WOMEN ADMINISTRATORS
IN DISTANCE HIGHER EDUCATION:
An Exploratory Study

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ABSTRACT

Currently we know little about the role of women administrators in distance higher education. This exploratory study based on a sample of 26 women administrators provides data on their backgrounds, career ladders, mentoring experiences, administrative concerns, and their view of competencies needed in distance higher education administration. Leadership and faculty concerns were top priorities. The findings of the study indicate that comprehensive faculty and administrative training programs are needed for the design and delivery of distance education. Further development of interpersonal and communication skills need to be encouraged between all personnel in systems. Continued dialog is recommended to rethink and rework workloads, budgetary allocations and tenure criteria. The "Learning Organization" and its leadership model are recommended for implementation in building a new paradigm for the virtual education age.

Keywords: Women; women administrators; women administrators in distance education; women administrators in higher education.

THE LEARNING REVOLUTION

Currently we are participating in the rise of the "Learning Revolution" driven by the exploding growth of distance education in higher education (Sloan Consortium, 2006). Distance education is normally defined as when students and instructors are separated and education takes place beyond the spaces of the campus or classroom. The Sloan Consortium (2006) indicated nearly 3.2 million students were enrolled in at least one online course during the fall 2005. A total and substantial increase over the 2.3 million reported in 2004. Thus, 700, 000 additional online students doubled the number of students added in any previous year.The 15th edition of Bear's Directory of Earning Degrees by Distance Education (2003), contains over 2, 500 listings of universities and colleges offering distance learning courses or degrees. Approximately 95% of four year colleges and universities offer distance education classes (NBC News, Dec. 31, 2007).Distance education, predicted to become the predominant mode of delivery by the year 2025, will significantly alter missions and infrastructures of colleges and universities, and the interactions of people working in higher education (Dunn 2000).

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP IN THE WORKPLACE

The flood of women into the workplace over the past two decades has resulted in their becoming a "critical mass" in the white-collar professions (Naisbitt and Aburdene, 1999, p .223). Pamela Pease, former President of Jones International University, which was the first totally online university to become accredited and led by Dr. Pease through the accreditation process stated, "It has been almost two decades since women have stepped

up to take a leadership role in the low profile field of "non traditional education" (Olcott and Hardy, 2006, p. 68).

Distance education in the early 1970's was little more than a correspondence effort with a subsequent technology assisted learning mode and then came the 90s and then the phenomenal surge of online education, of the millennium.

During the 1980s we began to see the structures and infrastructures of all types of organizations changing with the rapid thrust and growth of new technologies and women bringing into the labor market new values and new philosophies about leadership, management and organizational policies and practices. Women combined their values and capabilities with men and have, and are creating organizations with the values of a people approach to doing business (Naisbitt and Aburdene, 1990 P. 219). The dominant principle of organization has shifted, from management in order to control an enterprise to leadership in order to bring out the best in people and to respond quickly To change. (p. 219).

ADMINISTRATORS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Administrators make a difference in Learning. Research has shown that administrators make a difference especially in establishing the culture of the institution and their philosophy permeates the policies and practices of the institution, the division or the department.

Recent research by Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005 clearly show high correlations of the school leaders responsibilities of outreach, monitoring and evaluating, flexibility, discipline, culture, change agent with student academic achievement. In higher education the "seven principles of undergraduate education" (Chickering and Gamson 1987) clearly involve administrators to help to shape and are shaping the environment that is favorable to these good practices in higher education. In 2000 the Institute for Higher Education Policy published its Quality on The Line and offered its Benchmarks That are Essential for Quality Internet-based Distance Education in Internet. These Benchmarks of Institutional Support of course development, teaching/learning, course structure, student support, Faculty Support and Evaluation and Assessment clearly call for administrative involvement and planning.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Where are the women in distance-learning administration? Are they taking the lead in this rapidly growing enterprise? We know little about women in leadership positions in distance learning organizations. An exhaustive literature search produced no studies of distance learning women in administration, other than (Olcott and Hardy, 2006). The purpose of this exploratory study was to shed light on women in leadership positions in distance education:

➢ What are their concerns and challenges?
➢ What do they believe are the major competencies needed by women administrators?
➢ What attributes of leadership will be required in the developing, online educational systems of the future to support an environment of high academic achievement among students.

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To provide a profile of women administrators in distance education the following set of research questions were developed to provide an initial framework for study:

- ➢ **What are the backgrounds, career ladders, and years of service reported by women? Administrators in the study sample?**
- ➢ **Have women distance-education administrators been mentored for the positions they occupy? Have they mentored other prospective administrators?**
- ➢ **What do women administrators perceive as priority concerns in distance education?**
- ➢ **What do women distance-education administrators identify as necessary competencies and attributes for administrators today?**

Sample

In order to select a sample of women administrators in distance education it was necessary to identify colleges that had total, virtual education programs or specific units of distance instruction embedded in their institutions. The next step was to identify the current email addresses of the women administrators to be sampled.

