
Women Faculty, Higher Education, and the Recreation/Leisure Field

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Abstract

Women represent growing numbers of faculty members in higher education as well as in recreation/leisure departments. The purpose of this study is to describe the career development of women faculty in recreation-related areas and to offer implications for faculty development and the preparation of future faculty. Data were collected from women who belong to National Parks and Recreation Association and who identify as educators. An online survey used a career development model, which combines factors related to current position, career patterns, career satisfaction, family/work/leisure balance, and gender equity. Similarities are found across the academic ranks related to job satisfaction, attitudes toward job, life balance perceptions, and the gender equity subscales. However, some notable differences are evident relative to influence in the organization, extrinsic expectations (e.g., salary, benefits and perks), and perceived career advancement opportunities, which are all rated higher by full professors than women faculty in other ranks.

KEYWORDS: *Career development, career satisfaction, gender equity, life balance*

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The future of the leisure services profession depends on the education that students receive in universities. The faculty members who will teach and educate the next generation of practitioners will be essential, especially with the impending retirements of Baby Boomers from higher education in all fields (Leubsdorf, 2006). Some researchers (e.g., Kelly, 2000) have warned that studying professional concerns that arise within the field are short-sighted when so many pressing social issues exist. We believe, however, that examining faculty issues and concerns can be instructive in preparing the future professoriate who will educate the next generation of professionals.

The numbers of women faculty in higher education are growing (Sussman & Yssaad, 2005) as is the number of women in recreation-related fields (Bialeschki & Irven, 2001). To our knowledge, however, a study has not been conducted that has examined women faculty in the field of parks, recreation, tourism, and sport management. The number of women majoring in recreation-related fields has grown (Bialeschki & Dorwart, 1998) as well as the number of women faculty (Bialeschki & Irven, 2001). Bialeschki and Irven also found that the number of women faculty was half the number of men, but that twice as many women faculty were untenured compared to men. Reasons why women faculty members in recreation-related fields were mostly in adjunct, lecturer, instructor, or assistant professor levels were not explored in Bialeschki and Irven's (2001) study. However, these studies did not examine the career development patterns of faculty in areas such as parks, recreation, tourism, and sports.

Knowing more about the status of women faculty may provide ways to enhance the careers of these women as well as enable them to better prepare students for the professional world and to be better role models. Therefore, the purpose of our study was to describe elements of career development for women faculty in recreation-related areas, and to offer implications for faculty development and the preparation of future faculty.

Background

Women have been instrumental in the Recreation Movement for over 100 years (Henderson, 1992). However, their efforts have often been invisible. Further, in the area of higher education, women were somewhat invisible until the past 40 years when a handful of university women emerged as leaders in the newly formed National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA; e.g., Edith Ball, Betty van der Smissen, and Diana Dunn; Sessoms & Henderson, 2009). Since those early days of NRPA, the number of women in the field in general has grown, although as Shinew and Arnold (1998) noted, many women remain underrepresented in management roles. The management levels of women in any aspect of leisure services including higher education may be better understood by examining aspects of women's career development.

Career development for women is often complicated because of the social role factors that embed women's lives in a larger context of work and family (O'Neil, Hopkins, & Bilimoria, 2008). Further as Aitchison (2005) noted, women's experiences in all areas of leisure services have been shaped by both structural and cultural factors. Career development has been based on dominant male-defined constructions of work and career success (Shapiro, Ingols, & Blake-Beard, 2008), which usually does not take into account the mitigating circumstances of family and stereotypic gender roles. According to O'Neil et al., (2008) traditional definitions of career success generally

include a focus on the primacy of work in people's lives and the idea of leadership and upward mobility. In higher education, especially in research intensive universities, career success often is marked by a fast track to tenure and promotion (Ferber, 2003).

A career development model includes factors such as organizational structures, current position, family responsibilities, legislation, academic and cultural background, and individual situations (Henderson & Bialeschki, 1995). These factors must take into account the complexities of most women's lives regarding work and life balance. In a summary of research since 1990 about women's careers, O'Neil et al. (2008) identified patterns and paradoxes that were common regardless of what discipline or profession was examined. They identified studies that investigated issues such as mentoring, networking, sexual harassment, the glass ceiling, personal development, relational development, work-life balance, women's leadership, and human resources policies. They additionally emphasized that women's careers represented a variety of patterns, and women's human and social capital were critical for career development.

