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FEMALE ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT CHAIRS AT A PUBLIC, VERY HIGH RESEARCH ACTIVITY UNIVERSITY: EXPLORING THEIR CAREER PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

FEMALE ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT CHAIRS AT A PUBLIC, VERY HIGH RESEARCH ACTIVITY UNIVERSITY: EXPLORING THEIR CAREER PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Higher Education

By

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ABSTRACT

The advancement of women into academic leadership remains a problem facing public, high-research activity universities. While there are more women who are qualified to assume the position of department chair in research institutions today than there were 30 years ago, women still lag behind their male counterparts in holding these academic leadership roles. The purpose of this study was to examine the personal and professional career experiences of women department chairs in a public, very high research activity institution, and to provide advice to women faculty seeking to become a department chair in the future. The department chair is among the most important academic administrators within any higher education institution, and the effectiveness of this leader is paramount to the overall success of their department. Historically males have occupied the majority of chair positions in research universities. Little is known about how women prepare for the position, why they are selected, and the challenges they face in becoming a department chair.

The research design involved using a qualitative case study, which employed purposeful sampling methods. Eight current female department chairs, four college deans who were familiar with the chairs' appointment, and one provost from State University, a public, very high research activity university were selected to participate in the study. Face-to-face, open-ended interviews were employed as the primary source of data; however, additional documents were analyzed to corroborate the interview data and enrich the study. The research questions in this inquiry focused on four specific areas, which included: (a) knowledge, training, experience, and skills required to become a department chair in a public, four-year institution; (b) strategies used to obtain the position; (c) gender-based challenges faced by the women chairs; and (d) advice for aspiring female academic department chairs.

The study's findings indicated that the women chairs possessed important academic and administrative leadership experience and interpersonal skills, and encountered unique challenges in their advancement to the position. The study's participants also offered advice for future women department chairs with regard to understanding the roles, responsibilities, and challenges related to the position of department chair, as well as professional preparation for the position.

This dissertation is approved for recommendation
to the Graduate Council.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my one and only precious son, Adjani Winston. From the moment you came into my life, you have inspired me to pursue excellence. You have stood by my side and have shown me absolute kindness, unconditional love, support, and patience throughout this seemingly unending process. This is OUR achievement. It was worth all of the sacrifice and challenges we encountered in order to achieve it. You have worked just as hard as I have to earn this. Thank you so very much for being a wonderful son and for enriching my life. I love you with all of my heart.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For successful student, faculty, academic, and curricular development, effective department leadership is critical (Stark, Briggs, & Rowland-Poplawski, 2000). "Nearly 80% of all administrative decisions in higher education happen at the departmental level" (Wolverton, Gmelch, Wolverton, & Sarros, 1999b, p. 165). Academic department chairs are administrators who are vital members of their college and university academic communities, and are considered by many to be the most important university and college academic administrators who serve in research institutions (Barge & Musambira; 1992; Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Maerten, 1991; Treadwell, 1997; Williams, 1991). Furthermore, they directly affect the quality of their departments and play a critical role in determining the success of higher education institutions. Department chairs also work with other administrators to develop institutional policies (Wolverton, 1999). They are "typically midcareer faculty members" (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004, p. 8). Moreover, they arrive at their positions through a number of entry points, including election by their peers, the majority of whom are men (Niemeier & Gonzalez, 2004), appointment by the deans of their colleges, or by the chief academic officer of the institutions in which they are employed.

Academic department chairs fulfill a multitude of management and leadership duties and responsibilities that involve in large part, working with both faculty, support staff, and upper administration. A significant portion of their job entails communicating faculty concerns to senior administration and administrative concerns to faculty (Tucker, 1984). In addition, their jobs include promoting productivity within their departments, overseeing and managing personnel and financial resources, and pursuing opportunities to develop personal scholarship

(Gmelch, 2004). Academic department chairs serve as external liaisons by lobbing for financial support for their departments, (Carroll & Gmelch, 1992). Other administrative duties involve making decisions regarding teaching assignments and salary decisions, as well overseeing the appointment of constituents who serve on committees (Niemeier & Gonzalez, 2004). They also possess the authority to guide institutional policies and procedures, determine and maintain departmental cultures, and provide recommendations regarding faculty appointment, promotion, and tenure (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004). Overall, academic department chairs serve as "facilitators, initiators, agenda setters, coordinators, advocates, and standard setters" (Stark, et al., 2000, p. 15).

Academic department chairs also acquire significant administrative experience that allows them to become competitive for higher-level academic leadership positions. Several researchers contend that the position of department chair is generally perceived as the best preparation and is a prerequisite for advancement through the ranks of academic administration (Brown, 2000; Carroll, 1991; Fobbs, 1988; Naholi, 2008; Niemeier & Gonzalez, 2004). In most cases, individuals aspiring to senior leadership positions such as dean, vice-president for academic affairs, or president are likely to have moved through the ranks of academic administration, often beginning as a department chair (Lively, 2000). Therefore serving in the role of department chair is generally regarded as the point of entry for a faculty member who desires to pursue a career in senior academic administration (Niemeier & Gonzalez, 2004).

Over the last 20 years, higher education institutions have made slow changes in promoting an even balance of male and female senior academic leaders. According to a 2007 report from the American Council on Education (ACE), in 1986, men held 90% of all college and university presidencies, while women held only 10%. As of 2007, men held 77% of all

presidential positions at all colleges, while women held 23%. Although there has been a slight increase in the number of senior women administrators in public higher education institutions over the past two decades, today, males still far outnumber females in senior academic leadership positions.

While women have made marginal gains in holding senior academic administrative positions, they lead the way in degree attainment. In the 1970s and 1980s, women progressively began to outnumber men in undergraduate and graduate student enrollment (Chliwniak, 1997; Nidiffer, 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 2002). In 2002, 46% of all doctorates in the U.S. were earned by women (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). According to Touchton (2008), in 2005-2006, women represented 57% of all undergraduates, earned 60% of all master's degrees, and 45% of all doctoral degrees in the U.S. By 2008–2009 women earned 57% of bachelor's degrees, 60% of master's degrees and 52% of all doctoral degrees (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). In 2005, White posited that as the number of women undergraduate and graduate students increased over time, an increasingly larger number of women would be qualified for advancement into the academic and administrative ranks. Despite these predictions, there are still certain barriers that hinder women's promotion to the full professor and senior administrative leadership levels.

From an academic rank perspective, according to the U.S. Department of Education (2002), as of the fall of 1999, women comprised 54% of lecturer positions but only represented 21% of full professors in four-year higher education institutions. By fall of 2001, the percentage of female tenured professors increased slightly to 22% (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). In 2011, the U.S. Department of Education released a report entitled *Women In Academia*. The findings in this report indicated that there were 415,821 men teaching at colleges and universities

in the U.S. in 2011, compared to 313,156 women. The data further showed that women comprised only 43% of all full-time instructional faculty currently teaching at degree-granting institutions in the U.S. By rank, women made up 53% of all instructors, 53% of all lecturers, and 48% of all assistant professors. At the senior ranks, the gender gap was most apparent. Women comprised 41% of all associate professors but only 28% of all full professors at colleges and universities. Given these recent data, it appears that women are slowly advancing into senior-level faculty positions, making it even more difficult for more women to move into academic leadership positions (ACE, 2007).

Despite the great strides made by women to earn degrees at all levels of higher education over the preceding 20 years, the numbers indicate that women are still not advancing to academic leadership positions at the pace and at the levels achieved by their male counterparts. Males still far outnumber women in full professor positions, as well as in senior-level academic leadership positions such as deans, chief academic officers, and presidents in public, four-year high-research institutions.

Statement of the Problem

In summer of 2000, the Association of American Universities (AAUP) surveyed 2,817 departments at research institutions across the U.S., to assist in developing standard demographics for academic department chairs. The results of the survey indicated that men chaired 74.4% of the 2,817 surveyed departments, while women chaired only 17.5% of the departments (Niemeier & Gonzalez, 2004). As women advance to senior leadership positions such as deans and chief academic officers, the numbers are even lower (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). There is existing research regarding the importance of the position of department head in colleges and universities (Carroll & Gmelch, 1992, 1994; Gmelch & Parkay, 1999;

Treadwell, 1997; Wolverton, 2002), their roles and responsibilities (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004; Creswell, Wheeler, Seagren, Egly, & Beyer, 1990; Gmelch, 2004), and the challenges that they face (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; Seagren, Creswell, & Wheeler, 1993). Given the low percentage of women who hold the position of academic department chair within U.S. public, very high research activity institutions and the significance to further academic administrative advancement, it was important to examine the personal and professional and experiences of women who have attained this position. Little empirical research exists on women department chairs in research universities, what prepared them for this position, how they attained the position, and the challenges they faced in obtaining the position. This study was conducted to help fill that research gap.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the personal and professional experiences of women who have obtained the position of academic department chair within a public, very high research activity institution, and to provide advice to facilitate the advancement of women who aspire to the position. Specifically, the study looked at the personal and professional experiences of current female academic department chairs in a highly intensive research university as they described the qualifications, training, strategies, challenges, and other factors that led them to achieve the position of academic department chair. The study also gathered information pertinent to the experiences of the female department chairs from the college deans who hired them and the provost of the institution.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to address the problem identified and the purpose developed for this study:

1. What did the study participants perceive to be the qualifications, training, and skills necessary for women faculty to attain the position of academic department chair in a public, very high research activity institution?

2. What intentional strategies (personal and professional) did the women department chairs believe facilitated their advancement to their current position?

3. What were the principal gender-based challenges that the women faced in achieving their current position as academic department chair?

4. What advice did the study participants offer to women faculty who aspire to become an academic department chair in a public, very high research activity institution?

Delimitations and Limitations

Delimitations define the boundaries and scope of the study and are established by the researcher. The first delimitation of the study was that it was conducted only at one public, very high research activity institution. Beyond the college deans and the provost, only women who were currently serving as department chairs were included in the study.

Limitations are weaknesses in the study often related to the study design (Creswell, 2008). Several potential limitations existed based on the design of the study. The first was that the study reflected the views of participants from only one institution of postsecondary education and was limited in sample size. Given that the information in this study was gathered from female academic department chairs, college deans, and a provost serving a single public, four-year high research institution, the findings of this study may not necessarily be transferable to female academic department chairs serving in other college and university contexts. The second limitation of the study was that the sample of female department chairs in the study did not include any minorities. One woman department chair who participated in the study was foreign-

born but had lived in the U.S. for over 25 years. A final limitation of the study involved the researcher as the data collection instrument. By conducting face-to-face interviews with each participant, the richness of the data relied on the researcher's interview skills as well as the participants' willingness to be candid and to disclose, reflect, and analyze various aspects involving both their positive and negative experiences with serving in the role of academic department chair. This fact potentially influenced researcher bias in the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Assumptions

Four assumptions were accepted for this study. First, the study was conducted under the assumption that academic department chairs, college deans, and provosts were the most reliable sources of information based on their personal and professional experiences.

Second, it was assumed that a qualitative case study was the most appropriate methodology to elicit the rich information that was required to achieve the purpose of the study, and the use of in-depth, face-to-face interviews as a form of data collection was appropriate to produce accurate, rich, and detailed information. It was assumed that dialogue between the researcher and the participants would better allow the researcher to accurately explore and understand the personal and professional experiences of female academic department chairs.

Finally, the study assumed that all of the participants were completely candid and honest in their responses to the questions provided in the interview protocols, and that they each provided information that was as rich and as detailed as possible.

Significance of the Study

The present study was important because it was one of the first to qualitatively examine the personal and professional experiences of women who have obtained the position of department chair in a public, four-year, high-intensive research institution.

Numerous studies have been conducted regarding women who have attained academic leadership positions in higher education, but little is known about the personal and professional perceptions of female department chairs. Many studies focus primarily on senior-level academic administrators including presidents, deans, and provosts (Alexander-Snow, 2010; Bowen & Shapiro, 1998; Dominici, Fried, & Zeger, 2009; Hurtado & DeAngelo, 2009; Martin, Samels, & Associates, 1997; Nidiffer, 2000; Rosser, 2003; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010; Wolverton & Gonzales, 2000). There have also been studies that have examined the success stories of high profile women administrators, such as associate deans, deans, chief academic officers, and presidents (Danielson & Shulte, 2007; Earwood-Smith, Jordan-Cox, Hudson, & Smith, 1990). Moreover, other studies have focused on the career-paths of senior women leaders in higher education (Gerdes, 2003; Milley, 1991; Walton & McDade, 2001).

Previous research indicates that women continue to be underrepresented in academic leadership positions in higher education institutions and that they are infrequently promoted to senior-level positions such as associate deans, deans or chief academic officers, before first serving in the department chair position (Brown, 2000; Carroll, 1991; Fobbs, 1988; Naholi, 2008; Niemeier & Gonzalez, 2004). Even with this knowledge, the research shows that few women receive opportunities to serve in the role of academic department chair (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004; Niemeier & Gonzalez, 2004).

Despite the work conducted by previous researchers, a gap appears to exist in the literature that examines how women faculty in four-year research universities secure the position of department chair. In addition, there have been few if any qualitative studies that have specifically examined the professional and personal experiences of women who have attained the position of academic department chair within a public, four-year high research institution. This study was important for two major reasons: (a) it examined the personal and professional experiences and unique challenges faced by women who have served in the department chair position, and (b) the participants provided career advice that would be beneficial to women faculty who aspire to become an academic department chair within public, very high research activity institutions.

Many who study the field of higher education have posited that the academic department chair is the most critical and most important academic leader within a public, four-year high-research institution (Barge & Musambira; 1992; Bennett, 1982; Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Wescott, 2000; Williams, 2001). However, few women serve in this position because it has historically been dominated by males (Carroll, 1991; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Therefore, acquiring knowledge regarding the personal and professional experiences of women who have obtained the position of department chair within a public, very high research activity institution is significant because it will allow faculty and academic administrators to better understand the unique challenges experienced by women faculty members.

The study was also significant because it allowed current female department chairs to identify and provide important career advice to other women faculty who aspire to become academic department chairs within a public, very high research activity institution. By directing their attention toward the advice provided by women department chairs, women faculty who

aspire to the position can be better informed and prepared. Consequently, women may be able to achieve greater success in obtaining the position of academic department chair within a public, very high research activity institution in the future, thus contributing toward the effort to achieve a greater representation of women in leadership positions in such institutions.

Overall, it is hoped that this study will provide rich information that would be useful to higher education administrators to help improve the practice of selecting, hiring, or appointing future female department chairs. By taking the information provided in the study into account, higher education practitioners might also implement strategies to ensure that current and future women department chairs receive the training that is necessary to develop and prepare them to effectively serve in the position, as well as prepare to move to senior-level academic administrative positions. In addition, higher education practitioners might also use the study results to become more cognizant of the challenges facing women faculty seeking academic leadership opportunities and lead toward steps to mitigate those challenges.

Definition of Terms

To better facilitate the reader's understanding of specific terms used in this study, the following definitions were provided:

A Barrier or Challenge is something that acts to hinder, obstruct, impede, or restrict a boundary or a limit.

An Academic Administrator is any administrator that is in the academic chain of command and includes academic department chairs, associate deans, deans, vice provosts, and chief academic officers.

An Academic Department Chair is an academic leader or administrator who has the authority to exert influence over others because of their academic and administrative roles.

"They are leaders in establishing departmental goals and objectives and represent their faculties to the rest of the institution, selected professional organizations, and client groups outside the college or university" (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004 p. 3). In this study, the terms academic department chair, academic department head, department chair, and department head were used interchangeably. For the purpose of this study, the only difference that exists between a department head and a department chair is that a department chair is selected through a committee process and a department head is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of a college dean.

A Public, Very High Research Activity University is an accredited public institution or university of higher learning and research that grants academic degrees in a variety of subjects. This type of postsecondary institution provides both undergraduate education and postgraduate education. A high-research activity institution is defined by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as a doctoral-granting, research university that produces superior levels of research (http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/).

The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education is the leading taxonomy for recognizing and grouping colleges and universities and describing institutional diversity in the U.S. Based on "empirical data on colleges and universities, the Carnegie Classification" was published with the intent of reflecting changes among groups of comparable colleges and universities in areas such as policy and research. "The classification includes all accredited, degree-granting colleges and universities in the U.S. that are represented in the National Center for Education Statistics Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System" (http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/).

Summary

This chapter included an introduction to the study, which provided background literature and research on the broad problem of advancement of women into leadership positions in four-year colleges and universities in the U.S. More specifically, the introduction section addressed the importance of the role of the department chair and the specific responsibilities and challenges that the department chair is faced with in a public, very high research activity institution. It also included a statement of the problem, which focused on the specific problem examined. The chapter also included a section concerning the purpose of the study, which was to explore the personal and professional experiences of women who have attained the position of department chair within a public, very high research activity institution, and to identify advice that might assist women faculty who aspire to the position of department chair in the future. The chapter also included the research questions used to guide the study and achieve its purpose.

An additional area covered by the chapter regarded specific limitations and delimitations involving the participants, institution, research methods, and the study in general. In addition, it included a section on assumptions that impacted the manner in which the study was conducted and the manner in which the data was analyzed and presented.

The chapter concluded with three final sections. A section concerning the significance of the study was presented that highlighted the empirical research related to the topic, followed by any gaps in the current literature, then addressing what the researcher hoped to accomplish by conducting the study. Finally, the chapter provided definitions of important terms in the study to facilitate better understanding of the information contained in the study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

There has not been much literature produced that addresses the personal and professional experiences of women who have risen to the position of department chair in a public four-year research institution. Several books, articles, and studies have focused on various facets of being a department chair (Bennett & Figuil, 1990; Burns & Gmelch, 1995; Carroll & Gmelch, 1994; Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; Hickson & Stacks, 1992; Higgerson, 1996, Tucker, 1992). Some researchers have addressed and provided information specifically concerning the importance of the position of the department chair (Barge & Musambira, 1992; Bennett, 1982; Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Maerten, 1991; Treadwell, 1997; Williams,1991), the roles and responsibilities of the department chair (Caroll & Wolverton, 2004; Creswell, Wheeler, Seagren, Egly, & Beyer, 1990; Gmelch, 2004), and the challenges faced by department chairs (Seagren, Creswell, & Wheeler, 1993).