The book, Bear's Guide to Earning Degrees by Distance Learning, (2003) provided a resource for selecting sample emails. The web sites of the sampled universities are listed in Chapter 18 (pp.95-153), "Accredited Schools with Degrees Entirely by Distance Learning" and Chapter 19 (pp154-184) "Accredited Schools with Short-Residency Programs". Email addresses were located that identified as women distance-learning administrators in U.S.A. institutions.

This identification process became a tedious process and sometimes a frustrating task, because current email addresses were not always available on the universities' web sites. Email addresses may be within the magazine subscription lists of the Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration or the Distance Learning Association and the attendees of their annual International Forum on Women held each year (IFWE). However, those email address lists are not available for use. Other helpful email addresses were retrieved from articles published in the OJDLAA http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla a woman director in the investigator's distance-education university and emails of local women administrators in distance education were included in the list. Consequently, a total sample of 74 women administrators were identified with active, current emails.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire, based on a review of the literature, was designed in January and February 2007. A draft of the questionnaire was sent to two colleagues who were to asked to make suggestions and comments about the draft's validity and utility. One colleague was a retired Director of Adult Education. The second colleague was the CEO/President/Founder of a distance-learning, post-secondary institution. Several revisions were made to the drafted questionnaire.An online questionnaire format was selected to minimize the risk of respondents using file attachments that might distract or interfere with a spontaneous flow and rate of survey response. Survey Monkey.com, an online company, was contacted to format the questions for online implementation. The security executed by Survey Monkey.com protected confidentiality and prevented risks to respondents' identities before and after completing the questionnaire. The online questionnaire consisted of open-ended and forced-choice questions in order to collect data on respondents' age level, current positions, number of years in specific positions, years in distance education and traditional education, degrees, certificates, continuing education courses, mentoring experiences, perceived concerns, competencies, and attributes of distance-learning administrators.

Data Collection

The first wave of cover letters to the selected sample described the survey briefly and invited them to participate. Cover letters were emailed on January 23 and 24, 2007. A second wave of cover letters with the questionnaire's online link was sent on January 25

and 26. Follow up letters were emailed on February 9-11 to the first wave of the sample and February 14 -18, 2007 to the second wave. Initially there were 76 cover letters with the online questionnaire link emailed to all the selected sample of women DL administrators. Two of the letters were returned, as the administrators were not directly involved in distance education administration. Twenty-six administrators or 35 % of the selected sample of 74 completed the survey. A colleague assisted with an SPSS program to perform descriptive statistics, primarily on forced-choice data. The author hand-tabulated the open-ended questions, which are presented here in their respective categorical frequencies and percentages. The sampling procedures used and small sample size necessarily limits interpretation and restricts any attempts to suggest causality or generalize from these exploratory questions and findings.

The Background of Women Distance-Learning Administrators

Respondents were asked to state their present position, age level, and the number of years worked in their present administrative positions. The sample of 26 women administrators consisted of six presidents/vice-presidents/provosts; 10 directors with various titles in distance education; six deans and four coordinators.

Age Groups

Respondents were asked to select their present age group. The following age group categories were used: under 30; 31-40; 41-50; 51-60; 61-70; over 70. As can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1.
Age Grouping of Respondents

Age Level	Pres.VP Provost	Director	Dean	Coordinator	Totals	%
Under 30	0	1	0	0	1	4
31-40	0	3	0	1	4	15
41-50	0	2	3	1	6	23
51-60	6	3	2	2	13	50
61-70	0	1	1	0	2	8
Over 70	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	6	10	6	4	26	100%

N=26 Percents rounded to the nearest whole percent

Age Grouping of Respondents

All six respondents or 23% of the total sample, with the job title: president, vice-president, or provost fell in the 51-60 age group. Out of the entire sample 13 respondents or 50% of the sample appeared in the 51-60 age grouping, and six respondents or 23 percent were in the age 41-50 age grouping. It appears women administrators in DL have strong, experiential backgrounds in traditional and distance learning to guide them in their respective leadership positions.

Length of Time in Current Position

Table 2.
Position and Length of Time in Distance Learning Administrative Position

Length time in position	Pres. VP Provost	Director	Dean	Coordinator	Totals	%
Under l yr	1	2	0	1	4	15
1 to 3yr	3	3	1	0	7	27
4-6yr	1	4	3	1	9	35
7-10 yr	0	0	1	2	3	12
Over 10yr.	1	1	1	0	3	12
Totals	6	10	6	4	26	100%

N=26 Percents rounded to the nearest whole percent

Position and Length of Time in Distance Learning Administrative Positions

The length of time that the respondents of the study had spent in their present position varied. Note that only 4 respondents or 15% of the sample had been in their current positions under one year. It should be noted in Table 2 that three administrators, one with president/vice president/provost title and one director and one dean, or 12 % of the sample had spent over 10 years of time in their current, distance learning positions.