O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005) described career phases for women through their qualitative research. They suggested that career development was a series of stages characterized by themes related to early, middle, or advanced stages of careers, and included idealism, endurance, and reinvention, respectively. Although women in higher education were not studied directly in O'Neil and Bilimoria's integrative review, the career phases seemed to have some implications for women at different employment ranks (i.e., assistant, associate, and full professor) within universities.

Many of the issues associated with professional women also relate to women in higher education. Specifically, Ferber (2003) identified the devaluation of women as scholars, the dearth of role models, and unequal distribution of women in fields across the university. She also identified that women were less likely to be sought as collaborators for research, had less access to informal institutional networks, were more likely to experience isolation, and less likely to have mentors. Williams (2004) also summarized ways that female faculty members may be disadvantaged in their academic careers largely related to the stereotypes associated with the maternal wall. Mason and Goulden's (2002) research uncovered that having babies mattered greatly for academic women across all disciplines and types of institutions, and that a consistent and large gap occurred between women compared to men who started a family within five years of completing their doctorates. Williams concluded, however, that "all women—nonmothers as well as mothers—are disadvantaged by a workplace that enshrines the ideal worker who starts working in early adulthood and continues full time (and over time) for 40 years straight" (p. 19).

Ferber (2003) also raised the question regarding whether women take on heavier teaching roles and more service than men as a result of discrimination, or due to women's own choosing. Further, because family responsibilities may impact careers, some researchers (e.g., Ozkanh & White, 2008) have suggested that the flexibility women choose related to families may be taken at the cost of less positive long term outcomes (e.g., lower earnings, promotion). Women may be concentrated more in the non-tenure track ranks because those opportunities allow them more family time even though they sacrifice better salaries and future career advancement.

Hartley and Dobele (2009) examined environmental influencers that enhanced successful work outcomes for women in research universities as measured by

publications and grant writing success. They found that personal factors associated with success were marital status (i.e., single faculty were more productive than married faculty), partner support (i.e., this support was critical for success), and level of (personal) organization in life. They also determined that these measures of success often were based on the existence of research partnerships. Women who worked alone were less likely to submit research proposals.

This literature showed that many issues may be common for professional women regarding their career development. Our study, however, focused specifically on analyzing the perceptions of career development from women faculty in recreation-related units in higher education. A diagram of the conceptual career development model applied to higher education provided the foundation for this study and is presented in Figure 1.

Methods

Participants

A national study of professional women in parks and recreation was conducted during March 2010. About 3,700 professional female NRPA members were asked to complete an online questionnaire with 1,214 responses received for a 33% response rate. For this paper, only female respondents ($N = 57$) who identified themselves as educators and had job titles associated with higher education such as lecturer or professor were analyzed. The research project was designed for professional women in all areas of parks and recreation and the questions were not specific to university settings except as they were interpreted by this college or university sample. Therefore,

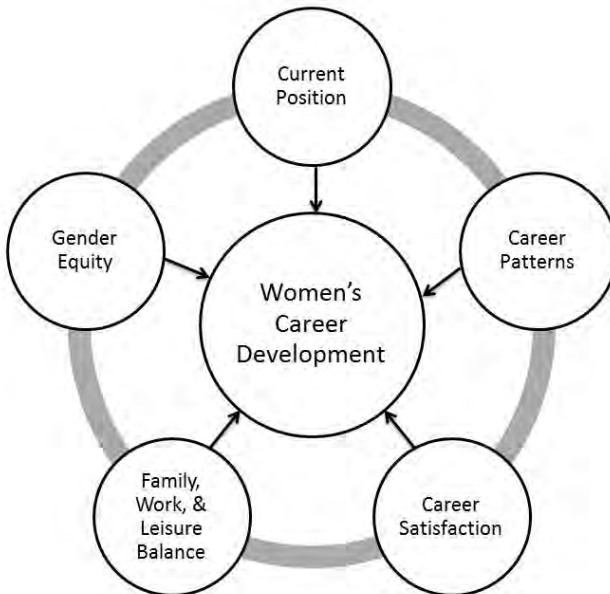


Figure 1. A Conceptual Model of a Woman's Career Development Applied to Higher Education

this study was exploratory regarding the issues associated with career development for this subsample of college/university women in recreation-related fields.

