. Feminists, men and women, argued that women had an equal right to work in male-dominated fields such as business, politics, and the sciences and cannot be discriminated against based on their sex. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 required equal wages for men and women doing equal work and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited discrimination based on sex. US Supreme Court cases such as *Roe V. Wade* (1974) and *Meritor Savings Bank v Vinson* (1986) set the legal precedent that women had the right to their own bodies (legal abortion access, free from sexual harassment at work, respectively). Now, over 50 years after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the US is still nowhere near achieving gender parity in leadership in the fields of politics, business, the arts, and the sciences - critical spaces of power, authority, and cultural influence.

According to the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), women now make up 19.4 percent of the US Congress, 24.3 percent of State Legislatures, and 25 percent of Statewide Executive positions (2015).¹ The US is one of the few advanced industrialized countries that has never had a woman president or vice-president. The Institute for Women's Policy Research predicts, at the present rate of women's growth in political leadership, that it will be 2121 before women will make up 50 percent of the US Congress (Baer and Hartmann 2014). Democracy requires citizen engagement, interest representation, and equal participation. When 50 percent of the population is less likely to be in democratic leadership because of one identity factor (gender), this diminishes the quality and strength of democracy.

The business sector, women have significantly advanced in labor force participation, but still relatively few are in executive positions. Of the S&P 500, women hold 4.6 percent of the CEO positions (Catalyst 2015).² Women hold 20.2 percent of corporate board seats among Fortune 500 companies. This is a slight increase from 18.7 percent in 2013 and 17.2 percent in 2009. At this rate, scholars argue that women may achieve gender parity on corporate boards by 2042 (McGregor 2014).³ Businesses have begun to adopt proactive policies that are favorable to the specific interests of women, such as sexual harassment and family leave policies, but the upper echelons of executive power still remain more of a

¹ Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, accessed July 2015.

² "Women CEOs of the S&P 500," Catalyst, April 3, 2015.

³ McGregor, J. 2014. "A Long Way to 50-50 on corporate boards." Washington Post, May 30.

mostly white “old boys club” rather than reflective of the diverse identities of American consumers.

Women are also missing in leadership positions in the arts and sciences. The majority of women work in the arts in entry and middle management-level positions, and the majority of art museum directors are men.⁴ “Women comprised 26 percent of all individuals working as creators, directors, writers, producers, executive producers, editors, and directors of photography on broadcast television programs during the 2011-12 prime-time season,” (Lauzen 2011). American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) recently called upon Congress to investigate Hollywood for gender discrimination. “In 2014, only 7 percent of the top 250 grossing films were directed by women — which is 2 percentage points lower than it was in 1998,” (Coggan 2015).⁵ The arts, where femininity is valued, are also a place where men are more likely to be in leadership positions than women.

Lastly, similar to business and politics, women are less likely to be in positions of authority in the sciences and in academic leadership. Though there is greater gender parity in tenure-track positions, women hold only 37.5 percent of fully tenured positions (Catalyst 2015).⁶ This number significantly drops in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) fields. In addition, women are less likely to lead academic institutions. Roughly 33 percent of community colleges, 23 percent of bachelor’s and master’s institutions, and 22 percent of doctoral

⁴ <http://artsfwd.org/can-we-break-the-glass-ceiling-of-arts-leadership/>

⁵ Coggan, D. 2015, “ACLU asks for investigation of Hollywood gender discrimination” Entertainment Weekly, May 12.

⁶ Catalyst, <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/women-academia> accessed July 2015.

institutions are led by women as presidents. In sum, across each of these fields in the US (politics, business, the arts, and the sciences), men make-up roughly three quarters of the leadership.

This is particularly puzzling given the substantial shift in women's education and professional achievement. According to the National Center of Education Statistics, women earn 57 percent of Bachelor's degrees, 63 percent of Master's degrees, and 53 percent of Doctorates (2010 numbers). In addition, stronger sexual harassment and family leave policies have been put into place to create work environments where women can feel more safe, comfortable, and protected as mothers. Over the last 50 years, substantial progress has been made in terms of women's entry to specific fields, but there has been minimal progress of women moving to positions of leadership and elite decision-making.

Why So Few Women Leaders?