Distance Learning and Traditional Learning Experience

Respondents were asked their experience in distance and traditional learning environments. For types of previous administrative positions held, the author found nine respondents, or 35 % of the sample, had administrative experience in both distance learning and traditional learning. Seven respondents, or 27 % of the sampled administrators, had experience only in distance learning compared with six administrators, or 23 % of the sample, with only traditional learning experience (Table 3).

Table 3.
Distance Learning and Traditional Learning Experience

No. of Positions	Pres/ VPProvost	Director	Dean	Coordinator	Totals	%
DL and TL	4	2	2	1	9	35
Only DL	1	2	2	2	7	27
Only TL	1	4	1	0	6	23
None Listed	0	2	1	1	4	15
Totals	6	10	6	4	26	100%

N=26 Percents rounded to the nearest whole percent DL= Distance Learning TL=Traditional Learning

Four of the six (6) in the presidents/vice-presidents/provosts category had experience in both distance learning and traditional learning institutions. Four administrators, or 15 % of those sampled, 2 directors, 1 dean, and 1 coordinator had no previous administrative experience prior to their current position.

Total Years in Distance Learning Positions and Traditional Learning Positions

Respondents were asked to specify the number of years in each position in distance learning and traditional learning. One president/vice-president/provost had worked 19 years in distance- learning prior to her present administrative position. One director had served 15 years in distance-learning positions.

Table 4.
Total years in Distance Learning Positions

Total Years	Pres/VP Provost	Director	Dean	Coordinator	Totals
0	1	6	1	1	9
1	0	0	1	1	2
2	1	0	0	0	1
3	1	3	1	0	3
5	0	1	0	0	1
6	1	1	0	0	2
7	0	0	1	1	2
10	1	0	1	0	2
11	0	0	1	0	2
15	0	1	0	0	1
19	1	0	0	0	1
Totals	6	10	6	4	26

N=26 Number of years for each position (months rounded up to a year)

One dean had worked for 11 years in prior distance-education positions. These years of experience suggested that women have been leaders in the "non-traditional" educational enterprise from early start up and low-profile years.

As displayed in Table 4. nine of the respondents had been only a few months in distance learning before assuming present distance-learning, administrative positions. The nine consisted of one president/vice-president/provost designation, six with director titles, one dean, and one coordinator.

Total Years in Distance Learning Positions

The data suggested that long years of experience in distance learning have not been required for distance learning, administrative positions in some institutions. As for the number of years spent in traditional learning positions, the author found one president/vice-president/provost and one director who each had spent 20 years in traditional learning and another president/vice-president/provost respondent who had toiled 28 years in traditional learning prior to becoming a president in distance learning.

Table 5.
Total Years in Traditional Learning Positions

Total Years	Pres/ VPProvost	Director	Dean	Coordinator	Totals
0	1	5	3	3	11
2	0	1	0	0	1
3	0	1	0	0	2
4	0	1	0	0	1
5	1	0	0	0	1
6	1	0	0	0	1
7	1	0	0	0	1
9	0	0	1	0	1
10	0	0	0	1	1
11	0	0	1	0	1
12	0	1	0	0	1
14	0	0	1	0	1
18	0	1	0	0	1
20	1	1	0	0	2
28	1	0	0	0	1
Totals	6	10	6	4	26

N= 26 Total number of years. Months rounded up to the nearest year.

Total Years in Traditional Learning Positions

An outstanding finding (Table 5.) is that eleven administrators, or 42 % of the sample, had only few months in traditional learning before accepting distance-learning positions. While remaining administrators' total years in traditional learning prior to current distance-learning positions ranged from 1 to 28. Clearly it appears the movement and promotion into distance-learning administration has not required traditional-learning experience in some educational institutions.

Career Ladders

Another study question focused on career ladders for women in distance-learning administration. Are career ladders for women similar or different than traditional-learning environments? In traditional learning situations the movement into administrative positions often follows faculty rankings, and in many universities administrators develop significant experience in prior faculty roles. In traditional education faculty move through the ranks from assistant to full professor and with academic achievement gain experience in specialized research and diverse teaching areas (Warner and De Fleur, 1993, p. 5).

Some faculty members who have been department chairs have an advantage to move on into administration. Warner and De Fleur (1993, p. 5) found many senior administrators moved from one of the liberal arts disciplines. The fields of English, chemistry and history usually have had the greatest representation.

In the sample of distance-learning administrators, (Table 6) 0, 10 respondents, or 38% of the sample, had been former faculty members. Sixteen respondents, or 62% of the sample, had never been in faculty positions prior to assuming their current administrative positions.