The following literature review provides information regarding academic department chairs in general, as well as information regarding women serving in faculty and leadership positions, and the barriers that they face in public, four-year research institutions. The review focuses on five specific areas: (a) the importance of the position of academic department chair in a public, four-year research institution; (b) the roles and responsibilities of department chairs in a public, four-year research institution; (c) what it takes to become a department chair in a public, four-year research institution; (d) information regarding women versus men faculty in higher education; and (e) barriers faced by women seeking academic leadership roles in higher education.

To assist in locating information for the review, the researcher utilized several academic databases at the University of Arkansas' library, including *Ebsco Academic Search Premier, JSTOR (Journal Storage), ProQuest Direct, ProQuest Direct Dissertations and Theses, ERIC (Education Resources Information Center),* and *Google Scholar.* These databases assisted the researcher with retrieving information that was pertinent for understanding the nature of the topic under study. Specific keywords and terms such as women, department chair, department head, chair, leadership, higher education, roles, responsibilities, position, importance, challenges, barriers, strategies, training, skills, research, institution, experiences, and mentoring, were typed into the academic databases located at the University of Arkansas library. Consequently, the researcher was able to retrieve important information in several academic journals, books, and other forms of scholarly publications.

Importance of the Department Chair in a Public, Four-Year Research Institution

Gmelch and Miskin (2011) reported that there are currently about 50,000 department chair positions across the U.S. Carroll and Wolverton (2004) examined the position of the department chair in higher education institutions. Their research focused on characteristics of both male and female department chairs. They found that only 10% of all department chairs were female. Niemeier and Gonzalez (2004) found that 87% of departments in Science and Engineering were chaired by men, while only 13% were chaired by women. Wolverton, Gmelch, Wolverton and Sarros (1999) reported the average age of a department chair as 51 years old, while Carroll and Wolverton (2004) found that the typical a department chair was about 46 years old. Wolverton (2002) discovered that the majority of department chairs were White males. Most department chairs had earned tenure and some had attained the rank of full professor (Hecht et al., 1999; Mecham, 2012). Carroll and Wolverton (2004) also reported that female chairs were

less likely than male chairs to become full professors, and if they did achieve the rank of full professor, they would remain in this position for a shorter length of time than the male department chairs.

A thorough review of the literature supports the view that department chairs are key contributors to the success of higher education administration. They are in essence, considered the most important university college administrators (Barge & Musambira; 1992; Bennett, 1982; Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Maerten, 1991; Treadwell, 1997; Williams, 1991). Gmelch and Burns (1994) posit that the department chair is a key figure in the management of college and university institutions. In addition, department chairs are considered both faculty members and academic administrators, and are first-line leaders who directly impact the quality of their departments. In this capacity, department chairs must meet the academic needs of students, the resource demands of faculty, as well as the desires of upper administration (DeWitt, 2003).

Department chairs also serve as liaisons between faculty members and senior administration (Leaming, 1998). They are important players in the overall academic leadership team on campus and are essential to the success of higher education institutions. Gmelch and Parkay, (1999) conducted a qualitative study to examine the developing identities of 13 new department chairs in 10 public and private universities in eight states. The results showed that in order for chairs to successfully fulfill their leadership duties, "they must learn to work with and through their colleagues" (p. 15), and develop positive interpersonal relationships with administrators. Furthermore, chairs must work to "remain connected" with both faculty and administrators to be effective (Gmelch et al., 1999, p. 16). Seagren, et al. (1993) wrote that despite the fact that the department chair has the most influence over faculty and academic support staff, many institutions fail to understand the importance of the position as well as the

unique challenges it presents. With the majority of departmental decisions being made by the department chair, there is tremendous pressure placed on them to succeed. Gmelch and Burns (1993) studied 564 department chairs to determine the levels of stress involved in their position. The findings showed that department chairs experience two main types of stress in their position: being productive faculty members and effective leaders. Furthermore, they discovered that the department chair has a larger workload than most administrators in higher education. Despite the high levels of responsibility that are associated are with the department chair position, it is not considered to be a prominent or high-status position in higher education (Hecht, Higgerson, Gmelch, & Tucker, 1999). Nevertheless, department chairs are needed to ensure the effective day-to-day functioning of the academic department (Hecht et al., 1999).

Department chairs secure their position in several different ways, including, being selected by a committee, being appointed to the position by a college dean, and volunteering to serve. In a national study, Carroll (1991) examined the career paths of department heads in 101 research and doctorate-granting institutions before becoming chair. He studied how factors such as length of tenure, age, gender, prior work experience, area of discipline and department size contributed to their progression to the position of department chair. The findings showed that, in general, department chairs begin their career paths first as graduate students within their academic disciplines, who acquire the academic qualifications that are necessary to pursue the position. They then go on to secure a faculty position and establish a good record of teaching and scholarly accomplishment. They then progress through the faculty ranks, earn a tenured appointment, and eventually become a department chair. Finally, the department chair position would be achieved either by intentionally seeking the position, by appointment, or by being asked to serve in the position. Their background work as a graduate student, tenured faculty

member and leader somewhat prepares them to advance into the role of department chair (Treadwell, 1997). This career path to the position of department chair was later supported by Westcott (2000).

Department chairs serve in the position for various reasons. Some choose to serve in the position because they believe that it is a necessary duty (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993) and some serve in the position simply because they were asked or told to do so by the deans of their colleges (Seedorf, 1990). Others choose to serve because they were influenced by their colleagues, or because they received an opportunity to personally advance in their careers (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993). Regardless of their motivations behind choosing to serve in the position of department chair, there are important duties that must be fulfilled, and people who must be served. Trying to balance their duties can present department chairs with various challenges both within and outside of the departments and institutions that they serve.

Wescott (2000) posited that "the department chair's job is the most difficult on campus in many respects" (p. 26). Additionally, Gmelch (2004) argued that the department chair position is the most misunderstood in today's academic world. Chairs play a huge role in determining the direction and governance of higher education institutions. "In carrying out their responsibilities they must address the needs of many constituencies, including students, faculty, departmental staff, higher administration, alumni, community groups, and members of their professional disciplines" (Aziz, Mullins, Balzer, Grauer, Burnfield, Lodato, & Cohen-Powless, 2005, p. 573). Every decision that they make impacts the lives of various constituents within and outside of their institutions. Department chairs must pay careful attention to detail and fulfill their roles effectively because they bear the brunt of the responsibility when things go wrong (Bennett, 1982).

The challenges faced by department chairs are enormous. These involve juggling various facets of their job, which leaves them with very little time to teach and do research. Other challenges include having very little control over budgets and facilities, dealing with difficult people and information, and having very little time to spend with family and to engage in leisurely activities (Gmelch, 1991; Treadwell, 1997). In addition, department chairs are confronted with the tasks of effectively managing and prioritizing numerous academic and administrative responsibilities as well as different types of people.

Department chairs must also deal with a variety of pressures, which come from several internal and external constituents. Seagren, et al. (1993) noted how difficult and challenging a chair's job is by stating the following:

> The chair is squeezed between the demands of upper administration and institutional expectations on the one side and the expectations of faculty, staff and students on the other, with both attempting to influence and shape the chair. The chair is caught in the middle, required to provide the most sophisticated leadership and statesmanship to avoid being crushed by these two opposing forces. (p.iii)

Given all of these challenges, department chairs must find ways to ensure that their responsibilities to all of their constituents are fulfilled while still maintaining structure and productivity, both within and outside of their departments. However, to further understand why the position of the department chair is important, one has to understand the roles and the responsibilities that the department chair is charged with.

Roles and Responsibilities of Department Chairs in a Public, Four-Year Research Institution

Since the 1960s various authors have written an abundance of books and articles about the roles and responsibilities of the department chair within higher education. In an article entitled: *The Role and Function of Academic Department Chairmen in Two Land-Grant*

Institutions, Siever (1969) described some of the major roles of the department chair in land grant institutions as being able to teach well, being able to achieve goals, demonstrating an ability to recruit promising faculty, ability to effectively fulfill faculty duties, a personal reputation for scholarship, and a capacity for decisive thinking and action.

Allan Tucker published a book entitled *Chairing the Academic Department* in *1984*. In it, he suggested that a good chair possesses solid interpersonal skills and can work well with faculty, staff, students, and administrators. He also wrote that a good chair possesses sound judgment, can resolve problems in a timely fashion, can motivate faculty, and has the ability to adapt their leadership styles when necessary.

In 1990, Creswell, et al. wrote *The Academic Chairperson's Handbook*. The goal of the book was to provide five main strategies that department chairs can implement to improve the teaching, research and scholarship abilities of faculty. These strategies involved: gathering background information on faculty performance, clarifying the problem which is affecting faculty productivity, observing performance yourself, facilitating improvement and practice, and monitoring progress and advocating (p. 61). The book also discussed that a good chair should be able to make sacrifices and commitments to ensure the success of faculty, and should also be able to quickly recognize any problems and develop a good plan of action for resolving them. More recently, Gmelch (2004) wrote an article entitled *Balancing Acts of the Department Chair* which discusses the various roles and responsibilities, as well as the challenges with work, family and time management that department chairs must balance while serving in such an important role. In essence, the above authors all suggested that department chairs are charged with fulfilling vast, important and complex roles that need to be understood.

The roles of the department chair vary depending on the type of institution where the chair is serving (Seagren, et al., 1993). The primary role of the department chair is to "facilitate the academic enterprise" (Treadwell, 1997, p. 218). However, the roles and responsibilities of the department chair are very diverse. In some instances they range from dealing with personnel issues, ensuring that departmental goals are achieved, developing solid relationships with internal and external constituents, and developing a personal program of research (Gmelch, 2004). In other instances, they may focus more on issues including salaries, teaching schedules, establishing committees, (Niemeier & Gonzalez, 2004), budget control, institutional policies, departmental cultures, and faculty promotion and tenure (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004). In addition, department chairs must also fulfill roles as facilitators of the curriculum planning process, initiators of new ideas, agenda setters that handle various issues, coordinators who provide structure, advocates for departmental advancement, and standard setters (Stark, Briggs, & Rowland-Poplawski, 2000, pp. 15-37).

The department chair also serves as a middleman between faculty and senior administrators. Wolverton et al. (1999) found that more than half of department chairs describe themselves as both faculty and administrator. A significant portion of the job of department chairs entails communicating faculty concerns to senior administration and administrative concerns to faculty (Tucker, 1984). Chairs often mediate between faculty and administration and interact with various constituents on a daily basis in order to make decisions (Hecht et al., 1999). As faculty members and developers, department chairs contribute greatly to the professional and academic development of faculty, and seek and provide faculty members with opportunities to be involved in research, teaching and service (Creswell et al., 1990; Gmelch & Burns, 1994). As administrators, chairs must ensure the effective running of the academic department and also ensure that their

goals are in line with the goals of their deans and the institution as a whole. Effectively fulfilling these dual roles can prove to be a difficult task at times due to the ambiguity of their roles. Tucker (1984) best explained this quandary as follows:

> Deans and vice presidents look to department chairpersons as those primarily responsible for shaping the department's future yet faculty members regard themselves as the primary agent of change in department policies and procedures. The chairperson then is a manager and a faculty colleague, an advisor and an advisee, a soldier and a captain, a drudge and a boss. (p. 4)

Department chairs must be cautiously selective in pursuing and completing the duties that are unique to their organizational characteristics (size, faculty, department's discipline), positional characteristics (term of office, years of service, method of appointment), and their personal characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity, motivation to serve) (Carroll & Gmelch, 1992). To successfully achieve all of these tasks, they must be able to manage their time, people, and resources wisely, and they must be able to listen deeply to colleagues and students with empathy (Bowman, 2002). Given all of these roles and responsibilities, a large part of chairs' success depends on how well they are accepted by the people in their departments (Sessa & Taylor, 2000) and how successful they are in fulfilling their roles.

Throughout the literature, their roles and responsibilities have been addressed in two particular categories. The first category has focused on the managerial roles, and the second category has focused on the leadership roles of department chairs. "Framing challenges, identifying opportunities, and managing resources constitute the primary work of academic chairs as managers. Solving problems and enabling others to solve problems is the real work of academic chairs as leaders"(Bowman, 2002, p. 159) and is a major challenge they face in their position. Academic chairs fulfill the duties of managers when they focus their efforts toward supervising staff, making good policies, ensuring that rules, regulations and policies are being adhered to and

controlling the finances within their departments to achieve the bottom-line (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993). Likewise, they function as leaders when they focus on the mission and long-term vision engagement with both their internal and external constituents (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; Treadwell, 1997). Each set of duties bears paramount importance, and in order to be successful, department chairs must possess a healthy combination of both leadership and management skills which must be implemented both at the departmental and at the institutional level.

The Department Chair as Manager

Gmelch and Burns (1994) wrote, "The department chair person has been identified as key in the management of today's colleges and universities" (p. 79). When it comes to management, department chairs must employ a multiplicity of skills including communication skills, conflict resolution skills, and negotiation skills (Gmelch, 2004). They must also possess good time-management skills to be able to promptly and effectively execute their administrative responsibilities and to be able to work well with others. As managers, their administrative responsibilities focus on the day-to-day operation of the department, and involve dealing with paper-work as well as personnel-based matters. Specifically, the department chair's paper-based administrative responsibilities involve scheduling teaching appointments, making required changes to the curriculum, and managing the finances assigned to their departments (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004; Lucas, 1994). Furthermore, department chairs must also maintain proper storage of information and ensure that their office equipment is up to standard and kept in proper condition. Performing these paper-based tasks efficiently requires a high level of organization. Being able to do so facilitates dealing with personnel-based matters in an efficient manner.

Personnel-based matters involve managing full-time and part-time faculty and staff, making hiring and firing decisions, and most importantly, developing faculty. "As faculty

developers, chairs engage in recruitment, selection, and evaluation of faculty, provide informal faculty leadership, and enhance faculty morale and professional development" (Wolverton et al., 1999, p. 334). This role is especially challenging, but very important, in ensuring the progress and academic development of faculty members. Department chairs must find ways to use their influence to "motivate faculty" (Lucas, 1994, p. 334), as oftentimes, faculty are not obligated to comply with their requests. Moreover, as faculty developers, chairs "encourage professional development efforts of faculty, encourage faculty research and publication, maintain a productive work climate including reducing conflicts, and represent their departments to administration" (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993, p. 9).

Another group of persons that department chairs manage and interact with quite extensively is students. Department chairs usually play a role in the selection of graduate students, especially for graduate teaching assistant positions and graduate research assistant positions (Gmelch, 2004), and teaching and advising students (Carroll & Gmelch, 1992). Thus, their duties owed to students, staff, and faculty are numerous, and effective communication with these constituents is paramount in achieving success with personnel-based matters. In addition, support from all constituents is extremely important to ensure the success of the department chair. Faculty, staff and senior administrators must be willing to cooperate with them to build positive relationships that would enable them to be successful.

Besides managing their institutional roles and personnel responsibilities, academic department chairs are also charged with the responsibility of effectively managing their personal agendas, which include finding a balance between managing their personal life and family, as well as their scholarly achievements (Twomby, 2010). They must find ways to ensure that their family lives do not suffer at the cost of serving their institutions by carefully planning, prioritizing, and

setting aside adequate time to ensure that their lives outside of work remain intact. Simultaneously, department chairs must make a concerted effort to continue to teach, keep current within their academic discipline, and maintain an active personal research agenda (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; Wolverton et al., 1999), by publishing articles, books, presenting papers, and attending professional meetings (Carroll & Gmelch, 1992).

Serving in the role of academic department chair does not mean that one's personal agenda must be left behind. Rather, successful department chairs must learn to be flexible and maintain a good balance in managing both their personal lives along with their roles of faculty developer, scholar, manager, and leader, in order to satisfactorily achieve their goals. Seedorf (1990) contended that achieving this balance might prove to be difficult for department chairs who have served in the department chair position for a long period of time.

The Department Chair as Leader

There has been a plethora of information written about leadership, but few studies have been done particularly on the leadership styles of department chairs (Whitsett, 2007). Academic leaders focus on developing the areas of teaching, research and service in their departments, and assist departmental faculty in developing their strengths (Smith, 2005). When academic department chairs function as leaders, their short-term and long-term goals typically reflect the culture, mission, and vision of the institution (Bowman, 2002). Fisher (2000) argued that the mission of an organization is central to achieving overall success. However, as leaders, department chairs must also focus on building and developing the culture and achieving the vision of the institution. As leaders, academic department chairs must fulfill several leadership tasks including: developing and initiating long-range departmental goals, staff leadership, informal faculty leadership, encouraging faculty research and publication, encouraging faculty to pursue

professional development opportunities (Wolverton et al., 1999), and “curriculum leadership” (Stark et al., 2002).

Academic planning and curriculum leadership is considered one of the main tasks of the department chair. One study done by Stark et al. (2000) examined the leadership role department chairs play in curriculum planning, the variables that affect the role, and the situations that influence chairs to involve faculty in curriculum leadership. Qualitative interviews were conducted with 44 department chairs in Carnegie classified institutions. The results showed that when it comes to curriculum leadership and academic planning, chairs self-reported their leadership roles as "facilitator, initiator, agenda setter, coordinator, advocate, sensor and standard setter" (Stark et al., 2000, p. 1). Furthermore, the results indicated that chairs in research and doctoral institutions view their primary leadership roles as "facilitators and advocates"(Stark et al., 2000, p. 1).

In their publication entitled *The Department Chair as Academic Leader*, Hecht et al. (1991) described the academic leadership work of the department chair as follows: curriculum and program development, faculty matters and development, student matters and development, financial and facilities management, department governance, office management, data management, and institutional support. Additionally, in *Strengthening Departmental Leadership*, Lucas (1994) described several leadership responsibilities of department chairs, which include leading the department, motivating faculty to be highly productive and effective in the areas of scholarship, research, teaching, and service, evaluating faculty performance, creating a supportive environment, managing conflict, fulfilling administrative duties, and developing chair survival skills. Department chairs are also charged with maintaining a conducive working environment, which involves reducing and managing conflict among faculty members in their departments (Wolverton et al., 1999).