Women have gained greater access to certain spaces of power where they had been previously excluded (government, the boardroom, the laboratory) but upon arrival, the path to leadership in these spaces is difficult to navigate. Though formal policies have been put into place to address issues that disproportionately affect women and women are graduating from advanced degree programs at an accelerating rate, women still remain a low percentage of leadership positions. Psychology Professors Alice Eagly and Linda Carli in their book, *"Through the Labyrinth: The Truth about How Women Become Leaders"* (2007), argue that sex discrimination, women's domestic responsibilities and women's self-doubt hinder

women's leadership chances. Rather than thinking of the glass ceiling metaphor, where there is just one final "floor" of power women can not reach, Eagly and Carli argue that one should imagine women's pursuit of leadership to be more of a labyrinth, with twists, turns, and dead-ends.

"There is little evidence from either the correlational or the experimental studies that the odds for women are stacked higher against women at each step of the ladder- that is that women's promotions became progressively less likely than men's at higher levels within organizations. Instead, a gender bias against women appears to operate with approximately equal strength at all levels. The scarcity of female corporate officers is the sum of discrimination that has operated at all ranks, not evidence of a particular obstacle to advancement as women approach the top. The problem, in other words, is not a glass ceiling," (Eagly and Carli 2007, p65).

Based on Eagly and Carli's excellent scholarship, as well as numerous other studies of women's leadership effectiveness (Ely, Ibarra and Kolb 2011, Batliwala 2010, Trigg 2010), I suggest that the problem of women's leadership should be conceptualized by two central factors: *institutional gender bias* and *individual gender bias*. Institutional gender bias refers to how organizations, companies, governments, even physical buildings can embed gender bias (Acker 1992, Hawkesworth 2003, Puwar 2004, Lorber 1994). This may range from of blatant gender-biased policies, such as banning women from membership or having no women's restrooms available, to more covert forms of gender bias, such as informal social gatherings that reflect norms of masculinity or having photos of only male leaders on the walls of the building. The majority of powerful public institutions were designed by men to reflect the interests and lifestyles of men. As such, it is not surprising that institutions have multiple levels of embedded policies and norms that exclude women as members.

Individual gender bias refers to the multiple ways in which gender schemas affect the assessment of individuals. Studies repeatedly demonstrate how women face a double-bind when it comes to leadership competence assessment. Women who conform to gender stereotypes of femininity are oft considered “too emotional”, “too quiet”, or “too soft” to be leaders (Brescoll and Uhlmann 2008, Valian 1999), while women who defy gender stereotypes of femininity in contrast are perceived as “too angry”, “too tough”, or “too cold”, affecting their leadership effectiveness. In addition, the internalization of gender schemas can add an extra layer of self-doubt and fear of rejection for women engaged in leadership in organizations (Foldy 2006). Unfortunately, many men and women still don’t really believe that women can be competent leaders. Gender bias operates at the institutional and individual level. In order to reduce this bias, solutions, such women’s leadership programs, need to target both dimensions of the problem.

Growth of Women’s Leadership Initiatives

To address the gender leadership gap, the US private and public sector have crafted many programs to bolster women’s leadership capacity as well as work towards redefining leadership to include traits associated with femininity (Gerzema and D'Antonio 2013). Many companies have designed internal programs to accelerate women into leadership positions, such as Key Bank. Key Bank, ranked one of the best companies for women, established Key Executive Women’s Network (KEWN), an in-house leadership program in 2004, and now women hold 5 of the 12

seats on the board of directors.⁷ Gender experts and business consultants are now coaching women leadership skills and teaching men to be aware of gender bias.

There is widespread demand to remedy this gender gap in leadership. One clear indicator of this interest is the popularity of the book “Lean In” by Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg. The book spent 12 weeks in the New York Times bestseller list and was the number 2 best selling book on Amazon for that year (2013). The book offers several steps that women can individually take to improve their success in the workplace as leaders. But Sandberg’s approach has been critiqued as offering an overly individualistic approach that too narrowly reflects a specific type of women (white, highly educated, upper-middle class, heterosexual) for a specific type of leadership (corporate governance). Feminist scholar bell hooks (2013) argues that Sandberg’s model is a form of “faux feminism” that overlooks the systemic pervasiveness of patriarchy and structural privilege.

Colleges and universities have also begun to create programs (such as workshops, centers, institutes, certificates) that focus on building women’s leadership skills and to be agents of social change. College is a critical time for shaping an individual’s identity, particularly for women (Jones 1999, Jones & McEwen 2000). Thus, collegiate women’s leadership programs have great potential for success. Students are primed to expand their knowledge base and open to challenging preconceived notions. But collegiate women’s leadership programs are in their early stages of development, much more still needs to be developed in order to assess potential effectiveness.