Table 6.
Faculty Member Prior to Current Administrative Position

	Pres VP/ Provost	Director	Dean	Coordinator	Totals	%
Yes	3	4	2	1	10	38
No	3	6	4	3	16	62
Totals	6	10	6	4	26	100%

N=26 Percents rounded to the nearest whole percent

Faculty Member Prior to Current Administrative Position

The investigator discovered administrators who previously held faculty positions represented a diverse group of academic types. Faculty positions appeared not to reflect academic pathways profiled in traditional administration career ladders. Reported teaching areas included English, developmental writing, business management, organization behavior, leadership, environmental design, play theories, creativity, research methods, political science, cooperative education, business education, psychology, chemistry, interpersonal communication, and leadership in higher education administration.

Respondents who reported they had never been in a faculty or non-teaching position were asked, "What was the title of your position prior to your administrative position?" There were a variety of non-teaching positions stated:

Non-Teaching Positions

Coordinator of outreach services, always in administration, human resources administration, office assistant, director of child-care center, financial aid counselor, administrative assistant, always the director, until they changed title to dean.

Certificate in Leadership/Administration Management

The next question asked whether the respondent had a certificate in leadership/administration and to select the appropriate degree from a list. Out of the total sample 16 respondents, or 62%, had an appropriate degree or certificate in leadership/administration. These certified administrators included three in the president/vice-president/provost category, 5 directors, five deans, and three coordinators. Nine respondents, or 35 %, did not have a degree or certificate in /leadership administration/management.

Table 7.
Degree or Certificate in Leadership/Administration//Management

	Pres.VP/ Provost	Director	Dean	Coordinator	Totals	%
Yes	3	5	5	3	16	62
No	2	5	1	1	9	35
Other	1	0	0	0	1	3
Totals	6	10	6	4	26	100%

N=26 Percents rounded to the nearest whole percent

Degree or Certificate in Administration/Leadership/Management

Participants who had degrees in administration or leadership/management certificates were asked to select their degree or certificate from a list.

Type of Degree or Certificate

It was found that 35% had a Ph.D. in Administration and 38% earned other degrees (Table 8.).

Other degrees reported, in addition to the degrees listed, included: MS Public Relations, Bachelor of Business Administration, Master Business Education, Master of Public Administration, (, p.2) MPA, MS Online Education.

Table 8.
Type of Degree or Certificate in Leadership, Administration or Management

Degree	Pres. VP /Provost	Director	Dean	Coordinator	Totals	%
M.S.	0	2	0	0	2	12
MED	0	0	1	0	1	6
MBA	0	1	1	0	2	12
Ph.D.	2	2	2	0	6	35
EdD	1	0	0	0	1	6
Other	1	0	1	3	5	29
Totals	4	5	5	3	17	100%

N= 17 Percents rounded to the nearest whole percent

Type of Degree or Certificate in Administration or Management

These findings suggest that women administrators in distance education have a variety of appropriate credentials to do distance-learning, administrative jobs.

Continuing and Professional Education

With the need for continuing education and professional development activities in new, changing areas of technology and communications, the investigator asked the respondents to list the continuing education and training courses in leadership/administration, or management, they had taken to-date.

The continuing education courses and training seminars in leadership/ administration or management were reported by 11 or 42% % of respondents and are listed below:

➢ **HERS West Community College Women's Leadership Academic Management Institute**
➢ **Multicultural Organizational Development, Consensus mediation training.**
➢ **Numbers workshop, city leadership programs, college leadership programs**
➢ **Harvard Institute on Leadership in Continuing Education**
➢ **Leadership Effectiveness Training, Advanced Certificate in Organization Design, Executive Leadership Certification**
➢ **American Management Association Zebra-Miller Management Training (in house)**
➢ **Harvard Leadership Conference Linkage Leadership Workshop**
➢ **Fred Pryor Seminars in Effective Leadership, Dealing with Difficult Employees**
➢ **Harvard Educational Leadership**
➢ **Distance Learning Certified Trainer Certificate in Distance Learning**
➢ **Other training programs included: Financial Management for Education Leaders, Online Teaching Certificate, Managing Enrollments, Corporate Strategy, Situational Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Knowledge Management, Assessment, Curriculum Design for Online Learning**
➢ **Certified Public Accountant, Continuing Education, Extensive Education Leadership courses**

Mentoring

Of interest to this researcher was the mentoring factor. Mentoring looms large in the distance-learning literature, and the training of administrators and is considered essential to the development of the effective performance of administrators (Cunningham, (2006, p.82); Beaudoin, (2003, p. 2); Thom, (2001, p. 82); Kouzes and Posner, (1988, p. 288); Astin and Leland, 1991 pp 47-53;Bower, 1993 maintained, "for women in academic administration in higher education, mentoring is a very important way to "make it" in a world not necessarily familiar or accommodating" (p. 91). The sample of women administrators in this study was asked if they had been mentored for an administrative position in distance learning. Only 4 respondents, or 15 % of the sample administrators, had been mentored and 22 respondents, or 85 % of the sample, had not been mentored (Table 9). Administrators who had been mentored were asked to describe their mentoring situations.