In order to positively influence faculty to buy into his or her direction for the department, the chair must also lead by example. This can be achieved by excelling as both a faculty member and as an administrator, and through the pursuit of professional development opportunities (Carroll & Gmelch, 1992). In addition to fulfilling these internal responsibilities, the department chair must also actively engage in external affairs by interfacing with constituents outside of their institution to achieve the goals of their departments and their institutions as a whole. As external liaisons, they lobby for financial support for their departments (Carroll & Gmelch, 1992), and meet with alumni, donors, and members of their external academic communities (Aziz et al., 2005). As such, department chairs are considered the face of their departments and must be able to go outside of their departments and represent their faculty, staff members and institutions with dignity, respect, and efficiency. They must familiarize themselves with key external constituents and agencies (Tucker, 1993), and they must be able to represent their universities and their departments in order to achieve desired outcomes.

The literature in the previous section revealed the critical level of importance of the position of the department chair in a public research institution. It also addressed how the nature of the job of the department chair demands a tremendous amount of focus and commitment to successfully achieve the various managerial and leadership roles and responsibilities, and tasks that they have been assigned to perform. Specifically, a number of factors including their prior personal and professional experiences, as well as the support of their internal and external constituents can positively or negatively affect the success and performance of the roles of the department chair. The next section examines the various ways in which one might come to occupy the position of department chair as well as the knowledge, skills, training, and other factors that contribute to the attainment of the position.

What It Takes to Become a Department Chair in a Public, Four-Year Research Institution

The literature that exists on department chairs does not specifically highlight any one, particular, set path that faculty take in order to obtain their position. In fact, the literature shows that department chairs secure their position through various processes depending on the department and institutions with which they are employed. Ways in which they might secure the position include being selected by a committee or dean, appointed by a dean, volunteering to serve, or feeling obligated to serve (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; Seedorf, 1990; Werkema, 2009). Carroll (1991) studied chairs in 101 Carnegie Council research and doctoral granting institutions to determine the career paths of faculty before attaining the position of department chair. He found that chairs obtain their position in five different ways: (a) a rotational appointment from within the department, (b) appointment by the college dean, (c) selection by departmental faculty members, (d) election by faculty with approval from the college dean, and (e) other hiring mechanisms. Moreover, he found that about 50% of department chairs were selected by faculty with final approval from the college dean.

The terms 'department chair' and 'department head' are often used synonymously, though a distinction can be made between the two. A chair is typically chosen by a committee, which includes faculty members, staff, and students, but is ultimately selected by a dean. A department head, on the other hand is appointed primarily by a dean, however, the dean also takes the input of faculty into consideration when making his or her selection (Smith, 2005). In addition, internal and, or, external searches are sometimes implemented in order to fill the position of department chair or head. Most often however, chairs are selected from an internal departmental search, while heads are recruited based on an external search process (Smith, 2005).

Knowledge, Training, Experience, and Skills

Various academic and professional experience, knowledge, and skills are required in order to qualify for the position of department chair. Typically a department chair requires “academic leadership, administrative leadership, successful teaching, active scholarship, and in some cases professional experience” (Treadwell, 1997, p. 218), in order to achieve the position. To successfully attain a leadership position in academia, women must obtain all of the required academic and administrative qualifications and credentials, "such as the terminal degree, experience in managing big budgets and lots of people, ability to secure grants or raise funds, plus evidence that they are constantly learning" (Taio, 2006, p. 111).

Despite all of the above listed criteria, many department chairs do not always have all of them before advancing into the role of the department chair. One of the main qualifications many chairs bring to the position is that they have garnered a certain level of confidence and respect from their faculty peers (Gmelch & Burns, 1994). Some department chairs even avoid going through a rigorous selection process, and take an unconventional path in securing the position. Some chairs are convinced by their deans to do the job on short notice, because of their leadership potential, and some feel obligated to do the job due to pressure from their colleagues because no one else will (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993). As a result, given the various paths to becoming a department chair, it raises the question as to whether department chairs undergo any sort of formal training in preparation for the position.

The lack of department chair training is a pertinent issue which has been clearly documented in higher education literature (Dyer & Miller, 1999). Although department chairs are critical players in the leadership of higher education institutions, few faculty members are formally trained and prepared before making the transition from professor to department chair

(Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Lumpkin, 2004; Treadwell, 1997; Wescott, 2000; Whitsett, 2007; Wilson, 2001). "The department chair makes major departmental decisions, in spite of a lack of training in leadership or management" (Whitsett, 2007 p. 1). Brann and Emmet (1972) explained that the roles and responsibilities of the department chair are not clearly defined despite the fact that the position is one of great responsibility. They further described the position as difficult and ambiguous. In addition, they posited that the position is so improperly defined that many colleges have no written definition of the roles and responsibilities of the department chair. An empirical study similar to Brann and Emmet's (1972) study, conducted by Chu, Kessler, Klein, Montanari, Ontiveros, Wort, and Veregge (2005), found that just 16% of chairs reported that their college deans provided them with well-defined written expectations of their job, and 57% of the respondents reported that their college deans provided them with no expectations. This led Chu et al. (2005) to conclude that many department chairs felt that they were "blindly" fulfilling the duties of their position with no clear sense of direction.

Werkema (2009) summarized the research of Creswell, 1986; Dyer and Miller, 1999; Lucas, 1994, and found that they all agreed that department chairs typically come into their positions lacking the necessary knowledge and preparation required to effectively fulfill their roles and responsibilities. Department chairs are not formally taught or educated about how to lead and manage their departments before beginning their roles in this position. In fact, in most cases, department chairs come from academic fields that are in no way related to leadership and management (Wescott, 2000). While some faculty members come into the department chair position having garnered some administrative experience, most of them arrive into the position of department chair lacking a clear understanding of the complexity of their roles and responsibilities, having had no professional leadership training, and having almost no awareness

of the impact of the position on their academic and personal lives (Aziz et al., 2005, Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; Gmelch & Burns, 1994; Lumpkin, 2004; Treadwell, 1997). Most department chairs learn almost everything about the department chair position informally from prior administrative duties, committee service, by observing role models, and while on the job (Hickson & Stacks, 1992; Lumpkin, 2004; Smith & Stewart, 1999).

Use of Strategies to Obtain the Position of Department Chair

There is scant literature that addresses any unique strategies that faculty members use in order to obtain the position of department chair. Most of the existing literature identifies strategies that department chairs use to succeed while already serving in the position. These strategies involve being a strong academic leader, creating positive relationships in the working environment, identifying areas for development, and making a strong commitment to influence change in the department and institution (Dyer & Miller, 1999).

Creswell et al. (1990) interviewed over 200 "excellent department chairs" across 70 universities to determine effective departmental leadership strategies. The findings identify only three specific strategies that faculty members tend to employ to prepare themselves for the department chair position. Specifically, the three strategies are: (a) acquiring as much knowledge as possible about the different roles of the department and the institution as a whole in an effort to prepare to serve effectively in the position; (b) creating a healthy balance between one's personal and professional life to ensure that both family needs as well as job requirements are met; and, (c) preparing oneself for a professional future in leadership by acquiring as much knowledge, training, and experience as possible.

Mentorship

Throughout the literature, there was discussion about the service role of a department chair as a mentor to faculty, as opposed to the department chair as a mentee. Mentorship is a process that occurs when an individual plays a vital role in the professional development and the career advancement of another individual (Gutiérrez, 2012). "In academia, most mentors serve as resources, coaches, and sponsors" (Filetti, 2009, p. 347). Mentoring can create a sense of belonging and build kinship among faculty and staff, and it especially assists in enabling institutions to offer substantial roles and responsibilities to their senior faculty, for whom the process can be very rewarding (Lichtenberg, 2011). A significant amount of the work of an academic department chair "is comprised of supporting and guiding colleagues, and offering helpful supervision and timely feedback" (Filetti, 2009, p. 343). Thus, mentoring or co-mentoring is a critical part of the job of the department chair that benefits others.

One of the most important roles that the department chair fulfills through formal mentoring is to create and identify opportunities that would allow faculty to grow and excel in their areas of expertise and interest. Department chairs, having gone through the process of earning tenure, serving on committees, and balancing their research and teaching, are well equipped to assume the role of helping a faculty member decide whether a service role might be a suitable for career advancement (Filetti, 2009). This suggested career path would depend on the individual's knowledge, academic and professional experience, as well as his or her personal circumstances. Through mentoring, the chair might select other departmental or college-wide mentors for a faculty member, suggest internal and external committee service, suggest opportunities for professional organizations, and create and identify opportunities for inter-disciplinary service (Filetti, 2009; Shollen, Bland, Taylor, Weber-Main, & Mulcahy, 2008) .

"Mentoring is particularly important for women and minority faculty, as these faculty continue to be underrepresented throughout the ranks" (Shollen et al., 2008, p. 131). Through effective mentorship, women can set career goals, acquire the competencies that are necessary to advance in their careers, develop the confidence to explore new challenges and opportunities, and develop more positive attitudes toward their jobs and careers (Shollen et al., 2008).

The previous section highlighted the various paths that department chairs take in order to achieve the position of department chair. It specifically discussed how heads and chairs differ slightly in the process of obtaining their position and that they can be selected from within or outside of a department or institution. In addition, it addressed some of the required and desired knowledge, training and skills that one should possess in order to qualify to serve in the position. Furthermore, the section discussed the problem of the lack of formal training and preparation of persons serving in the role of department chair. Finally, the section discussed the importance of mentorship and how it serves as a positive contributor toward a faculty member's advancement into service roles in academia.

Women vs. Men Faculty in Higher Education

Faculty members are vital to the success of a research institution. **"**The role of a faculty member is complex, and assuming the roles of educators, scholars, and citizens can often seem overwhelming" (Gutiérrez, 2012, p. 1). The work of tenure-track and tenured faculty in higher education institutions involves fulfilling three main responsibilities; teaching, service, and research (Alberto & Herth, 2009; Reybold & Alamia, 2008). In addition, faculty must fulfill service roles to their institutions, and their local and international communities at large (Gutiérrez, 2012). To advance in higher education, faculty must commit their full attention to all three of these areas over a prolonged time period (Bain & Cummings, 2000). Being a successful

faculty member also involves moving up the academic ladder through promotion, earning tenure, and even moving on to positions in other institutions (Reybold & Alamia, 2008).

A summary of the literature regarding women faculty in U.S. higher education institutions indicates that there are fewer women faculty than there are male faculty (U.S. Department of Education, 2009; Women In Academia, 2011), and there is slower progress in their career advancement as compared to their male counterparts (Conley, 2005; Park; 1996; Samble, 2008; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004; White, 2005). According to data reported in Women in Academia (2011) which compared the number of men versus women who held faculty positions in higher education institutions, in 2009, women comprised just 43% of all full-time instructional faculties in higher education institutions in the United States. At the highest faculty ranks, the gender gap was more evident. Women constituted only 28% of all full professors, 41% of all associate professors and 48.4% of all assistant professors at colleges and universities. Moreover, tenured males significantly outnumber tenured females in higher education (Mason & Goulden, 2004b). Based on this information, it is clear that women faculty still lag behind their male counterparts in their attainment of faculty positions and advancement in academic rank.

Furthermore, research has suggested that women faculty will not attain equality with their male counterparts anytime soon. "The entrance of women academics into tenured positions is relatively uncommon. They have been and continue to be viewed as outsiders in the academic realm" (Armenti, 2004, p. 65). According to some scholars, there is a major problem in higher education that indicates that although there has been an increase in the number of female faculty members over the past two decades, there has been an almost zero increase in the number of tenured female professors (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007; Hult, Callister, & Sullivan, 2005;

White, 2005). Glazer-Raymo (1999) forecasted that based on the rate of progress that women have made in attaining faculty ranks in research universities, it will take until the year 2149 for women to be able to achieve equality with men as full professors.

The most dominant problem that has been affecting the career progression of women for decades is that of balancing their academic careers and family lives. Grant, Kennelly, and Ward (2000) found that women, experience more stress and more difficulty than men when combining and balancing their academic careers with their family lives. Davis and Astin (1990) surveyed both male and female faculty and found that only the female faculty identified family commitments as obstacles to work productivity.

Coupled with the above, studies have demonstrated that women faculty are less likely to be satisfied and successful in academia, and are more likely than men to leave their positions even before earning tenure primarily because of gender discrimination and salary inequity issues (Aguirre, 2000; Nunez-Smith, Curry, Bigby, Berg, Krumholz, & Bradley, 2007; Rosser, 2004). Barbezat and Hughes (2006), Morley (2005), Samble (2008), and West and Curtis (2006) all suggested that women face inequalities in pay even with comparable levels of experience, education, and research productivity. Using a causal model that included differences in the wages of male and female faculty, Hagedorn (1996) studied how discrepancies between female and male faculty salary affected job satisfaction. The sample consisted of over 2700 full-time male and 1200 full-time female faculty, from over 300 Carnegie-type institutions. Based on the salary information provided by each participant, it was determined that at least 750 female faculty in the study "were identified as having gender-based wage differentials" (p. 18). Hagedorn (1996) also concluded that female faculty satisfaction in the workplace is directly correlated to nondiscriminatory salary compensation. Furthermore, she also discovered that once

they are satisfied with their monetary compensation, female faculty members would be more likely to stay in the institution.

Other researchers have suggested that a wider array of issues contribute toward the level of satisfaction of female faculty and their willingness to stay within an institution. In a study using a national sample from a survey conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics and the National Science Foundation (1999), Rosser (2004) sought to determine faculty intentions to leave based on their work-life satisfaction. A total of 12,755 full-time faculty members from private and public two-year and four-year higher education institutions were selected as a subset from the national sample. Of the subset, 5,672 of the faculty members were female and 7,083 were male. The results of the study showed that female faculty members tend to leave because they are less satisfied with their advising and teaching workload, and the quality of their benefits, job security, and salary levels compared to their male counterparts. The results also indicated a disparity in course assignments and in salary equity.

In another study using data from the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty: 1999, Xu (2008) examined gender disparity, faculty attrition, and turnover intentions, particularly in the STEM disciplines in higher education. He sampled a total of 1,231 tenure or tenure-track faculty of which 74.5% were male and 25.5% were female. The faculty were employed at a total 960 research and doctoral degree granting institutions. The results of the study showed that while both women and men were equally committed to their academic careers in STEM; women were more likely to change positions or leave their institution due to dissatisfaction in the areas of "research support, advancement opportunities, and free expression of ideas" (p. 607). The findings also suggested that the underrepresentation of women faculty is compellingly attributed to an academic culture that offers women "fewer and unequal opportunities in leadership and

limited financial, academic and social support" (p. 607). Olsen and Near (1994) suggested that the balance and conflict between work and family roles influence faculty members' overall life satisfaction, but that a successful balance would take a considerable amount of time to achieve .

Over the years, women have certainly made strides in obtaining and effectively performing their roles and responsibilities as faculty members. Despite this, they have encountered challenges in the past and still continue to face challenges in their personal lives (Twombly, 2010), and in their roles as faculty members in higher education (Cheung & Halpern, 2010; West & Curtis, 2006; Samble, 2008). Such challenges include numeric disparities in their representation in the professoriate, slow career advancement, and dealing with perceptions that marginalize women who pursue faculty careers. In addition, women faculty also face personal challenges such as managing family and household commitments that affect their levels of productivity and the amount of time that they can commit to their jobs (Cheung & Halpern, 2010; West & Curtis, 2006; Samble, 2008; Twombly, 2010) .

These challenges have been attributed to several factors, including increases in part-time and non-tenure faculty appointments, more attractive job opportunities outside of academia, a system that discounts the familial responsibilities (Samble, 2008), and societal expectations on women in relation to childbearing, childrearing and spousal commitments (Conley, 2005). Over the years, these challenges have had negative consequences for the careers of women faculty members and continue to hinder their ability to advance to senior faculty or administrative positions.

The previous section discussed the importance of faculty in higher education institutions. It also provided data comparing the number of women and men who hold faculty positions in U.S. higher education institutions, and emphasized the disparity between men and women who

hold senior positions in such institutions. Furthermore, it touched on some of the unique challenges that women faculty encounter in securing leadership positions in higher education. A more detailed discussion of the challenges faced by women seeking academic leadership positions is provided in the next section.

Barriers Faced by Women Seeking Academic Leadership Roles in Higher Education

Several researchers have used various terms to describe the barriers or the slow and uneven advancement faced by women in academic leadership. These terms include "glass ceiling"(David & Woodward, 2005; Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986; Mitchell & Turner, 1993), the "concrete wall" (Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009; Ogilvie & Jones, 1996) or the "sticky floor" (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Betters-Reed & Moore, 1995; Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009; Padavic & Reskin, 2002), and most recently, the term "labyrinth" has emerged (Eagly & Carli, 2007). To better understand why women lag behind in the academic leadership pipeline, and to ensure a clearer understanding of the past, present and future progress of women in higher education leadership, it is essential to understand the barriers that they face in seeking academic leadership roles in public, four-year, research institutions.

For the purpose of this study, barriers were defined as conflicts, challenges, or obstacles that women face at the personal and institutional level. The existing literature on barriers facing women seeking academic leadership roles in higher education identifies three specific types of barriers: gender barriers, personal or family-related barriers, and institutional or organizational barriers. A thorough discussion of these barriers is necessary so that current leaders in public, four-year higher education institutions can mitigate or even eliminate as many of these barriers as possible in order to create more opportunities for women to attain senior leadership positions.