The average age of the respondents was 51 years with a range from 29-63 years. The women represented 25 states as well as Canada. Over 85% ($n = 48$) self-identified as White with 9% ($n = 6$) African American and the remainder Latina or biracial ($n = 4$). Over 85% ($n = 48$) had a Ph.D. and all others possessed masters' degrees. Marital status consisted of 55% ($n = 32$) married, 28% ($n = 16$) single, 11% ($n = 6$) living with a partner, and 6% ($n = 3$) divorced. Almost three-quarters ($n = 42$) of the respondents said they contributed more than half or all to the family income. The average yearly salary range was \$70,000 to \$80,000. The rank of faculty members included instructor or assistant professors ($n = 19$), associate professors ($n = 16$), and full professors or higher level university administrators ($n = 22$).

Procedure

After approval from the Institutional Review Board, a survey was constructed based on the career development model previously used to study women in leisure services (Henderson & Bialeschki, 1995; see Figure 1). This survey focused on the career dimensions of current position, career patterns, career satisfaction, family/work/leisure balance, and gender equity issues. The instrument was compiled by an advisory team of 12 university women who met on several occasions to modify and update the questionnaire modeled from previous studies. This group also informally pilot tested the survey to assess its face validity and readability before it was sent to the study population.

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Scales and their reliability within the questionnaire included overall satisfaction with current job ($\alpha = .73$); expectations met in career to date ($\alpha = .80$) along with the subscales of opportunities, time issues, and extrinsic aspects; attitudes toward job ($\alpha = .90$); life balance perceptions ($\alpha = .73$); and gender equity ($\alpha = .86$), which included the five subscales of gender issues, networks, work policies, perceived competency, and gender plus. Data analysis included descriptive statistics concerning career development and analysis of variance regarding the differences among the ranks in the university (i.e., assistant, associate, and full professor). The qualitative responses were used as a means for interpreting some of the quantitative data. Because of space limitations and our intent, we did not provide statistical detail for all results, but highlighted data that had implications for the present and future professoriate.

Results

The data from women faculty in recreation-related fields are examined below using five aspects of career development: current position, career patterns, career satisfaction, family/work/leisure balance, and gender equity issues.

Current Position

The women faculty in our sample had been in their current jobs for an average of almost 13 years ($SD = 10$). They said that they were expected to work an average of 40 hours a week but many worked an additional 15 hours per week ($SD = 12$) on

average. As expected, full professors ($M = 17$ years, $SD = 10$) had worked in their current positions longer than associate ($M = 13$ years, $SD = 9$) or assistant professors/instructors ($M = 8$ years, $SD = 10$).

Career Patterns

Career patterns related to job history, professional development, and career aspirations. The educators had been employed in some position (i.e., academic or non-academic related to the recreation field) for an average of 26 years ($SD = 10.7$), which included an average of four full-time and three part-time jobs in recreation-related areas. They indicated that they attended on average five professional development sessions ($SD = 3.4$) a year and belonged to that same number of professional organizations. Over 40% ($n = 23$) of the respondents said they were already in a position that might be termed senior management, but half of the remaining respondents did NOT aspire to senior management. Reasons given for the lack of aspiration to senior management were related to satisfaction with current position, too much time commitment, and too much work stress. The major reasons the women identified for career pattern interruptions were graduate school (33%; $n = 19$) and maternity leave (12%; $n = 9$). No statistical differences among the groups were found based on employment rank for any of these patterns.