Table 9.
Mentored Administrators

Title	Pres/VP Provost	Director	Dean	Coordinator	Totals	%
Yes	2	0	2	0	4	15
No	4	10	4	4	22	85
Totals	6	10	6	4	26	100%

N= 26 Percents rounded to the nearest whole percent

Mentored Administrators

Mentored administrators described their mentoring scenarios in ways illustrative of their job responsibilities and situations. Descriptions reported from these situations included:

➢ My boss took special time to train me once I was in the field.
➢ The former dean mentored me regarding distance-learning initiatives and teaching via distance learning.
➢ In the Ph.D. program I had a senior woman colleague who was Director of Adult Learning. She helped inspire me.
➢ Myself as Dean of Psychology, VPAA mentor

Whereas only four respondents, or 15 % of our sample of women administrators, had been mentored, Eight (8) respondents, or 31 % of the sample, had currently taken on the responsibility of mentoring candidates for distance-learning administrative position (Table 10).

➢ Do these findings indicate a lingering need for some women in administrative positions to feel they could have benefited more from earlier mentoring in their careers?
➢ Are some women administrators fulfilling this need proactively, in part, by taking on the responsibility to mentor prospective distance-learning administrators?
➢ To mentor candidates who then may go on to succeed them in their positions, and/or are they sufficiently groomed to go forward into new, administrative positions in distance education?

Table 10.
Mentoring a Candidate for an Administrative Role

Title	Pres/VP Provost	Director	Dean	Coordinator	Totals	%
Yes	3	2	3	0	8	31
No	3	8	3	4	18	69
Totals	6	10	6	4	26	100%

N= 26 Percents rounded to the nearest whole percent

Mentoring a Candidate for an Administrative Role

Respondents were asked to briefly describe their mentoring of candidates. These brief, general descriptions suggest only a few of the various, informal ways and levels that mentoring might occur in different settings.
Mentoring Situations follow:

- Support of faculty, staff, and mid-level administrative positions
- Graduate students who work here on a part-time basis.
- I nudge the person to try new things, read more on distance learning, to think outside the box.
- My assistant will take over my position when I leave in 6 months time.
- Director of Admissions and Marketingi This individual has accepted additional tasks and responsibilities.
- We have a number of PT faculties. Some of my middle-level, administrative-types who I'm mentoring I have also worked with some graduate students in this role.
- In my interactions with the two women that work with me. I encourage them to come to me with solutions and rationale to situations, rather than asking me for a solution.
- They are a supported to take more leadership in areas of their expertise.
- I am currently mentoring a new dean whose duties and responsibilities include student services, registrar, and financial services. This person is being groomed to be a vice-president.

Concerns of Women Distance Learning Administrators

A priority area of exploratory interest were the concerns of women administrators today while the distance-learning revolution transforms the academy.

The field of distance education is filled with discussions and research about faculty concerns and their needs. One has only to review the titles of the articles in the OJDLA http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla a quarterly, distance-learning journal with 1001 subscribers in 32 countries.

Several illuminating titles have suggested faculty concerns for administrators: "Factors Motivating and Inhibiting Faculty in Offering Their Courses via Distance Education, "(Bruner, 2007); "Conditions for Success of Online Mentoring a Case Study, (Nchindila, 2007); "Barriers to Online Teaching in Post-Secondary Institutions: Can Policy Changes Fix it?" (Berge, 1998); Informal Faculty Mentoring as a Component of Learning to Teach Online," (Thompson, 2007); "Managing Virtual Adjunct Faculty Applying the Seven Principles of Good Practice," (Puzziforro-Schnitzer, (2005); "Best Practices for Administration Evaluation of Online Faculty," (Tobin, 2004); " Distance Education, Facing the Faculty Challenge, Bower, (2001); Motivation and Incentives for Distance Faculty; Parker (2003) and from Distance Education, the official publication of the United States Distance Learning Association, the article, "What Shall We Do? Faculty Concerns and Sound Solutions," (Moreland and Saleh, 2007).

Leadership Concerns

One, over-arching concern in the literature and among practitioners in distance education has been the need to identify a working model and definition of leadership in distance learning. Beaudoin, (2003) offered a lengthy and comprehensive review of the literature. He sent out a poignant call for all to focus more on new kinds of leadership styles and more research on leadership skills and practices demanded in distance education. However, he fell into his own trap by recommending only old, individualistic, male-oriented leadership models generated from an earlier industrial era. He wrote highly of the "transformational leadership" of Bennis and Nanus (1985) and the "Situational Leadership" model of Hersey and Blanchard (1977).

However, in my view, we must delete these male-dominant, individualistic type models from our cognitive, social, educational, and experiential systems. We need to adopt a new paradigm of leadership befitting the educational organizations now emerging in this century.