Gender Barriers

Women nowadays have access to better educational opportunities. They have also demonstrated a greater ability to achieve success in academics and in management (Cheung & Halpern, 2010). Despite the achievements, women who possess the qualities of a good leader experience slower career advancement, especially in higher education (Growe & Montgomery, 1999; Porat, 1991). Numerous authors and practitioners (Acker, 1992; Alvesson & Billing, 1997; Benokraitis, 1998; Buzzanell, 1995; Chliwniak, 1997; Glazer-Raymo, 1999; Golombok & Fivush, 1994; Kanter, 1993; Kimmel, 2004; Taio, 2006; Witmer, 1995) have argued that the majority of problems encountered by women leaders in higher education can be attributed to 'gender-related issues' or 'gender stereotypes'. One of the main reasons so few women obtain leadership positions in higher education is that gender remains an obstacle. In her 2006 dissertation, Taio (2006) qualitatively examined the experiences of nine senior women leaders in higher education who overcame barriers to success. One of her findings indicated that women are always "under a microscope" and must work tirelessly to achieve success and to break through the male-dominated academic environment. She also found that women leaders constantly face the challenge of dealing with difficult administrators and constituents who have completely different views and positions from them.

Moreover, research regarding women seeking educational leadership positions reveals that gender, rather than age, academic background, and job experience, determines the leadership role they will be delegated in the field of education (Growe & Montgomery, 1999; Sanchez-Hercules, 2010; Whitaker & Lane, 1990). It is difficult for women leaders in higher education because characteristics associated with being female such as nurturing, sympathetic, communal, and supportive behavior are typically perceived as inconsistent with the dominant, aggressive,

forceful, and assertive characteristics usually ascribed to successful leaders (Eagly & Karau, 2002). In certain leadership roles, women leaders face obstacles that their male counterparts do not face. They are treated less favorably, because they operate in a male-dominated leadership world, and are perceived as possessing less leadership ability than men (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly & Diekman, 2005).

Women have particularly been criticized because of their leadership styles which tend to emphasize more on relationship-building and frequent interpersonal interaction than do the leadership styles of their male counterparts. Previous scholars contend that unlike their male counterparts, women leaders are expected to fulfill the requirement of meeting traditional expectations of being "feminine" and "communal" while simultaneously projecting a "masculine" or "agentic" leader persona (Cantor & Bernay, 1992; Eagly, 2007; Kellerman, 2003; Mandel, 2003; Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990; Powell & Graves, 2003; Rhode, 2003; Ropers-Huilman, 1998; Zemsky, 2001). However, it appears that women also encounter difficulty in executing their leadership roles even when they choose to operate solely from the standpoint of the 'male leader persona'.

When women leaders "fail to exhibit the communal, supportive behaviors that are preferred in women, they can be negatively evaluated for these violations" (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001, p. 786). Regardless, pressure to conform to the standards outlined by society and their institutions have forced women leaders to adopt the leadership styles of their male counterparts, because utilizing men's method of leadership is still viewed as the easiest way for a woman to be hired for positions of leadership (Growe & Montgomery, 1999).

Personal or Family Related Barriers

Women faculty in particular are faced with the unique responsibilities of managing and balancing their time, families, and personal and professional resources (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004) in order to achieve success in their jobs. As they seek leadership positions in higher education, they are challenged with unique personal and family barriers that adversely affect their careers. Such barriers include maternal and marital commitments (Colbeck & Drago, 2005; Nunez-Smith et al., 2007; Spalter-Rother & Erskine, 2005; White, 2005) and geographical immobility (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Nunez-Smith et al., 2007; Patton, 1990; White, 2005), both of which hinder women's success in attaining leadership positions in higher education.

According to Glazer-Raymo (1999), women in academia encounter tough challenges in balancing motherhood, marriage, and career within a male-dominated social environment. Typically, women disproportionately bear the brunt of the responsibility for taking care of their family obligations as compared to men (ACE, 2007; Conley, 2005; Nunez-Smith et al., 2007; White, 2005). White (2005) explained that the careers of women faculty are hampered by institutional cultures and structures and the pressures that come from family. In a longitudinal study done in 2001, Yedidia and Bickel (2001) sought to understand the reasons why there was a great scarcity of women in academic leadership positions in four-year institutions and to also understand the barriers that hindered them from obtaining positions as leaders in higher education.

Thirty-four women department chairs with extensive leadership experience were interviewed. The results showed that eight out of 34 department chairs indicated that issues such as sexism, lack of effective mentors, and assuming the role as the primary caretaker of their children and families presented major barriers to their career advancement. Similarly, Taio

(2006) interviewed nine senior women leaders in public four-year institutions to develop a deeper understanding of what it takes for women to succeed as senior-level higher education administrators. The study revealed that women encounter major barriers to their career success, including unequal treatment, gender bias, resistance, political hurdles, as well as personal struggles. Furthermore, the results indicated that in order to be successful, "women must constantly overachieve, maintain good relationships with others, hold onto personal and institutional values to do the right things, and expand themselves constantly" (Taio, 2006, p. v).

Many women find themselves struggling to meet the needs of their children and spouses while simultaneously trying to be productive enough to make progress in their jobs. In addition to fulfilling the roles of both mother and wife, some women are also taking on the additional responsibility of caring for an elderly parent (Loder, 2005; Rosser, 2004). Loder (2005) conducted a qualitative study to determine the differences and similarities in how women administrators from various generations deal with work-family conflicts. She found that some women administrators essentially had to return the favor by caring for an elderly parent who was there to help them with some of the family responsibilities as they transitioned into their senior leadership roles. However, as a result of juggling all of those family responsibilities, many women are unable to commit the extra time and energy that is necessary to achieve their job objectives in order to be able to secure promotions and move higher up the leadership ladder.

Women in academia exist in an institutional culture that is very unforgiving toward those who try to balance their work lives with their family lives (Colbeck & Drago, 2005; Spalter-Rother & Erskine, 2005). Studies done by Mason and Goulden (2004b) and Williams (2005) suggested that women who have children in the preliminary stages of their careers, are

considerably less likely to move up the faculty or administrative ladder, earn tenure, and remain in academia. Using data from the Survey of Doctorate Recipients, the National Science Foundation, and the University of California Faculty Work and Family Survey, Mason and Goulden (2004b) conducted a study to explain the challenges that faculty face in balancing work and family life. They examined areas such as career achievement in academia, problems regarding earning tenure for women, and familial outcomes in the areas of childbirth, marriage, and divorce. Over 8,500 University of California faculty in all disciplines were surveyed. The results showed that women who successfully pursue "ladder-rank" faculty careers are less likely to marry and have children, and are more likely to divorce. They also found that women may be more successful in their academic careers if they delayed or even relinquished marriage and childbirth. Consequently they suggested that women may be choosing to "drop out of the pipeline to marry, have children, or avoid divorce" (Mason & Goulden, 2004b, p. 100). In addition, "women who are dissatisfied with their rates of academic progress may be more likely subsequently to marry, have children, or stay married" (Mason & Goulden, 2004b, p. 100). Similarly, Williams (2005) described this as a phenomenon referred to as a “maternal wall” and explained that “women who have children soon after receiving their PhD are much less likely to achieve tenure than men who have children at the same point in their career” (p. 91).

Geographical Immobility

Geographical limitations can hinder women faculty and administrators from pursuing opportunities that can advance them in their careers (Eagly & Carli, 2007; White, 2005). Moving to another geographical location can sometimes present complications and setbacks especially for couples who both work in academia. According to Armenti (2004):

> Women are more likely than men to decline better job offers in other locations in order to avoid uprooting their families and because their (academic and career-oriented partners would then face the prospect of having to search for a job in a tight labor market. (p. 67)

Wolf-Wendel, Twombly, and Rice (2000) suggested that sometimes, couples in academia face difficulty in finding positions that will allow both partners to reside in the same geographic region, fulfill their professional goals, as well as the day-to-day needs of running a household and caring for children or loved ones. Overall, many women feel pressured to put work over family in order to succeed in their careers. Unfortunately for some, making the choice to put their families before their career can yield devastating consequences such as failing to achieve tenure (Colbeck & Drago, 2005) and can also limit the geographic mobility that is often required to move up the academic ladder (Shollen et al., 2008). Geographic limitations can hinder female faculty and administrators from assuming positions that could allow them to advance in their careers (Eagly & Carli, 2007), which can ultimately result in limited career choices, infrequent promotions, and lower salaries; all of which create obstacles for women's career advancement (Touchton, Shavlik, & Davis, 1991).

Institutional Barriers

Several scholars have suggested that institutional barriers can hinder the advancement of women's careers (Chliwniak, 1997; Curry, 2000; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Kanter, 1993; Tedrow & Rhoads, 1998). These authors essentially wrote that various factors that exist within an institution, such as stereotypes, prejudices, obstacles, and resistance to women's leadership still limit women's opportunities for leadership. Rosser (2004) studied women scientists and engineers in highly prestigious research universities and found that senior "administrators suggested that institutional barriers have prevented women scientists and engineers from having a level playing field in their professions" (Rosser, 2004, p. 50). The study identified the greatest

barriers facing professional women striving to advance in higher education is overt discrimination and "stereotypes surrounding their performance, isolation, lack of mentoring, and difficulty gaining credibility among their peers and administrators." (p. 63).

Women in academia operate in a male-dominated environment, often pigeonholing women as outsiders. Many senior positions such as board members, administrators, and academic leaders are occupied by males. Few women serve in these types of positions. Institutional cultures as well as societal expectations that are more accepting toward male leaders have had negative impacts on women's opportunities for promotion in higher education. Eagly and Carli (2007) specifically described four major institutional barriers that hinder the advancement of women to senior positions in higher education.

The first barrier involved limitations placed on women due to the high demands and pressures of their job requirements. These include, but are not limited to, working extended hours to fulfill major tasks, meeting travel obligations, and having to relocate in some instances to enhance their job performance and career growth. Women face a double-edged sword, in that, they struggle to maintain the feminine image of a nurturing, good woman, and that of a strong, aggressive leader simultaneously (Curry, 2000; Tedrow & Rhoads, 1998). They are criticized if they do not act "feminine" enough, and also if they do not exhibit enough "masculine" traits on the job. Additionally, as women try to balance all of these aspects of their various careers with their personal and family obligations, they are in many cases unsuccessful, thus, making it difficult to advance in their careers.

The second barrier noted was the establishment of social capital and a struggle for power between men and women. Eagly and Carli (2007) posited that gender has a significant impact on social capital. Women are constantly grappling with men to secure influence, leadership

positions, and access to information, which tends to be a very difficult battle to win. Kanter (1993) discussed that women are excluded from informal support networks and are left to fend for themselves once they attain a leadership position. Furthermore, women, being in the minority, unfortunately do not have the ability to build strong network systems in higher education due to the exclusion that they face in the higher education environment (Eagly & Carly, 2007; Kanter, 1993). Because network systems significantly impact hiring, promotion, and tenure decisions **(**Chliwniak, 1999), women often find themselves at a disadvantage since they encounter difficulty in building informal and formal networks. As a result, they may be overlooked for career advancement opportunities, by major decision-makers. Therefore, they "must constantly overachieve" (Taio, 2006, p. v) and "work twice as hard and be twice as good" (Taio, 2006 p. 104) to find methods of building positive relationships and connections with people in positions of power in order to be successful.

The third barrier faced by women regards their ability to assimilate into specific aspects of the institutional culture. Eagly and Carli (2007) suggested that an institution's culture can be defined by factors such dress codes, non-verbal and verbal language and communication, office structures, and general social interactions. These cultures often tend to reflect masculine beliefs and principles, negative perceptions about women in leadership positions, and an unwelcoming organizational environment, especially at the senior level (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Jablonski, 1996). At times, women may have to deal with double standards, leading them to compromise their values in the workplace (Sturnick, 1999). Cooper (2002) noted that the cultural values within an institution may reflect certain gender-related expectations to which women feel obligated to conform. These gender-related values may manifest themselves in masculine values such as competitiveness, assertiveness, aggressiveness, and decisiveness, which are greater appreciated

by people within an institution, compared to feminine values such as collaboration and participation (Cox, 2008; Lively, 2000). As a result, women must make a concerted effort to overcome the barrier of the masculine institutional culture in order to successfully negotiate their advancement to leadership positions higher education.

The final barrier identified by Eagly and Carli (2007) involved the ability of women to access employment opportunities that will allow them to assume greater responsibilities in order to qualify for senior-level positions. These include more challenging supervisory and leadership responsibilities, and more opportunities to demonstrate their skills and abilities. Eagly and Carli (2007) suggested that these opportunities are less likely to be accessed by women due their numerous family responsibilities, limited access to strong network systems, travel limitations, and leadership styles. Furthermore, according to an Allan (2011), women in leadership positions are still facing the challenge of attaining parity with men when it comes to salary. Although women may have similar levels of education, and in some cases, more professional experience than their male counterparts, they are still hired in jobs that give them significantly less responsibilities (Johnsrud & Heck, 1994).

Academic Bullying

Lester (2009) defined workplace bullying as "a type of interpersonal aggression that occurs at work that goes beyond simple incivility" (p. 445). Most of the literature that exists on bullying, written over the last two decades has been centered on adult bullying in general (Adams, 1992; Byrne, 1994; Keashly & Newman, 2010; Randall, 1997; Rayner & Hoel, 1997; Spurgeon, 1997). Typically, bullying is initiated by someone who holds a higher level of power, toward someone who has a lesser amount, and is "often aligned with sexism and race" (Lester, 2009, p. 451). According to Hagedorn and Laden (2002) women in four-year institutions

experience a greater level of disapproval and negativity within their institutions as compared to women who work in two-year colleges.

One book recently written by Twale and De Luca (2008), entitled, *Faculty Incivility: The Rise of the Academic Bully Culture and What to do About It*, touches on women being challenged by their male colleagues in academia. In it, the authors suggested that as women move up the academic ladder into leadership positions traditionally occupied by males, males feel threatened and as a result, react discourteously toward women. Furthermore, literature synthesized by Lester (2009) noted that women in academia tend to be "challenged by both colleagues and supervisors" and that they "report bullying more readily" (p. 447). Consequently, some women find it hard to cope with such aggression and ultimately leave their institutions, making it even more difficult for them to advance in academia.

The previous section addressed three main barriers that women face in seeking senior leadership positions in academia. The first barrier suggested that gender is a hindrance to women leaders, resulting in some women feeling compelled to lead in the manner that is considered the norm; that is, the way that men lead. In addition, the studies further suggested that family and personal barriers also affect the productivity and career advancement of women. Women are often-times faced with balancing jobs with their relationships with their spouses, children and in some cases, extended families. This section also addressed institutional barriers that hinder the advancement of women in higher education. Women frequently encounter cultural, societal and social barriers generated by their institutions, which negatively affects their success and progress in their careers. Finally, an additional section was provided regarding bullying and incivility toward women in academic leadership positions.

Summary

The slow advancement of women into senior leadership positions remains an important issue in higher education. The progression of women particularly into the department chair position has also received little to almost no attention. In this literature review, the researcher provided an overview of the importance of the position of department chair. The department chair serves as a vital administrator in higher education. The department chair is important because he or she serves as the link between faculty and administrators, both of which are key to the success, development, and advancement of higher education institutions. The roles involved with the position are considered extremely critical to the success of higher education research institutions. A review of the literature regarding the roles and responsibilities of department chairs in public, very high research activity institutions revealed that the department chair must be able to successfully fulfill various managerial and leadership duties simultaneously. The department chair is charged with dual roles that involve managing administrative duties, staff, students, curriculum affairs, as well as leading faculty and providing direction for their department. The literature also revealed that department chairs obtain their positions in various ways including being selected by faculty, being appointed by their college deans, and volunteering to serve. A combination of knowledge and skills are also required to become a department chair. These skills involve teaching, research, administrative, leadership, as well as strong interpersonal and communication skills. The review also discussed how, in the vast majority of cases, department chairs lack formal training and preparation for the position, and that they learn the requirements, responsibilities and challenges while they are serving in the position. The importance of the role of mentorship in attaining and prospering in the position was also discussed as essential in the career of the department chair. Research regarding women

versus men faculty in higher education shows that there are significantly more men versus women who are employed as faculty in research institutions. Furthermore, data shows that compared to women, there are more men serving in senior faculty positions, thus increasing their opportunities to move into the department chair role. Finally, a review of the literature regarding some of the gender-based, personal, and institutional barriers that women face in seeking academic leadership roles in higher education was provided. Many women faculty and first-level administrators struggle to balance their work with the roles of wife, mother, and caretaker. They also have to find ways to break through the stereotypes regarding the ability of women to lead effectively, the perceptions of their peers and administrators, and resistance and bullying particularly from their male counterparts. Based on the lack of literature regarding women serving as department chair, this study aims to provide qualitative evidence particularly focusing on the personal and professional experiences of women as they advanced to the position of department chair in a public research institution.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the personal and professional experiences of women who hold the position of academic department chair within a public, very high research activity institution. The study also sought to identify important advice to facilitate the advancement of women seeking the position. This chapter discusses: (a) the research design; (b) the participants; (c) data collection procedures; (d) researcher bias; (e) data analysis; and, (f) trustworthiness measures employed by the researcher.

Research Design

Creswell (2008) explicitly defined qualitative research as follows:

> Qualitative research is an inquiry approach useful for exploring and understanding a central phenomenon. To learn about this phenomenon, the inquirer asks participants broad, general questions, collects the detailed views of participants in the form of words or images, and analyzes the information for description and themes. From this data, the researcher interprets the meaning of the information, drawing on personal reflections and past research. (p. 645)

Given the open-ended, inductive, and exploratory nature of the inquiry, a qualitative research strategy was deemed most appropriate for this research study. This design allowed the researcher to explore the professional and personal factors that enabled women faculty members to attain the academic administrative position of department chair at a public research university.

Case Study

The main purpose of case study is to "illuminate" a single, particular issue and explore it in great depth (Creswell, 2008). According to Merriam (2009, p. 40), a case study is “an in-depth description or analysis of a bounded system.” A bounded system is defined as the “what” of the study. It can be a distinct thing, a process, an institution, a program, or a person(s), around which boundaries exist (Creswell, 2008; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 1993). In this study, the bounded system

involved understanding how women faculty members become academic department chairs in a doctoral-granting research university. Case study research design is most appropriate when a researcher seeks to arrive at a comprehensive, in-depth, and systematic understanding of a single and specific phenomenon that is being studied.

