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Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

MAKING HISTORY AND OVERCOMING CHALLENGES: THE CAREER PATHWAYS  
AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE PROVOSTS IN THE  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

A dissertation proposal submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in Leadership, Administration, and Policy

by

Sevetlana S. Pirjan

July, 2016

Linda Purrington, Ed.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Sevetlana S. Pirjan

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Doctoral Committee:

Linda Purrington, Ed.D., Dissertation Chairperson

Conchita Y. Battle, Ed.D.

Robert Barner, Ph.D.

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation study to my wonderful parents for their inspiration and care without which this accomplishment would not have been possible. My father knew his daughters had a bright future; he decided to move from an Islamic Republic Country where women did not have equal opportunities to make sure his daughters could have the chance to become educated and successful.

To my grandmother, Bani, who always believed in me and motivated me to continue my education. Unfortunately, she passed away before I finished my first semester at Pepperdine University. However, her hard work motivated me to complete my degree.

To my loving, caring, and supportive family: my parents, my sister, and my brother in law, my niece, and nephew who have had supported me unconditionally through my journey. Thank you for always believing in me and understanding why I was away from family functions.

To my tennis coach in high school Lynn Santamaria, who saw leadership in me and believed in me, and pushed me to apply to a 4-year university.

Lastly to the California State University Northridge's Education Opportunity Program (EOP). EOP believed in me and gave me an opportunity to attend a 4-year university. If it were not for this program, I would not be completing this degree. Thank you CSUN EOP!



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## VITA

**Academic Preparation**

Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA 2016  
 Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership, Administration and Policy

California State University Northridge, Northridge, CA 2007  
 Master of Art in Education, Leadership Policy Studies: Higher Education

California State University Northridge, Northridge, CA 2004  
 Bachelor of Arts in Art: Graphic Design/Illustration

**Professional Experience**

California State University Northridge, Northridge, 2012-Present  
 Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication: Student Resource  
 Center/Educational Opportunity Program  
 Undergraduate Academic Advisor

California State University Northridge, Northridge, 2004-2012  
 Department of Art  
 Undergraduate Academic Advisor

**Professional Affiliations**

National Academic Advising Association  
 Armenian International Women's Association

## ABSTRACT

The California State University (CSU) system is the largest public university system in United States. In 2014, female student population was 56% and 42% were male. Overall, there are higher percentage of female students than male students in the CSU system, yet there are only 10 female Provosts in the CSU system. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and describe the career journeys of women Provosts in the CSU system in order to learn more about: (a) what factors have motivated these women to executive leadership roles in the CSU system, (b) their career pathways, (c) any obstacles they may have encountered and addressed on their career pathways, and, (d) any mentoring support they may have received on their career pathways. This study described the career journeys of seven female CSU Provosts.

This study was a qualitative portraiture design. Interviews consisting of 16 questions were conducted in person or over the phone. Nine themes emerged from the analysis of the interview. The themes were prior leadership experience, the mission of the CSU system, traditional and non-traditional career pathways, being female, balancing family and career, gender-based obstacles, formal and informal mentoring, and lastly female mentoring.

This study had four conclusions. First, CSU women Provosts concluded that the CSU mission and vision motivated women to their current role and the connection to the system. Second, the CSU system supports both traditional and non-traditional pathways to the Provost position. Third, like other women leaders, CSU Provost continue to face challenges in their executive career pathways. The main conclusion for the challenges was balancing family and career, in addition to gender-based obstacles. Finally, the study concluded that women CSU Provosts had role models and different styles of mentorship throughout their education and career pathway towards leadership roles.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **Background of Study**

In the United States as of 2011, “57 percent of all college students are female, but only 26 percent of full-time professors are women” (Chin, 2011, p. 2). Moreover, there are fewer females than males in college executive positions, such as those of President and Provost (Bowman & Bastedo, 2009). “Only 23 percent of university Presidents, including 14 percent of Presidents at doctoral degree-granting institutions, are women” (The White House project report, 2009, p. 10). Although females have become the majority of the student population of colleges and the number of women faculty and staff members continues to increase, the number of females in executive positions has not increased proportionally. This trend is also evident in the California State University system.

The California State University (CSU) system is the largest 4-year public university system in the United States, with 23 campuses statewide, 437,000 students, and 44,000 faculty and staff members. Every year, the CSU system graduates approximately 81,000 students with bachelor’s degrees, 19,000 with Master’s degrees, and 334 with Doctorate degrees. Moreover, one in 10 employees in California is a CSU graduate, and the system sustains 150,000 workers in the state of California (CSU, 2014a). Additionally, the majority of the teachers in the state of California are graduates of the CSU system, which is essential in keeping with the original objective of the CSU system to educated future teachers (Gerth, 2010).

Based on the CSU’s mission statement to ensure accessibility for all students, one-third of the student population is composed of first-generation college students (CSU, 2014a). Furthermore, more than half of the graduates are Latino, African American, or Native American students (CSU, 2013). The CSU system’s student population has diversified over the years

regarding race and gender. A survey conducted in 2008 found that 40% of the students who graduated from the CSU system had English as their second language (CSU, 2008). From 2005-2010, the Asian student population in the CSU system has grown by 17%, African American student numbers have increased by 7%, Mexican American student numbers have raised by 30%, and White student numbers have decreased by 15%. Regarding the ratio of female to male students in the CSU system, males represented the majority during the 1990s (Gerth, 2010). Again, from 2005-2010, however, this trend has changed to only a minuscule difference in the male and female population numbers (CSU, 2014a; Gerth, 2010). Currently, 56% of students are women and 42% are male (CSU, 2014a). Overall, there is higher percentage of women students than male students in the CSU system.

The CSU system has 45,460 employees; this includes both full-time and part-time employees (CSU, 2014b). Of that population, 23,000 are faculty, 12,248 are professional technicians, 4,842 work in office administration positions, 2,162 work in a service occupation, 1,639 are employed in construction/maintenance/transportation, and 1,423 are employed in management. Concerning employee race and gender, 28% are White males, 16% are male minorities, 31% are White females, 12% are female minorities, and the remaining 5% are unknown. Overall, female employees occupy a slightly higher percentage in the CSU system than male employees. Nonetheless, in certain areas of employment, the numbers change tremendously. For example, in office administration, the employees are predominantly female (83%), and 13% are male. In the occupation service department this proportion varies significantly, with 63% males and 32% females. In management roles, there is a marginally higher percentage of males (51%) over females (45%; CSU, 2013).

In the CSU system's organizational structure, each campus has a President and a vice President. The following four areas fall under the Vice President's jurisdiction: (a) Academic Council, (b) Advancement, (c) Business and Finance, and (d) Student Affairs. In the academic year 2014-2015, there were five female Presidents and 15 male Presidents, and there were nine female Provosts and 14 male Provosts. The academic council consists of all the college Deans for each campus, with a total of 47 female Deans and 127 male Deans in the entire system. The university advancement office deals with alumni, the community, and corporation donations and resources for each campus; currently, this office consists of 9 females and 14 males. Lastly, the business and finance office has nine females and 14 males, and the student affairs office has six females and 17 males in executive roles (CSU, 2014b). Thus, based on the number of students, faculty members, and staff members, there are more females than males in the system. In terms of executive roles, however, there is an evident underrepresentation of females in leadership roles in all areas and on each of the CSU campuses. This underrepresentation is especially apparent in the President and Provost positions.

Although in the last 10 years the number of female students and employees has increased throughout the CSU system, the number of women in executive leadership positions has not increased at the same rate. Thomas, Davies, and Harly (as cited in Collings, Conner, McPherson, Midson, & Wilson, 2011) indicated that a significant number of female students are earning higher degrees. Nevertheless, if the number of female professors, researchers, and higher-level leaders in academia continues to remain low, this trend will translate to limited female executive roles in the future. Therefore, it is important to ensure more representation of female leadership on campuses with higher numbers of female students.

Currently, there is no literature regarding women who have risen to their executive roles in the CSU system and the specific challenges they may have encountered on their career paths. However, there is parallel literature regarding other higher education institutions and female executive roles in those institutions. Some female executives have indicated that one of the main challenges they have faced in their attempts to rise to leadership roles has been the undiversified nature of organizations as well as their struggle to maintain a balance between work and family (Collings et al., 2011). Also, women have indicated that some policies set by their universities have hindered their progress toward executive roles (Baltodano, Carlson, Jackson, & Mitchell, 2012). Lastly, some women have indicated that some universities subscribe to the conventional dogma that believes only males can occupy leadership roles. Women in these universities have found it challenging to change the institution's perception (Baltodano et al., 2012; Collings et al., 2011).

In society, women have overcome certain leadership challenges through their participation in professional development programs, specifically leadership conferences and mentoring programs for women. Women leaders in universities indicated that when they started their careers as department chairs, they had opportunities to attend conferences and professional development programs for women. Additionally, they were able to interact with other senior women leaders who shared insights about how to overcome challenges, receiving both formal and informal mentoring (Baltodano et al., 2012; Collings et al., 2011). In the CSU system, each campus has the option to provide professional development and programs to enhance female leadership. For example, California State University, Northridge (CSUN, 2014) hosts a 1-day training where female faculty and leaders speak and give information sessions on female leadership and promotion of female leadership. Also, CSUN Academic Affairs has a program



where female faculty and staff can apply to be part of a 2-week program that serves to advance women leaders in higher education administration.

### **Problem Statement**

California has the largest 4-year public state university system in the United States (Gerth, 2010). Currently, the CSU system has a female population of over 50%, and a faculty and staff with 50% females as well. Out of the 23 campuses, five have female Presidents and nine have female Provosts (CSU, 2014b). Extensive career pathway studies have focused on what has attracted Presidents and Provosts to pursue leadership roles in higher education, but no related studies have been conducted specifically for female Provosts in the CSU system. Therefore, there is a need to study and describe: (a) what factors motivated Provosts to pursue their roles, (b) their career pathways, (c) any obstacles they may have encountered and addressed in their career pathways, and (d) any mentoring support they may have received along their career pathways.

### **Statement of the Purpose**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and describe the career journeys of women Provosts in the CSU system in order to learn more about: (a) what factors motivated these women to executive leadership roles in the CSU system, (b) their career pathways, (c) any obstacles they may have encountered and addressed on their career pathways, and (d) any mentoring support they may have received on their career pathways.

### **The Importance of the Study**

Women have struggled to achieve equal rights both in education and in the workforce since the 1600s (Solomon, 1985; Tisinger, 1991). In relation to education, the number of female students in undergraduate institutions has increased, yet only 16% of Presidents of universities

and colleges are women (Chin, 2011). In the 2013-2014 academic year at CSU, the largest 4-year public system in the United States, there were only five female Presidents and nine female Provosts across 23 campuses (CSU, 2014b). The historic trend has been that men typically serve as CSU Presidents. However, this trend is slowly changing, although more remains to be done to achieve gender equality at this executive level. Broad career pathway studies have been conducted regarding what factors have attracted Presidents and Provosts to their leadership roles in higher education in general. However, no studies have been conducted specifically on CSU female Provosts. Therefore, the need existed to study and describe: (a) what factors motivated Provosts to their current roles, (b) their career pathways, (c) any obstacles they may have encountered and addressed on their career pathways, and (d) any mentoring support they may have received on their career pathways.

The outcomes from this study might provide a better understanding of career pathways that lead females to become executive leaders in the CSU system. Also, the study might add to the literature on women's history and the success of female leaders in a field once predominantly occupied by males. Lastly, it is hoped that the outcomes of this study will support and motivate women in all levels of education to pursue leadership roles.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Chief Executive Officer (CEO):* The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is the highest-ranking person in an organization. Primary responsibilities include developing and implementing high-level strategies, making major decisions, and managing the overall operation of resources. Also, the CEO is responsible for communicating with the boards of directors in the organization (Glick, 2011).

*Traditional Pathway to President:* In higher education, an individual begins his/her career as a faculty member and would seek promotion through the ranks to full professor, then department chair. Seeking promotion at that juncture, the faculty member may branch off to an administrative position, such as Vice President of a university division, or may take the pathway to college Dean by way of associate Dean. The next logical step toward a presidency might be Provost, unless the Provost position is desired as an end in itself (Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001).

*California State University (CSU):* The mission of the CSU is to offer undergraduate preparation and general education programs; it offers baccalaureate and master's degree programs, and, at some campuses, Doctorates in education and physical therapy. Diversity and individual strength characterize the campuses and academic programs in the CSU. The variety of teaching approaches among all campuses keeps the CSU (and American higher education) vigorous and creative. Varied curriculum, course content, and teaching styles are fundamental to the academic freedom that drives the ongoing progress and improvement of CSU's baccalaureate programs (CSU, n.d.; Gerth, 2010).

*Chancellor of CSU:* As the leader of the CSU system, the Chancellor contributes to the CSU campuses by guiding the missions of the campuses and working with each campus to develop new policies system-wide. The Chancellor coordinates academic areas, advancement, budget, capital planning, human resources, and legal and technological operations, in addition to representing the CSU to state and national policymakers (CSU, n.d.).

*Vice Chancellors/Senior Executives of CSU (VC/SE):* The Vice Chancellors/Senior Executives of CSU (VC/SE) report directly to the CSU board of trustees. Still, the Chancellor selects and appoints the individuals who hold these positions. The particular focus of this role is to oversee Academic Affairs, business affairs, technology, physical plant development, employee

relations, state and federal affairs, legal affairs, audit and advisor services, and university communications (CSU, n.d.).

*President of the CSU:* Presidents of CSUs have the responsibility of serving as the chief executive officer (CEO) of their respective institutions, and are the primary liaisons between the university and the greater community. As such, Presidents are the public *face* of the institution. Presidents maintain close working relationships with the CSU's system-wide office, reporting to the Chancellor and representing the campus as members of the system-wide Executive Council. The President manages campus operations, develops plans for the future, sets campus priorities, and oversees the hiring and support of staff and teaching faculty (CSU, n.d.).

*Provost of the CSU:* The Provosts of the CSU provide leadership and support services for faculty, staff, and students. Also, the Provost oversees Academic Affairs, university advancement, university budget and enrollment, and student affairs. The Provost facilitates the professional development of faculty in all phases of their careers as teacher-scholars. Lastly, the Provost performs activities related to administering financial, physical, and technological resources, and works on matters of shared governance with the academic senate and other constituencies (CSU, n.d.).

*Mentor:* A mentor is an experienced individual who is willing to share his/her knowledge with someone less experienced in a relationship of trust. The role of the mentor is to be a transitional figure in an individual's development (Brewerton, 2002).

### **Theoretical Framework Summary**

This study of female Provosts in the CSU system was guided by one particular area of feminist theory: liberal feminism. Liberal feminism asserts that males and females are not fundamentally different and thus women should have equal rights as men (Beasley, 1999).

Liberal feminism focuses on socially constructed male roles and sets out to establish equal rights, autonomy, and access for women in all areas of society (Beasley, 1999; Hirschman, 1993; Marilley, 1996). Ultimately, according to liberal feminism, females and males should have the same rights, roles, and responsibilities within society (Arnold, 2012). For this study, since higher education leadership roles have been established based on male style leadership, understanding the experiences of CSU female Presidents and Provosts in a male dominated field will help convey an understanding of their journeys to leadership roles. In Chapter 2 of this study, the theoretical framework will be discussed more fully.

### **Research Questions**

This study explored the following research questions:

1. What factors have motivated women Provosts in the California State University system to pursue their leadership roles?
2. How do California State University women Provosts describe the career pathways they have followed to achieve their leadership positions?
3. What challenges and obstacles, if any, have female California State University Provosts experienced in their career pathways and how have they addressed such challenges and obstacles?
4. What mentoring experiences, if any, have California State University women Provosts received along their career pathways?

### **Delimitations**

Delimitations are parameters that are specifically set by the researcher (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). The delimitations of study were the following: (a) this research was conducted in

California, (b) interviews were one on one and conducted face-to-face or via telephone, and (c) participants were delimited to female Provosts of the CSU system.