Researchers have brought to our attention some of the needed attributes of distance-education leaders to meet the new types of tasks demanded of administrators in the information society and cyber cultures where they must perform. However, researchers generally have been thinking with out-dated, leadership paradigms, along the lines of individualistic leaders of a by-gone era Pahal, (1999), Portugal, (2006). Marcus, (2004) concluded her literature review by stating:

> *"In summary, the question of what a distance education leader is, the characteristics of such, the requirements of such, and the actions of an effective distance education leader still have not been adequately found." P. 31*

Respondent Concerns
The respondents in this study were asked to report two or three of their administrative/management concerns about distance-learning administrators. Respondents were not asked to rank these concerns. Two respondents reported four concerns respectively. Three respondents did not reply to the question. There were 47 total concerns listed. The reported survey concerns were entered into nominal categories. The highest number of respondent concerns (n= 12) and 26 % of all concerns expressed appeared in both of the categories of Faculty/Personnel and Leadership. Student learning had 9 concerns or 19% of the total number of concerns reported. Communication/Interpersonal had 5 concerns or 11 % of the total number reported. 6 respondents or 13% the total number reported expressed financial concerns Survey respondents shared only 3 concerns about technology and that number represented only 6% of the total number of concerns reported.

A detailed breakdown of the respective categories and the content of these concerns for each category is presented below.

Faculty/Personnel Issues 26%
Obtaining new online programs, Department chairs not interested, Ensuring academic excellence with disbursement of staff, Management of dispersed team of department chairs, and leaders; Ensure faculty use best methodologies for instruction. Ideas not credited, but passed off as own by supervisor; Lack of community practice or support; Administrative cooperation/minimize competition; Motivation of distance-learning faculty, Faculty training and support policies; Assisting staff to understand online a method of delivery; Faculty understands online environment equal to traditional environments.

Leadership 26%
Working collaboratively with colleges; Balancing internal/external views/ partnerships; Managing change; Changing traditional organizational culture; Dispel myth of online education is of lower quality than traditional education; Protecting all from undue attention of comparisons with traditional education; Working with accredits to understand dynamics of distance-learning marketing; Most effective online marketing; Competition is increasing in marketing decisions; Clarity and consideration of institutional values and principles; Proactively support diversity and self-reflection on issues of diversity and inclusion, job description and evaluation. Ability to communicate learning theories.

Student Learning/Curriculum 19%

Assessment requirements (reported twice), Maintenance of quality, Student services-flexibility Academic excellence programs Online equal to traditional learning Program growth-scalability/quality, Retention of students, Mentor and develop an environment of learning

Financial 13%

Funding (state), Remuneration to reflect time spent (faculty), Paying staff adequately, Shrinking budgets in higher education, Distance learning impact, Monies-faculty buy- ins.

Communication/Interpersonal 11%

Connecting students and faculty via distance-learning methods, Distance communication's potential for misunderstanding, Impersonality of distance education and effect on relationship building, Building consensus, Better support and communication system between locations and main campus.

Technology 6%

Keeping up with technology (reported twice) and How to keep up with Technology many of these Faculty and Personnel concerns are consistent with the articulated article titles cited from the Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration. For example a prime area of faculty concern was faculty training and support policies. Another general concern was providing staff more knowledge and a greater understanding of what distance learning is all about.. The concerns expressed for managing a dispersed team of department chairs and leaders indicated Administrator's need for more experience and personal confidence in managing staff in various online modes and settings. The day in which an administrator needs to watch a faculty member to manage the workflow has gone with the 20th century.

Competencies Needed for Distance-Learning Administrators

The literature suggests there are new competencies needed for administrators and leaders of distance-education organizations. Pahal (1999) maintained that IT leaders for the new millennium should possess the following characteristics: vision, integrity, trust, selflessness, commitment, creativity, open-mindedness, toughness, ability to communicate, ability to listen, be a calculated risk -taker, innovative visibility, inquisitiveness, intuition, action-orientation, candidness, tenaciousness and the ability to network. Portugal (2006.p. 4) forecasted that emerging leaders in distance education will need to be well versed in the business functions of their universities so online systems and structures operated smoothly and effectively for students, faculty and support staff. In addition, she suggested that finding and keeping qualified staff in an online environment would be another skill to acquire for emerging leaders in distance education.

Beaudoin (2003) maintained that leaders must create conditions conducive to energy, initiative, and innovation in their particular milieu and bring others along, both above and below them in the organizational hierarchy. Furthermore, Beaudoin (2003, p. 6)) stressed that distance-education leaders must "see themselves, and be seen, as educational leaders, who are less directing and more motivating. They must facilitate the articulation, development, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning shared and supported by a wider academic community." At this juncture Beaudoin (2003, p. 6) approaches the leadership notions of the "Learning Organization" model of Peter Senge (1990) to be proposed in the next section.

Competencies for Distance Education Administration

The samples of surveyed respondents were asked to state the competencies they believed are important for distance-learning administrators.