Based on the purpose of this study, case study was employed to elicit the answers to the research questions that were posed. Specifically, a collective case study was used in an effort to achieve a thorough and in-depth understanding of the personal and professional personal factors instrumental in the women's selection as a department head. Furthermore, the researcher utilized collective case study design to seek advice from the various groups of participants, which would assist women faculty who aspire to the position of academic department chair.

The unique strength of a case study is its use of multiple sources of evidence, including interviews, observations, documents, and artifacts (Merriam, 2009; Slavin, 2007; Yin, 1993). It seeks holistic description and explanation of the phenomenon that is being studied. The data collected tend to be descriptive and typically, the evaluation involves obtaining various perspectives from many participants (Slavin, 2007). Merriam (2009) further explained that case studies ultimately yield a "rich" and "thick" description of the phenomenon under study.

A collective case study was deemed most appropriate for the study because it allowed the researcher to provide a thorough and detailed account of the process that women faculty experienced to become a department head. A collective case study is one where "individual cases share a common characteristic or condition, and are categorically bound together" (Merriam, 2009, p. 49). It has been observed that a collective case study is most credible and successful when it involves multiple and varied phenomenon within the bounded system, as in this research

study (Merriam, 2009). Therefore the use of collective case study was an appropriate research design to achieve the stated purpose of the study.

Participants

According to Creswell (2008), a target population is "a group of individuals with some common defining characteristic that the researcher can identify and study" (p. 152). Thus, the targeted population for this study was women department chairs who were currently serving in that role, who had earned tenure, and had achieved faculty rank of at least associate professor at a public doctoral-granting, research university. That target population included a total of 12 women who came from four colleges within a single university. The other participants included four current or former deans who were serving at the time of the female chairs' appointment, and who were familiar with the hiring of the women to the position. Each of the deans was male, was tenured and had achieved the faculty rank of full professor. Each dean represented a different academic college at the institution.

Furthermore, to add richness and depth to the study (Merriam, 2009), the provost of the university was also included as a participant in the study. The provost, a female, was also a one-time department head at a research institution, was also tenured, and held the faculty rank of full professor. All of the study participants were currently employed at one public, four-year high-research institution. It is important to note however, that the department chairs were the primary and specific focus of the study.

Purposeful sampling was employed in determining both the participants and the research site for this study. Creswell (2008) indicated that when using purposeful sampling, "researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn, understand, and gain thorough insight of the central phenomenon" by choosing participants and sites that are "information rich" (p. 214).

Furthermore, Merriam (1998) added that the strength of purposeful sampling increases when the researcher selects "information-rich cases" from which the most knowledge can be gained (p. 61). By selecting multiple participants that were "information-rich," the researcher sought to acquire profound information that would allow her to learn as much as possible about the issues and questions that were of central importance to the purpose of the study.

The research site for the study was a public, four-year institution, classified as a very high research institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The site was assigned the pseudonym, State University, for the purpose of anonymity. The researcher identified the participants of the study by first conducting a search of each college and department on State University's website to identify all of the female academic department chairs listed within the institution. Upon retrieval of the names from the institutional website, the researcher contacted the Office of Institutional Research of State University via email, for verification and confirmation of the names of the participants, and to determine that each participant did in fact hold the position of department chair or department head. In reciprocation, the institutional research office confirmed the names and email addresses of each of the participants as well as the colleges where they were employed. The list contained the names of 12 women department chairs who were currently serving their departments and eligible to participate in the study. However, the researcher eliminated one of the female department chairs. The reason for this was because the individual was currently serving as the director of the school of nursing which is a female-dominated field, and was not a typical academic department chair. The other 11 eligible department chairs were serving in a total of four different colleges within State University. Based on the total number of colleges that were being served by the female chairs, the researcher was able to determine that only four current and/or former college deans

would be asked to participate in the study. These deans were identified according to the above-mentioned criteria, and each agreed to be a participant in the study. Furthermore, the provost of the institution also agreed to participate in the study. The names and information of these five participants were retrieved through the institution's website.

To ensure that the study was appropriate and that it conformed to certain legal and ethical standards, the researcher solicited permission to conduct the study through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of State University. The researcher then disseminated a preliminary email (see Appendix A) to the 11 department chairs, the four college deans, and the provost. The purpose of the preliminary email was to introduce the researcher and to provide the participants with a brief overview of the purpose of the study, to request their participation, and to provide a timeline during which the researcher planned to conduct the study. The researcher received a total of 13 positive and three negative responses.

Eight of the department chairs, all four college deans, as well as the provost agreed to participate, two of the department chairs did not respond to the email, and one department chair declined to participate due to other commitments. Further efforts were made both by email and phone to secure the participation of the remaining two department chairs. Each of them was sent two additional emails as well as one voicemail further requesting their participation, to which they did not respond.

After receiving official IRB approval to begin the study (See Appendix B), the researcher sent out a second email to the 13 confirmed participants with attachments that contained an official letter of invitation (see Appendix C) that provided them with a more thorough description of the proposed study. Attached to the second email was an informed consent form (see Appendix D) which described in detail, the process for maintaining

confidentiality, the use of digital recording, and the potential risks involved with participating in the study. The researcher then made follow-up phone calls to each of the 13 participants to set and confirm a date, time, and location for face-to-face interviews. Each interview was scheduled to accommodate the participants' busy schedule. The participants returned their signed informed consent forms indicating that they acknowledged and understood the procedures and potential risks before the researcher proceeded with the interviews.

To facilitate the interview process, the participants in the study were categorized into three distinct groups. The first and primary group of participants consisted of eight academic department chairs. No distinction was made between women who were serving as a department chair for the first time, or who had served more than once in their employment history. Furthermore, no distinction was made regarding the length of time the women participants had served as department chairs. The second group of participants comprised the current or former deans of the colleges where the women academic department chairs were employed. Each dean included as a participant in the study had to be serving when the chair was selected, and had to be familiar with the reasons for the appointment. Finally, the third group consisted only of one participant, the current provost or chief academic officer of the institution. All of the names of the participants were changed and assigned pseudonyms to protect their anonymity and to maintain confidentiality.

Data Collection

Researcher as an Instrument

In qualitative research, "the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis" (Merriam, 1998, p. 7). The researcher developed an interest in this particular topic due to the fact that she is a woman who has studied and worked in higher education for about 10

years. During this time period, the researcher was able to determine, based on available data and observation that there were fewer women than men serving in leadership positions in the public, four-year institutions where she was a student, and employed. Due to her interest in serving as an academic administrator within a four-year institution in the future, the researcher embarked on this study to examine the personal and professional experiences that enabled the women in the study to obtain the position of department chair.

The data collection procedures for this study consisted of qualitative research practices outlined by Creswell (2008) who posited that in order to collect data, the researcher must identify and select individuals, obtain their permission to study them, and gather accurate information from the individuals by asking them questions. To ensure accuracy of information for this study, the data collection procedures included the following: developing interview protocols, field testing, conducting in-depth interviews with each participant, reviewing the curriculum vitae of each participant, and, reviewing web databases, which listed publications and professional accomplishments of each individual.

Interview Protocols

In an effort to acquire "rich, thick" data regarding the issues being explored by the study, the researcher created three separate sets of interview questions (Merriam, 2009). Protocol A, Protocol B, and Protocol C (see Appendices E, F, and G) were each designed for in-depth, open-ended interviews with each of the groups of study participants. Protocol A contained eight questions specifically addressed to the female academic department chairs, Protocol B contained five questions addressed to the deans of the colleges, and Protocol C contained four questions specifically addressed to the provost of State University. The interview protocols developed by

the researcher consisted of open-ended questions, followed by additional follow-up open-ended questions, general probes, space for interviewer comments, and space for reflective notes.

Field Testing

To ensure the clarity of the questions as well as the effectiveness of the interview protocols, the researcher first conducted a field test before proceeding with the actual study. According to Creswell (2008), field testing "helps determine that the individuals in the sample are capable of completing the survey and that they can understand the questions" (p. 402). The researcher tested the interview questions from Protocols A and B with former department chairs and deans respectively, who were not participants of the study. Specifically, the field testing involved conducting face-to-face interviews with two former department chairs and two former college deans who were previously employed as chairs and deans respectively, at State University. Each interview was conducted with the field test participant in their work-setting and was completed within a one-hour time period. The researcher also tested Protocol C with the field test college deans for clarity. Based on the advice and recommendations obtained from the chairs and deans in the field test, the interview guides were refined before the researcher proceeded with the interviewing of the actual participants of the study.

Interviews

The researcher conducted face-to-face, in-depth, open-ended interviews with each of the 13 participants involved in the study. The interview questions were aligned with the research questions posed in this study, and facilitated open discussion and transparency from the participants. Before beginning the interviews, an interview guide containing the questions that would be asked was provided to each participant (see Appendices E, F, and G). To ensure the comfort of each research participant, each interview was conducted in his or her natural work

setting. "One-on-one interviews are ideal for interviewing participants who are not hesitant to speak, are articulate, and who can share ideas comfortably" (Creswell, 2008, p. 226). Thus, each interview allowed the participant to openly share information. The interviews were conducted over a three and a half week period during the month of January 2012, and lasted between 30 and 60 minutes per participant. In addition, the interviews allowed for follow-up questions related to themes expressed by each participant.

The purpose for conducting interviews with the participants in the study was to yield a detailed, multifaceted, and rich account of information to better understand the experiences of the female academic department chairs and to identify important advice that may be useful to women who aspire to the position of academic department chair in a public, very high research activity institution. Furthermore, by interviewing the deans and the provost, the researcher sought to obtain additional information to corroborate the evidence and triangulate the data provided by the women department heads (Merriam, 2009).

The responses to the questions were audio-recorded using a high-quality digital voice recorder and "notes" were taken by the researcher as the participants answered each question (Creswell, 2008). Upon completion of the interviews, the researcher sent out an email thanking all of the participants for taking the time to participate in the study (see Appendix H). The responses were transcribed, coded for anonymity, and then emailed to each participant to verify the accuracy of the data.

Document Analysis

The researcher retrieved background information on the accomplishments of each women department chair through web searches, and examining their curriculum vitae. This step was important in corroborating the information provided by each of the women regarding their

professional qualifications and achievements. The information retrieved through web searches included published articles and books, press coverage, and electronic news articles regarding their past and present professional accomplishments. In addition, the researcher retrieved more information regarding their achievements from the department chairs' departmental websites in order to further examine and reinforce their academic and professional qualifications. Before each interview was conducted, the researcher reviewed all of the background data of each participant to familiarize herself with the participant and to add a more personal touch to the inquiry.

Researcher Bias

Maxwell (2005) stressed the importance of understanding "how a particular researcher's values and expectations influence the conduct and conclusions of the study and how to avoid the negative consequences" (p. 108). Taking this into consideration, there were three potential biases associated with the researcher and the nature of this study: (a) the researcher identifies herself as female, (b) the researcher attends a public, very high research activity institution with a small percentage of female academic department chairs, and (c) the researcher has future career aspirations that include advancing into an academic department chair position, and is pursuing this study partly to benefit personally and professionally from the findings. By interviewing the participants, the researcher hoped to gain insight from the experiences of women who are current department chairs as well as insight from the deans of their colleges and the provost on what it takes to become a department chair.

First, because the researcher of the current study identifies herself as female, it is important that this characteristic be regarded as a potential bias since it may influence the manner in which the researcher perceives and analyzes the information received from the study's participants, particularly, the female academic department chairs. Females have historically

lagged behind in receiving opportunities to serve in academic leadership positions within public four-year research institutions. Due to this fact, the researcher might be more focused on understanding the personal and professional experiences and challenges encountered by the female chair participants in the study.

Second, since the researcher attends a public, very high research activity institution with a small percentage of female department heads, the researcher might be inclined to display a profound level of emphasis on understanding the experiences and challenges faced by the female academic department chairs in the study. This may consequently influence the researcher to analyze the data provided by the female academic department chairs in the study, in a manner that either reveres them as a group that has overcome the odds, or in a manner that portrays them somewhat as an isolated group of women.

Finally, since the researcher has future career aspirations that involve advancing into a chair position, she might possibly be pursuing this study, in large part to benefit personally and professionally from the findings. Based on the data collected, the researcher might analyze the information and present it in a manner that may appear to be self-serving, in order to help her achieve her future career goals.

These above-mentioned biases potentially impacted the manner in which the data were analyzed and reported. Therefore, the researcher employed specific steps including triangulation and member checking to minimize any bias and threats to the validity of the data, and to ensure trustworthiness of the findings.

Data Analysis

According to Creswell (2008, p. 244) data analysis "consists of developing a general sense of the data and then coding description and themes about the central phenomenon" (p.

244). “It is inductive in form, going from the particular or the detailed data (e.g., transcriptions or typed notes from interviews), to the general codes and themes.” To analyze the data collected for this study, the researcher first stored the data on a personal computer. She then sorted the data into specific files. This first step was important to ensure proper organization and protection of the data. After the data was organized, the researcher analyzed the data by hand and transcribed the audio-recorded interviews into written text. Creswell (2008) suggested that hand analysis of qualitative data is most effective when one desires to be closely connected to the data, and that "organization of data is critical because of the large amount of information gathered during a study" (p. 245). Because this step was critical in the data analysis process, the researcher ensured that adequate time was allocated to the process of transcribing each interview. Furthermore, to ensure the safety and the confidentiality of each participant, the researcher replaced any names or identifiable information of each participant and the research site institution by using pseudonyms. Taking this step assured that specific procedures were followed to ensure that none of the data could be traced to an individual (Slavin, 2007).

Coding

Once the data was transcribed, the researcher applied the process of coding by carefully re-reading each sentence, and writing down emerging points and ideas in the left and right margins (Creswell, 2008). In doing so, the researcher noted specific key words or phrases which she believed explicitly described the meaning derived from each text segment. The researcher then used four different colored highlighters; one to match each research question with the codes that emerged. For example, the codes that matched research question one were all highlighted in green, those that matched research question two, in pink, etc. This helped the researcher facilitate the process of organizing the codes and linking them to the research questions. Finally, the

researcher created a list of all of the codes in a word document and grouped them based on likeness, in preparation for the next step of the data analysis process.

Themes

Following the coding process, the researcher thoroughly re-examined each sentence of the data as well as the codes for any common or recurring themes or “major ideas" (Creswell, 2008). By "reading the transcripts several times and conducting analysis each time” (Creswell, 2008, p. 245), the researcher sought to acquire a deeper understanding of the responses provided by the participants. The researcher then carefully read and re-read the complete transcripts, the vitas, and additional data from each participant to ensure that the information was adequate, and to assess whether any additional data were needed to complete the study.

Once the researcher had determined that that no further data collection was required, the researcher used the list of codes to discover emerging themes that offered results for the study's primary research questions. The codes that emerged most often, and provided the most factual support were developed into themes. Based on the data gathered from the participants, a total of eight major themes emerged in the study. The number of themes that were developed in the study were sufficient, according to the guidelines outlined in Creswell (2008) who wrote "it is best to write a qualitative research report providing detailed information about a few themes rather than general information about many themes" (p. 252).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness involves ensuring that the findings of a study are congruent with reality. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that ensuring credibility is one of most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. To better explain the concept and importance of trustworthiness in qualitative research, authors such as Patton (2002), Merriam (2009), and Lincoln and Guba

(1985) have used the terms "credibility", "transferability", "dependability", and "confirmability" in their research.

Credibility

To establish credibility, and to validate the accuracy of the findings in the study, the researcher used appropriate procedures including triangulation (Patton, 2002) to confirm the validity of participants' responses, and member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to confirm any factual errors or questions about the researcher's interpretation of their responses.

According to Patton (2002, p. 247) "triangulation strengthens a study by combining several kinds of methods or data." Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Patton (2002) also recommended that triangulation entails validating evidence from the use of various methods, such as focus groups, observation, and individual interviews which all form the key data collection strategies for qualitative research. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used triangulation to confirm the interview responses by comparing the data from the participants' vitas, publications, and professional accomplishments retrieved through web databases, with the interview responses. This step served to ensure that all of the information provided by the study participants in the interviews corresponded with the information located from the alternate sources.

The researcher assessed the validity of the data by conducting member checks. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained the process and purpose of member checking as "testing for factual and interpretive accuracy but also providing evidence of credibility" (p. 373-374). Member checking was achieved in the study by first transcribing all of the information provided by each participant verbatim, and then sending the transcription to each participant for revision and confirmation of their interview responses. Each of the participants had 10 days to respond if they

wanted to make any changes to their transcript. The participants were notified if they did not respond, the researcher would assume that the transcript was an accurate depiction of the views of the participant (see Appendix I).

Transferability

Transferability pertains to the extent to which the findings of one study can be generalized or employed in other studies (Merriam, 2009). To enhance the transferability of this study, a “rich, thick, description” of the data provided by each participant was detailed. In addition, the study included “maximum variation” in the sample by involving three different ranks of participants. It is important to note that the reader must determine whether the findings of this study are germane to their own context.

Dependability

Dependability is another critical aspect of establishing trustworthiness in a study. It is based on the notion that a study will yield consistent and comparable results as long as the same research methods, sampling procedures, data collection procedures, and overall research conditions are applied. To ascertain the dependability of the results, the researcher created an "audit trail" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) for this study. This was achieved through the filing and labeling of all of the documents gathered for the study including, email correspondence between the researcher and participants, research articles, interview transcripts, and notes taken by the researcher. The audit trail demonstrated transparency in the coding process, and enhanced the credibility of the study by facilitating external validity checks, to ensure that the research was dependable.