### **Limitations**

Limitations are aspects of the study over which the researcher has little or no control. (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). The study was not meant to make generalizations about Provosts in other university systems. The study was limited to an examination of the experiences of CSU Provosts, and may or may not be used for future leaders in other areas of academia as a guide to making progress in their careers. Finally, there may be limitations in scope due to the nature of the data gathering process (i.e., interviews, etc.).

### **Assumptions**

According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), assumptions are purposes, grounds, and suggestions that are accepted as functioning for the purpose of the study. For this study, there were several assumptions. The researcher assumed that:

1. Women are and can be accomplished and successful executive leaders of higher educational institutions.
2. All participants were honest in providing information about their life experiences and career pathways.
3. Participants recalled accurately and shared their experiences to the best of their abilities.

### **Organization of the Study**

This qualitative study is presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 provides a brief history of the topic, in addition to explaining the importance of the study and defining key terms. The chapter also presents the problem statement, purpose statement, research questions, theoretical

framework, delimitations, limitations, and assumptions of the study. Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature related to (a) history of female education, (b) CSU system organizational structure, (c) what factors motivated women to their roles as Presidents and Provosts of universities and community colleges, (d) career paths and challenges, (e) the influence of mentoring on their career pathways, and (f) university culture and environmental support. Chapter 3 explains and defines the methodology employed for this qualitative study. Subsequently, Chapter 4 presents the stories of women who currently serve as Provosts in the CSU, with a focus on their individual career journeys. Lastly, Chapter 5 analyzes the data and presents conclusions and recommendations.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and describe the career journeys of women Provosts in the CSU system in order to learn more about: (a) what factors have motivated these women to executive leadership roles in the CSU system, (b) their career pathways, (c) any obstacles they may have encountered and addressed on their career pathways, and (d) any mentoring support they may have received on their career pathways. This chapter presents a review of the literature relevant to this study. The literature review is organized into seven major sections and concludes with a chapter summary. The first section addresses the historical background of women in higher education with subtopics in: (a) the 1600s-1900, (b) the feminist movement, (c) the World War II era, and (d) women in higher education today. The second major section details the theoretical framework for this study, liberal feminism. The third major section describes the CSU system. The fourth major section outlines factors that have motivated women to serve in executive roles. The fifth major section discusses women Presidents and Provosts and the career pathways they followed to achieve their current positions. The sixth section depicts challenges and obstacles female Presidents and Provosts experienced as university leaders and how they have addressed such problems and barriers. Finally, the seventh section addresses the mentorship women Presidents and Provosts received on their career pathways.

### **Historical Background Higher Education for Women**

**Overview 1600s-1900.** During the 1600s, females were not allowed to attend any colleges in the colonies that would later become the United States. However, by the time of the American Revolution, First Lady Abigail Adams suggested that new laws should be enacted to allow females to attend institutions of higher education. She spoke publicly regarding equality,



specifically for females. Changes started to occur when Abigail Adams stated that power does not solely rely on men (Lowe, 2010):

I cannot say I think the public is very generous to the ladies: for, while you are proclaiming peace and good will toward men, emancipating all nations, you insist on retaining absolute power over wives. However, you must remember that arbitrary power is like most other things which are very hard, very liable to be broken. Moreover, notwithstanding all your wise laws and maxims we have it in our power, not only to free ourselves but to subdue our master and with violence, throw both your natural and legal authority at your feet. (Adams, as cited in Lowe, 2010, p. 124)

The changes she brought forth allowed movement and growth in education for females between 1790 and 1850 and laid the foundation for women's higher education. In 1783, the first coeducational academy was opened in Greenfield Hill, Connecticut. For the next 50 years, female higher education grew in demand due to society being more open to females receiving an education. Shortly after this, in the early 1900s, the popularity of public education, common schools, high schools, and colleges for women reached a high point. A key factor for this was the Civil War and individuals who gave attention to equal rights, leading to the development of women's education (Solomon, 1985). Although most universities in the northern states were beginning to support the idea of women in higher education, the southern states did not. The first eight state universities to accept female students were Iowa, Wisconsin, Kansas, Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Michigan, and California. With more universities joining the movement, additional issues arose such as curriculum content and whether or not female professors could teach courses (Solomon, 1985).

Although schools were starting to open their doors to females during World War I, most university graduates supported only the traditionally feminine roles such as teaching home economics, social work and in rare cases, working as college professors. Other fields began to open to females, but there were still fewer females entering the business world than there were performing traditionally female roles in the home. One of the roles universities played in bringing women into the intellectual and social processes of modern higher education was to allow increasing numbers of students, teachers, and scholars in higher education. Although student numbers increased, the small number of female administrators meant little encouragement for female students who might see these administrators as role models. The minimal encouragement stemmed from the fact that coeducation positions for administration were limited, and in all women's colleges, Deans had multiple positions such as teaching and advising, in addition to serving as Dean (Solomon, 1985).

**Feminist movement.** Throughout the years, the development of higher education for women has paralleled the feminist movement. From 1860 to 1880, the pioneers of women in higher education came forward. They were mainly single-minded in advocating that women obtain a higher education. From 1890 into the 1900s, these pioneers became more mentally and physically forceful. The third generation of pioneers, from 1910-1920, was known as the *new women*; they were more refined, responsive to social freedom, and outspoken as the *flappers* of 1920s influenced them. Flappers were liberal, outspoken, and unafraid of attention (Solomon, 1985). Due to their revolutionary behavior and dress, some colleges began mandating dress codes. Their free-spirited attitude would lead educators to bring sex education into the curriculum, although it was a controversial subject. From the 1930s and every year since, there has been an 8-10% increase in female enrollment in U.S. colleges and universities. Since there

was a high increase of women attending universities, the Dean of the University of California (UC) stated that there should be a balance between females and males in both economic and social aspects of the student body and that more public state universities and colleges should be supportive of female attendance in higher education (Solomon, 1985).

**World War II: A turning point for women in higher education.** World War II brought a more positive attitude toward females in the workforce and higher education, as men were abroad fighting the war and women entered the industrial workforce in large numbers. In higher education, women's attendance increased as well. This was an important turning point for the future of education that would persist for the next few decades. At the end of the war when military men returned home and with the end of the Great Depression, women faced pressure to return home and to the traditional roles of marriage. However, those who enjoyed their place in the workforce began moving toward having both a career and family (Solomon, 1985).

Opposition to women in the workforce led to greater feminist activism. Some universities formed student groups for women who wanted the freedom for which their male counterparts had fought overseas. After the war, the Government Issue (GI) bill passed, creating funding for men to enroll in universities. This influx of males into colleges and universities meant limited enrollment for women. Female enrollment dropped by about 20%. However, numbers would eventually balance again, and toward the end of the century, female enrollment in higher education in the U.S. was back to approximately 27% (Solomon, 1985).

The 1970s were a high peak for women's education; for example, in 1972 exclusive policy was passed that gave women right to be part of sports in universities. By 1984, there were 10 times more women in sports at the university level than before. In 1974, women who attended universities began receiving federal funding to buy materials and implement programs. The

programs that were implemented included women's studies departments and organizations supporting women. Finally, in 1977, the National Women's Studies Association hosted the first professional organization conference, which was related to women who wanted to learn about and gender inequality topics (Dicker, 2008).

**Women in higher education: Present day.** Currently in the United States, there is still a significant gender inequity among college students, but the balance has shifted for women; as of 2015, there are 4,645,321 male students and 5,917,734 female students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). However, women are still in the minority in executive roles in higher education. In the CSU system, the gender ratio among male and female Presidents and Provosts is 3% to 23%, respectively, even though female students outnumber males (CSU, 2014b).

### **Women in Leadership Roles in Higher Education**

In 1970, the Ford Foundation created a forum to discuss and provide resources for underrepresented women in higher education leadership (Tinsley, 1985). From this forum, other small foundations were formed to provide financial help for promoting female administration and advancement in the field. By 1973, the University of Michigan established the first administration for the advancement of women in academia in areas such as collective bargaining, legal issues in higher education, and personnel management (Mitchell, 1993). Although females have slowly started applying to positions in higher administration, some females are still fulfilling two roles such as having several administration roles and being a faculty member, which makes it more difficult for them to move forward in higher administration roles (Tomàs, Lavie, Duran, & Guillamon, 2010).

After the establishment of different academic organizations for women, other female groups began to support and promote female leadership. From 1975 to 1983, a high number of

women became academic administrators, specifically in smaller universities. After 1983, larger universities followed the pattern of promoting women in administration. From 1983 to the present, changes have occurred in higher education administration, yet there is still a lack of women represented in the university setting (Tomàs et al., 2010; Mendoz, 2010).

**Leadership.** According to Gardner (as cited in Bolman & Deal, 2008), “Managers do things right, leaders do the right thing” (p. 343). A leader’s purpose is to make a change and ensure that the vision of the organization is enacted and aligned with the mission. Leaders also make decisions for the long term, which will impact the future. Currently, leaders and leadership are still often defined in masculine terms, and many theories of leadership emphasize stereotypically masculine qualities (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Miner, as cited in Eagly, 2007). Most leadership theories have been applied to singular approaches that can be traditionally defined as male leadership styles (Irby, Brown, Duffy, & Trautman, 2002). Most traditional leadership theories have been formed and shaped based on male leadership styles. For example, one can describe leadership styles as follows: punishments for poor behavior, rewards for exemplary performance, and dictating clear expectations and guidelines for a structured, hierarchical, give-and-take between leaders and followers (Burns, as cited in Lazzari, Colarossi, & Collins, 2009).

**Leadership styles.** Organizations and teams have been successful based on the values of strategic leaders (Greer & Carte, 2013). Similarly, Rath and Conchie (2008) stated that to have a great leader, must verify the strengths of their team. Greer and Carte (2013) delineated the following leadership styles: (a) transactional, (b) transformational, (c) charismatic, (d) authentic, (e) servant, and (f) responsible leadership. In transactional leadership, a leader provides rewards to a follower based on his/her progress. Alternatively, transformational leadership is about developing a vision and helping the organization adapt easily to that vision. Charismatic

leadership involves inspiring others to become role models for the common vision. Authentic leaders demonstrate self-awareness and relational transparency, which helps build trust. A servant leader places the good of the organization over his/her own self-interest. In addition, a servant leader values and develops the current organization through leading by example. Finally, responsible leadership views workers as stakeholders and is mainly based on financial performance. For the purposes of this study, transformational leadership is further highlighted subsequently.

***Transformational leadership.*** Bolman and Deal (2008) emphasized that transformational leaders tend to help the organization improve and meet universal needs and purposes. B.M. Bass and Bass (2009) described transformational leadership as the process of changing and transforming individuals, both leaders and followers. Leadership is transformational when a leader engages with followers in such a way that the connection raises the motivation level and morality of both the leader and the follower. Transformational leadership moves followers to achieve more than what is expected of them and helps develop followers to their fullest potential. The literature has found that most female leaders use the transformational style in addition to offering support and empathy (Basham, 2012; Ramsunda, as cited in Hough & Holland, 2010). Lastly, organizations that promote female leadership have the vision of transformational leaders.

***Female leadership.*** In general, traditional female leadership traits include kindness, concern, warmth, and gentleness, in contrast to the male traits of high aggressiveness and self-direction (Duehr & Bono, as cited in Eagly, 2007). According to Bolman and Deal (2008), men have indicated that female leadership presents an advantage due to the characteristics of their leadership style. Followers believe women have higher attribute and lower political characteristics, in addition to warmth and being supportive. When confronted with traditionally

masculine leadership traits, female leaders sometimes find that they need to adapt to the culture of the organization they are leading (Longman & Anderson, 2011). Since traditional leadership was modeled after and designed for males, the model is defined as elite, self-reliant, and focused on promoting independence.

As stated previously, although a vast shift has occurred enabling female students to attend higher education in all subject matters, there is still a lack of leadership roles for females in all many fields such as higher education. The following factors have been connected to the *glass-ceiling model* (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

- *Stereotypes associate leadership with maleness.* Both males and females connect to leadership as a result of characteristics originally established by male leaders (Schei, as cited in Bolman & Deal, 2008).
- *Women walk a tightrope of conflicting expectations.* Due to set beliefs, powerful women are seen as offensive, unfeminine, and outrageous (Keller & Belikins, as cited in Bolman & Deal, 2008). For example, when male leaders express anger they are viewed positively; however, for female leaders, anger is viewed negatively (Brescoll & Uhlmann, as cited in Bolman & Deal, 2008).
- *Women encounter discrimination.* Fairy tales and prior societal norms have shaped individuals' thinking about leadership: namely that men are more suited to leadership than women. Females being portrayed as evil or weak has made the path to leadership roles for females more competitive (Valiam, Eagly, & Carl, as cited in Bolman & Deal, 2008).
- *Women pay a higher price for leadership.* Compared to males, females have typically received smaller salaries for the same leadership roles. Approximately 70% of

females have said their biggest barrier has been being responsible for their family while also balancing their leadership roles and career. In addition, balancing a career with the obligations of housework and taking care of children affects women strongly (Morris, as cited in Bolman & Deal, 2008).

Subordinates typically assert that women and men have both similarities and differences in their leadership styles (Carless et al., as cited in Bolman & Deal, 2008). For example, females show higher levels of integrity and males show more assertiveness (Hoyt, 2010). Males are more likely to promote themselves for leadership than are women (Bowles & McGinn, as cited in Hoyt, 2010). Based on stereotypes, female leadership tends to be defined as more transformational, which is more apt to bring greater engagement, support, and mentorship to others (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Hoyt, 2010).

### **Professional Development**

Different approaches to professional development have helped women with their advancement in their career pathways and to overcome challenges. Even though not all organizations will provide professional development specifically for women, some women will take it upon themselves to utilize professional development opportunities to connect with other female leaders who may share similar challenges. The following organizations have provided and continue to provide professional development for women. Specifically in the CSU system, CSUN gives faculty and staff the opportunity to apply for Higher Education Resource Services (HERS) every year.

**Higher Education Resource Services (HERS).** The mission of HERS is to create a safe community of women leaders through different leadership development programs that focus on gender equity within the broader community. Since 1976, the organization has opened their



doors to women faculty, staff, and administration in higher education to develop their leadership skills. The professional development is 12 days long, with a curriculum that provides women with knowledge of competencies for prioritizing and maximizing institutional resources. In addition to developing leadership skills, HERS provides networking and community building among other leaders and females to sustain female leadership in higher education (Higher Education Resource Services [HERS], n.d.).

**American Council on Education (ACE).** One of the most well-known organizations in higher education is ACE. The organization represents 2 and 4-year colleges, private and public universities, and non-profit and for-profit entities. The organization has leadership programs and activities for current and future department chairs, administrative leaders, and women of color. ACE has two forums specifically for women; both are offered as 3-day sessions. One is the National Women's Leadership Forum, and the second is the Regional Women's Leadership Forum. The National Women's Leadership Forum provides guidance and seminars for senior-level women who are Deans and higher administration in the hopes of creating career pathways to college and university presidencies or the role of senior Dean. The Regional Women's Leadership Forum provides guidance and seminars for middle-level women leaders such as department chairs who hope to find a career pathway to college leadership roles, and attain university Dean and higher-level leadership roles (American Council on Education [ACE], n.d.).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The purpose of theory is to not to deliver a pat set of answers but rather to guide individuals and organizations to discover possibilities and keep researchers aware of the questions that need to be asked when conducting studies. Specifically, when researching a topic such as gender equity in higher education—such as women's centers, hiring, and women in

leadership roles—organizations are acting according to certain theories about power and how to best advance change (Bunch & Pollack, 1983). This research study used feminist theory, specifically liberal feminism, which outlines the gender equity initiative in education and policies (Donvan, as cited in Allan 2011).