Surprisingly four of these administrators did not respond to the question, and one respondent offered only two responses. A total of 62 competencies were listed.

The categorization of the competency responses are as follows:

The largest category of competencies listed and 37 % of the total number of responses available was in the Leadership Qualities and Attributes Category. 37%
Other categories of competencies included:
Experience and Knowledge 26 %
Building Relationships 18 %
Communication Skills 11 %
Management /Organization skills 8 %
Technology 6%

The actual responses are described in each of the categories below.

Leadership Qualities and Attributes 37%
Integrity for Quality, Risk-taker, Willing to try new things and assess them, Flexibility, willing to resolve issues, Ability to manage life and time, Flexibility, willing to resolve issues, Require instruction and training for content and delivery for all faculty who instruct in online education, assertiveness, clarity of thinking in problem solving, Practical awareness of human nature, Agility, Entrepreneurial spirit, Sense of humor, Flexibility, Visionary, Putting quality first over enrolment numbers, Transformational leader, Broad vision, Multi-talented, Patience, Search for new opportunities, Organizational insight, Patience, Creativity in maximizing the online environment for maximum student service, Leadership ability to communicate, knowledge and learning theories

Experience and Knowledge 26 %
Understanding of the field, Teaching experience in class and online, Working knowledge of course system to help others in management, Understanding of all administrative systems relevant to off-campus studies, Understand all programs offered to off-campus students, Knowledge of distance education, Duration online learning experiences, Adequate training and experience with all aspects of the model, Knowledge of the field, online teaching experience (twice reported) Online course creation experience, Administrative experience pre-distance learning, Understand university processes, Keeping apprised of what is happening in the world of distance learning and accreditation that may impact online institutions, Knowledge of budgetary consideration for sustainability and impact.

Building Relationships- Faculty and Students 18%
Understand faculty thinking about traditional roles and emerging roles, Good working relations with administration faculty and students offering new distance courses and programs, Recognize that involvement and interaction from faculty is necessary for learners to connect, Ensure that all students understand learning can occur through online instruction, An ethic of care for faculty and students in distance education, Availability and promptness of response to problems, advising skills, Motivate and encourage students through difficult aspects of learning, Collegial community building, Building relationships, Self-reflective regarding diversity and team building.

Communication Skills 11%
Be able to communicate effectively on ground and online, Communicate well with students, Effective face-to-face and distance communication, Diplomacy, Ability to foster authentic dialog regarding values and principles, Communicate knowledge and learning theories.

Management and Organization Skills 8%

Written and verbal organizational skills, Efficient time management and organizational skills, Managing and motivating faculty whom are accustomed to instructing students in a classroom Organizational skills, Time management.

Technology 6%

Understand technology, Adaptability and flexibility with technology faculty and administration, Willingness to try new technology, Strong interest in technology Student/faculty support through technological change/Clearly these administrative/leadership priorities articulated by these women administrators strongly reflect the need for systems, individual institutions and team leaders to dialog more to assess the specific needs of specific units.

The second step would be to have a team of knowledgeable persons, who are knowledgeable of a specific educational system, and skilled in the delivery mode of distance education delivers tutorials, seminars, and one on one instruction to faculty involved and those to be involved in distance education in order to build positive attitudes. This team of teachers would be continually available to help where needed for growth and development of distance learning capabilities of all members.

This team would change composition periodically as members become more skilled and capable in the distance learning enterprise. These teachers will be the new distance learning leaders of tomorrow based on the Senge (1990) model of the "Learning Organization."

CONCLUSIONS

This study showed that women administrators could be found at all administrative ranks in distance education. They are continuing their education and as entrepreneurs investing in human capital (Reimers-Hild, C., Fritz, S., King, J.2007). Some women administrators are engaged in mentoring other candidates for distance-learning administrative positions.

This finding could signal a new trend in leadership commitments through relationships and roles mentoring others. The concerns by the sample of administrators were found to be similar to concerns published in the literature in diverse distance-learning contexts. Leadership and Faculty/personnel issues, the highest number of concerns, are supported by the ever present needs for more faculty information, dialogue, and flexible leadership including specific distance-education skills. Most important were the needs expressed for continued dialogue between all units and external systems, and persons at all levels of participation in the distance-learning organization for the purpose of more effective student learning.

Another, important implication from this study is that in a general sense the concerns and priority competencies identified by these administrators can help us to identify areas we need to address and facilitate the blending of leadership skills that are no longer gender specific Muriel Oaks, in (Olcott and Hardy, 2006 p, 71) an interview stated, "Leadership differences are as much generational as gender related."

These findings appear to support the view that we need to be thinking about blending the traditional values of men and women in leadership modalities, (Harris, Smith, Hale, 2002, (Colwill, Townsend, 1999) and how to create new cultures to sustain and nurture new leadership paradigms.