Confirmability

Confirmability, the final measure of trustworthiness, refers to the researcher's ability to maintain objectivity while conducting the study. This concept suggests that the researcher should allow the study's participants, rather than her personal biases, to influence the research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Confirmability also refers to the magnitude to which others may authenticate the results of the study. The researcher was able to establish confirmability in the study by refraining from bias, and by being objective and transparent with the data collection methods, the data provided by the participants, and the data analysis procedures. Future researchers attempting to determine the presence of confirmability in the study should be able to refer to the raw data, notes, and analysis procedures as the origin of the researcher's final recommendations and conclusions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Summary

This chapter provided specific information regarding the research procedures that were utilized in the study. The researcher employed a qualitative, collective case-study approach that included in-depth, face-to-face interviews and collection of documents. This type of methodology was used to thoroughly examine the participants' perception of the factors that facilitated their selection as department chair. The data for the study were collected through face-to-face interviews with eight academic department chairs, four college deans, and one provost; all employed at State University, a public, four-year, high-research institution. Each interview lasted no more than one hour in length. Three separate interview guides developed by the researcher, were utilized to gather information from each group of participants. The data were manually transcribed and analyzed by the researcher to identify themes that emerged from the

information provided by the study participants. Finally, the researcher addressed several constructs to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the study's findings.

CHAPTER IV

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This study was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the personal and professional experiences of women in attaining the position of academic department chair in a public, very high research activity university. Specifically, the study focused on what factors, from the perspective of the participants, were necessary for women faculty to become academic department chairs in a research university setting. The data collected for this study was done in the form of in-depth face-to-face interviews with eight academic department chairs/heads, four college deans, and one provost from State University, a four-year, public land-grant, high-research institution.

The study participants included nine women and four men and served as academic department chairs, college deans, or provost, and they were all tenured faculty members. The eight women department chairs, the primary focus of the study, were currently serving in the role of department chair, had earned tenure, and had achieved a faculty rank of at least associate professor at State University. The four current or former deans were serving in one of the four academic colleges at the time of the female chairs' appointment, and were familiar with the hiring of the women to the position. Each of the deans had achieved the faculty rank of full professor. Finally, the provost of the university was included because she had also served as department head at a research institution, was tenured, and had achieved the rank of full professor.

Two primary sources were used to collect the data. Interviews for the study were conducted over a period of approximately a month in January, 2012, and the researcher also gathered information through written documents collected about each participant. For the

researcher to conduct an effective study and fulfill its purpose, a qualitative, multiple case method was utilized. This chapter presents collective professional and biographical descriptions of the department chairs, the hiring deans, and the provost. It also provides information regarding the methods of data collection and data analysis employed in the study. In-depth, face-to-face interviews served as the primary data source for this study. In addition, the researcher collected supplementary data through written materials obtained from document collection. A detailed collective description of each group of participants is also provided.

Description of Participant Cases

In this research study, a sample of eight department chairs, four college deans, and one provost was identified. The researcher was prudent about keeping the sample size small in order to achieve an in-depth and thorough understanding of the data. The sample size of 13 participants was deemed adequate and appropriate because according to Creswell (2008), "the overall ability of a researcher to provide an in-depth picture diminishes with the addition of each new individual or site" (p. 217). Any more than 13 participants would not have yielded any new information that would be useful for this study. At the time of the study, all of the participants were serving State University, a Carnegie Classified public, four-year, very high research activity institution in the capacity of a department chair, a college dean, or a provost. Each had been serving in their position for a period of at least one year. Each of the participants displayed a profound interest in the study, and spent a significant amount of time providing valuable insights and offering their personal experiences, which enriched the study.

In addition, each participant was assigned a pseudonym to protect his or her identity. Participants were assigned a pseudonym in Table 1, indicated by Chair 1, Chair 2, Chair 3, Chair 4, Chair 5, Chair 6, Chair 7, Chair 8, Dean 1, Dean 2, Dean 3, Dean 4, and Provost. These

pseudonyms were maintained throughout the study. The numbering of the pseudonyms does not represent any specific order of importance or academic discipline. Each participant was named and listed numerically according to the order in which he or she was interviewed. So for example, Chair 1 was the first chair interviewed, etc., then Dean 1 was the first college dean interviewed, etc.

In order to facilitate a better understanding of the participants in the study, selected demographic characteristics regarding each participants of the study is located in Table 1 listed below.

Table 1

Selected Biographical Data of Study Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Age Range	Number of Years in Current Position
Chair 1	Female	55-60	1-6
Chair 2	Female	55-65	5-13
Chair 3	Female	55-65	1-6
Chair 4	Female	50-60	5-10
Chair 5	Female	60-65	1-5
Chair 6	Female	45-50	1-5
Chair 7	Female	50-55	1-5
Chair 8	Female	40-45	1-5
Dean1	Male	55-65	1-9
Dean 2	Male	55-65	1-9
Dean 3	Male	50-60	1-9
Dean 4	Male	65-75	1-9
Provost	Female	48-55	1-5

For the purpose of honoring the confidentiality and the anonymity of the study participants, the researcher felt that it would be best to provide a collective description of each group of participants. Below is a collective description of the department chairs, the college deans, and the provost of State University.

Department Chairs

Demographic information: The eight female department chairs in the study were all Caucasian. Seven of them were born in the United States and one was born in a foreign country. The youngest department chair interviewed at the time was 42 years old and the oldest was 65 years old. The eight department chairs who were interviewed were currently serving in four colleges at State University. Four of the chairs were from the College of Arts and Sciences, two from the College of Engineering, one from the College of Human and Environmental Sciences, and one from the College of Education.

Academic Accomplishments: Each of the department chairs held a doctorate from a Carnegie Classified institution in their particular field of study. Five of the women had earned their doctorate degrees in the field of Arts and Sciences, two of them in the field of Engineering, and one in Human Environmental Sciences. After earning their bachelor's degrees, seven of them went on to earn their master's degrees in their particular fields. However, one of them earned her doctorate straight from her bachelor's degree program.

Professional Accomplishments: Each of the women had been at State University for at least five years before moving into the role of department chair. All eight of the women had served in various administrative positions including academic program coordinators, graduate coordinators, undergraduate department chairs, interim chairs, and directors within their programs. At the time of the study, one of the department chairs had served as department chair

for a little over one year, six had served their departments as chair for at least three years, and one had served for at least 12 years. All of the women were tenured professors. Seven of the eight women had achieved the rank of full professor, while one had achieved the rank of associate professor. Each of the chairs was actively engaged in scholarship and research and committee service, and of the eight women, at least half of them were currently teaching one class while serving as department chair. Each of the women belonged to various professional organizations and societies in their fields both on and off campus, and also at the national level. Three of them held significant leadership positions within their professional societies. Each of them had published a large number of articles, had given numerous academic presentations at both international and national professional conferences, and four of them had written at least one book.

College Deans

Demographic information: All four college deans who participated in the study were male. Three of the four college deans were Caucasian-American, and one was Indian. The youngest college dean interviewed at the time was 55 years old, and the oldest was 72 years old. The college deans were currently serving in four colleges at State University; namely the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Engineering, the College of Human and Environmental Science and the College of Education.

Academic Accomplishments: Each of the college deans held a master's and a doctoral degree from a Carnegie Classified institution in one of the four fields of study: Arts and Sciences, Engineering, Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences, and Education.

Professional Accomplishments: Before moving into the role of college dean, all four of the college deans had served in various administrative leadership positions including associate dean

and department chair, and had also assumed positions as major directors within their programs. Each of them had also acquired significant fund-raising experience, and had raised millions of dollars in funds and grants for their departments, and for State University. At the time of the study, one of the participants had been serving as college dean for a year and a half, another had served his college for at least two years, and the other two deans had served their colleges for at least eight years. All four college deans held the rank of full professor and were all highly distinguished professors in their fields. Each of the deans was highly respected locally, regionally, and nationally as a scholar, and was still actively engaged in scholarship and research while serving as college dean. Each of the college deans had dedicated years of service to various local and national committees and boards. In addition, each of the college deans belonged to and led various professional organizations and societies within their own institutions, and also at the regional and national level. Each of them had published a large number of journal articles, book chapters, and books. One of the college deans had published over 100 book chapters and journal articles. Each of the college deans had given at least 30 academic presentations at national and international conferences, and had authored and co-authored several books.

Provost

Demographic information: The provost of State University was a Caucasian-American female. She was between 48 and 55 years old. At the time of the interview, she was responsible for overseeing at least 20 colleges and schools, and other academic and administrative departments on the campus.

Academic Accomplishments: The Provost of State University was a highly distinguished academic who earned her undergraduate and graduate degrees from Carnegie Classified

institutions. Her bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees were attained in the field of Arts and Sciences.

Professional Accomplishments: Before moving into the role of provost, she had served in various administrative leadership positions including senior associate provost, associate dean, department chair, and faculty associate to the vice chancellor. She had also acquired significant fund-raising experience, and had secured over one million dollars in project grants. At the time of the study, the provost had been serving State University for at least three years. She had achieved the rank of endowed full professor, and was nationally recognized as a highly respected scholar, researcher, and leader. Furthermore, she was considered one of the top administrators in the nation. At the time of her interview, she was still actively engaged in scholarship and research had authored or co-authored at least 50 professional reports and papers and had made at least 80 academic presentations both in the U.S. and abroad. The provost of State University had also served and chaired numerous local and national committees and boards. In addition, she had served in leadership positions in several national professional organizations and societies.

Research Questions

The study addressed the following four research questions:

1. What did the study participants perceive to be the qualifications, training, and skills necessary for women faculty to attain the position of academic department chair in a public, very high research activity institution?
2. What intentional strategies (personal and professional) did the women department chairs believe facilitated their advancement to their current position?
3. What were the principal gender-based challenges that the women faced in achieving their current position as academic department chair?

4. What advice did the study participants offer to women faculty who aspire to become an academic department chair in a public four-year research institution?

During the interview phase, the researcher asked each of the three groups of study participants a minimum of four and a maximum of eight open-ended questions as listed on the interview guides in Appendices E, F, and G. The open-ended interview questions were followed by general probing questions as deemed necessary, to clarify the participant's responses. The interview protocols examined the knowledge, skills, and training acquired by the female department chairs, any intentional personal and professional strategies that they used to obtain their position, whether there was a network of people who provided them with support and encouragement, and any unique challenges that they faced as women in obtaining the position of department chair. In addition, the interview protocols included questions which asked the respondents to provide any advice that might be useful to other women aspiring to the position of department chair within a public, four-year, high-research institution.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data was performed by the researcher. The coding of the data was conducted following the guidelines outlined by Creswell (2008) as follows: (a) Each transcript was read thoroughly, (b) the data in each transcript was sorted and divided into texts and segments, (c) the texts were assigned codes, (d) the codes were examined for overlap, redundancy or repetitiveness, and (e) the codes were collapsed into broad themes. Each research question yielded significant themes which provided answers to the research questions posed in this study. Furthermore, the researcher utilized a technique called bracketing in the transcript data to ensure the anonymity of the respondents, clarify information collected during the interviews, and assist the readers in better understanding the study. Any references made to

individuals, their titles, departments, institutions, or locations, that might reveal the participants' identities were replaced with bracketed words, such as [this state], [in my field], [a specific company] or [University of Undergrad]. The researcher exercised great care in analyzing the responses of each participant, and accurately reflected them without changing their true meaning.

This section of Chapter IV is organized by research question and emergent themes, followed by detailed responses from the participants' interviews, and answers to the research questions.

Research Question 1: Qualifications, Training, and Skills

The first research question focused on the qualifications, training, skills, and abilities that the participants believed were necessary to attain the position of department chair within a four-year research institution. From the data, two distinct themes emerged that indicated that the female department chairs needed to acquire a variety of skills, training, and professional abilities to be adequately qualified. In particular, the participants discussed that having acquired academic, administrative, and service experience from within as well as outside of the institution, empowered and qualified them to attain the position of academic department chair. They also provided insight into the importance of having "soft skills" to be able to effectively fulfill the roles of a female academic department chair. Specifically, the data suggested that the interpersonal and communication skills of an academic department chair are equally, if not more important than her academic and professional competencies.

A discussion of the findings is presented in this section. As illustrated in Table 2, two themes emerged from the data.

Table 2

Emergent themes from Research Question 1

Research Question 1:	What did the study participants perceive to be the qualifications, training, and skills necessary for women faculty to attain the position of academic department chair in a four-year research institution?
Theme 1:	Academic and Professional Experiences Are Necessary
Sub-Themes:	Academic and Professional Experience, Internal and External Experience, Committee Service, Experience with Professional Associations
Theme 2:	Interpersonal and Communication Skills Are Essential

Academic and Professional Experiences Are Necessary

This theme resonated throughout the data. In order to attain the position of department chair, the potential candidate needs a set of academic and professional experiences including teaching, research, administrative work, committee service, community engagement, on-campus service, and active participation in external associations. Although the female department chairs who participated in the study did not receive any particular training or workshop experience to prepare them specifically for the position of department chair, each of them believed that the above-mentioned experiences contributed toward their attainment of the administrative position.

Chair 1 provided a detailed account of the specific internal and external service and administrative preparation and experiences that she acquired before moving into the role of department chair:

Academic and Professional Experience

> I held the graduate coordinator's position from 1993 to 2008 before I became chair. And so this was an excellent preparation because not only did it allow me to work with graduate as well as with undergraduate students, it helped me in learning about the professional development of all of our graduate students. As graduate coordinator I needed to know a little bit about every single aspect of that student which also means I know very well what a chair needs to know. The chair needs to understand all the different units or subunits within a faculty that they are entrusted to be chair over. So my

preparation as an academic was extremely well grounded. My professional development as a public administrator gave me significant insights into administrative jobs. So my professional preparation as public administrator, academic preparation, and my position as graduate coordinator gave me really good insights in terms of the work that the chair has to do.

The second important aspect is that the graduate coordinator works closely with the chair and so we have to coordinate work. The chair needs to talk to the graduate coordinator about issues that are going on. So I had considerable insights into issues that a chair would also face. It could be a problem with a faculty member; you know graduate students do sometimes have problems with faculty members. I had conversations with my chair about how I would handle that.

Internal and External Experience

I served on a variety of diversity initiatives in the university that again brought me into contact with units from elsewhere on campus. I later on joined the women's commission because I have strong interests in diversity and gender issues.

Externally, I also served on the graduate council, which is advisable for graduate coordinators so they learn the process of how to administer graduate programs. This then gave me extensive contacts with other chairs or program coordinators or graduate coordinators in other departments outside my department so I got to know about those people. And so that helped me a lot. And so that led then to other appointments beyond the graduate coordinator job.

So all of it I think was helpful in terms of how I prepared myself as a chair to advance the interest of my department.

Additionally, Chair 6 discussed how her previous practical work experience, previous administrative experience, experience at other institutions, as well as her involvement in professional societies, enhanced her leadership skills and enabled her to obtain her position:

Academic and Professional Experience

As far as professional experience, I think what was relevant for me in this position were a couple of things. First of all, prior to going into academia I worked in industry for nine years. So, I was practicing [in my field] for nine years and I assumed greater responsibilities in project management basically leading kind of efforts at [a specific company]. And a couple of things gave me experience in management and leadership, but also, it gave me the corporate side, the practicing [in my field] side of the world. So I think that was important because in my job as department head, one of our big objectives is to prepare students for careers [in our field]. And so I understand that practical side where the students are going to be working.

External Experience

Bringing to [this state] my experience from the [University of UNDERGRAD], where I was a student and a faculty member, plus my experience as a student from [University of GRAD] where I did my PhD, I feel like those outside experiences from other universities was also very helpful. This gives me another model on which to compare and kind of think about what we want to maybe adopt here, cause I find that many times, it's not inventing new ideas, it's borrowing good ideas that others have, and adapting them to your environment that's helpful.

Another thing, at the [University of Undergrad] I served as the undergraduate department head. And so, that gave me a lot of experience with managing our undergrad program, and experience with our accreditation initiatives through [a certain accreditation agency], and I think that was valuable.

Experience with Professional Associations

I've always been very active in professional societies, with the [Institute of A], with the [American Society for B], and with the [American Society for C] mostly. And within those professional societies, I took on leadership positions that did a couple of things: they developed my leadership skills and also they built a very big network in the academic community. So I think that a skill-set or a value that I brought with me here is that I do have a broad network of other people in academia from which to draw on who can kind of support our program, and I can reach out to them when necessary. And so I think that those are some of the major skills that I bring to the table.

Chair 8, further discussed how her academic and service preparation helped her advance to the position of department chair:

Academic and Professional Experience

I had a reasonably typical experience as a faculty member, and so I have engaged in a reasonable amount of research, classroom teaching, and mentoring students both graduate and undergraduate. I think that certainly my experience, research, and teaching contributed to my advancement as chair. Sure, if I wasn't a competent academician, first of all I would not have gotten tenure and second of all my colleagues would not have wanted me to be a department chair. So I showed a modicum of success there.

And also, this was not the rule but it was a rule that I made for myself; I told my faculty that I would not serve as department chair unless I was able to achieve the rank of professor. So, I thought that if my academic record is not strong enough to support being a full professor, then I don't feel like I'm really in a position to be able to oversee and head the whole department, including full professors if I'm an associate professor. So what it took to become full professor was to demonstrate my contribution to the literature, and so those sorts of things led to the reality of me being department chair.

> The other major service activity that led to in large part the selection of me as chair is that I served as the director of graduate training. We have two PhD programs in the department and I served two terms as the director of graduate training for one of them. So that also is an administrative role and involves dealing with and organizing a number of faculty and motivating them and making decisions on a larger scale.

Committee Service

> I suppose the most relevant experiences that I've had though really are the service activities that I engaged in throughout my career as a faculty member. A couple of them helped dramatically. I served on a pretty large number of search committees, seeing that whole process and spearheading in several cases, that was extremely valuable, learning to deal with all the filling out of forms and dealing with administration and all the red tape that goes along with that, as well as just sort of thinking about the hiring process, how we want to change the future, whom do we want to bring in and why, and thinking about that larger level.
>
> But the two positions I held that were most helpful and influential; one is that I served on the department personnel committee for a lot of years; most of my pre-chair years, and so that process involved doing annual merit evaluations of faculty, looking at everyone's records and evaluating them, and also tenure and promotion committee and decisions. So that experience helped me see everyone's productivity and again see what went into making these sorts of decisions and be part of evaluating faculty and giving feedback.