⁷ “Best Companies for Women,” DailyWorth. November 6, 2014

Collegiate Women's Leadership Programs (CWLP)

Gender affects expectations of leadership, beginning in childhood. In their study of political ambition in college-aged students, Lawless and Fox (2014) found that "40 percent of male respondents, but only 29 percent of female respondents, reported encouragement to run for office later in life from at least one parent," (7). College is an opportune time to challenge these negative gender stereotypes, foster positive self-image, and develop a leadership identity in young women (Kezat and Moriarty 2000, Duckett 2006). In addition, collegiate leadership development programs are shown to be effective in fostering leadership skills long term.

"Participation in short-or moderate-duration [collegiate leadership training] programs significantly enhanced students capacities, in comparison with peers with no formal training, on the measures of collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility, and citizenship," (Dugan and Komives 2010, 540). Thus, participation in collegiate women's leadership programs may be a particularly effective tactic to challenge individual and institutional gender bias.

Though collegiate women's leadership programs have grown on college campuses nationwide, we have no real data regarding how many programs exist, how these programs differ, or any assessments of effectiveness. Given the lack of research on this subject, it is best first to begin with defining what a collegiate women's leadership program is. This is a difficult question and the challenge of answering it illustrates part of the problem. There is no clear answer. Collegiate women's leadership programs can be found in various disciplines of a college or housed in student affairs or career development. Each different type of women's

leadership program offers a particular emphasis. The widespread interest illustrates the extent of the problem but the lack of uniformity is highly problematic for comparison and research.

Types of Collegiate Women's Leadership Programs

Collegiate women's leadership programs generally reflect four different types of arrangements on university campuses. Though these are not mutually exclusive, the different types do reflect the potential stakeholders on campus. Collegiate women's leadership programs are often housed 1) in the Department of Women and Gender Studies; 2) in Career Development and Student Affairs; 3) as a component of business education; and/or 4) in Political Science. I will briefly outline the benefits and costs of each arrangement, based on my own experiences and prior research.

Given that the Departments of Women's and Gender Studies are explicitly focused on the impact of gender, it is of little surprise that many collegiate women's leadership programs are housed in this department. The central benefit of this arrangement is that feminist theory serves as the academic foundation. This ensures that students are exposed to complex, institutional analysis, critical thinking, and gain greater gender consciousness. The costs of this are that students who are alienated by the emphasis on gender studies and feminism may self-select out of participating in these programs. In addition, the possible emphasis on post-modern feminist and queer theory may alienate students more focused on practical application.

A second model of establishing women's leadership programs on college campuses comes through the lens of career development and student affairs. The central benefit of these types of programs is that students gain highly practical skills, such as resume building, networking tips, and improved public speaking tactics. A cost of these programs is that women do not gain deeper gender consciousness or critical thinking skills. Thus, the participants are less equipped to deal with and potentially transform institutional gender bias.

Business schools and Departments of Finance/Economics are also beginning to pay specific attention to women in leadership. This is partially due to the demand from industry to have more women in positions of executive leadership. Evidence indicates that gender diversity in corporate leadership leads to more successful and effective businesses (Kramer, Konrad, Erkut, & Hooper 2006). The cost of this model is that women's leadership education is limited to the economy and formal labor market. There is less emphasis on broader community principles and civic leadership but rather, greater stress on women's individual leadership and communication skills.

Lastly, there are specific programs in Departments of Political Science or Government that are designed to advance women's leadership skills with an emphasis on public service, political leadership, and civic engagement. Given that political science is concerned with how power is distributed, the lack of women in political, economic, cultural, and academic power is of particular interest to political scientists. The benefits of these types of programs are that participants can gain a perspective towards women's leadership that addresses both individual and

institutional issues. The cost is that some women may be less interested in political science programs (which may be partially connected to gender stereotypes that politics is masculine). If a student desires a more individualized women's leadership program, they may be less engaged by the institutional analysis.

The four primary types of collegiate women's leadership programs are not mutually exclusive and overlap at times. Each type offers a unique perspective and set of learning priorities. The differing emphases can lead to potential conflicts on campuses, given the differences in how one should theoretically approach women's leadership and the role of feminism(s) in these conversations.⁸ Programs embedded in Departments of Women and Gender Studies are more likely to emphasize structural oppression, intersectional identity, and feminist theory (institutional emphasis). Programs embedded in Business Schools and Career Development are more likely to emphasize practical skills, such as networks, resume building, and public speaking (individual emphasis). But both are needed to foster individual women's leadership identity and create institutional changes to reduce gender bias.