New types of leadership models cannot exist without observable skills and supportive organizational cultures. Values of self-knowledge, building relationships,

facilitation and empowering others are becoming recognized as essential skills for all leaders and managers. (Colwill, Townsend, 1999).

The male-dominant leadership model is as vestigial as the industrial age's mid-level supervisor. These antiquated notions of "situational leadership or transformational leadership" were proposed to lead people who did not have any vision. These ideas do not work any more in organizations of the information age. We need to do more than to look for easy solutions to organizational problems; it is time to begin to create new dynamic leadership models supported by flexible systems.

Further research should be done on needs of distance learning administrators and faculty at all levels. The results should be used to design graduate programs in Educational Administration in higher education in addition to designing new continuing education seminars in leadership and management. A review of the promotion and tenure system in American higher education is long due and recommendations are needed for this information age. Faculty workloads need to be reviewed and time allocated for faculty to continue training to expand their skills and abilities, in all areas of the distance learning enterprise. Budget systems in higher education at all levels need to be reviewed and new priorities set for this millennium.

THE LEARNING ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP AS A NEW PARADIGM

To create a new paradigm of leadership we simultaneously need to develop a new form of culture to sustain and develop new leadership modes. Many of us still work in bureaucratic, controlling type cultures, which endorse old models of leadership. I propose distance education leaders study, and begin to implement the culture and leadership model proposed for a " Learning Organization" advocated by Peter Senge (1990). Senge, (1990) and colleagues at MIT, a decade ago, proposed, researched, and developed a model which corresponds and complements the leadership and organizational/cultural needs in the Distance-education enterprise this millennium and will address in the long run the concerns found in this research.

This "Learning Organization" model is grounded in team learning and team leadership. In this form of organization leaders are designers, stewards, and teachers. The learning organization is a place where people at all levels of the organization are continually growing and expanding their capacity to create the results they together want in their organization. Senge (1990 p. 5) maintains that what distinguishes a "learning organization" from current "controlling or authoritarian organizations" is the mastery of five Disciplines. When people master these disciplines collective learning is brought about and teams can learn. He discusses these disciplines in the book, The Fifth Discipline (pp. 5-13).

These disciplines summarized below are from Senge's descriptions;

➢ **Systems thinking:** This is the fifth discipline that integrates the other four disciplines. It is the conceptual framework with the tools that help people to understand by looking at the whole, not just individual parts of the system.

➢ **Personal mastery:** A commitment to realize the things that matter to people and commitment to lifelong learning.

➢ **Mental models:** These are the images, or stereotypes deeply entrenched in our minds about people and behavior. These models influence how we think about and react to things. We need to engage in introspection and dig up our mental models and

scrutinize them. Then we are able explore these mental models with others and carry on dialogue and become more receptive to others' ideas

➢ **Building a shared vision:** Building a shared vision has always been an important aspect of leadership. It is the capacity of people to hold a shared picture of the future that all seek creating a shared vision and mission can bind people together in a common identity.

➢ **Team learning:** This discipline starts with "dialogue" which Senge (1990, p. 19) defined as "the capacity of members of a team to suspend assumptions and enter into a genuine thinking together." (p. 10) In the process of dialogue people learn how to identify patterns of interaction that can undermine learning. Senge (1990, p. 10)) maintains team learning is critical because teams are the basic learning unit and unless they can learn, the organization cannot learn.

Where does one start to implement with this model? How do we begin the development of? A "Learning Organization ". I believe that the best place to start is with is your unit or team, and Begin to practice suspending judgements, dialoguing, and practicing team learning. In The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook (`1994), written by Senge and colleagues, are exercises for you and your team or unit to practice in order to build a " Learning Organization."

LEADERS IN LEARNING ORGANIZATIONS

Leaders are designers, stewards and teachers in the "learning organization." They have commitments and responsibilities for building organizations where people continue to expand and develop their capabilities. According to Senge, (1990, p.340), The first leadership act will be taking a stand for building a "Learning Organization."

Administrative leaders design and implement learning processes for the people in their organization so they are able to deal with issues and solve problems faced in the ever changing distance-learning revolution. Leaders become stewards of the vision of the learning organization. This vision becomes the leaders' specific commitment to teach others about the larger picture in a mutually- reciprocal and joint learning network. (Senge, 1990)

This leadership model of collective team making decisions and leaders as designers, stewards and teachers is a different approach than the hierarchical leader making the decisions and setting the goals and energizing the troops. This collective network of leaders can become a powerful force in building the cultures and infrastructures for learning organizations, which can deliver quality distance education in a global marketplace.

WOJDE editor's Note:

Emine Demiray March 8, 2012 at 6:58 am
We would like reprint an article in our journal int.WOJDE with non-commercial purposes which is titled as Women Administrators in Distance Higher Education- an Exploratory Study and written by Dr. LaWanna Lease Blount and published AWL Journal No. 28, Summer 2008 by giving our thanks and bibliographic citation with

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