Two other department chairs explained that while they did not have any major administrative experience in higher education that directly prepared them for the position, their academic preparation and some limited administrative experience helped them in their advancement to the position of department chair. Chair 2 stated:

> I did not have any specific skills or training that prepared me to be a department chair. In other words, I do not have an education background. I don't have the theoretical framework that comes from an education background. And now, they have leadership degrees or degrees in leadership; I didn't do any of that. I did not necessarily go to workshops dealing with leadership as such; I had served in leadership capacities within different professional organizations that I belong to, but nothing that's going to say this is how you do, or this is what you do, this is how you should dress, you know, didn't have anything like that. So, not having that to draw on, and being, I'll say, placed into this type of this position, there really wasn't anything to draw on.

Chair 4 also added that although she had no previous experience or training in academic administration, she felt that the direct academic training and preparation she received in her field of study helped her attain the position:

> This is probably the first job that I have no schooling, formal schooling to do. I've never had a class in administration. I was trained [in my field], I was trained as a teacher, I have taught in the public schools, and probably that experience of being a teacher [in my field] in two public schools have helped me with the diplomatic skills that it takes to be here. So that experience prepared me a little bit more to deal with the parents that I never expected to deal with in this position. Being a faculty member and understanding what's important to faculty members, certainly has channeled my focus. I see my job as helping students but also helping faculty to do their job with the least interference from administration.

In addition to the perspectives of the department chairs, Dean 2 provided his viewpoint on three particular areas which he believed were important in determining whether to hire a department chair: ability to multitask, gain the respect of others, and provide overall leadership:

> Typically a department chair or department head is perhaps the most demanding job on campus because they are working directly with the faculty and so they are the first line managers. They're involved with students, they're teaching, they're doing research, they're administrating faculty and staff, and they have fiscal responsibilities.
>
> So when people look at potential candidates they look at it from different angles. Obviously the students on the committee are going to look at whether or not this person is going to be supportive of students, the faculty are going to be looking at whether or not he or she is going to be a good leader of the faculty, and the deans are going to look at the person as whether they can provide the overall leadership and whether or not they are knowledgeable about all the different responsibilities of the department chair or department head, and if they have the leadership qualities to do that. So we have different constituencies and very often they are going to be looking at different things.
>
> Typically department chairs do have some other responsibilities that they have been engaged in that give you an indication of how good an administrator they will turn out to be. For example can they can multitask, and can they gain the respect of all the people that are going to be reporting to them. You're [department chairs] going to be providing leadership to a bunch of faculty that are tenured, and if they choose to disagree with you they will say so, so what you can accomplish to a large extent is based on respect. So you have to look at the qualities that the faculty respect. They respect a true scholar, they respect a good teacher, they respect a good-leader, they respect somebody that is straightforward and can look into their eyes and tell them what they are thinking, and basically somebody with high levels of integrity and somebody who is more institution-focused as opposed to self-focused. So those are the kinds of qualities that we look at.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills Are Essential

The data collected provided the participants' insight and appreciation of the importance of oral and written communication skills, listening skills, and their ability to build and maintain

positive relationships and garner the respect of the constituents with whom they work. Chair 5 indicated how her interpersonal abilities helped her obtain her position:

> I actually think that what prepared me most was just being a flexible person. And so, as I came through the system, I worked well with others, and that's an important kind of thing to be able to do. And so I think that it's always more than a skill set. And being a department head, a lot of what you're doing; the primary job that I think you're doing is interfacing with faculty, with students and with staff, and trying to blend that. So I think that that was probably the greatest asset I had. I actually had a good working relationship with most of the group.

The college deans in particular, discussed that although a department chair's academic and professional competencies are very important in ensuring career success, it is the department chair's interpersonal competencies, communication skills, and internal motivation that determine whether or not she can positively influence others and effect positive change.

Dean 1 voiced a similar opinion by emphasizing the importance of a department chair's interpersonal skills and ability to maintain positive relationship with others, in addition to her academic competencies:

> They [potential department chairs] had to have demonstrated that they had a productive program of research, and that they were effective teachers. Moreover, they need I think interpersonal skills to balance the competing groups within their department. They also need to be able to have a good working relationship with me. I am not an adversarial person and I don't respond well to people who come in and threaten.

Dean 3 explained how the soft skills, interpersonal skills, and internal motivation of a potential department chair influenced his hiring decisions, and how having those skills becomes integral in the dealing with difficult people:

> The key thing is do these people interact well with the people that they're gonna serve, because anybody in a leadership position has to understand it's about service. You know, you're washing the feet of everybody else, and it's gonna be trying at times, and you gotta keep that in mind that no matter how nasty someone is to you, you're doing it for their benefit and for the benefit of the whole. And if it's gonna be about you and your personality and people doing it your way, then you might as well not take this job in the first place. And you know people can be really nasty and catty and so you gotta have "a thick skin." It's about people having a good sense of themselves and what matters and what they're trying to achieve.

> So things I am personally looking for is does the person have an understanding of what they're doing and why they're doing it. So when I do my interviews, I try to ask questions along the lines of who are you, why do you want this position, is it about you aggrandizing yourself or is it about… you wanna get something done… and what was your motivation, what drove you to go into your profession or leadership or whatever.
>
> So it's really more about the heart and soul of the person than the black and white competencies of the person…. because if they're not competent people, then they shouldn't be here in the first place. So it's really about do they have those soft skills, do they have that motivation and desire.
>
> You know our jobs are 90 hours a week. You're gonna burn out in a short period of time if you don't have something deep down inside that's driving you to do this. So it's a matter of caring.

Dean 4 suggested that a combination of good communication skills, listening skills, and an ability to work well with others are all important factors that come into play when making his decision to hire a department chair:

> We're looking for a person who has very good communication skills; both oral and written communication skills, that they be able to explain decisions that they make, that are collaborative in the way they sit down and work with people and try to come to compromises as necessary.
>
> It's also very important that they listen carefully to their faculty before they make decisions. I think it's important that they respect and adhere to whatever the dean's agenda happens to be. It doesn't mean that they can't speak up and take opposition to certain things but when decisions are made they're loyal to the cause if you will, and pursue that. And I don't mean that they have to be slaves to the master but if the dean has set out an agenda, you would hope that the department heads would be supportive of that agenda to the extent that they could. It's been my experience and the experience of those who come here that the women who are here as faculty members, particularly the ones that are interested in administration, tend to be, this is not the universal truth, but tend to be more effective in their communication, and they tend to be somewhat more nurturing and more open to listening to faculty.

Finally, the provost of the institution added that a department chair's ability to listen effectively to the various constituents that she works with, and to put the needs of others above herself is also a crucial quality:

> Part of it is coming to the department chair position and being able to listen to multiple sides because there's always multiple sides to any situation whether it's with a student, or with a faculty member, or with another administrator.
>
> I think it also has to do with being willing to put your department above yourself. And that's hard sometimes for any faculty member because a faculty member wants to do his or her research and wants to figure out how to promote his or her career, and so it winds up being that you're thinking more broadly than yourself, and that is part of what I think would make a successful department head.

The responses provided by the participants regarding research question one indicate that although the female faculty that became department chairs did not seek out or receive training that directly and specifically prepared them for the position of department chair, they acknowledged that having a combination of academic, professional, and service experience was essential. The data revealed that female faculty members must have sufficient academic, service, administrative, and leadership experience in order to be perceived by their peers and dean as qualified and capable of effectively fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, several of the women department chairs indicated that having professional work experience outside of their own institution was important in understanding their academic discipline and gaining greater credibility with their peers. Perhaps the most important finding regarding research question one was the importance of strong interpersonal and communication skills. Both chairs and deans noted how valuable “soft skills” were to maintaining positive relationships with all constituent groups.

Research Question 2: Intentional Strategies (Personal and Professional)

The second research question addressed whether the department chairs employed any intentional strategies in order to attain their position of department chair. Two themes emerged from the data that implied that the department chairs did not employ any strategies to obtain their position, and that mentoring and support systems were key contributors that facilitated their

advancement. A discussion of these findings is presented in this section. As illustrated in Table 3, two themes emerged from the data.

Table 3

Emergent themes from Research Question 2

Research Question 2:	What intentional strategies (personal and professional) did the women department chairs believe facilitated their advancement to their current position?
Theme 1:	No Direct Strategies to Obtain the Position of Department Chair are Necessary
Theme 2:	Mentors and Support Networks are Necessary
Sub-theme:	Internal and External Support Networks, Family Support, Having a Woman as a Mentor

No Intentional Strategies Were Used to Obtain the Position of Department Chair

The participants' responses regarding this theme, suggested that they did not develop or use any specific strategy to obtain the position of department chair. In fact, many of the women indicated they had no intentions of pursuing the position of department chair. However, they felt that effectively fulfilling their duties of teaching and research, earning tenure, seeking leadership and administrative experience, and trying to be exemplary in their role as a faculty member, contributed toward their attainment of the position.

Chair 1 provided a detailed account regarding why she did not use any particular strategy to acquire the position of department chair. She discussed how she was not particularly seeking or aspiring to the position of department chair, but after careful consideration, felt that it was probably the next best move for her since her previous service roles had become mundane. She explained:

> Most chairs, unless they are very deliberate about this, really don't want to do chairship. And I think that, (I don't have data to support this), but many, many chairs do not easily move into positions of chairship, because it's a job that requires a particular skill set and a personal aptitude and stress levels that many academics don't really enjoy. And most people did not go into academia to become administrators. You know, they got into it

> because they love teaching and training young professionals, doing their research, interacting with their colleagues….and so I think the choice of becoming a chair is not always a pleasant one for a number of people.
>
> In my case, it took me probably a couple of years to reflect upon what would I do next. For me it was professional growth. I had done the graduate coordinator thing for a long time. I felt it was my responsibility to serve my department. And so for me it was did I have the skills and the abilities to lead my department, to grow the department, and could I do this effectively? Did I have the wisdom and all the good things that you have to have as a chair, to lead my unit and to be an effective advocate? So these were the major considerations in preparing myself for the job.

Chair 2 added that she did not have any strategy nor was she even considering becoming an academic department head when she was appointed to the position:

> I didn't even want to become a department head. I did not want to become an administrator. And, even to this day, I don't know if I'm a good administrator, I don't even know if I administrate, I don't even know if I lead, I mean I sit in this chair and we do things.

Chair 5, also shared that while she did not have a strategy, having a vision facilitated her advancement to the position of department chair:

> I have a vision for leadership. I have a vision for how it is that we're gonna make the next generation of professionals better. How are we going to turn out people who are analytical, people who can think, people who are ethically centered and have a passion for the work that they're going to do? I want to create those kinds of professionals. So my goal was to create a better professional to serve the needs of society.

Additionally, Chair 5 described that holding herself to a higher standard and being fair to others may have contributed to her attainment of the position of department chair:

> I just try to operate always keeping in mind that students come first, and that my job is to [State University]. I see my role in this office as being an advocate for both faculty and students but also for our greater community at large because we have a mission if you will of service, artistic service to the community. So as far as strategies, I guess I would say that I try to hold myself to a higher standard than I would anyone else.

Chair 6 discussed that she was not purposefully seeking out the position of department chair at the time of her appointment to the position, however she believed that it was her

involvement in multiple academic and service initiatives on and off campus, rather than the use of any particular strategy that facilitated her advancement to the position of department chair:

> Honestly, I was not on the market looking for a department head position. It was just an opportunity that presented itself. But that said, I think that throughout the years I have always been very active in professional development. So, every year I'm doing something to develop myself professionally whether it's going to training or workshops, or reading books on professional development. I've also had some leadership experience, and I think that by participating in conferences every year, and networking with others, that it helps me to become let's say a better teacher. So those are some examples I would say on what I did just to continue to develop myself professionally.

Chair 7 who also did not use a particular strategy to attain the position of department chair, provided her perspective on how she was simply fulfilling her academic and service roles to the best of her ability when the opportunity to serve in the position arose:

> I did not use any particular strategies. I think I was a traditional faculty member focusing on trying to do a good job teaching, trying to build an international reputation for my research, and trying to do service to my community and to my department so I kind of followed the prototypical involved faculty member path. So I was not necessarily aiming for being department head but after I'd been a full professor for two or three years, I just thought well am I going to continue doing exactly this for the next 15, 20 years, or, what's next. I thought maybe serving as department chair was the next logical step I would enjoy doing.

Mentors and Support Networks are Necessary

This theme yielded significant data that suggested that mentors and support networks are critical players in the career advancement of a female department chair. The participants provided detailed accounts of the manner in which mentors and support systems have influenced their career advancement.

Internal Support Networks

Chair 1 discussed how support from the former chair of her department as well as friends and other administrators on and off campus helped her in her transition and advancement to the position of department chair:*

> Most of us have either role models or have people who are encouraging them or have some other networks of people that they play ideas off of. And so for me, I had all of the above.
>
> My predecessor was very encouraging and our personalities matched very well. I think he understood what I was going through and he also helped by giving some insights in terms of the job. When he became chair it was under very daunting circumstances. And so I supported him during that time as much as I could as a friend, and so I think he reciprocated in some ways. When I talked to him, and asked him if he thought I was ready for the chair position, he was a good supporter.
>
> I had conversations with friends in other departments to help me sort of get a handle on this because some of them had been chairs before. And I also got some support from the dean's office.

Chair 2 expressed how mentorship began with people who have always been able to see potential within her that she was not able to see within herself. She shared how mentors and support networks helped her before and during her role as department chair.

> There have always been these people in my past, and in my present and hopefully in my future, that have seen things in me that I didn't see in myself. So even as a graduate student, I had no idea what I was gonna do when I graduated, because I kept telling myself I'm not gonna be very good at teaching or anything like that, and that was my very first job [LAUGHING]. But I never would have probably chosen teaching as a profession to begin with without that little nudge, and it worked out really well.

Internal and External Support Networks

Chair 2 further described the support she received inside, as well as outside of her department when she was being selected for the position of department chair:

> During the application process, the faculty were there 100%, the dean and associate dean at that time were there, and the other department heads too were very accepting because you become the new kid on the block, and being the only woman it's kinda scary. But yeah, very supportive, and even to this day, I would not hesitate to call any one of the other department heads outside [my department] and say I need assistance. In fact we do this all the time, we email people and say: do you know the answer to this or have you experienced this? We have a new situation here that we've never had before, so do any of you have this situation in your department? If so, how have you handled it? What have you done? Outside of [State University], there have been colleagues who have been in department head positions for a long time, so I share things with them from time to time.

Likewise, Chair 4 expressed the support that she received in the past and still receives from professional and family networks outside of her department and institution:

External Support Networks

> Right now, [State University] is part of a coalition of [specific field] executives. There's one [specific field] executive for every state in the union. We meet once a year at different places and we have a list serve and so I learn so much from reading what other people are experiencing. And I know that if I have a question I can post a question to the list serve and someone is going to answer. And very often someone that has gone through the same thing or experiencing the same thing will either pick up the phone and say I'm having the same problem, you know, I don't know what to do about this, and then I feel a little better. Or they offer me solutions of how they made it through the problem, what pitfalls to watch out for, all sorts of things like that so that's called the National Association of [specific field] Executives from state institutions. So those are the organizations that have been supportive to me.

Family Support

> Well, my husband … pretty wonderful too because he picks up all the slack at home. I couldn't do it without him because I have [X number of children]. It is a big responsibility and it is a big challenge.

Furthermore, Chair 5 described how she was mentored by her doctoral PhD advisor who was also an academic department head. As a result, she was able to observe his method for success, which helped her later on in her life as she became a department head.

> The first person who was my mentor was in fact my PhD. mentor, who was the department head of a very complex and difficult department. I saw him be an administrator and a scholar, and I saw him be incredibly productive with not only turning out articles but books, and being very intentional. And one of the things I noted about him was that he set up a routine that allowed him to be productive in more than one way.
>
> I knew then as his doctoral student, that I needed to have that early time where I was doing the same thing that he was doing. So it set a routine for me. I saw him be a very successful department head. I took so many of those lessons of the way he worked into my professional life and in fact, as a faculty member and I made sure that I demarcated that same kind of thing.

Chair 8 also shared a similar experience in terms of receiving support from former chairs as well as the faculty and staff in her department:

> The two former chairs have been and continue to be incredibly supportive. I was elected to be chair during the final year of the previous chair's term and so we would talk periodically during that year about activities he was engaging in and what was involved and he would try to prepare me for that. Both of them were and continue to be emotionally supportive as well as providing tangible answers to questions and… that kind of support.
>
> But I would have to say without a doubt, every single member of the faculty has been supportive. Every one of them has made efforts to make sure that I know that they appreciate what I do or when I'm doing a good job, and have offered to help out with whatever tasks are involved. So, I'm supported on all sides. The office staff also, are awesome and support me in all kinds of ways.

To add to the chairs' perspectives, Dean 3 and Dean 4 supported the idea of mentoring in general. Dean 3 stated how mentoring can assist in preparing women for success in leadership roles:

> I think we can have as many competent females as we have competent males. It's about mentoring. I really think it's a matter of people seeing themselves in a leadership role, people being appreciated in the role, and people being cultivated by others for the roles. It's really about empowering people and preparing them to succeed in the roles you want them to step up to.

And finally, Dean 4 shared how he believed mentoring can help a woman department head, especially in the initial phase of her appointment:

> If the woman coming into the department head position has not ever had any administrative experience, then it's best if you can partner them up with a senior person, another department head, or someone on your staff, who can mentor them during the initial part of the experience that they are gonna have as department head.

Having Female Mentors

Another important aspect of mentorship that emerged from the data was the importance of having a woman as a mentor. The participants believed that having at least one mentor who is a female is important because a female mentor provides a unique type of support. They suggested that a female mentor is better able to empathize with a female department chair, because she has had at least some of the experiences that a female department chair encounters , and would be better able to provide advice or support on issues that are unique to women.

Chair 3 explained how the female mentors in her life have helped in her career advancement:

> I am very close to a current female vice provost, who I think is the best administrator I know. So everything about my strategy comes from direct mentoring from this person who's risen up the ranks to do amazing things for [State University]. She has incredible political sense, and so when I'm in the middle of a bad situation I call her first. That having been said, I have a group of very talented women and they're all poised to take this job over. And they are amazing. They are the ones who advise me about issues like faculty conflicts and problems with students.