Feminist theory had three significant waves and time periods. According to Pillow (2002), the first occurred in the mid-1800s as the women's movement initiated the right for women in the United States to vote. Actions represented the bold statement that women were equal to men in intellect, status, and rights. After a hard-won victory and period of acceptance, the appearance of stability belied the frustrations of women who did not want to be limited to motherhood and housekeeping, but who wanted to experience other careers. In the 1960s-1980s, the next wave defined to greater levels what it meant to be fully human, such as gender norms, politics, career, education, and control over reproduction (Arnold, 2012). The third wave, though less intense than the previous two, gained momentum in the 1990s to 2000s; at this time feminist worked against social instantiations for reforming equality society for women (Dicker, 2008). However, many believe this third wave has not been as successful as the previous two waves (Arnold, 2012; Pillow, 2002). With the three main waves, liberal feminism was formed.

**Liberal feminism.** Liberal feminism is sometimes referred to as the first *democratic era* and *enlightenment liberal feminism* (Donvan, as cited in Allan, 2011). Liberal feminism focuses on laws, political processes for equal voting rights, and education, as well as reproductive and domestic rights (Allan, 2011). The movement gained momentum for women in the 18th and 19th centuries and was influenced by individuals such as Marry Wollstonecraft Shelley and John Stuart, who argued that women should have the right to education (Allan, 2011).

According to Firth and Martens (2008), the purpose of education was to remove barriers for women and to make sure females had full opportunities to attend schools and had education. Firth and Martens stated that girls should have the same opportunities for education as boys. Although liberal feminist theory brings attention to female rights, it also has another purpose: to understand inequality and instigate change in areas such as racism and social and economic imbalances, as well as to address gender discrimination and sexism (Almeder, 1994).

### **California State University System**

The CSU system was formed primarily because of a statewide need to educate future teachers. The CSU system is the oldest public university in higher education in California, and the largest 4-year public university system in the United States. The first established public university was named the *San Francisco Normal School* in 1862. The system had three main time lines; the first was from the 1850s to World War I, in which eight *normal schools* were formed. Since enrollment was growing, the legislature and the governor had to rethink school expansion. From the end of the War World I to the end of World War II, the return of men from war created a higher demand for education, and the next normal school was formed in Los Angeles. The third period followed World War II and lasted a dozen years as the population was growing because of soldiers returning home, adding to the demand and political pressure to create new programs and degrees. At the same time, the UC was also developing, in addition to community colleges and vocational programs (Gerth, 2010).

With the growth of public institutions, the student population also began to increase, creating demand for public universities in all areas of California. Students began to apply for admissions; all students had to submit personal statements, males had to be 18 years old to apply, and females had to be 15. Since admission to universities was growing for each system, the

governor at the time, Pat Brown, wanted to put a structure in place, a master plan, for all of the higher education systems, including the CSU system, the UC system, and the California Community Colleges (CCCs); (Gerth, 2010).

**California Master Plan for Higher Education.** During 1940-1959, birth rates in the United States grew tremendously. This would impact higher education; specifically, in California, it meant there would be an increase in student enrollment by 35%. The Legislature and the governor's board presented to the UC, CSU, and CCC a plan to accommodate the number of enrollments. The guidelines encompassed three major areas: expansion of integration, curriculum, and standards for junior colleges, the CSU system, and the UC system (Holy, 1961). The California Master Plan for Higher Education (the Master Plan) was introduced in 1960. However, it was not approved and implemented until 1975. The Master Plan outlined the roles of the two state university systems: UC and CSU. Academic research was designated as the UC system's primary objective. The UC would also provide higher education through to the doctoral degree, as well as law, medicine, dentistry, and veterinary degrees. The CSU system was designated as a teaching institution. The CSU provided undergraduate and graduate education through master's degrees, in addition to professional teacher certifications. In 2006, the CSU system was also granted approval to award specific doctoral programs for programs such as education, so long as the degree was an affiliation with a UC or another private institution (California State Department of Education, 1960; UC Office of the President, 2007).

Lastly, the CCCs were designated in the Master Plan to support the community. They would provide vocational training as well as education for high school graduates to obtain the first 2 years of undergraduate course work, such as lower division general education or to complete an Associate of Arts degree. The CCCs would also provide continuing education for

community members who might not be interested in obtaining a degree but who wanted to enhance their educational life. Also, CCCs would provide remedial courses for English as a second language (UC Office of the President, 2007). With the Master Plan in place, by 1982, the CSU system had changed the system's name two times, from *normal school* to *state colleges* to *California State University* (Gerth, 2010).

**CSU organizational structure.** The organizational structure of the CSU has several levels. At the top of the CSU system is the Office of the Chancellor. The Chancellor oversees all 23 campuses, each of which is led by a President who reports directly to the chancellor. Each campus also has a Provost who serves as a Vice President, overseeing subdivisions of the university. The Provost also oversees faculty affairs and hiring of faculty personnel. The Chancellor does not work alone; he/she reports to the board of trustees, which has 25 members, each of whom serves for 8 years. The governor of California appoints the board members, and participants include faculty and alumni from throughout the CSU as well as two current CSU students, each of whom serves for 2 years. The board of trustees selects the Chancellor (CSU, 2014b).

The Chancellor's Cabinet consists of the Chief Academics Officer, the Chief Financial Officer, General Counsel, the Vice Chancellor of Human Resources, and the Vice Chancellor, who are selected by the Chancellor. Although the Chancellor selects the cabinet, not all members report to the Chancellor directly; the Vice Chancellor and Chief Auditor report to the board of trustees (CSU, 2014b).

The President of each campus selects her/his cabinet, which consists of Vice Presidents, an Attorney General, a Chief of Staff, Director of Finance, Director of Legislative Affairs, Director of Personal, Director of Elections, Director of Clubs and Organization, and a Director of

Environment Affairs. Based on the needs of each campus, the President may have other Assistants/Sub-directors as needed (CSU, 2014b).

### **Factors that Motivate Women to Serve in Executive Leadership Roles**

Individuals who pursue leadership roles find their motivation is empowered by social justice and challenging oppression that exists in the organization (Seligson, 2010; Vandenabeele, 2014). The aspirations of other women to pursue careers in leadership roles, as well as their current supervisors and leaders in their organizations (Campbell, Mueller, & Souza, 2010; Schuh et al., 2014; Seligson, 2010).

Valdata et al. (2008) investigated nine university Presidents, studying what attracted them to their current roles. Four of the Presidents indicated that they chose their current position based on the university's diverse culture; some even had unique cultural studies programs. One stated specifically that she accepted the position because it was the university where she first started her career. Mainly, women have accepted their current positions due to the diversity of the institution or because they had a particular connection with the organization.

Some women have indicated that believing in themselves motivated them to apply for higher positions; specifically building their self-confidence. Second, women have indicated that the environment of the university plays a crucial role in individual motivation (Cook, 2010). For example, when the university administration and culture of the university are diverse and have fewer males than the dominant leadership model, women are motivated to apply for positions (Cook, 2010; Longman & Anderson, 2011). Finally, women have also indicated that having different roles and experiences in their careers, building skills such as learning to manage higher-level budgets, and earning terminal degrees has motivated them to move to executive roles.

People skills and problem solving also helped motivate them to apply for more senior positions (Cook, 2010).

### **Career Pathways to Executive Roles**

In academia, the pathway to leadership positions for males and females is similar. Individuals start as faculty members, are promoted to tenured faculty positions, and after serving as department chairs, move on to associate Dean, Dean, higher executive positions, and then to Provost or President (Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001). Although both males and females may take similar pathways to reach their positions, it has been noted that for females, the culture usually demands a greater time commitment (Eagly, 2007; Schneider, Carden, Francisco, & Jones, 2011).

Female Presidents of community colleges often take nontraditional pathways to leadership. Some female Presidents have indicated that although they began their careers as faculty, they didn't advance to chair and Dean positions. They went on to other executive positions such as Dean of student affairs or Academic Affairs. Other female leaders recommended if one doesn't take a traditional pathway, to have variety of executive roles that would lead her to the level of President of a community college (Dentith & Peterlin, 2011; Wolverton, Bower, & Hyle, 2009). Wolverton et al. (2009) interviewed 10 female community college Presidents in the U.S.; all indicated that if it had not been for someone crossing their path motivating them to move forward, they would not be serving as a President now. For the CSU system specifically, no studies have been conducted showcasing the career pathways of women Presidents or Provosts who have served in the system.

In summary, male and female Presidents take similar career paths to leadership roles. For example, individuals start as faculty members, move forward to tenured faculty, and then serve

as department chair. After serving in this role for a few years, they move forward to associate Dean or college Dean, then move forward to higher administration positions such as Provost or President (Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001; Schneider et al., 2011). Although both males and females have similar career pathways, it takes longer for females to get to the higher administrative positions (Dentith & Peterlin, 2011; Wolverton et al., 2009). For example, some females stated that having a family makes it take longer to become tenured. Others said that some departments may be male dominant; therefore, it takes them longer to move forward (Wolverton et al., 2009).

### **Career Challenges to Executive Roles**

The term *glass ceiling* is used to describe barriers and challenges faced by women in the workforce. It represents a level through which they cannot break to move into higher positions (Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986). Although this term was coined to describe women in the business field, the struggle for higher positions has occurred in all work areas, including education (Berrey, 2014; Shapiro, Ingols, & Blake-Beard, 2008). In general, women have experienced challenges such as being perceived as insubordinate when they speak up (Rappeport, as cited in Hunt, 2010). Women leaders have faced political power challenges in all fields, specifically in the fields that have predominantly been driven by male leadership (Shakeshaft, Brown, Irby, Grogan, & Ballenger, 2007). The White House project report (2009) indicated that although it seems the workforce has shifted toward female leadership in higher education recently, there has been a slow progression among females who attain tenured faculty positions and executive roles.

The literature states that the slow progress could be due to challenges female professionals still face in organizations compared to male professionals in the same or similar organizations (Bonebright, Cottledge, & Lonnquist, 2012; Madsen, 2012). Some professional



organizations that are predominantly male, or with predominantly male leaders, may pose challenges to female leaders whose leadership styles are not what the workforce expects (Eagly, 2007). Although organizations may be structured so that there is gender equity, one study conducted with female leaders indicated that women still face challenges such as an unwelcoming work environment and invisible rules in the organization. For example, the environment may not be open-minded regarding female leadership due to previous leaders having been male (Collings et al., 2011). Female professionals state that when the environment is unwelcoming for administrative roles and department chairs, subordinates are less motivated and have less passion for new ideas and social change (Schneider et al., 2011; Madsen, 2012). Also, staff members and faculty members are quick to assume that females cannot lead the organization (Eagly, 2007).

Moreover, females may be expected to turn down tenured positions for part-time executive positions due to salary needs and the need to maintain work-life balance. This leads to professional mobility being affected in cases where individuals have had to plan ahead about their career pathway, such as how many years they should spend as a professor before moving to a higher administration role and how this would affect their family obligations.

According to Chavez (2011), findings from the literature have highlighted the common challenges (such as the glass ceiling) that still occur in all aspects of women's careers, especially in education. Females who choose to have children, which means leaving their role for several months and sometimes not returning to their positions, have had difficulty with career mobility (Chavez, 2011; Eagly, 2007). Lastly, disparities in salary between the genders for professionals in the education field may cause individuals to question this field as the best professional fit

(Fleming, Broughton, & Miller, as cited in Chavez, 2011; Berry & Frank, as cited in Chavez, 2011).

According to Long (2008), women face some additional challenges in higher administration when transitioning to their current roles, such as when a faculty member has been promoted to a department chair, or when a college Dean has been promoted to a Provost of the university. As mentioned earlier, since these roles have been traditionally designated as male roles, the transitions can be challenging at times; some female leaders have chosen not to take on the positions due to the challenges of shifting away from traditional male leadership. Finally, female Presidents felt that due to the lack of women in executive positions, promotion was discouraged. Fewer women executive positions also presented networking challenges, as the existing opportunities tended to be male focused (Shapiro et al., 2008). A study by Shapiro et al. (2008) found that the majority of women indicated that they face many of the same challenges; some have created support groups, some have built networking with other female leaders, and some have relied heavily on mentoring. Having strong female support systems makes some of the challenges easier to overcome (Coleman, 2012).

In summary, some of the challenges that women have indicated were due to family and career pathways taking longer; in order to have executive roles, they would have to give up on tenured positions for higher paying positions (Chavez, 2011). Another challenge women have faced is competitive work environments (Madsen, 2012; Schneider et al., 2011). Although some Presidents have indicated universities have appointed women Presidents, the same universities still have dominant male leadership and have male dominant leadership model still in place (Campbell et al., 2010; Chavez, 2011; Eagly, 2007; Shapiro et al., 2008).

## **Mentoring**

The origin of the word *mentor* has been traced to the goddess Athena, a man named Mentor to act as the guide and advisor to Telemachus (Brewerton, 2002). Brewerton (2002) described a mentor as an experienced and trusted counselor. However, a mentor is now commonly understood as an experienced individual who provides support and guidance and helps newer employees or students develop leadership skills and advance within an organization (Clutterbuck, as cited in Brewerton, 2002; Lynne-Lipton, as cited in Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011). Two forms of mentoring occur in most higher education settings: formal and informal (Seligson, 2010; Selzer, 2008; Sharma & Freeman, 2014).

**Formal mentoring.** Formal mentoring usually takes place in an individual's study program or an organization setting. The structure of formal mentoring engages the organization in matching mentors based on an individual's characteristics; the university assigns the roles and assures follow-up commitment. Formal mentoring takes slightly longer than informal mentoring to build a relationship as the participants get to know one another. Although formal mentoring mainly occurs in fields such as business and health, for the past 10 years the field of education has been offering formal mentoring as well. Especially in graduate level programs and in colleges and universities, new faculty members are often required to select a tenured faculty member to mentor them (Seligson, 2010; Selzer, 2008; Sharma & Freeman, 2014). In terms of administration and faculty, there are more formal types of mentoring specifically with new faculty members, although in some universities, faculty will be assigned as formal mentors for new faculty members. Specific to the CSU system, no literature provides recommendations on what kind of mentoring occurs for administration and faculty members (Seligson, 2010; Selzer, 2008; Sharma & Freeman, 2014).

**Informal mentoring.** Informal mentoring occurs in a casual, organic way; usually, an individual or organization does not structure it. Instead, an individual will approach a senior level individual and ask him/her to become a mentor. Informal mentoring is based on a social and emotional relationship. Two individuals who have common characteristics and social understandings may have a higher chance of becoming connected and building trust for mentoring. Furthermore, when informal mentorship occurs, the mentee is comfortable to discuss personal needs, as it creates a safe environment to speak to one another (Desimone et al., 2014).

**Mentoring: Discussion.** In general, both formal and informal mentoring experiences are positive; however in different fields, sometimes informal mentoring occurs without any formal steps, although it needs to be conducted formally (Selzer, 2008). Although formal mentoring is structured, for the most part, informal mentoring develops structure over time. However, in education, both types of mentoring occur. In higher education, specifically due to graduate programs, informal mentoring occurs more often than formal mentoring (Desimone et al., 2014; Selzer, 2008).

**Higher education: Female mentoring.** According to Van Tuyle and Watkins (2010), for higher education, female students' mentor relationships are formed with their faculty members. On the graduate level, most students are inspired by their faculty members to pursue faculty positions or leadership roles in the future. Cobb et al. (2006) stated that future female higher education leaders should have mentors who have had professional expertise in the higher education culture. Kram stated that mentoring has two functions: career and psychosocial (Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011). The career function is based on *learning the ropes*, such as how to advance in higher education roles. The psychosocial function manifests when mentors and

mentees build a relationship and trust with each other (Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011; Van Tuyle & Watkins, 2010).

In addition to Kram's model, Dunbar and Kinnersley (2011) highlighted a second model based on the work of Hall and Sandler (1983), who explained that mentoring is about the relationship of an undergraduate or graduate student with a special faculty member. This faculty member guides and helps the student develop knowledge in academics and work toward his/her personal goals. Most importantly, the faculty member is aware that while the student is growing, there will be failures on the road to success that give the student learning opportunities. Last, the mentor helps the student with his/her professional career by introducing him/her to professional circles. Research has indicated that if future female leaders are aware of the importance of effective mentoring relationships, it is more likely that they will be inspired and encouraged to move toward higher leadership positions. Also, current leaders in educational programs should provide opportunities for students to find mentors in education administrations, in both formal and informal programs.