Career Satisfaction

Most of the women faculty members were quite satisfied with their current positions ($M = 4.22$; $SD = 1.1$) based on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 = very dissatisfied to 5 = very satisfied. The job satisfaction scale (i.e., based on dimensions such as responsibility, leadership required, independence, time flexibility, variety, feelings of empowerment) indicated an average score of 2.65 ($SD = .32$) based on a 3-point scale with 1 = little to 3 = great deal. The specific items within the scale were rated most highly for independence and responsibility. Full professors ($M = 2.9$, $SD = .35$) rated variety in the job statistically higher than associate professors ($M = 2.4$, $SD = .74$).

The women were also asked to reflect on the extent (1 = not at all met, 2 = somewhat met, and 3 = exceeded) to which their expectations had been met during their careers. The expectations most highly met were in the subscale of opportunities ($M = 2.5$, $SD = .37$), which consisted of the variables of job challenge, responsibility, influence in the organization, opportunities to develop new skills, status and prestige, and compatibility with colleagues. A variable that might be expected to differ statistically across ranks was influence in the organization, which was higher for full professors ($M = 2.6$, $SD = .59$) than assistant professors ($M = 1.9$, $SD = .80$). Extrinsic motivators including salary, benefits and perks, and career advancement opportunities were rated at a moderate level ($M = 2.3$, $SD = .47$) for all women faculty. Statistical significance was found, again, between full professors ($M = 2.5$, $SD = .36$) compared to assistant professors ($M = 2.1$, $SD = .58$). The least met career expectations similar at all levels concerned time issues ($M = 1.96$, $SD = .40$) with variables related to time available for family, stress level, and hours required.

Career satisfaction also encompassed the affinity that faculty felt for their field and their university. The 5-point Likert affinity scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree indicated that most faculty were positive about the work they did and where they did it ($M = 4.2$, $SD = .78$). However, almost 73% ($n = 42$) of the

respondents indicated that they occasionally or frequently thought about leaving their jobs. The responses to the open-ended question regarding the reasons indicated that new opportunities, changing leadership in their organization, and stress level were the impetus for dissatisfaction with their job. Nevertheless, almost 90% ($n = 51$) of the respondents indicated they were currently NOT looking for a different job. This response might be expected given the current economic realities.

Family/Work/Leisure Balance

The literature review indicated that life balance especially related to family and caregiving was important for many professional women. Data from the women faculty in our study illustrated some of these same issues. Interestingly, the household composition of the sample was quite small with an average of 2.1 ($SD = 1.0$) people currently living in the home. The average number of children under the age of 18 years was slightly over one ($SD = .5$). Only 8% ($n = 5$) of the faculty respondents had children that required childcare. Of interest and probably somewhat expected given the average age ($M = 51$ years, $SD = 9$) of the sample, was that a quarter of the faculty members said they undertook regular care inside or outside the home for an older or disabled relative.

Half the respondents indicated that responsibilities for household chores were theirs and the other half said it was a shared responsibility with spouse/partner. The women indicated that they spent about 10 hours a week ($SD = 9$) on housework and 12 hours a week ($SD = 8.4$) in activities that they would call leisure. They claimed they spent about 5 hours a week on average ($SD = 3.71$) participating in physical activity with almost two-thirds responding that they did this activity on their own rather than as part of a structured group.

A scale (1 = never to 5 = always) was developed to measure life/balance perceptions. The average on the scale was 3.3 ($SD = .51$) with similar perceptions related to sometimes wishing for more time, feeling physically and emotionally drained due to work, having to rush to get everything done, and taking work home. The one variable that was statistically different based on rank was "the stress of work affects my ability to relax/sleep" with associate professors higher ($M = 3.4$, $SD = .83$) compared to full professors ($M = 2.6$, $SD = 1.0$).

Gender Equity

The final aspect explored related to gender equity issues, which reflected sociological and political aspects of career development. Most women were not as optimistic about gender equity as might be expected in the 21st century. For example, 63% ($n = 36$) of the respondents indicated that women did not have as many opportunities to advance in the field as men. The open-ended responses to this question suggested that men continued to dominate higher education, and although changes had occurred, women still faced challenges especially related to the glass ceiling. Almost half the respondents indicated that they received lower pay than men in similar positions. About 60% ($n = 34$) of the women believed they had to work harder than men to advance or get promoted. Further, four out of five respondents said they knew women in the field who had experienced gender-related discrimination. Over half the women said they had never experienced sexual harassment, but slightly less than half said they had experienced sexual harassment at least once in their lives.