Colleges are presently dealing with how to create women's leadership centers that meet the diverse interests of their student body. For example, Scripps College, a women's college, recently received a \$5 million dollar donation to create the LASPA Center for Leadership. Students were concerned that the Center may only be for certain majors (business), similar to Claremont McKenna College's Kravis

⁸ While at Rutgers, there were many different women's leadership programs, each with different emphasis. For example, the Institute for Women's Leadership was housed in the Rutgers Department of Women and Gender Studies where as PLEN (Public Leadership Education Network) worked through the Department of Political Science. At Barnard, there were tensions between the Athena Center for Leadership Studies and the Barnard Center for Research on Women, with "Leadership" being considered as too neo-liberal and corporate by some students.

Leadership Institute. The administration took efforts to dispel these concerns and emphasize how the LAPSA leadership institute will emphasize global citizenship and public service. The newly appointed director, Lisa Watson, has worked in non-profits and public service for the last 30 years. The LAPSA center defining women's leadership in broad terms and the students are connecting to the message. As one student reported:

"I'm really excited about it [the LASPA Center] because I think it will do a good job of integrating leadership through business, finance, that sort of thing as well as service," Sarah Berschinski '17 said. "One of the initial concerns of it was it being too focused on business or too much on service so I think now they're doing a good job of implementing the two."⁹

The LAPSA center opened in March 2015 and has received wide support from the Scripps student body, alumnae, and the broader community.

In sum, I suggest that effective collegiate women's leadership programs need to incorporate the individual and the institutional perspective. Students will individually benefit by gaining professional skills that will help them navigate through the labyrinth of leadership. The institutional perspective links the student to the broader community, and fosters group consciousness. By understanding how institutions have embedded gender bias, students can then better act as transformative leaders to eliminate these obstacles. The emphasis on institutional analysis also lends itself well to community engagement. Community partnerships are sorely needed as civic engagement in the US continues to decline.

Demand for Greater Civic Engagement in America

⁹ <http://www.thescrippsvoice.com/articles/2015/4/9/launching-the-laspa-center>

The decline of widespread civic engagement and the low-levels of democratic education in the US has raised concerns regarding the health of the American democracy (Coley and Sum 2012, Putnam 1995). In terms of democratic learning, the 2014 National Assessment of Educational Progress shows that only 23 percent of American eighth graders scored at or above proficiency in civics. Global Democracy, a research think-tank based in Austria, recently ranked the United States 16th in the world for its quality of democracy (2014). Political Scientists Theda Skocpol and Morris Fiorina (2004, 1999) show how everyday citizenship participation has declined and shifted towards professional issue advocacy in their edited volume, Civic Engagement in the American Democracy. Low levels of American civic engagement diminish the quality and strength of the US democracy.

American colleges and universities are elevating their role in improving the civic health of the US. The Association of American College and Universities (AACU) published “A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy’s Future,” (2011) to highlight the critical impact of preserving and instilling civic learning and democratic education in colleges and universities. The objective of higher education in a democratic country, according to this report, is to “cultivate in each of its graduates an open and curious mind, critical acumen, public voice, ethical and moral judgment, and the commitment to act collectively in public to achieve shared purposes,” (16).

One way this can be accomplished is through collegiate women’s leadership programs. When these programs are connected to political science education, this can contribute to the broader aim of strengthening the public voice. These programs

can teach democratic values of inclusiveness, deliberation, and equality. Since Hillary Clinton is a viable female candidate for US President, this is a unique time in American politics when young women are more likely to be interested in public service and government. Political Science educators need to partner with (or even establish) collegiate women's leadership programs to capitalize on this civic enthusiasm from a group who have long considered themselves external to politics, young women (Lawless and Fox 2014).

Through these types of partnerships with CWLP, political science educators can work to redefine politics in a manner that engages women as civic leaders. These alliances can lead to increased civic engagement broadly speaking. If women's leadership programs focus too narrowly on professional development without institutional analysis (business emphasis) or focus too narrowly on institutional analysis without providing enough practical application (feminist theory emphasis), students may not be able to maximize their potential as transformational leaders. Thus, I suggest that the expertise of political science educators can offer a unique approach to link differing approaches to women's leadership in a manner that will have a positive impact on both the individual student and the broader community.