Overall, researchers have indicated that having a mentor can enhance a mentee's educational and career experience, success, and networking if both share similar characteristics. For example, having the same gender and race, and having a mentor who holds a position that a mentee would like to occupy in the future can enhance the experience of both mentors and mentees (Lowel, Schott, & Wolverton, as cited in Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011).

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter outlined the theoretical framework used for the research: liberal feminism. Moreover, it highlighted the history of women in higher education, women in Presidential roles in higher education, the history of the CSU system, and the organizational structure of the CSU

system. The chapter also presented the main factors that motivated women to serve in executive roles, career challenges to executive roles, and mentoring.

The first areas reviewed in were leaders, leadership styles, and feminist leadership. Research has emphasized that leadership characteristics and styles have typically been defined as being skewed toward males. Also, it has been noted that female leaders tend to utilize a transformational leadership style, where followers adapt quickly to the leader's vision for changes in the organization. Female leadership opportunities exist in organizations that are open to diversity, which makes the transition for females smoother.

Secondly, the literature reveals that most Presidents and Provosts were attracted and motivated to their current roles due to building their career pathways and confidence. Also, current Presidents chose their particular institutions based on wanting to lead institutions that were diverse and open to female leadership (Van Tuyle & Watkins, 2010).

Third, the literature describes pathways that female leaders have taken to their roles in higher administration for higher education (Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001). Both females and males have taken similar pathways to the presidency in higher education. Individuals typically started as faculty members, then became department chairs, then occupied senior academic positions, such as director of Academic Affairs, followed by a Deanship, and lastly occupying the role of Provost or President (Dentith & Peterlin, 2011; Eagly, 2007; Schneider et al., 2011; Wolverton et al., 2009).

Fourth, the literature highlights career challenges for women. Although the glass ceiling is used to describe barriers to women's leadership primarily in the business world, this phenomenon occurs in educational settings as well (Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986). Thus, some

organizations may place gender equity at the forefront, yet females still face similar challenges to those experienced nearly 4 decades ago.

Lastly, the literature highlights mentoring as critical for women leaders to overcome their challenges. Mentoring has a tremendous impact and influence on both female and male leaders (Colman, 2012). One of the key mentoring models describes two functions for mentors: career and psychosocial. The career function focuses on learning how to transition to the role of leadership, and the psychosocial function focuses on developing a relationship with the mentor where participants build trust, and the mentee sees the mentor as his/her counselor and coach (Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011; Van Tuyle & Watkins, 2010). Also, Dunbar and Kinnersley (2011) indicated that mentors and mentees prefer to have similar gender and race, and mentors prefer to have higher-ranking mentees. These qualities help the mentor influence the mentee, in addition to helping the mentee network with different organizations and individuals.

### Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter describes the methods used for this study. Specifically, this chapter describes the study design, setting of the research, population samples, sampling processes, and human subject considerations. Furthermore, this chapter describes the instrumentation, data collection procedures, data management, and data analysis, and concludes with a discussion of the researcher's role.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and describe the career journeys of women who currently are serving as Provosts in the CSU system in order to learn more about (a) what factors have motivated these women to pursue executive leadership roles in the CSU system; (b) their career pathways; (c) what challenges and obstacles, if any, female CSU Provosts have experienced in their career pathways and how have they addressed such challenges and obstacles; and (d) any mentoring support they may have received during their career journeys.

The following four questions guided this study:

1. What factors have motivated women Provosts in the California State University System to pursue their leadership roles?
2. How do California State University women Provosts describe the career pathways they have followed to achieve their leadership positions?
3. What challenges and obstacles, if any, have female California State University Provosts experienced in their career pathways and how have they addressed such challenges and obstacles?
4. What mentoring experiences, if any, have California State University women Provosts received along their career pathways?



## **Research Design and Rationale**

This study used a qualitative phenomenological portraiture design. Individual interviews were conducted with CSU women Provosts either in-person or by telephone. The interview consisted of 16 semi-structured and open-ended questions, organized in four sections (See Appendix A). The first section addressed leadership via four questions. The second section addressed career pathways via three questions. The third section included four questions regarding challenges and obstacles. The last section included five questions about mentorship during their career journeys.

Leedy and Ormrod (2013) asserted, “Qualitative research encompasses several approaches to research,” all of which “focus on phenomena that occur in natural settings and that involve capturing and studying the complexity of those phenomena” (p. 139). Portraiture is a qualitative research designs that bridges science and art by merging “the systematic and careful description of good ethnography with the evocative resonance of fine literature” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, pg.4). Portraiture studies are intended to capture the human experience and organizational culture. Additionally, the portraiture design allows the researcher to connect and dialogue with the subjects of the study, which then shapes the evolving portraiture with words (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) described the portraiture method as outlined by the traditions and values of phenomenological design. Phenomenological portraiture design emphasizes authenticity rather than reliability and validity. The primary instrument used for this method is documenting and interpreting the participants’ perspectives and experiences: in this case, their career pathways in the CSU system.

## **Setting**

This study took place in California, specifically the CSU system. The mission of the CSU system is to provide high-quality, accessible, student-focused higher education. With 23 campuses across California and almost 447,000 students, the CSU system is the largest, the most diverse, and one of the most affordable university systems in the country (CSU, 2012). The system has 45,460 employees; this includes both full-time and part-time employees. Of that population, 23,000 are faculty, 12,248 are professional technicians, 4,842 work in office administration, 2,162 work in service occupations, 1,639 are employed in construction/maintenance/transportation, and 1,423 are employed in management (CSU, 2013). Regarding employee race and gender, 28% are White males, 16% are minority males, 31% are White females, 20% are minority females, and 5% is unknown (CSU, 2013). In total, there is a slightly higher percentage of female employees in the CSU system than male employees; in spite of this, the higher administration is male dominated (CSU, 2014a).

## **Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure**

The following paragraphs explain the population, sample and sampling procedures of the study.

**Population.** The population for this study consisted of seven CSU female Provosts.

**Sample.** The sample for this study consisted of past and current female Provosts in the CSU system. For the past Provosts, no direct contact information was available, so the researcher had to reach out to current Provost to be connected with these women.

**Sampling procedures.** The researcher developed a list of potential participants based on public information obtained from each CSU campus website. An introductory email was sent to everyone on the list (See Appendix B). The email provided an overview of the study, described

participant eligibility criteria, and also described what participants would be asked to do in the study. Individuals were invited to respond to the original email within a 2-week period to express their interest in participation. Individuals who expressed interest in participating were sent a follow-up email with an informed consent form (See Appendix C) and were requested to identify the best means for an interview and convenient dates/times. Once the researcher received the signed consent form, desired means of the interview, and potential dates and times, the researcher responded with an email to confirm interview logistics.

### **Human Subject Considerations**

Researchers must protect participants who will be involved in any research. To protect the participants, the researcher completed the Social Behavioral Research for Human Subject Consideration certification training via the Collaborative Intuitional Training Initiative (CITI). Before the start of the study and data collection, approval from Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) was also obtained.

Contact information for Provosts is public information and, therefore, no special permission was needed to contact these individuals. Informed consent was obtained electronically from participants before any data were collected (See Appendix B). Participation in this study was voluntary; therefore, participants were notified that they could choose not to respond to certain questions and discontinue their participation in the study at any time without any penalty whatsoever. It was anticipated that any potential risks to participants would be minimal and could perhaps include some emotional discomfort related to recalled experiences, as well as boredom and fatigue. To minimize such potential risks, the researcher reminded participants of the voluntary nature of responding to any questions and remained vigilant about any signs of participant discomfort. The researcher also managed the interview time and the

number and nature of the interview questions to stay within the proposed time frame. If participants experienced emotional discomfort, boredom, or fatigue during the interview, they were given a short break.

Participants in the study were given the opportunity to review and respond to interview transcripts in 2 weeks, and had the option to request copies of study findings. No personal information or university names were provided for the study. However, due to the high profile of the participants in this study, it is possible that their portrayals might identify them. Colleagues might know their employment history or appropriate personal characteristics; participants were aware of this potential limit of confidentiality (See Appendix C).

### **Instrumentation**

The following passages describe the interview, content validity, data collection procedures, data management, data analysis and reporting, and positionality of the researcher.

**Interview.** The interview instrument consisted of 16 semi-structured and open-ended questions that were organized into five main areas (a) leadership, (b) career pathways, (c) career challenges, and (d) mentorship (See Appendix A). Table 1 represents the alignment between the guiding research questions and the interview sections and questions. Table 1 also depicts the supporting literature sources for each of the interview questions.

**Content validity.** To ensure the content validity of the interview instrument, the researcher solicited expert review. Experts were in leadership roles, were female, and had special knowledge of the CSU system.

Table 1

*Relationship between Interview Questions and Literature*

Thematic Area	Research questions	Interview Questions	Literature Sources
Leadership	RQ1: What factors have motivated women Provosts in the California State University to pursue an executive leadership role in the CSU system?	1. At what point in your education or career did you discover your interest to pursue a leadership role in the CSU?	Campbell et al., 2010; Collings et al., 2011; Eagly, 2007; Lowe, 2010; Tomàs et al., 2010; Valdata et al., 2008
		2. What key factors influenced your decision to become a CSU leader?	Campbell et al., 2010; Collings et al., 2011; Eagly, 2007; Valdata et al., 2008
		3. What inspired you to choose a CSU campus for an executive leadership role?	Arnold, 2012; Collings et al., 2011; Lowe, 2010; Valdata et al., 2008
		4. What Legacy would you like to leave as a CSU leader?	Campbell et al., 2010
Career Pathways	RQ2: How do California State University women Provosts describe the career pathways taken to achieve their leadership role in the CSU system?	1. Describe the career pathway you experienced to become a CSU leader?	Hoyt, 2010; Campbell et al., 2010
		2. Do think being a female impacted the specific career pathways you have taken? Please explain.	Campbell et al., 2010; Gill & Jones, 2013; Hoyt, 2010
		3. When attending higher education did you ever have a long-term goal for being a female leader?	
Mentoring	RQ4: What mentoring experiences, if any, have California State University women Provosts received along their career pathways?	1. What mentor or mentors, if any, did you have throughout your education and career pathway leading to your CSU leadership role?	Campbell et al., 2010
		2. How did your mentor(s) influence you?	Campbell et al., 2010
		3. Do you believe it makes a difference having formal or informal mentoring? Please explain.	Baltodano et al., 2012; Hoyt, 2010; Tomàs et al., 2010
		4. Do you believe having a female mentor may help future female in their leadership role? Please explain.	Campbell et al., 2010; Gill & Jones, 2013; Hoyt, 2010;
		5. Did any of your mentors have any background in the CSU system or were they in the CSU system? Please describe.	Campbell et al., 2010; Gill & Jones, 2013

Experts were contacted via email and each expert was asked to provide feedback about the following questions:

1. Are the interview questions aligned to the research questions?
2. Are the questions worded clearly regarding the research questions?
3. Are there any questions that need to be added?
4. Are questions organized in the right order?
5. Does 1 hour sound reasonable regarding the questions being asked?
6. Any other observations/comments to improve instrument and process?

The researcher then discussed the expert feedback with the dissertation chair and determined what changes, if any, might be made to the interview instrument. Based on the experts' feedback, the researcher omitted similar interview questions and ensured that questions would not make the interview go over an hour. Since some interview questions led to other areas of conversation, the longest interview was 45 minutes.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

First, the researcher sent an email inviting all participants for the study via email (See Appendix B) and encouraged them to respond within 2 weeks. If a response was not received within 2 weeks, a second request was sent. Once participants agreed to participate in the study, the consent form was sent via email (See Appendix C). The participants had 1 week to respond to the consent form. If the consent form was not returned, a friendly reminder follow-up email was sent. Third, once the researcher had received the form from the participant, an email was sent to set the date, time, and location for the interview. Fourth, on the day of the interview, the researcher requested permission from the participants to record their responses and take notes before the beginning of the interview. Once approvals were set for recording and note taking, the

researcher began by introducing and informing the participants about the study, reviewing human subject considerations, and providing an overview of the interview process. Next, participants were reminded that if they needed to leave or discontinue the interview at any time, they could do so without repercussions. They could also decide not to answer some of the questions. Lastly, the researcher reminded participants that their identity would be kept confidential. After these steps, the researcher began the interview with the questions (See Appendix A).

### **Data Management**

All data were securely stored in the researcher's personal computer; the audio files and the interview transcripts were password protected. The interview notes, as well as the transcripts of the interviews and the coding, were saved on the researcher's personal computer. All participants were coded in alphabetical order (i.e., A, B, C, etc.). The study codes and data will be destroyed no earlier than 3 years and within 5 years after the completion of the study.

### **Data Analysis and Reporting**

After data were gathered, the researcher transcribed the interview responses and then sent the transcripts to the participants for their review to confirm acceptability before analyzing the data. This process gave participants an opportunity to correct, add, or delete any information (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The researcher gave participants 2 weeks to review their transcripts and return them with any necessary modifications. If a participant did not respond, the researcher assumed that the transcript did not need modifications.

Once all transcripts were finalized, the researcher referred to the notes taken at the time of the interview in addition to the transcripts for coding. Then, the researcher identified overlaps among themes across all participant responses per question to identify the emerging themes per

question. When analyzing data, the coding process for this study was based on patterns (Saldana, 2009). Per Saldana (2009), qualitative studies can have two cycles for this process; first, the researcher identifies words and phrases, which evolve into to themes, and second, themes are merged and put into characterized patterns such as:

- Similarity: when participants have answered questions in a similar way.
- Difference: when participants have responded to queries in a different way
- Frequency: when participants have responded to the questions, particular issues, events, and circumstances emerged frequently,
- Sequence: when participants have responded to queries, participants described similar sequences of events.
- Correspondence: when participants have responded to questions, events or activities that happened that were related to each other.
- Causation: when participants have responded to queries, one event/issue appears to have caused or affected another.

The researcher then developed three to five themes for the codes from the data gathering. The researcher selected the four that were repeated most frequently across the responses to highlight in Chapter 5.

The researcher also called on two volunteer experienced coders to also analyze the data. Each coded the data independently and then returned them to the researcher. The researcher used coded data received from the experienced volunteer coders to analyze the information further. The researcher was then able to compare results and identify final findings of the study. Once all coding was completed, the researcher concluded the aforementioned patterns for the portraiture study.



**Positionality of Researcher**

The researcher is an employee of the CSU system and, therefore, has knowledge of the organization-wide structures. Although the researcher reports indirectly to the Provost at her CSU campus, before conducting this study she was not familiar with the career pathway specifics of the target population.

## **Chapter 4: Results**

This chapter presents the detailed findings of the study. The findings are organized into two main sections: portrait narratives and collective findings. Within the two sections, the findings are related to each guiding research question. The chapter concludes with a summary of key findings.

### **Statement of the Purpose**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological portraiture study was to explore and describe the career journeys of women Provosts in the CSU system in order to learn more about: (a) what factors have motivated these women to executive leadership roles in the CSU system, (b) their career pathways, (c) any obstacles they may have encountered and addressed on their career pathways, and (d) any mentoring support they may have received on their career pathways.

### **Research Questions**

1. What factors have motivated women Provosts in the California State University System to pursue their leadership roles?
2. How do California State University women Provosts describe the career pathways they have followed to achieve their leadership positions?
3. What challenges and obstacles, if any, have female California State University Provosts experienced in their career pathways and how have they addressed such challenges and obstacles?
4. What mentoring experiences, if any, have California State University women Provosts received along their career pathways?

## Methodology

Individual interviews were conducted in person and via telephone: three participants did interviews in person, and four participants had their interview over the phone. Participants were invited to respond to 16 questions. The interview questions were organized into four sections and addressed (a) leadership, (b) career pathways, (c) career path challenges and obstacles, and (d) career pathway mentorship (See Appendix A).