The gender equity scale consisted of 24 5-point Likert (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) questions. This scale had five subscales called gender issues, networks, work policies, perceived competency, and gender plus (i.e., issues other than gender related to equity). The only subscale that showed significant differences among the ranks was gender plus. Associate professors ($M = 3.6$, $SD = .64$) differed from full professors ($M = 3.1$, $SD = .56$) concerning perceptions that race and ethnicity were more important than gender, and perceived changes occurring in the old boys network. One somewhat striking variable differed among the levels with assistant professors ($M = 3.9$, $SD = .86$) agreeing that women lacked good role models in the field more so than did full professors ($M = 2.9$, $SD = 1.1$).

Table 1 provides a summary of all the gender equity items, their percentage of agreement, the mean score, and standard deviation. Note that a large majority of respondents believed that unconscious discrimination continues to exist in the field, many men do not “get” that gender discrimination remains an issue, and women often are excluded from informal networks.

Discussion

Our study provided an exploration of aspects of a career development model including current position, career patterns, career satisfaction, family/work/leisure balance, and gender equity for women faculty working in recreation-related units. The similar numbers of respondents among the faculty ranks allowed us to make some comparisons. Many similarities found across the ranks related to job satisfaction, attitudes toward job, life balance perceptions, and the gender equity subscales. However, some notable differences were found.

O’Neil and Bilimoria (2005) suggested that career phases existed for professional women, and we suggested a possible connection related to faculty ranks (i.e., early/idealism = assistant professors, middle/endurance = associate professors, late/reinvention = full professors). We might expect to see the biggest differences between established (i.e., full professors) and newer (i.e., assistant professors) faculty, which was true related to influence in the organization, extrinsic expectations, and career advancement opportunities that were all rated higher for full professors. These results, however, may not necessarily reflect a difference between idealism and reinvention as assistant professors seemed to be quite realistic and pragmatic about their situations (e.g., they indicated that they still had to face gender equity issues). Some differences were found between associate and full professors such as variety in the job (full professors were higher) and stress of work (associate professors were higher). These results could be indicative of the endurance phase of some associate professors.

One difference that seemed of particular concern to us was the difference found between full professors and assistant professors regarding the statement, “Women often lack role models in our field.” Assistant professors had much higher agreement with the statement than full professors. As documented earlier, the recreation field in general and in higher education remains male dominated, and our study showed that women were not visible as role models. For over half the women in our study, this visibility of role models evidently did not exist.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Gender Equity Issues for Women Faculty (N = 57)

Statement	Percent Agree	Mean	SD
Gender Issues			
Conscious discrimination against women occurs in the field	31	2.98	1.04
Unconscious discrimination against women occurs in the field	76	3.94	.90
The idea of traditional gender roles prevents women from being viewed as leaders	50	3.31	.99
Many men do not “get” that gender equity remains an issue that needs to be addressed	80	3.94	.86
Women often experience a glass ceiling in this field...	54	3.50	.97
Men prefer working with other men and will often recruit and select them over women	52	3.37	1.00
Women are often excluded from informal male networks	82	3.94	.86
Women often have less influence and power in the organization	52	3.22	1.04
Sexual harassment continues to be an issue in the field	44	3.30	.86
Women often do not receive the same mentoring as men in the field	58	3.39	.92
The parks and recreation field does not seem to be concerned about gender equity issues	30	2.98	1.09
Women often lack good role models in the field	58	3.24	1.08
Networks			
Women often do not have adequate formal networks in the organization	43	3.07	1.06
Women often do not have adequate informal networks in the organization	39	2.93	1.06
Women tend to work in areas that are not promotable in our field	32	3.00	.97
Women often do not desire to move into management positions in our field	39	2.48	1.02
Work Policies			
Women often are not able to assume higher level management positions because of multiple non-work roles	59	3.50	1.10
Employers have not implemented enough policies that help their employees, and especially, women	50	3.35	1.07
Women are often unable to put in the extra hours required for high level management	26	3.00	1.05
Perceived Competence			
Women often do not have the necessary skills to be successful managers	11	1.56	.74
Women have only moved into the recreation field recently*	2	2.00	.64
Women often lack knowledge about positions available	15	2.48	.93
Gender Plus			
Discrimination due to race and ethnicity is a bigger issue than gender discrimination	28	3.09	.85
Changes are occurring for the better in the field because the “old boys” are retiring*	61	3.56	.77

