Bridging the leadership gap

Women are well represented as campus administrators but not when it comes to the presidency.

Community college leaders

![Bar chart showing the percentage of female presidents and female executives/administrators/managers by race-ethnicity.]

- Total: Female presidents 36%, Female executives/administrators/managers 56%
- American Indian: Female presidents 31%, Female executives/administrators/managers 58%
- Asian or Hawaiian Pacific Islander: Female presidents 45%, Female executives/administrators/managers 54%
- Black or African-American: Female presidents 43%, Female executives/administrators/managers 61%
- Hispanic or Latino: Female presidents 43%, Female executives/administrators/managers 54%
- White: Female presidents 33%, Female executives/administrators/managers 55%

Race-ethnicity

Source: AACC data analysis of Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Fall 2011 Employees by primary occupation, salary categories, race/ethnicity and gender survey file.


Community colleges are challenged in responding to a leadership crisis. Roughly three-quarters of community college presidents surveyed in 2012 indicated that they plan to retire within the next 10 years. The wave is already surging. Based on analysis of AACC’s membership database, over the past few years about 600 community colleges have hired new CEOs. Although colleges strive for diversity at all levels, data show a gender gap when comparing executive/administrative/manAGERial positions and the presidency. In 2011, 56 percent of community college executive/administrative/manAGERial staff were women, but they comprised only 36 percent of college CEOs. Among women, African-Americans held more leadership positions compared to other race-ethnic groups.

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