## Findings

The interview responses were analyzed through a portraiture method.

**Portrait narratives.** Following are the portrait narratives for seven CSU women Provosts as related to each research question.

***Portrait one.*** Portrait one offers a depiction of Participant A.

***Leadership.*** When asked when in her education or career did she discover her interest to pursue a leadership role in the CSU, Participant A began her response by describing several different leadership positions that led her to the CSU. She started her career as a full-time professor at another campus where she also established a women's studies program. Afterwards, she had different administrative roles in various institutions including becoming a department chair for a women's studies program. Participant A indicated that next she led nine different campus women's studies departments. After this experience, Participant A moved to a different university and became the Dean of a liberal arts college, which led her to her current position.

There were several influences to her becoming a Provost specifically at a CSU campus. She first indicated that her education and career had all been in a public institution; therefore, she had a connection with public schools. Also, she believes firmly in the public education system. Participant A added that one of her main influences was the mission of the CSU system, as it

aims to serve low-income, first generation students of color and increase gender diversity in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

When asked about the legacy she would like to leave, she shared that she would like to leave the university in a better place than when she started. She also expressed that she accepted the position during a time of bad budget cuts. Now that the budget is steady, she can improve on certain areas, such as hiring faculty. Lastly, she mentioned she would like to be known for being a Provost who hired faculty and administration to improve the academics of the university and student success.

*Career pathway.* Participant A shared that she took the traditional Provost pathway. Participant A received her Bachelor's of Arts degree in two areas, and then received her Doctor of Philosophy in a science field. After achieving her academic degrees, she started teaching at a college. As she accepted the teaching position, she agreed to start a women's studies program at that college. After becoming a 10-year faculty member, she became a division chair (this is similar to a department chair in the CSU system). Following this experience, Participant A moved to another college where she worked for a program that was research based. This particular experience gave her the chance to be the chair of a women's studies program at a larger public institution. This position led her to apply for a Dean position at another large public institution. Naturally, her next step was to move to a Provost position, which led her to the CSU system.

Participant A conveyed that being female had a significant effect on the career pathway she took. She explained that her passion was women's studies, although her education degrees were in the sciences. Her passion persuaded her to pursue leadership roles in women's studies programs.

*Challenges and obstacles.* Participant A indicated that when she started her undergraduate degree and graduate program, she never had female role models. The field she chose to study was predominantly male. She noted that when she was first pregnant, she had to stay behind and not travel with her cohort because it was not safe to go overseas. During her second pregnancy, she indicated that she was told to reconsider being pregnant due to the timing not being appropriate, as she had to write grants for the program. However, she stated that she did not get an abortion. Instead, she followed her heart and passion, which was to build women's studies programs at different colleges that did not have women's studies programs. When asked if gender played a role in the obstacles she faced, without hesitation she agreed that it did indeed, especially when she was pregnant. Participant A stated that one of the hardest obstacles she faced was balancing family and career.

Moreover, Participant A offered the following advice for aspiring future females leaders in the CSU system: to know what they want next from their career and stay on track with their goals. She highly recommends following the traditional pathway and understanding the specific career stepping-stones.

*Mentoring.* Participant A indicated that she did not have mentors when she was in school, as she was the only female in her field of study at that time. She wished that there were women in her field when she was in school because although she had male role models, it was hard for her to connect with them. She also indicated that when she started her career professionally, the President of the university was female, and she learned a lot from her. As she moved to different roles, Participant A learned from individuals in other areas of the university. The mentoring she received in her education was more informal as opposed to formal. However, she believes both are important and can impact an individual differently. Particularly for women and individuals of

color and depending on the study of field and career path, formal mentoring opportunities may not exist. Lastly, she indicated that most of her professional experience occurred on the east coast. Hence, she did not have mentors in the CSU system. However, when she started on the CSU campus, different leaders in the university taught her about the culture of the CSU system and the campus.

*Portrait two.* Portrait two offers a depiction of Participant B.

*Leadership.* Participant B never had a vision of becoming a CSU Provost at the beginning of her professional career. However, that changed when she obtained her first teaching position as an associate professor. Several influences made her decide to become a CSU Provost. Her first influence was to make a change and develop programs to help students, and the second influence was to be part of the largest higher education system in the nation. After her first experience in the CSU system, she went to work for the UC and private university systems. However, she felt that she connected best with the CSU.

*Career pathway.* Participant B started her pathway as an associate professor, gradually took different leadership roles, and developed graduate level programs. However, she did not take the traditional pathway, as she did not have the support to do so. Being a female affected her specific career pathway because she was blocked from moving into leadership roles even though she had the energy and the passion to become a leader.

*Challenges and obstacles.* Participant B indicated that she had no female mentors in either her education or her career; she never had a female professor in her major coursework. Hence, she did not have any female in leadership positions to whom she could speak to regarding the issues and barriers she faced. As a result, she went outside her organization to receive advice

and serve in leadership roles. Although she faced obstacles as a female, she never confronted her male colleagues directly. Instead, she learned how to work with the situation and move forward.

Participant B indicated that times have changed since she was moving through leadership roles. However, the struggle for women still exists in all areas, primarily male dominant fields. The difference now is that there are a lot more resources and mentorship opportunities for women, both formal and informal. There is more support for female leadership, providing a collaborative environment and encouragement for women to participate in more external opportunities.

*Mentoring.* Given that she did not have female role models or mentors, Participant B indicated that she had few male faculty members to mentor her. She said the male mentors gave her new learning opportunities and helped her identify her strengths and weakness, encouraging her to apply for higher positions and leadership roles. She does not believe there is a difference in having formal or informal mentoring. In fact, she never had formal mentoring. She believes informal mentoring helped her, as she felt more comfortable talking to individuals who were similar to her. She did advise future females to have female mentors because it helps inspire and motivate them to see and understand another woman in leadership. Lastly, she indicated that all of her mentors were in the CSU system, and this gave her a strong support system.

*Portrait three.* Portrait three offers a depiction of Participant C.

*Leadership.* Participant C was the youngest faculty member and also the only female in the department when she started her career. She said that both age and gender were factors when it came to her leadership roles. After a few years in the department, she was asked to be the chair. However, she declined because she felt she had to learn more. Six years later, she took her first leadership role; at that point she knew she wanted to have a greater role in administration

and improve programs for students. When she was the chair of the department, she was asked to apply for an associate Dean position, at which point she worked for two different Deans.

Afterwards, she went to a different CSU campus to take a Dean position, where she realized she could do more, so she applied for her current position as the Provost. She decided to become a Provost in the CSU system because she it gave her the ability to change areas for student success, faculty development, and research opportunities. She knew the CSU system would give her the chance to implement the vision she had for making the organization more global. Given that she was at the CSU system before her Provost position, she wanted to stay in the CSU as a Provost because she loved that it is the largest public university system in the nation. She spoke with passion about the access the CSU provides for students and the diversity connecting to the California Master Plan. As a Provost, she wants her legacy to be her ability to increase student success and graduation rates for CSU's diverse student population, including first generation, English as a second language, and low-income students.

*Career pathway.* Participant C indicated that she took the traditional career pathway. She held different leadership roles over 20 years, which helped her to move forward with her career. Participant C asserted that being the only female in her area did not affect her leadership role; she is passionate about her field and leadership. She hopes based on who she is and what she has done, she will be known as a trailblazer.

*Challenges and obstacles.* Participant C did not face any particular barriers. However, being a Provost is a difficult role, due to the capacity of the work and ensuring everyone is satisfied with the decisions she makes. She recently faced slight judgment by her male colleagues for being a woman in a high-level position. She shared that women are viewed as sensitive and weak if they are too soft-spoken or nice, and are seen as mean if they are assertive



and active. She advised future female leaders in the CSU system to find mentorship, as it helps to learn from leadership and get great advice. She ended this section of the interview by stating that “women should aspire to be a female leader, and they impact the workforce.”

*Mentoring.* Participant C said she observed individuals for whom she worked and adapted strategies that would help her. For example, she observed different individuals giving speeches; she learned the importance of having a sense of humor, and especially time management. Additionally, she requested to be part of the executive leadership academy for a mentorship program offered by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. She believes that both formal and informal mentoring make a difference because formal mentoring can teach the road to becoming a leader, and informal mentoring provides someone with whom to talk to about one’s hardships. She indicated that having female mentors will help because men tend to bond with men, and sometimes when a woman is in a difficult position, it is hard for men to understand. She also noted that having a female mentor is great for network access. Although she did not start in the CSU with a mentor in the system, she now has CSU mentors. She is also part of a new program that offers mentorship for brand new Provosts in the CSU system.

*Portrait four.* Portrait four offers a depiction of Participant D.

*Leadership.* Participant D discovered the CSU when she received a call in regard to her current position. She indicated that the campus she chose influenced her by being a wonderful match for her skills and values. She was inspired to be in a CSU campus because it is the largest higher education system in the United States, and she wanted to be part of a system that plays a key role in educating so many students. She also likes that she works with a President who has a similar vision to hers; the President inspires her to be the best she can be. For her legacy, she

would like to leave the university in a better place and be remembered as an individual who had a positive impact on student support and was supportive of faculty and staff at the same time.

Lastly, she wants to ensure she was able to make the entire CSU better.

*Career pathway.* Participant D described her career pathway as traditional. She indicated that being female has impacted her career pathway in some way, in the sense of having kids and working; it took her longer to complete her degree while working full time and taking care of her children. Although she could have had leadership roles earlier in her career, she felt she had to be great at the position she wanted before applying.

*Challenges and obstacles.* Participant D said she experienced self-imposed barriers, as she wanted to ensure she was great at the position. She started believing in herself from her experiences and as a result of others believing in her. Still, she had guilt as a mother working over 60 hours a week. Gender affected her, as there were times when she went to a meeting, she was the only female, leading others in those meetings to underestimate her ability. However, this obstacle made her ensure that she was engaged, worked harder, and showed individuals she was capable of doing the job regardless of gender. Her field of study for her undergraduate degree was also very male-dominated, yet she kept moving forward.

Participant D advises future female leaders to have a broad base of knowledge and skills. She also said it is critical for individuals wanting to be a Dean, Provost, or President to be curious; they should always be learning, and value what others do and know. Lastly, she recommended aspiring Provosts to stay out of politics, be extremely honest, have integrity, deal with difficult issues, and be fair.

*Mentoring.* Participant D shared she had excellent role models during her time of the academics. During her graduate studies, she had the privilege of working with female faculty

members. During her career, a significant male figure encouraged her in regard to leadership and career and has followed up with her career until today. Given her experience, she explained that the impact of mentoring depends on the person. She sometimes thinks mentoring an individual who does not want to change might not be helpful, regardless of whether the mentorship is formal or informal. Lastly, she believes individuals' attitudes and commitment play a huge role for mentoring. Additionally, she believes having a female mentor will have a positive outcome, but male mentors will work as well. However, she said that when females see other females who are successful, they make excellent connections. In her experience, she was welcomed by CSU female staff who were happy to see the first female Provost on their campus.

***Portrait five.*** Portrait five offers a depiction of Participant E.

***Leadership.*** Participant E shared that she loved her field of study, and was an accidental Provost. She started her career as a professor in the Midwest, and after 6 months, she did not want to stay there. She wondered where she should go next: the East or West Coast. She started doing research and applied to a CSU campus to teach. She explained that, based on her research, she wanted to be part of a diverse and liberal political community that was committed to multicultural issues. She was offered and accepted a teaching position at a CSU and moved to California. The position in California required her to travel 120 miles; at the time her son had just been born. Since she did not want to be far from her son, she moved to a closer CSU campus near her house. She started teaching there and also began taking on more leadership roles. She volunteered to help create programs for student success, such as an equity education program and faculty mentorship. From that point, she was getting noticed for making changes and taking leadership roles. She then became the director of the faculty development center and started shifting from student success programs to faculty programs. Afterwards, she had different roles

in administration. At the same time, she received a call to apply for the associate Provost positions at another CSU campus. After having the different experiences stated earlier, she applied for a Provost position at another CSU campus. She was there for a few years before arriving at her current university as Provost.

She was influenced to become a CSU leader because fundamentally she shared the same views, such as the mission of the CSU, and the diverse student population. The CSU student population is the backbone of the workforce for the state of California, as stated in the mission of the CSU. She illustrated that CSU graduates end up staying within the CSU system, versus moving to other organizations. She will be celebrating her 30th year at the CSU, and is not planning to leave the system. She firmly believes in the mission of the CSU and chose a CSU campus for an executive leadership role because her heart is in the public school, and she wanted to ensure that she was the part of the organization. Lastly, she wants her legacy to be that she built strong programs for students and faculty. She also wants to be known as a Provost who grew the campus academically for student success and has created a collaborative, respectful, open-minded, and fun environment.

*Career pathway.* Participant E had never planned to become a Provost; however, her diverse experiences in universities directed her to become a Provost. Being in the CSU system, she built a reputation. She had also been on different campuses in the CSU, which has helped her. Still, both her gender and race impacted her career pathway. She explained that at the faculty level you would have diverse population, however, at administration level the diversity stops. Currently, there are few female Provosts of color in CSU higher administration.

*Challenges and obstacles.* Participant E indicated that one of the challenges she faced was not having a Dean position before applying for the Provost position. She stated that being

female also presented career obstacles. Like most females, male colleagues demonstrating little respect for women in leadership was a challenge. She overcame this obstacle by quickly learning to address any issue by having a conversation.

Her advice for aspiring future female leaders in the CSU system is if you are required to change areas, start from the inside out. This means work with the individuals who have been there long enough and understand the process. Lastly, she suggests having the right people on the job and doing what you love and are passionate about, because it is a hard job.

*Mentoring.* Participant E indicated that she had numerous mentors, including some who were not even aware that they were mentors. Her first mentor was the Dean of health and human development; this person encouraged her to apply for higher positions. Also, she attended an Academic Affairs Administration fellowship. Her mentors were both male and female; they always encouraged her to apply for more senior positions. Her mentors gave her advice on areas in which to improve, and seeing what her mentors had accomplished was inspiring in and of itself. She expressed the importance of talking to people who have expertise in one's areas of interest, as their knowledge will provide the opportunity to move forward with leadership possibilities. Lastly, Participant E said mentors could help with challenges, especially female mentors. She intentionally likes to mentor strong women to move to leadership roles; she helps and encourages women to understand campus politics and apply for administration roles, specifically for Academic Senate. Lastly, she indicated that all of her mentors were in the CSU system.

*Portrait six.* Portrait six offers a depiction of Participant F.

*Leadership.* Participant F's leadership experience went back to her childhood when she was in leadership roles such as captain of a sports team and she was in Girl Scouts. She always

found ways to get people together to work on common goals. When she started teaching, she indicated that doing so was leading. She slowly started working on grants, which led her to be a department chair. She then moved from different leadership roles to her current position as a Provost.

She chose to be a Provost at a CSU campus because of the mission of the school, as well as the mission of the CSU system. Specifically, she chose this campus's mission, which places students at the center of their educational experience; she shares this same value. When she ran for the department chair, she wanted to make a change in the department to improve the environment and continue offering a great program for students. At the time, the department was fragmented and she knew she had the skills to bring it together. After obtaining the position of department chair, she naturally wanted to do more and moved into different leadership roles. She chose to be a provost in the specific campus because the university encourages interdisciplinary programs. Also, she stated that the CSU's mission is seeing the success of students in a diverse population. She wants her legacy to be that she was an inclusive leader and a champion for diversity and social justice. She would love to be known for working hard to increase student access to diverse, strong academics. She would also like to be known for providing the necessary resources for faculty and staff to ensure students receive the best tools. Lastly, she would like to be remembered for being innovative, staying contemporary, and helping students be determined in their study.