*Reverse interpretation needed for these items

Although we might have guessed that older faculty who may have grown up pre-Title IX would sense that gender equity issues existed, we were surprised by how pervasive the sense of inequity remained. Of interest was that twice as many women perceived unconscious compared to conscious discrimination. Further, lack of access to informal networks was perceived as twice as likely as access to formal networks. Gender biases are often perceived to be non-existent given the legal policy changes that have occurred in society (e.g., equal employment opportunities). Yet, as suggested in our study, a perception among many women faculty members was that discrimination remained (see Table 1) in subtle unconscious ways that may not be blatant.

Interestingly, over half of the women faculty in our study did not aspire to senior administrative positions. Career success usually connotes that upward mobility is desirable (Ferber, 2003). The vast majority of women in this study indicated that they were satisfied with their current situation. Perhaps assistant professors were more concerned about tenure and promotion as a form of “upward” mobility than administrative positions at this time. However, they also may lack good role models of senior faculty who have been successful in management. We surmised that perhaps in the current economic climate of large budget cuts in higher education, the stress of administration was not appealing to newer women faculty.

Although a majority of respondents were older and childcare issues were not a major issue, we were surprised by the number of women who indicated they had caregiving roles for older family members. The balance between family/home life and work seemed to have dimensions beyond taking care of children. Caregiving remains a dominant and traditional role for many women whether related to caring for children or aging adults (O’Neill & Bilimoria, 2005). Regardless, many of the faculty women in our study indicated that they had leisure activities as well as opportunities for physical activity indicating attempts to try to balance their lives relative to work and caregiving roles. Perhaps because these women represented recreation-related fields, we would suspect that they would know how to balance their lives. Our data indicated that balance was perceived but this balancing was not without some stress.

A limitation of this study was the sample included only women who were members of NRPA. Many university faculty members in the broad field of parks, recreation, sport, and tourism are not members of NRPA. Nevertheless, we believe this study provided a way to begin to explore career development dimensions for women faculty in recreation-related fields. Many men may face similar problems but the focus of our research was on understanding women faculty’s career development. The value of the study may lie in some implications for the future as they relate to what can be said to newer female assistant professors in higher education. As described below, this study also had some implications for faculty colleagues.

Implications for New Faculty

Faculty members starting their careers as assistant professors in higher education generally must address tenure and promotion. This untenured status could put women in a situation of perceiving that they have little influence in the university (Sussman & Yssaad, 2005). Women are also confronted with the need to negotiate their work and other life interests related to family or personal interests (O’Neill et al., 2008). These conflicts are not unique to academic women, but the university culture may

be somewhat distinct compared to other employment areas. On one hand, faculty members generally have flexibility regarding how they use their time. Negotiating family concerns might be easier because of the flexibility. On the other hand, however, faculty members can be flexible but often have to work long hours during their “free time” if they have heavy teaching loads or want to obtain tenure through research and writing (Williams, 2004). Our sample indicated they generally worked additional hours each week beyond what was expected by their employers.

We suggest that new untenured faculty should be clear about the university’s expectations for them. Although many universities are now more family-friendly, the expectations are the same as in the past for tenure and promotion. Therefore, having the support from family as well as superiors is essential. Faculty should look for role models and mentors, if not in their department then elsewhere. However, the responsibility for assisting women in their career growth starts in the department. Further, it may be important for a newer faculty member to look to role models who are like oneself. For example, if a woman faculty member has young children, she should find other women who have raised children and have been professionally successful, even if she needs to look outside her own university.