Creating a Cohesive College Women's Leadership Program Curriculum

Given the wide array of college women's leadership programs, I suggest that establishing a set of shared curriculum objectives would help create greater theoretical cohesion. These learning objectives will both advance women's leadership and civic engagement principles. Effective CWLP will require three

components: 1) cohesive theoretical foundation; 2) substantive community engagement; and 3) emphasize democratic learning and civic engagement.

First, college women's leadership programs must be grounded by a cohesive theoretical foundation. This cohesive curriculum needs to emphasize theories of *identity* and *institutions*, drawing heavily from feminist scholarship. By understanding and exploring the construction of one's own identity, students' deepen their personal sense of self, which lays the groundwork for fostering a sustainable leadership identity (DeRue & Ashford 2010). The sexual objectification of women is one of the most pervasive obstacles to women's equality (Bernard, Gervais, Allen, Campomizzi, and Klein 2012) and leads to an internalization of gender stereotypes. Building self-affirmative narratives can be an effective method to reduce the negative impact of stereotype threat. Martens, Greenberg, and Schimel (2006), in a study testing the impact of internalized stereotypes (referred to as stereotype threat in psychology) on women's math test performance, found that women who partook in self-affirming exercises were able to reduce the impact of stereotype threats on their test scores. Thus, I suggest that an effective CWLP curriculum needs to strengthen women's internal sense of self and external professional skills at the individual level. At the institutional level, the CWLP curriculum will also ensure that student's understand how to analyze institutions, from a gendered perspective. Studies of institutions, drawing from political science, organization psychology, and sociology, will best prepare students to navigate and transform structures of gender discrimination.

Second, CWLP need to have forms of substantive community engagement. I suggest that this comes in the form of 1) supervised internships that require reflection and critical analysis and 2) mentorships/sponsorships by women engaged in the community/profession. Experiential learning is vital for all college graduates to gain success in their fields of interest. This is particularly critical for women's leadership since role models of women leaders, particularly in politics, are far fewer in number. Business studies repeatedly show how women's professional networks have a significant effect on women's professional trajectory (Ibarra, Carter, & Silva 2010). Mentorships provide college students with personal role models and career coaches.

Third, democratic learning should be a central objective of the program. This can be achieved through many avenues. For example, the Institute for Women's Leadership at Rutgers and the Athena Center for Leadership Studies at Barnard require that the senior scholars conduct applied research project for the final. In these community engagement projects, students partnered with local organizations to provide needed research or programs. This public engagement research assignment instills the students with a greater sense of democratic responsibility and empowers them as agents of change and scholars. At Rutgers and Barnard, I observed how these civic engagement research projects also improve the students' risk-taking and problem-solving skills as well as deepen their sense of community accountability.

The three requirements of a cohesive theoretical foundation, a substantive community engagement dimension, and an emphasis on democratic learning will

establish cohesion amongst collegiate women's leadership programs. Within each of these three central components, there is still space for each campus and university to create their own tailored program. Political Science educators can offer a rich perspective towards the civic engagement component of these programs and should be involved in their construction and oversight.

Conclusion

The report "A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future" calls upon every college and university to prioritize civic ethos, civic literacy, civic inquiry, and to advance civic action as lifelong practice in its students. These principles will then "cultivate more informed, engaged, and responsible citizens while also contributing to economic vitality, more equitable and flourishing communities, and the overall civic health of the nation,"(20).

Collegiate women's leadership programs (CWLP) are a platform to advance civic engagement by improving women's self-efficacy as community leaders. This requires a cohesive theoretical foundation and substantive community engagement. At present, CWLP are springing up on campuses nationwide but there is little consistency in how they are designed. I suggest that a connection to political science will offer this ground for cohesion. By staying connected to political science programs, students will not only gain professional skills (interview, negotiation, and communication tips) but also necessary civic skills (community problem-solving, citizenship, justice, and equality).

In sum, collegiate women's leadership programs will succeed if there is a cohesive theoretical foundation, requires substantive community engagement, and culminates with an applied research project that prioritizes democratic learning. Collegiate women's leadership programs (CWLP) can both increase gender parity in decision-making positions and strengthen civic engagement on college campuses. As many colleges and universities have already discovered, women's leadership programs are excellent bridges into community engagement, citizenship, and public service. These programs can help elevate new civic voices so that they too can become part of the heavenly chorus of pluralist heaven (Schattschneider 1960).

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