*Career pathway.* Participant F took the traditional pathway to her position as a Provost. During her second year as an associate professor, she applied for an associate Dean position. However, due to her ranking and experience, she didn't get the position. However, her application sent the Dean a signal that she was interested in a leadership role. After spending a

few years as a professor, she started leading in other areas on campus, which led her to apply for the department chair position. The President of the university then encouraged her to apply for an executive fellowship program through the ACE; at the time she had a female President for the mentoring program. After participating in this program, she returned and became the chair of the academic senate, which led her to apply for the Dean position at a different college on campus. After becoming the Dean of that college, she became the Provost for her current campus, and she loves it. Being a female impacted her career pathway, as she did not have role models or mentors. When she was in school, female careers were secretarial work and teaching; she loved teaching and chose to teach. At the same time, she stated that if she were growing up now, she would want to pursue other fields. Still, she has a passion for teaching. Being in the sports field for her studies, she had to work with men, and at times she had to work hard to earn trust and respect.

*Challenges and obstacles.* First, when she applied for the Associate Dean position, she did not have much experience; therefore, she didn't get the position. Second, as the department chair of a fragmented department, she had to bring the department together to help colleagues be civil and respectful to one another. As a Dean, she was an internal candidate. However, she came from a different college and discipline. She learned to be transparent, be fair, and build trust, and after 6 years, employees did not want her to leave. In her current position, coming to a new campus, she had to establish trust, get to know people, and let them see who she is. Although she could not state that she experienced specific sexism, she has seen an undercurrent of it in most fields. Even now, women are still undermined in society. However, her colleagues have been outstanding people from a variety of racial backgrounds. At the same time, for her particularly, she had never had any challenges.

Participant F's advice for aspiring future female leaders in the CSU system is to be ethical, fair-minded, honest, and transparent, and to have frequent communication with organization. She emphasized the importance of learning, building relationships, having integrity, always networking, treating everyone with respect, acknowledging people who do things well, and understanding the politics of the campus and the climate. Additionally, she shared that leading is having a good team, trusting one's team, and recognizing good team effort. Lastly, she indicated that neither formal nor informal mentoring matters more than personal drive, knowledge of one's next steps, and a contingency planning for how to take those steps.

*Mentoring.* Participant F's first mentor was her high school coach. She now has multiple mentors, including some who are indirect, meaning they are not in her direct circle. Participant F has taken both positive and negative aspects from mentors in terms of what to do and what not to do as a leader. For her, the Dean and the President of her old organization were mentors and sponsors for her leadership program. She believes it is good to have both formal and informal mentoring. Participant F indicated that it is great for a woman to have a female mentor, as she herself chose to do her fellowship with a female university President. She wanted to learn from a woman President about how to deal with challenges and politics at that level. Simultaneously, she recommended having both male and female mentors because one can learn from diverse talent. She emphasized the importance of having mentors; however, she didn't have mentors that were in the CSU during her education. Instead, she had Deans and Presidents from the CSU that she considered her mentors when she became part of CSU campus.

*Portrait seven.* Portrait seven offers a depiction of Participant G.

*Leadership.* Participant G described her Provost positions as "accidental administration," as she originally had plans to be a U.S. historian. She started at a small college as director of



degree programs due to a hiring freeze; she was then appointed to be interim Dean. After that, she started leading in different leadership roles and participated in the American Association of State Colleges and Universities program. The program was designed to review what college and states had done to graduate students in a timely manner. The former CSU campus President led her team; she introduced Participant G to the CSU system. Also, there were other CSU representatives in this program. When there was a position in the CSU system, the CSU President encouraged her to apply; she then spent the next 6.5 years at a CSU campus. At the campus, she raised graduation rates and still at that point did not want to be a Provost. However, she loved the CSU and wanted other campuses to succeed. At that point, the position of Provost opened at another campus, and she applied.

She decided to become a CSU leader because the CSU provides both student access and retention. Also, she felt motivated by the CSU mission and its dedication to low-income students, first-generation students, and students of color. She was inspired to choose a CSU campus because of the challenge of improving the graduation rate, and the opportunity and ethical obligation to help first-generation students and students of color earn their degree. She wants her legacy to be higher graduation rates at her campus and helping all students build confidence in their abilities.

*Career pathway.* Participant G indicated that she did not take the traditional pathway to the CSU Provost role. However, she would highly recommend following the traditional career pathway. She began as director of the degree program, interim Dean, and director of advising center, all while she was teaching. After she moved to another school as the associate Provost and Vice President for student affairs, she then became the director of undergraduate studies and

Academic Affairs at this CSU campus; this led her to become a Provost. She does not encounter a lot of Provosts who have taken this career pathway.

She indicated that, being a member of a specific race, she did not experience any difficulties in her career pathway. Student affairs departments have mainly been female dominated versus other administration roles, hence she saw herself in a mother role to her students. When she interacts with a student, she thinks of the fact that it is someone's child. Academia has been a positive experience for Participant G, and she has not experienced a glass ceiling, especially because she studied social sciences versus a science-based field.

*Challenges and obstacles.* Participant G indicated that she faced few obstacles, all depending on the administration role she had at the time. Still, the hardest challenge was balancing family and work, given that she waited until her son was a sophomore in college to pursue the Provost position. She had to compromise and live in student housing while she was teaching and in administration. Lastly, she indicated that having a supportive husband also helps tremendously. As for her advice to aspiring future female leaders, she said to say "yes" at every opportunity. She encourages aspiring future female leaders to try and have experience in all areas of universities to be able to be a good Provost and take opportunities of positions that will build their resume to where they would like to be at the end of their career. Lastly, she encourages them to remember that there will always be someone in the room who knows more than them. Therefore, they should be open-minded, leave their egos at the door, and be supportive of students, staff, and faculty.

*Mentoring.* Participant G did not have mentors during her schooling and career; instead, she had role models. She stated that formal and informal mentoring has become more influential in the last 20 years. She has learned from her colleagues and bad leaders. For example, she

learned what not to do from bad leaders. Meanwhile, she learned her leadership skills as a Provost from a CSU President. Also, the former CSU campus Provost taught her how to use data to make a change in policy and procedures.

From her mentors, Participant G learned that although ideas might be great, the end product is more important. She learned to understand the process of an idea and to trust others. Participant G also shared that both formal and informal mentoring work well, yet regardless of mentoring, one should always remain a student. Individuals should always learn from others around them.

Participant G stated that the impact of a female mentor would depend on the individual. She was raised in an assertive family and having a strong mother taught her not to have problems being in a room full of male figures and taking control of an issue. Gender did not make a difference for her, and in fact, one of the best pieces of advice she received came from a male who encouraged her to balance work and family, specifically being a mom. While all of her experience was on the East Coast, she had a great mentor in a CSU President. Within the CSU, many individuals who have guided her through the system and organizational culture.

**Collective findings.** The following sections present summaries of the collective findings for each guiding research question, summarizing key themes.

**Research question one.** The first research question explored the factors that have motivated women Provosts in the CSU system to pursue their leadership roles. The following interview questions were asked to address the first research question:

1. At what point in your education or career did you discover your interest to pursue a leadership role in the CSU?
2. What key factors influenced your decision to become a CSU leader?

### 3. What inspired you to choose a CSU campus for an executive leadership role?

Table 2 presents four key themes that resulted from an analysis of responses to the first three interview questions: prior leadership experiences; CSU mission fit; CSU system size; and diversity, influence, and value of higher public education.

Table 2

#### *Motivating Factors for Pursuing CSU Leadership Roles*

Themes	Number of Responses	Theme Descriptions
Prior Leadership Experiences	7	Serving as associate program directors, department chairs, associate Deans, and Deans provided preparation and motivation for pursuing CSU leadership roles and pathways to the Provost role.
CSU Mission Fit	7	Participants connected with the tenets of the CSU mission to provide access to and excellence in education for all students and the role and responsibilities of the Provost in support of the mission.
CSU System Size, Diversity & Influence	3	Participants were motivated by the opportunities and challenges of working for the largest education system in the United States and preparing graduates for the California and national workforce.

*Prior leadership experiences.* All seven participants described a progression of leadership roles that prepared them and motivated them to go onto the next level of leadership, and ultimately led them to pursue and serve in a Provost position. However, all participants indicated that previous leadership experiences motivated them to pursue work in the CSU system. Two participants started as associate professors at a CSU prior to being a Provost in the CSU system.

*CSU mission fit.* All seven participants passionately highlighted the mission of the CSU system as a motivating factor that led to leadership roles in the CSU system. One participant stated, “CSU not only provides access to students, but also retains students.” Another participant stated, “The CSU is affordable for the students; at the same time has strong curriculum and provides access for all students.”

*CSU system size, diversity and influence.* Three participants also indicated that knowing they are leaders of the largest system in nation influenced their decision to become a Provost in the CSU system. Two participants referred to the statistic that one out of 10 students that graduates from the CSU system is in the California workforce, and one out of three CSU graduates is in the United States workforce.

**Research question two.** The second research question explored how CSU women Provosts describe the career pathways they have followed to achieve their leadership positions. The following interview questions were asked to address the second research question:

1. Describe the career pathway you experienced to become a CSU leader?
2. Do think being a female impacted the specific career pathways you have taken?

Please explain.

Table 3 illustrates four key themes that resulted from an analysis of responses to the two interview questions for the second research question. The themes are traditional, non-traditional, being female impacted career, and being female did not impact career.

Table 3

*Career Pathways Followed To Leadership Role*

Themes	Number of Responses	Theme Descriptions
Traditional	4	When an individual start as a full-time professor, then becomes department chair, and then becomes associate Dean, followed by being a Dean and then Provost.
Non-Traditional	3	When an individual started as a professor, didn't have roles as department chair or associate Dean, nor did she have a Dean position. However, the individual had different high level of administration role that led her to be Provost.
Being female impacted career	4	Participants who studied in male dominant fields face obstacles. Also, in their career pathway, participants were blocked from opportunities.
Being female did not impact career	3	Participants hoped and believed they were the trailblazers.

*Traditional.* Four of the participants took the traditional pathway. Three participants shared that they received an invitation to apply for the Provost position due to the work they had been doing at their previous institutions.

*None traditional.* The three participants that did not follow traditional pathway explained in detail the steps they took. One participant indicated that her pathway was similar to the traditional pathway; however, she skipped from a position as Dean to associate Provost. Another participant stated that she was not supported to take the traditional pathway; therefore, she sought out other leadership roles to prepare her for the Provost role. The third participant that did not take the traditional pathway prepared for her role through different university leadership positions in departments such as Academic Affairs and Student Affairs.

*Being female impacted career.* From the four participants that indicated that being female impacted their career. Due to having children, one participant stated that it took longer for her to achieve higher leadership roles. For another participant, being pregnant two times, she had to change her area of study, and was asked to reconsider being pregnant due to the timing of grant programs.

*Being female did not impact career.* One participant stated, “As a White woman starting in student affairs where predominantly the area has lots of women, it didn’t impact me.” Another female stated that she was the first female Provost on her CSU campus, which she believes set the tone of the campus. She hopes she has been a trailblazer for not only her campus but also the whole campus community.

***Research question three.*** The third research question explored the challenges and obstacles, if any, that female CSU Provosts have experienced in their career pathways and how

have they addressed such challenges and obstacles. The following interview questions were asked to address the third research question:

1. What were the obstacles, if any, that you experienced, and how did you overcome any obstacles?
2. Describe if gender played a role in the obstacles you experienced and how you addressed any obstacles?

Table 4 highlights three key themes that resulted from an analysis of responses to the third research question. The themes are few obstacles, lack of female role models, and career and family.

Table 4

*Challenges And Obstacles Experienced In Career Pathways*

Themes	Number of Responses	Theme Descriptions
Gender Challenges	4	In higher leadership roles, male colleagues underestimate women's authority and ability to be successful leaders.
Lack of Female Role Models	3	Participants explained that due to not having female role models in the fields when they were students or during their careers, it was hard to connect and share issues.
Career and Family	7	Participants mentioned balancing time, feeling guilty for working 60 plus hours per week, relocating, and taking longer to move to a leadership role.

*Few obstacles.* Overall, participants indicated that they faced few obstacles. Three participants reported that their male colleagues had issues reporting to them. Two participants reported that there has always been an undercurrent of sexism and discrimination in all fields when females have had higher leadership roles.

*Lack of female.* Participants asserted that there was always a lack of females in leadership positions during their education and careers; therefore, they could not connect, share issues, or even think they would be able to become leaders. One participant indicated that she did not have

any direct female mentors during her education field, except for female professors in her general studies courses.

*Career and family.* All participants described balancing family and career as an obstacle. One participant specifically indicated that being an active parent makes it harder to accept a leadership role that requires long work hours. She had to wait until her children were older to take a higher leadership position. Another participant shared her feelings of guilt when she had children at home and had to work long hours.

***Research question four.*** The fourth research question explored the mentoring experiences, if any, that CSU women Provosts received along their career pathways. The following interview questions were asked to address the fourth research question:

1. What mentor or mentors, if any, did you have throughout your education and career pathway leading to your CSU leadership role?
2. Do you believe it makes a difference having formal or informal mentoring? Please explain.
3. Do you believe having a female mentor may help future female in their leadership role? Please explain.

Table 5 presents five key themes that resulted from an analysis of responses to its corresponding research questions. The themes are role model, mentoring, both formal and informal, female, and both female and male.

*Role model.* During participants' career pathways, some indicated that they had fewer mentors and more role models. For example, one participant noted that her field of study did not provide mentoring; however, the President of her institution was female, and the President became that participant's role model. Another participant shared that her first role model was her



high school coach who pushed for her to have a leadership role, which then inspired her to become a leader at the start of her career.

Table 5

*Mentoring Experiences Received Along Career Pathways*

Themes	Number of Responses	Theme Descriptions
Role Model	3	Participants stated lack of females in a leadership role, they had no mentors, however they had role models.
Mentoring	4	Participants said observing from both positive and negative administration were beneficial.
Both Formal and Informal	4	Participants said both informal and formal mentoring give the opportunity to connect professionally and personally.
Female	7	Participants stated that seeing female leaders motivated them and connected them with the individual. Knowing those leaders “made it” motivated them to strive for leadership roles.
Both Female and Male	3	Participants felt female mentors connected with them personally and could help with issues, whereas male figures could help with networking and connecting them to other administration.

*Mentoring.* Three participants indicated that mentoring being highlighted in academia over the last 20 years, mainly formal mentoring established by each career field. One participant stated that currently there are many mentorship resources for females that can help drive career pathways to higher leadership roles. Another participant said that in her career pathway there was more indirect mentoring for her. She learned from different individuals what to do and what not to do as a leader.

*Both formal and informal.* Some participants indicated that having both formal and informal mentoring is important; participants concluded that it depends on what the individual mentee prefers. One participant stated that having formal mentoring would provide opportunities to have mentors sponsor individuals for fellowships or programs. One participant said informal mentorship is always helpful because of the relationship one has with an individual. Mentors can share issues, especially when a mentors returning to work after having children. Participants also indicated that female mentors impact the mentees next career role, as they help one connect with

likeminded individuals emphasizing the importance of seeing females in higher leadership roles. All participants indicated that having a female mentor is great.

*Both female and male.* Participants shared that having male mentors can help as well. Two participants explained that men tend to achieve higher leadership roles sooner than women. Having male mentors who have already had leadership roles creates a networking opportunity. At the same time, women mentors give women a great networking connection to other women organization as well.

### **Summary of Key Findings**

In response to research question one, four themes were identified that motivated participants to pursue their leadership roles in the CSU system. Serving in prior leadership positions and connecting to the tenets of the CSU mission were the two themes referenced by all seven participants. Participants stated that what pursued them to Provost roles were being department chairs and having higher administration positions in different areas such as Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. All participants stated the reason they chose specifically to be a Provost in the CSU campus was the mission of the CSU and the California Master Plan. All participants believe in the CSU's the mission to promote access and diversity in addition to affordability for students. Three participants described the system's size, diversity, and workforce influence, knowing that the CSU system has a huge role in the workforces of California and United States.

In response to research question two, four themes were identified regarding career pathway followed by a leadership role. Participants who stated they took the traditional pathway also stated that they received an invitation to apply for the Provost position due to the work they had been doing in their previous institutions.