Mentoring is associated with role models. Women should seek mentors, either men or women, who can provide insight about the nuances of the university and the tenure process (Hartley & Dobeles, 2009). These mentors can also help them to negotiate the system and to make the best decisions about activities they undertake. Not only should mentors give advice, but they also can be important advocates to their younger colleagues. Newer women faculty should also look for collaboration opportunities with colleagues (both men and women) that will enhance their academic goals. Hartley and Dobeles (2009) suggested that although these strategies are also the responsibility of colleagues and department chairs, newer women must realize the importance and potential of mentors early in their careers.

Women faculty may also want to be reflexive in considering the activities (e.g., advising, committee work) that they undertake in the university. In some cases, little choice is offered regarding some duties. However, in other situations, decisions can be made concerning particular service opportunities. These decisions should be strategically made with the support of mentors to facilitate career goals. Faculty need to be team players but also must be focused in the activities they undertake given the expectations of their universities. Ferber (2003) noted that sometimes unconscious discrimination results in what roles women are expected to take in the university, but at other times women have a great deal of latitude to make choices about the amount of service, advising, or teaching they will do.

Research extensive universities offer somewhat different challenges based on the expectations, although most baccalaureate schools generally require some scholarship even if it is not funded research. Although this study did not differentiate type of university, the literature (e.g., Hartley & Dobeles, 2009) certainly suggested that women are most successful when they are able to engage in partnerships, especially with senior researchers who can help them learn as well as facilitate opportunities for funding and publications. These strategies further speak to the importance of mentorship and role models.

Implications for Colleagues

Recruiting and retaining quality faculty should be a major focus of university units. Therefore, providing mentoring for young faculty is paramount for both established male and female faculty members. Mentoring is a two-way street. New colleagues should seek mentors, but established female and male faculty should recognize the responsibility they have to facilitate experiences and help faculty make appropriate decisions (Hartley & Dobebe, 2009). Although mentoring is a two-way street unit directors can ensure that opportunities for mentorship are available and are a core responsibility of the department. In addition to support and encouragement, honest feedback should also be given to enable new faculty to grow and improve their teaching and scholarship. Further, senior faculty can assist junior faculty in networking and establishing their professional careers. This assistance must be strategic as people often feel more comfortable with others like themselves (e.g., men may be more likely unconsciously to mentor other men than female colleagues). However, if a department in a university is to reflect diversity, attempts must be made to assure that women are actively recruited and given adequate support (e.g., graduate assistants, research start-up money) to be successful.

Senior faculty and colleagues can help newer faculty members negotiate the structural and cultural constraints that continue to exist in higher education for many women. Faculty members who are tenured or who are in administrative positions are often in a better place to acknowledge power relations and to contest some of the dominant, and often unconscious, codes and behaviors to make the way smoother for those younger women who follow. Further, although policies in universities are more family-friendly, more is yet to be done related to issues such as childcare, flexible schedules, and tenure clock extension for both male and female faculty who qualify (Ferber, 2003; Ozkanh & White, 2008).

Female associate professors also need support. Focus is often placed on how full professors might contribute to their upward mobility through senior management and how assistant professors need to perform to obtain tenure and promotion. Some associate professors do not wish to be promoted but want to continue in roles in which they can excel and make significant contributions to students and to society. Associate professors that have received tenure and promotion may need support to move toward reinvention (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005) through their teaching, research, and service to make for a satisfying career. Although some women may not aspire to upward mobility, the types of constraints that lead to less job satisfaction, stress, and discriminatory behavior that could result in women leaving the academy are the responsibility of more than just the unit chair.

Future Research

This study may have raised more questions regarding women faculty in recreation-related fields than provided answers. The type of university, which was not analyzed in our study because of lack of this information, likely had a major role in opportunities as well as support services for women. Further, the policies that a university has related to diversity and family friendliness are important to explore and consider. More research needs to be conducted regarding these areas. In addition, changing social roles for male faculty members may also be worth exploring relative to career development and the

balancing of work/family/leisure. In addition, a study focused specifically on women in academic positions would enable specific issues distinct in the university to be further explored. Regardless, this exploratory study has provided a basis for further research to help women faculty members in recreation-related fields be successful in higher education by taking into account the complex dimensions that lead to satisfaction and success in career development in higher education.

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