Participants that took a traditional pathway didn't feel that being female impacted their career pathway. Participants that didn't take the traditional pathway had a background in higher leadership roles in areas of Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and program and grant leadership. Participants indicated that the CSU system gives opportunities for individuals with different background career experience to take on the Provost role.

In response to research question three, regarding challenges and obstacles experienced in a career pathway, three themes were identified. Overall, participants indicated that they had few obstacles. Participants indicated that male colleagues didn't like to report to female leadership. Participants also stated that when females are strong they come across as mean and can be disliked. However, if females are nice and agree to certain orders from higher administration, they are known as weak leaders. All participants felt there was a lack of female leadership during their time of becoming a leader and following their career pathway. Although currently there are more females as leaders in mid-level administration in the universities, now they still feel it is lacking based on increasing numbers in student population being female and faculty mainly being female across the system. Lastly, all participants stated that balancing family and work was one of the main obstacles they faced. Specifically, participants stated that the long hours, being away from children, and feeling guilty were obstacles; some participants waited until their children were older to take higher leadership roles as a result.

In response to research question four, five themes were identified regarding mentoring experience received along one's career pathway. Participants indicated that during their education and some of their career pathways, mentoring was not as common as role models. Therefore, they had role models such as Presidents and other female leaders in different areas that motivated them to move forward with their careers. Participants also stated that they

received both formal and informal mentoring, indicating that both formal and informal mentoring are beneficial. In the formal setting, individuals will learn professionally, and mentors can also learn individuals' weakness and straightness. In informal mentoring, individuals can connect and be more open in regard to challenges they face. Lastly, all participants indicated the importance of female mentoring, and highly recommend future female leaders to have female mentors. Participants noted that a female mentor is highly relatable, specifically in regard to balancing family and work. Also, most females experience similar challenges, and a female mentor can help to resolve those challenges.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

This chapter discusses the key findings for the study, conclusions, and recommendation for policy, practice, and further study. The chapter concludes with a summary of the study.

### **Problem**

California has the largest 4-year public state university system in the United States (Gerth, 2010). As of 2014, the CSU system has a female population of over 50%, and a faculty and staff with 50% females as well. Out of the 23 campuses, five have female Presidents, and nine have female Provosts (CSU, 2014b). Broad career pathway studies have focused on what has attracted Presidents and Provosts to pursue leadership roles in higher education, but no analogous studies have been conducted specifically for female Provosts in the CSU system. Therefore, there is a need to study and describe: (a) what factors motivated Provost to their roles, (b) their career pathways, (c) any obstacles they may have encountered and addressed in their career pathways, and (d) any mentoring support they may have received along their career pathways.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological portraiture study was to explore and describe the career journeys of women Provosts in the CSU system in order to learn more about: (a) what factors have motivated these women to executive leadership roles in the CSU system, (b) their career pathways, (c) any obstacles they may have encountered and addressed on their career pathways, and (d) any mentoring support they may have received on their career pathways.

## **Research Questions**

1. What factors have motivated women Provosts in the California State University system to pursue their leadership role?
2. How do California State University women Provosts describe the career pathways have they followed to achieve their leadership positions?
3. What challenges and obstacles, if any, have female California State University Provosts experienced in their career pathways and how have they addressed such challenges and obstacles?
4. What mentoring experiences, if any, have California State University women Provosts received along their career pathways?

## **Summary of Methodology**

This study utilized a qualitative portraiture design. The researcher conducted face-to-face or phone interviews with seven CSU female Provosts. The interview was composed of 16 questions that were organized into four areas: (a) leadership, (b) career pathway, (c) challenges, and (d) mentors.

Portraiture was used to describe each participant's career pathway to give the reader a detailed description of the unique journey taken by each CSU Provost. Additionally, the interviews gave the opportunity to understand the experience of female Provosts in the largest educational system in the nation. Detailed findings were reported in Chapter 4 for each interview question and were organized into sections related to the corresponding guiding research question. The researcher and two outside coders analyzed the data for common themes.

## Discussion of Key Findings

Fifteen themes emerged from an analysis of the participant responses. For this study, the researcher identified the top two themes for each guiding research question based on the response frequency. The themes that had a frequency response of four or greater were selected. This resulted in nine top themes, two for each of the research questions except research question four, which had three key themes with response rates of four or greater.

**Research question one.** Research question one asked, What factors have motivated women Provosts in the California State University system to pursue their leadership role? Two themes were discovered for research question one: prior leadership experience and the CSU mission statement fit. Seven participants indicated that having various leadership roles prepared them to pursue a pathway to their current position such as being associate professors, directors of Students Affairs, and Deans of colleges. These experiences motivated the participants to become female CSU Provosts. Two participants felt that leadership knowledge and experience related to different entities of the university helped them continue advancing in their career paths and become confident in their current leadership role. Parallel literature has noted that women leaders are inspired by previous roles, as well as female supervisors (Campbell et al., 2010; Schuh et al., 2014; Seligson, 2010).

The second theme that surfaced from the data collected in response to research question one was related to the mission of the CSU system, which states, CSU emphasize student success through opportunity and an tremendous education that prepares students to become leaders in the workforce, making the CSU a essential financial channel for California (CSU, 2015). All seven participants indicated that they connected to the CSU system's mission to provide access to first generation, low income, and diverse students. Indeed, CSU's goal is to educate individuals for

California's workforce (Gerth, 2010). All participants passionately supported the mission and had a personal connection with it. One participant indicated that the CSU system not only provides access to students but also retains them, allowing students to graduate into the workforces. Three participants indicated that CSU graduates are the main workforce of California and felt it was an honor to be part of the system. All participants indicated that it is an ethical obligation to ensure each student not only receives access but also graduates and enters the workforce. In similar study of female Presidents, four participants indicated that they chose their current position based on the university's culture; it was diverse, and some had unique cultural studies programs (Valdata et al., 2008). Valdata et al. (2008) also concluded that women choose leadership positions at a university as a result of a strong connection to its mission, specifically highlighting diversity, being open to female leadership, and emphasizing social justice issues.

**Research question two.** Research question two asked, How do California State University women Provosts describe the career pathways have they followed to achieve their leadership positions? Two key themes resulted from an analysis of data related to research question two: participants taking the traditional career pathway and being female. Four participants in the study indicated they took the traditional pathway, and three participants did not take the traditional pathway. One participant that did not take the traditional pathway indicated that the CSU evaluates the individual from all perspectives, regardless of whether the individual has taken the traditional pathway. Although there is no literature in regard to the CSU Provost and his/her career pathway, parallel literature by Birnbaum and Umbach (2001) described the pathway to careers as President and Provost. In the traditional pathway, individuals start as faculty members, are promoted to tenured faculty positions, and after serving as



department chairs, move on from associate Dean to Dean, and on to higher executive positions such as Provost and President. Lastly, two participants indicated that although they didn't take the traditional pathway, being female created setbacks before they took on positions of CSU leadership. In recent studies, female Presidents indicated that they began their careers as faculty members and in other administration roles (Dentith & Peterlin, 2011; Wolverton et al., 2009).

Four participants indicated that being female did impact their career pathway. The two participants that took the traditional pathway were not the same individuals who indicated that being female influenced their career pathway. Two participants noted it took them longer to achieve their roles, due to setbacks such as having children and relocation. Eagly (2007) and Schneider et al. (2011) noted that males and females may take similar pathways to reach their positions. For women in tenured faculty and executive roles, the culture usually demands a greater time commitment before they can move forward to positions such as Provost and President.

**Research question three.** Research question three asked, what challenges and obstacles, if any, have female California State University Provosts experienced in their career pathways and how have they addressed such challenges and obstacles? The two key themes that resulted in participants having challenges and obstacles during their career pathway were balancing career and family, as well as gender obstacles. All participants in the study highlighted that the hardest part of their career pathway was balancing career and family. More specifically, participants described the feeling of guilt due to not being home and working so many hours as a main struggle. One participant indicated that she waited to take have the Provost position until her son was in his second year of college. Another participant indicated that she looked for another CSU campus closer to her house so she wouldn't be so far from home. Chavez (2011) and Eagly

(2007) also indicated that women with families struggle with career mobility as a result of role strain and family obligations.

Women Provosts in the study also spoke about experiencing gender-related challenges. Two participants indicated that male colleagues underestimated their performance because they were women. Both participants indicated that the way they overcame the challenge was to address the individuals directly. Both participants also indicated that this was a learning opportunity for them, as it taught them to address issues before they become bigger. Another participant indicated that as a result of being the only female in meetings, she had to prove to her male colleagues she could do as well as her male colleagues. Therefore, she worked harder and made sure everything was perfect when it came to outcomes. Eagly (2007) indicated that colleagues do underestimate women, such as assuming that they are unable to lead organizations.

Three participants spoke to another gender-related obstacle that was not specific to the CSU system, but overall in the workforce: namely, underlying discrimination, sexism, and underestimation of female leadership. Two participants reported that underlying discrimination and sexism are not unique to this particular field; they exist in other fields as well. The literature has also highlighted that some professional fields (such as business and sciences) that are predominantly male, or that have predominantly male leaders, may pose challenges for female leaders whose leadership styles are not what the workforce expects (Eagly, 2007). Although liberal feminist theory is known for its attention to female rights, it is also used to guide an understanding of inequality (Arnold, 2012). The theory has highlighted this was the *democratic* area for women, and the focus was on the laws and policy set in society (Allan, 2011; Arnold, 2012).

**Research question four.** Research question four asked, What mentoring experiences, if any, have California State University women Provosts received along their career pathways? For the last research question, the three key themes were related to mentoring opportunities in participants' educational and career pathways. Four participants highly recommended that individuals should have mentors for their academic and career journeys. Two individuals that they have a former President of a CSU as a mentor and one participant was encouraged to apply for her current position due to her mentor.

The second theme was formal and informal mentoring. Formal mentoring usually occurs in an individual's education path; however, recently organizations have begun establishing formal mentoring programs (Sharma & Freeman, 2014). The same four participants who stated that mentoring was beneficial also agreed that both formal and informal mentoring are beneficial. The formal structure will give guidance in a career pathway, which mainly occurs in fields such as business and health (Seligson, 2010; Selzer, 2008; Sharma & Freeman, 2014). Informal mentoring can occur in any setting; it is not structured, individuals already have a connection, and a relationship is built before mentoring occurs. Furthermore, when informal mentorship occurs, the mentee is more comfortable to discuss personal needs, as it creates a safe environment to speak to one another (Desimone et al., 2014). In general, both formal and informal mentoring experiences are positive; however, in different fields, sometimes informal mentoring occurs without any formal steps (Selzer, 2008). The field of education has begun offering formal mentoring, especially in graduate level programs, and in colleges and universities, new faculty members are often required to select a tenured faculty member to mentor them (Seligson, 2010; Selzer, 2008; Sharma & Freeman, 2014). For informal mentioning, participants indicated that relationships are the key factor to connecting with individuals. For

example, two people who have common characteristics and social understandings may have a greater chance of becoming connected and building trust.

The last theme was female mentoring. Three participants stated that observing other females can help women learn what challenges they may face and how to overcome challenges. Specifically in higher education, most graduate students and new faculty are connected with mentors that have a similar study area or field (Van Tuyle & Watkins, 2010). All participants indicated that they highly recommend all females to have at least one female mentor. In support of this finding, Cobb et al. (2006) also asserted that future female leaders should have mentors who have had professional expertise in the higher education culture. Two participants also stated that past female Presidents have become their mentors, and female mentors helped them achieve leadership by encouraging and guiding them.

## **Conclusions**

Four conclusions surfaced from this study. The first conclusion relates to mission fit. Women leaders in the CSU system are more motivated to pursue executive level positions, such as Provost, when they believe that the CSU mission is aligned with their personal beliefs and values, including a commitment to issues of equity and social justice. All participants in this study had some personal connection with the mission of the CSU system. These participants were passionate about serving low-income and first generation students, not only giving them access but also helping them graduate and join the workforce; this passion motivated the participants to become Provosts. Valdata et al. (2008) also concluded that women leaders choose a university for a strong connection to its mission, specifically highlighting diversity, openness to female leadership, and commitment to social justice issues.

Secondly, the CSU system supports both traditional and non-traditional career pathways for female leaders to advance to the executive position of university Provost. In this study, four participants took the traditional pathway, starting as a full-time faculty member, becoming a department chair, becoming an associate Dean, then Dean, and then Provost. Three participants took non-traditional pathways; they did not serve as full-time professors or chairs. However, they served as Deans of programs such as Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, and were directors of programs such as faculty development and the student services program. Lastly, one participant's pathway was close to the traditional one, but she skipped being a Dean of a College. The study shows that the CSU system that has chosen female Provost who may haven't taken the traditional pathway. In similar studies this has also been the case, being in other executive positions such as Dean of Student Affairs or Academic Affairs, while other female leaders recommended positions that would lead them to the level of President of a community college (Dentith & Peterlin, 2011; Wolverton et al., 2009).

The third conclusion for the study relates to the challenges women still face when pursuing careers in CSU leadership roles. Although more career advancement opportunities exist for women in the CSU system and more women are filling executive roles, many of the same challenges that women leaders and aspiring women leaders experienced in the past still exist. All seven participants in the study indicated there has been a change for women in leadership roles; however, there is still lack of leadership roles for women and more research should be conducted in regard to women leadership and more opportunities for women in leadership. All participants indicated that a lot of positive movements such as feminist organizations, women's studies programs, and women's professional development have impacted the change and promoted equity. However, one of the main challenges for women occurs when they have a family and feel

guilty for working long hours. Furthermore, the theory for the study, liberal feminism, highlights the autonomy of women making choices for their careers. Women have started to have their choice of career; however, based on the theory, because of established society roles, many feel guilty for choosing a career versus staying home with their children (Baehr, 2007). This may be close to how men feel as providers who need to work longer hours to make sure they can provide for the family. Women also have the same expectation to be able to work, and yet must also fulfill the societally prescribed roles of wife and mother.

Role models and mentors, both female and male, are key to leadership advancement and success of women executive leaders in the CSU system. Two participants indicated that past Presidents from other CSUs encouraged them to apply for higher positions, such as their current role. One participant stated that sometimes one's mentors are indirect individuals, where the mentor and mentee may not have a relationship; however, they influence the mentee's decision making in leadership roles. One participant indicated that although most of her mentors were women, she received the most helpful advice from a male mentor. Lowel et al. (as cited in Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011) indicated that it doesn't matter whether mentors are same gender; it matters what the mentee would like to gain from the relationship, such as a future leadership role that is the same as or similar to the mentor's. All participants indicated that role models and mentors enhanced their leadership role, and also helped them overcome the obstacles and challenges they encountered. Colman (2012) also described the importance of mentors and roles models for women when they are faced with challenges. In addition, other literature supports having both male and female mentors, noting that doing so creates networking opportunities (Colman, 2012; Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011; Lowel et al., as cited in Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011).

## **Recommendations for Policy and Practice**

This study explored and described the career journeys of women Provosts in the CSU system. The researcher has four recommendations for policy and practice.

The first recommendation is that women who would like to pursue a higher leadership role such as a Provost in the CSU system should take on different leadership roles to have an understanding of all university entities, and also understand each leadership role. An individual that doesn't take a traditional career pathway should make sure she has experience with all entities of the university to be able to understand policies and procedures in all areas. Lastly, individuals should also experience different institutions to build a reputation and learn various institutions policies and procedures, which will enhance their leadership roles.

The second recommendation is that these women should be aware that challenges will occur, gender specific and otherwise. Since all participants indicated one of the main challenges was returning to work after giving birth and feeling guilty spending time at work and not at home, the researcher recommends that institutions create a safe space for women to have a forum to speak and share their vulnerability with other women who have gone through the same challenge.

The last recommendation is in regard to mentoring, as both participants and literature indicated the importance thereof. Institutions that do offer leadership doctoral degrees should have a class that combines at least two semesters of mentorship for students. For example, programs should match individuals with leaders in the field in which they would like to pursue their career. Mentoring will give individuals an opportunity to build a relationship outside their organizations and create networking opportunities. However, if mentoring opportunities are not available, the recommendation would be to participate in any female leadership or organizational

professional program. For example, women should look into organizations that provide specifically female leadership programs. Furthermore, individuals who participate in fellowship programs or observe other leaders should try to choose females so they can have the experience of how it may be for them when they are in leadership roles. Lastly, if individuals can't participate in professional development programs, it is highly recommended that they build a relationship with supervisors or higher-level leaders in their organization and observe their style, creating a learning opportunity for them.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

This study is the first research conducted specifically with female Provosts in the CSU system regarding their career pathways. However, parallel literature and limited research has been conducted for the CSU system.

**A sample of study.** Since there are few female Provosts in the CSU system and snowballing of past Provosts was limited, the researcher had a small sample population for the study. Therefore, future research might study how gender and race have influenced the career pathway of CSU Provosts. In support of this question, the study participants did indicate that race and gender had both positive and negative effects on their career pathway.

**Study of California's higher education system.** This study was delimited to the CSU system; therefore, Provosts who were serving at other universities were not part of the research. Hence, the researcher recommends a study to be done among the UC system's female Executive Vice Presidents and Provosts in comparison to this study.

**Replication of study.** At the time of the study, there were four interim female Provosts in the CSU system. The four individuals were not part the research sample, due to their positions as



interim Provost. The same study should be done in 10 years to review the increase or decrease of female Provosts at the CSU system.

### **Summary**

The dissertation presented findings related to seven female Provosts and their career pathways in the CSU system. In the CSU system, which is the largest public higher education system, there has been a slight change for women to have executive roles such as Presidents and Provosts. The ratio of female Provost leadership to the female student population is not proportional. The study highlights the career pathway of females and how historically women were told stay home and takes care of children, or settles for being teachers or secretaries. However, the feminist movement changed policies to help women achieve equal rights. There is abundant literature in regard to female leadership, as well as female Provosts and Presidents in higher education. However, there is limited literature in regard to CSU system female Provosts and Presidents, specifically their career pathways.

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the career journeys of women Provosts in the CSU system in order to learn more about: (a) what factors have motivated these women to executive leadership roles in the CSU system, (b) their career pathways, (c) any obstacles they may have encountered and addressed on their career pathways, and (d) any mentoring support they may have received on their career pathways. The outcomes from the study validate the themes represented by parallel literature on female leadership in higher education, specifically regarding career pathways and challenges faced by females. The themes also highlighted how to overcome obstacles, such as receiving mentoring and participating in professional development opportunities.

The findings for this study were centered on what motivated participants to choose a career as Provost in the CSU system. The researcher discovered that the participants chose to pursue CSU leadership due to their connection with the mission of the CSU system. Also, the study showed that most participating Provosts took a traditional career pathway. However, some Provosts did not take the traditional path, which highlights that the CSU system adopts a holistic approach to hiring Provosts. Although some individuals may not have taken the traditional career pathway, they had different leadership roles in various university areas that gave them knowledge of leadership and university policy and procedures.

Furthermore, although the female CSU Provost participants have taken different career pathways, they faced similar challenges and obstacles, especially balancing family and work. Specifically, after having children and going back to work for long hours, they felt guilty when they weren't home with their children. The second challenge that participants reported wasn't present in the CSU system; however, there is still an underlying issue of discrimination and sexism for female leadership in the world at large. Lastly, the study also showed that for women to overcome obstacles, there are far more resources and professional development support now in contrast to the time during which some of the participants were advancing along their career pathways. One of the key factors that helped all participants was mentoring. Moreover, the study showcased that both formal and informal mentoring and professional development are beneficial factors for bolstering aspiring future leaders and building networking.

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## APPENDIX A

## Research Questions with Interview Questions

<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Interview Questions</b>
<p><b>RQ1:</b> What factors have motivated women Provosts in the California State University to pursue leadership role in the CSU system?</p>	<p><b>Leadership</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At what point in your education or career did you discover your interest to pursue a leadership role in the CSU?</li> <li>2. What key factors influenced your decision to become a CSU leader?</li> <li>3. What inspired you to choose a CSU campus for an executive leadership role?</li> <li>4. What Legacy would you like to leave as a CSU leader?</li> </ol>
<p><b>RQ2:</b> How do California State University women Provosts describe the career pathways taken to achieve their leadership role in the CSU system?</p>	<p><b>Career Pathways</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe the career pathway you experienced to become a CSU leader?</li> <li>2. Do think being a female impacted the specific career pathways you have taken? Please explain.</li> <li>3. When attending higher education did you ever have a long-term goal for being a female leader?</li> </ol>

<p><b>RQ3:</b> What challenges and obstacles, if any, have female California State University Provosts experienced in their career pathways and how have they addressed such challenges and obstacles?</p>	<p><b>Challenges and Obstacles</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What were the obstacles, if any, that you experienced, and how did you overcome any obstacles?</li> <li>2. Describe if gender played a role in the obstacles you experienced and how you addressed any obstacles?</li> <li>3. What do you believe has most helped and hindered you to advance in your current role?</li> <li>4. What advice would you provide to inspiring future female leaders in the CSU system?</li> </ol>
<p><b>RQ4:</b> What mentoring experiences, if any, have State University women Provosts received in their career pathways?</p>	<p><b>Mentoring</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What mentor or mentors, if any, did you have throughout your education and career pathway leading to your CSU leadership role?</li> <li>2. How did your mentor(s) influence you?</li> <li>3. Do you believe it makes a difference having formal or informal mentoring? Please explain.</li> <li>4. Do you believe having a female mentor may help future female in their leadership role? Please explain.</li> <li>5. Did any of your mentors have any background in the CSU system or were they in the CSU system? Please describe.</li> </ol>

## APPENDIX B

## Participant Recruitment Email

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Sevetlana Pirjan. I am a doctoral student in the Education, Leadership, Administration, and Policy program at Pepperdine University. My doctoral research will study the lived experiences of female Provosts in the California State University System through in-depth interviews of selected Provosts.

More specifically, this study will explore:

- a) What factors have motivated women Provosts in the California State University System to pursue their leadership roles?
- b) How do California State University women Provosts describe the career pathways taken to achieve their leadership role in the CSU system?
- c) What challenges and obstacles, if any, have female California State University Provosts experienced in their career pathways and how have they addressed such challenges and obstacles?
- d) What mentoring experiences, if any, have California State University women Provosts received along their career pathways?

For this project, I will interview female Provosts in the California State University system and I would like to invite you to participate in this study. To collect data for this research, I will interview selected female Provosts at their work or another agreed upon location. Before the interview, I will send out a background description questionnaire with four questions. During the one-on-one interviews, participants will be asked to answer a series of sixteen questions. The entire interview should take no longer than one hour and will be conducted in person or via telephone, or via online by me. I will take written notes as to any observations or thoughts I may have during the interview. I will audio record the interview for accuracy, but at any point, you may ask me to turn off the recorder or you may refuse to answer a question. After the audio has been transcribed, it will be erased, and your identity will remain anonymous. A pseudonym will be assigned in place of your real name.

Every attempt will be made to keep participant identity confidential. However, your statements or your paraphrased responses will be included in the study, and it is possible that an informed reader, through your responses, could unveil the identity of participant. You are free to withdraw your participation at any time should you decide to do so.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at [REDACTED]. I hope you will enjoy this opportunity to share your experience as one of the few female Provosts in the largest public higher education system in United States. For questions about this research, please contact Dr. Linda Purrington, Dissertation Chair, at [REDACTED].

Respectfully yours,

Sevetlana S. Pirjan  
Doctoral Student  
Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology



## Follow-up Recruitment Email

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I hope that this email finds you well. I am following up on an email I sent a few weeks ago inviting you to support me in my study for my doctoral degree. I included the information from the first email below and hope that you consider supporting me in this process.

My name is Sevetlana Pirjan. I am a doctoral student in the Education, Leadership, Administration, and Policy program at Pepperdine University. My doctoral research will study the lived experiences of female Provosts in the California State University System through in-depth interviews of selected Provosts.

You are invited to participate in a qualitative research study conducted as part of the requirements for a Doctorate in Educational Leadership, Administration and Policy in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University. For this project, I will interview female Provosts in the California State University system.

More specifically, this study will explore:

- a) What factors have motivated women Provosts in the California State University System to pursue their leadership roles?
- b) How do California State University women Provosts describe the career pathways taken to achieve their leadership role in the CSU system?
- c) What challenges and obstacles, if any, have female California State University Provosts experienced in their career pathways and how have they addressed such challenges and obstacles?
- d) What mentoring experiences, if any, have California State University women Provosts received along their career pathways?

To collect data for this research, I will interview selected female Provosts like you at their locations. Before the interview, I will send out a background description questionnaire with four questions. During the one-on-one interviews, you will be asked to answer a series of questions. The entire interview should take approximately one hour and will be conducted in person, telephone, or online interview by me. I will take written notes as to any observations or thoughts I may have during the interview. I will audio record the interview for accuracy, but at any point, you may ask me to turn off the recorder or you may refuse to answer a question. After the audio has been transcribed, it will be erased, and your identity will remain anonymous. A pseudonym will be assigned to your name.

Through this data, I would like to learn more about the lived experienced of female and Provosts who have been successful in a male dominant system, and the strategies they used to overcome challenges and obstacles, if any in their career pathways. Every attempt will be made to keep your participation anonymous. However, your statements or your paraphrased responses will be

included in the study, and it is possible that an informed reader, through your responses, could unveil the identity of participant. You are free to withdraw your participation at any time should you decide to do so.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at [REDACTED]. I hope you will enjoy this opportunity to share your experience as one of the few female Provosts in the largest public higher education system in United States. For questions about this research, please contact Dr. Linda Purrington, Dissertation Chair, at [REDACTED]

Respectfully yours,

Sevetlana S. Pirjan  
Doctoral Student  
Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

## APPENDIX C

## Informed Consent for Participation

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher: Sevetlana Pirjan

Title of Study: Making History and Overcoming Challenges: The Career Pathways and Career Advancement Experiences of Female Provosts in the California State University System

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in the research study being conducted by Sevetlana Pirjan, under the direction of Dr. Linda Purrington, Ed.D.

1. My participation will involve the following: I agree to engage in a candid interview with the researcher, Sevetlana Pirjan, about my lived experience as executive leader. I agree to the one-hour interview, consisting of 16 questions, to be audiotaped and transcribed by the researcher.
2. My participation in the study will consist of a one-hour interview with the researcher. The study shall be conducted in a quiet location that lends itself to the tape recording of the interview.
3. I understand that the possible benefits to society or me from this research are such that current and future female individuals may benefit from my candid reflections of my experience as a female leader.
4. I understand that there are certain risks and discomforts that might be associated with this research. These risks include the possible physical discomforts associated with prolonged sitting in a one-hour interview. While every attempt will be made to shield the identity of individual participants by the use of a pseudonym, there is some risk that an informed reader of the study could surmise the identity of the participants through paraphrased statements, quotes, or references to the characteristics
5. I understand that I may choose not to participate in this research.
6. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to participate and/or withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.
7. I understand that the researcher will take all reasonable measures to protect the confidentiality of my records, and my identity will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this project. The confidentiality of my records will be maintained in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. Under California law, there are

exceptions to confidentiality, including suspicion that a child, elder, or dependent adult is being abused or if an individual discloses intent to harm him/herself or others.

8. I understand that the researcher is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. Additionally, I understand that I may contact Dr. Linda Purrington, Ed.D. [REDACTED] if I have other questions or concerns about this research. If I have questions about my rights as a research participant, I understand that I may contact Institutional Review Board, Pepperdine University, at [REDACTED].
9. I will be informed of any significant new findings developed during the course of my participation in this research that may have a bearing on my willingness to continue in the study.
10. I understand to my satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project. All of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have received a copy of this informed consent form, which I have read and understand. I hereby consent to participate in the research described above.

If you have further questions regarding this research, you may contact me, the primary investigator, Sevetlana Pirjan at [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED], or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Linda Purrington at [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED]. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Dr. Thema Bryant-Davis, Chairperson of the GPS IRB at Pepperdine University at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

I understand that this research study has been reviewed by Graduate and Professional Schools (GPS) Institutional Review Board, Pepperdine University. For research-related problems or questions regarding participants' rights, I may contact Dr. Thema Bryant-Davis, Chairperson of the GPS IRB at Pepperdine University at [REDACTED], [REDACTED].

I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this consent form. By signing this document, I consent to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Research Participant's Full Name (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Research Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

In addition by signing below this document, I consent to be audio recorded for the study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Research Participant's Full Name (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Research Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the subject has consented to participate. Having explained this and answered any questions, I am cosigning this form and accepting this person's consent.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sevetlana Pirjan, Principal Investigator (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sevetlana Pirjan, Principal Investigator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX D

## Background Description Questions

- 1) What is your ethnicity?
- 2) What is your current age?
- 3) What is your level of education?
- 4) Did you attend to a CSU system for any of your higher education?

## APPENDIX E

## Interview Scheduling Email

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for your participation in the interview for my study regarding your career pathway experiences as a female Provost in the California State University System.

I would like to conduct all interviews within the next two months. I kindly request that you provide me with your availability by [Date], along with your preference of in-person, phone, or Skype/Google Hangout Interview. I will do my best to be available for your first preference of time and date. Attached to this email, you will find the interview questions.

Thank you very much again for your willingness to participate in my study. I look forward to our interview and learning about your career pathway in to your leadership role in the California State University System.

Respectfully yours,

Sevetlana S. Pirjan  
Doctoral Student  
Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

## APPENDIX F

## Interview Script

Pseudonym of interviewee:

Date of interview:

Time of interview:

Introduce my self, and review the intent of the study and thank the participant for her time.

Remind the participant that I will be recording the interview with an audio recording device in addition to taking notes. Let her know that she can request to stop the audiotaping at any time in addition can request not to answer specific questions. Once the participant has agreed recording will start as soon as they are ready.



## APPENDIX G

## Transcript Review and Thank You

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for your participation in my study regarding career pathways and career advancement experiences of female Provosts in the California State University System.

Please review the attached transcript from your interview for correctness of statement. Please let me know if you have any edits needed in order for the transcript to best represent your responses. If you have any edits, please respond by 11:59 PM PST on *Day, Month Day, Year*.

Thank you very much once again for your willingness to participate in my research. It was a pleasure speaking with you and learning about your career pathways and advancement.

Respectfully yours,

Sevetlana S. Pirjan  
Doctoral Student  
Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

## APPENDIX H

## IRB Approval

# PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

## Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board

June 2, 2015



Project Title: Making history and overcoming challenges: The career pathways and career advancement experiences of female presidents and provosts in the California state university system

Dear Ms. Pirjan:

Thank you for submitting your application, *Making history and overcoming challenges: The career pathways and career advancement experiences of female presidents and provosts in the California state university system*, for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB). The IRB appreciates the work you and your faculty advisor, Dr. Purrington, have done on the proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations (45 CFR 46 - <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm>) that govern the protections of human subjects. Specifically, section 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) states:

(b) Unless otherwise required by Department or Agency heads, research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt from this policy:

**Category (2) of 45 CFR 46.101**, research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: a) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and b) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit a **Request for Modification Form** to the GPS IRB. Because your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the GPS IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite our best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the GPS IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete explanation of the event and your response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the GPS IRB and the appropriate form to be used to report this information can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* (see link to "policy material" at <http://www.pepperdine.edu/irb/graduate/>).

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all further communication or correspondence related to this approval. Should you have additional questions, please contact Kevin Collins, Manager of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at [gpsirb@pepperdine.edu](mailto:gpsirb@pepperdine.edu). On behalf of the GPS IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,



Thema Bryant-Davis, Ph.D.  
Chair, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives  
Mr. Brett Leach, Compliance Attorney  
Dr. Linda Purrington, Faculty Advisor