Similarly, Chair 6 explained why it is important to have female mentors:

> I think, as a woman, it's really important to have another woman as one of the mentors because, there are some issues that I feel are uniquely female, that a woman can answer I believe more easily. It's not that a man maybe doesn't have a perspective or can't assist, but they're not personally experiencing that same challenge. In fact, I just led with our female faculty, a study of a book called 'Women Don't Ask' and it's about the art of negotiation. And what we learned is that women don't ask for things that they need. And so they assume that if they ask it's a sign of weakness, whereas this book talks about why it's a good thing to ask. I know women who have had children in academia and they're nursing and they have no place to go to do that in a private setting, and they're afraid to ask to schedule maybe a conference room or something like that. So, again, these are things that most women are more comfortable talking to other women about. So, I've always had many mentors, both men and women, and today I still have female mentors.

Dean 4 also supported the notion of having a female mentor:

> Sometimes women are much more comfortable talking to another woman. If you have another woman department head that’s been there, done that, it helps to spend a little time with her.

The data gathered pertaining to research question two suggested that department chairs did not employ any specific strategies in order to become a department chair. Rather, their selection to the position was the result of hard work and professional success in fulfilling their teaching, research, service, and administrative duties. In their role as a faculty member, they demonstrated the academic leadership potential necessary for the position. Additionally, having a strong network of mentors and supporters, and particularly other females, who provided

guidance, encouragement, and good examples, also helped them in career advancement and in their role as department chair.

Research Question 3: Gender-based Challenges

The third research question examined the unique challenges that the female department chairs faced with respect to their gender. Specifically, this question sought to explore whether the female department chairs felt that they had encountered unique challenges in their position that were not typically experienced by their male counterparts. From the data, four types of challenges emerged. The first challenge involved balancing their personal and family commitments with their career, the second involved being challenged by senior males, the third challenge involved having to work twice as hard as males to earn respect due to the perception that women are less qualified than males to lead effectively, and the fourth challenge involved institutional barriers. A discussion of these findings is presented in this section. As illustrated in Table 4, four themes emerged from the data.

Table 4

Emergent themes from Research Question 3

Research Question 3:	What were the principal gender-based challenges that the women faced in achieving their current position as academic department chair?
Theme 1:	Personal Challenges Involving Family and Work
Theme 2:	Facing Resistance From Male Colleagues
Theme 3:	Being Perceived as Less Qualified than Male Colleagues
Theme 4:	Institutional Barriers

Personal Challenges Involving Family and Work

The data collected for research question three suggested that the female department chairs felt challenged with balancing their careers and meeting their family obligations. In addition, they also felt burdened with fulfilling most of the family obligations within their household.

Chair 6 explained how family obligations present challenges for professional women as opposed to for men:

> Most women in academic positions and leadership positions within academia have a spouse who also has a professional career. And so, I do feel like one of the challenges that's uniquely for women, is that you definitely have to manage your career and your personal life. And your personal life is with children and with running the household; food, shopping, bill paying, all those kinds of things.
>
> And some of my male colleagues, you know, they have a wife at home, and so if the child is sick, she deals with it, if the child needs to be transported back and forth to school, she deals with it.
>
> So, I would say that it's been my experience, my observation, that women who are working professionally have fifty percent or more of that home-life responsibility. That puts more pressure on the women and that constrains them more on what they can do, so, maybe they can't travel as much, and that may hurt them professionally because they can't get to the conferences or meetings that they need to. They get called away maybe more often because of child-care issues or a child is sick, and so there's always that sort of give and take.

Similarly, Dean 4, provided information in support of Chair 6's perspective:

> I think another challenge that women have is sort of balancing all of the aspects of their lives because typically, men coming into these jobs if they're married, their spouse sort of takes care of all those things that need to be taken care of, extra to the work. And with women, the challenges I think are much more intense of balancing their mom role, the wife role and the career role. It's just most of the time how it happens. The women, the mother has most of the child-caring role, and an awful lot of household responsibilities.
>
> Not only that, but as they're getting up into their forties, they become involved in a parent care-taker role. So there's a lot of responsibilities. So it's balancing those roles and figuring out ways to do that and maybe carving out some resources to sort of supplement what you would normally expect the woman to do in the household. I think that's a real issue and a challenging issue and sometimes men who have not been in dual career families, don't really understand that when they're working as leaders, and they will set those expectations and disregard that multiple role that their women executives have to make. So those are I think, significant challenges.

The provost of the institution added that family obligations make it more challenging for women in deciding to pursue the department chair position:

> I also think females who are generally tenured and at the associate or full professor level may have different family obligations than do their male counterparts. So I think there's much more of a balance which puts some women in a difficult position to decide that … pursuing the department chair position is what they are willing to do.

In light of personal challenges, Chair 5 explained the personal cost that a female pays as a result of serving in a leadership position and discussed how one has to be very purposeful about making time for family and friends to balance out her life:

> There is a personal cost for leadership…. period. And because of the range of duties as a department head, you have to be empathetic and yet you have to also be morally situated in what you're doing. And when you make hard decisions there's a personal toll.
>
> And much of what you do isn't going to get spoken out of very private rooms, not even with spouses and family. And therefore, there is a sense then that you have to have the things that have to be in the vault, you have to deal with them, and there's a personal cost to having do that.
>
> And the only way that you can balance that in your personal life is to make sure you have a personal life, that you make sure you maintain that balance of friendships, that you continue to invest in your personal relationships, that you set up clear communication in your personal life, about when you're gonna have time constraints….. And not to feel badly about that, but to set up that communication and to make sure that that's in place because otherwise, the family can be a full-time job, and then you're still doing research, and you're still teaching, and then you have this whole other piece.
>
> But it's always a cost-benefits ratio and I think that that's when you decide do I like the person that I'm becoming through these activities, and when you say I don't like the person I'm becoming, then you need to step out of that role.

Facing Resistance From Male Colleagues

Another challenge that the female department chairs faced involved resistance from some of their male colleagues. The female department chairs reported that their formal authority was challenged primarily by older male counterparts.

Chair 3 described the challenges that she encountered with senior males in administration:

> I tend to be very direct and somewhat aggressive, and that hasn't gone over well in certain male centers of administration. I have had trouble especially at the associate professor rank with pushing back. In fact, a previous dean who was a male told me I tended to push the envelope. He said I was a fantastic chair, but he had to put in that remark. And I don't think that remark would be there for a male chair. And actually I don't care. When they do something wrong I will contest it and I will push back, and pretty hard, but I don't do it very often, cause I do believe in choosing battles. I think men are allowed to do that kind of thing more than women. And even when there are women running the college it doesn't seem to matter, it's the same problem. One of the worst retired right before I started. But he gave me my biggest problem. He was horrendously sexist.

Chair 5 also shared her experience with being challenged by her male colleagues:

> I sincerely believe that some of my male colleagues jumped for joy when I became chair because they thought they could push me over. And I think they were very surprised when I stood my ground. And I don't know that that's helped or hindered me in any way but I think that my first year as chair was more challenging than it should have been because of that. There are times in faculty meetings that I believe that I'm heckled, where a male colleague would never have been. I try very hard not to rise to the bait, and I just stay out of it and just let it roll off. I've developed tough skin to where I don't take things personally. I mean when I make a mistake, I take it personally, but if I'm doing what's right I'll stand up to anyone. You see the absolute worst side of people sometimes and I understand that sometimes faculty get very frustrated and they come in and need to vent. But there's a civility that should be there which isn't always.

Furthermore Chair 6 expressed that she believed that her older male colleagues simply cannot empathize with her as a woman:

> A lot of times my older male colleagues don’t relate. So, you know, they may suggest having a meeting in the evening or on the weekend, which may not be convenient for me because that’s my time with my family. I’ve never had anybody outwardly be rude to me; but I can tell they just don’t get it.

Being Perceived as Less Qualified than Males in the Workplace

Another theme that emerged was the perception that females are less qualified leaders than are males.

Chair 8 provided a detailed account of a salary-related challenge that she encountered as a department chair, which she believed was attributed to her gender:

> There is one piece that I am quite sure had to do with my gender, that was negotiating with the dean for salary. When it came down to negotiating for salary, as a woman I was being greedy and not thinking about the needs of my department. As a man I would have

> been, you know, doing what you do, you know, negotiating for salary. That actually almost knocked me out of the running. I actually said I don't think I'm going be able to take on this position. It worried me really not primarily in terms of my own needs but it was symbolic for me about what I would be able to do for my department.
>
> And my thought was if in asking for something I am perceived to be grasping and greedy, what does that mean when I need to fight hard to get my faculty members what they need, to get our graduate students what they need, to provide resources for the department? Is that always going to be the perception, that I'm being argumentative and greedy as opposed to making a tough case?
>
> The salary was completely symbolic for me. I didn't feel that I should be paid 80% of what a male was being paid for doing the same job.

Two deans provided their perspective on why women face more challenges in administrative positions than do males in the workplace. They suggested that one major reason women face more challenges is that women tend to come into the department chair position with less experience than their male counterparts.

Dean 1 provided his insight on women's limited academic and professional preparedness for leadership positions in research institutions:

> We're moving into a period in academic administration where your competency is what will make the difference. Personnel decisions are being made on skill and education and productivity. The problem women may encounter might be their lack of an appropriate CV for the position.

Dean 2 stated his perspective regarding this issue:

> Typically the women that come in for the positions have less experience, compared to their male counterparts, so they might have to prove themselves a little bit more. But I think that once people are satisfied that there is good potential there I don't think there are any more issues beyond that. And I think that people serving on search committees, when they see a woman, their first reaction would be-okay, are these qualifications at par with the rest of the candidates. I don't think you have to worry as much about not getting a fair chance. But at the end of it, fair chance means that some places will not choose you because they have more qualified people.

Institutional Barriers

Dean 3 and Dean 4 suggested that women face a much steeper challenge than their male counterparts in being accepted as academic leaders. Furthermore, Dean 3 and Dean 4 also

suggested that people within the department and within higher education institutions as a whole, might be more reluctant to accept women serving in academic leadership positions.

Dean 3 explained:

> Not all of the people in their department will look at [women] as a leader the same way they might a man. Faculty - both males and females; they're sort of projecting this superwoman kind of expectation on women that they wouldn't put on a male in that position. They may be looking for sort of a strong dominant male to be the leader as opposed to a person who's going to be effective. And women they have to set themselves apart from those people which is sometimes difficult to do in a faculty role and well as an administrative role.

Dean 4 added:

> A lot of this is about the people within the institution. I think that's the biggest challenge. I think what people challenge is the past 30 years of where they [females] rose through the ranks. If there's a prevalence within an institution, that this is a male-dominated role, then they're facing that, and it can be overcome but it's a higher activation energy, you know it's more effort, more perseverance to succeed. It's doable but it's a higher, steeper challenge.

The data collected in connection with research question three revealed that women serving in the department chair role within State University faced four types of challenges based on their gender. The first challenge involved balancing work careers with personal and family commitments. The female department chairs felt that they faced a significantly greater burden of meeting the needs of their family and taking care of household duties than did their male counterparts. The women chairs also expressed a lack of support on the part of their male colleagues whom they believed showed a limited understanding and empathy toward their struggle to balance their family and work life. The second challenge that the female department chairs faced involved being challenged by some of their senior male colleagues. They felt that senior male faculty and administrators demonstrated far more resistance toward them than they would toward a male department chair. The third challenge involved the perception that the female department chairs were less qualified and prepared to serve in the department chair

position as compared to their male counterparts. The final challenge pertained to institutional barriers. Several deans suggested that some of the challenges experienced by female department chairs are due to the stereotypical perception of administrators, faculty, and staff who hold the belief that the role of a leader should be fulfilled by a male rather than by a female.

Research Question 4: Advice for Women Who Aspire to Become a Department Chair

Research question four sought any important advice that would be beneficial to women faculty who aspire to become an academic department chair. Based on the responses of the participants, three themes emerged. The first theme involved advice for women about conducting background research on the position, understanding what the position entails before going into it, and understanding the challenges and the duties involved with the position. The second theme presented advice primarily provided by the college deans and the provost. They advised potential female candidates to develop their academic credentials and gain relative professional experience before deciding to pursue the position. The final theme involved advice about learning to separate friendships from work. A discussion of these findings is presented in this section. As illustrated in Table 5, three themes emerged from the data.

Table 5

Emergent themes from Research Question 4

Research Question 4:	What advice would the current women department chairs offer to women faculty who aspire to become an academic department chair in a public, four-year research institution?
Theme 1:	Understand What the Position Entails Before Jumping On Board
Theme 2:	Come Fully Credentialed
Theme 3:	Separate Friendships from Professional Relationships

Understand What the Position Entails Before Jumping On Board

This theme was consistent throughout the data and indicated that the participants believed that women aspiring to the position of department chair should first conduct research on the position, and need to be knowledgeable about the duties and the challenges involved with the position in order to be able to handle them effectively.

Chair 8 discussed the importance of women knowing exactly what they are getting into so that they can make an informed decision as to whether they still want to pursue the position of department chair, given their awareness of both the pros and cons:

> If a woman would want to engage in this position I would ask her to consider why she wants that position and what she hopes to get out of it. I certainly can imagine that there are some individuals for whom being the leader and the person who guides and directs and charts out the path of the department would be very rewarding. But it's a frustrating position because it's middle management essentially.
>
> You get pressure from upper administration about here are the new initiatives, here's what we have to do, we have to cut this much from the budget, we have to do this and that, now nobody can do this anymore, now there's a whole new policy, tell your faculty. And then you get pressure from below from faculty. I need this, I need this. On the ground we're trying to get this stuff done and we can't get it done. And you have to mitigate between those things. I think that the right person might be able to do that if they can keep that vision first and foremost.

Additionally, Chair 3 suggested that getting direct exposure to the position beforehand, will help women interested in the position to be able to determine whether they still want to pursue it:

> I think involving the potential candidate in the running of the department pretty early on is probably the best advice. My associate chair has been involved in faculty disputes, she's been involved in scheduling, she's been involved in every aspect. She knows what the job is and she still wants it. But the fact is I don't care what anyone tells you, people told me you should hide what the job is from her or she won't take it, but I think that's bad management. You want the person to know what they're getting into.

Come Fully Credentialed

The data gathered regarding this theme reinforced the importance of academic and professional preparedness for the position of department chair. The participants in the study suggested that it is important for women faculty to have the appropriate academic credentials and professional experience before pursuing the position of department chair.

Chair 7 offered her advice regarding academic and professional preparedness. She specifically advised women to determine whether the duties of the job are of interest to them before pursuing it:

> I think first and foremost you have to build a strong external visible program of your own because if you're going to be department chair, you don't have to be the best researcher in your department, but you certainly need to be in the top quarter or thereabout so that when you are talking to the heavy hitters in your department you have their respect. I think it's hard to be basically leading an organization if you don't have the respect of the faculty you're leading. So I think that's the first - is to be a solid teacher, and I think the second goal is whatever spare time that leaves … be involved in the department.
>
> You don't have to be on every committee; if you try to do that you'll never get anywhere. But you should rotate round and be on different committees. You should talk to the committee chairs of other committees to get a feel for how the department is run, how curricular decisions are made, how budgeting decisions are made, and how hiring decisions are made. Get on hiring committees, get on curriculum committees, you know, try to rotate round.
>
> I think it's important not to just come in prepared for the job but to find out if these things interest you. If it turns out that the curriculum committee, the budgeting issues, the hiring committee chairs; if those bore you or frustrate you then probably you don't want to be department chair and I think it's important to know that before you walk into the job.

Dean 1 also reaffirmed the importance of developing oneself professionally in order to attain the position of department chair:

> Of course the research, the teaching, the advising - all those things are important. There's a remarkable array of leadership positions on campus. For example, we have a faculty senate at [State University], we have a college cabinet, and every department has their committee structure. So I think developing the leadership skills within your national associations, on your campuses, in the community, all those things are important CV builders. But also they're important to develop the skill-set necessary to run a

> department. For example if you want to be a dean, you have to be a chair. I mean unless you are aware of the day to day rhythms of a department, the problems that you face both with students and parents and external constituents, with their faculty and graduate students, balancing a budget, putting together all these reports we have to do…. unless you've been through those cycles a few times I don't think you're adequately prepared. So my major recommendation would be develop the skills and that takes some time.

Similarly, Dean 2 provided detailed advice regarding the academic and professional preparation that is necessary to become a department chair, but also went a step further in detailing the additional importance of having team skills and good leadership skills, which sets the best apart from the rest:

> So let's say that you're a young faculty member and you have this position and some day you aspire to be a department head or department chair, I think the first few years should be spent trying to earn tenure. And most people would say that you are to focus on all things academic, which is your research record and your ability to guide PhD students and master's students, and your classroom teaching and flexibility in undergraduate teaching.
>
> So if you serve on national boards, if you serve on national committees, if you do things at that level in your professional societies, then that could be used to enhance the visibility of the department and obviously people are going to look at that. So I think you have to do that, and you have to show that you're good at those things. But that's not enough.
>
> I think the part that really separates people is when you look at their citizenship. Are they people that can work as a team, and are they open-minded? Do they basically just sit behind closed doors or do they interact with people? And are they good to students and good to staff? So ultimately I would say that the teaching and research part is a necessary but not a sufficient qualification. And what also gets you to the sufficiency level is your ability to lead and take on some tasks that are not just benefitting you and your research group, they benefit the department.

Moreover, Chair 6 added that female candidates interested in pursuing the position of department chair should use their interpersonal and communication skills to their advantage. In addition, they need to be confident enough in their abilities to pursue positions in fields where there are very few women:

> I would say women tend to have very good people skills, very good communication skills, good problem-solving skills, and they're good negotiators. So, I think that that also is something that uniquely gives women an advantage cause in many cases people are more comfortable talking with them where men can tend to be more abrupt or less kind of

> warm if you will. So I think that for women, you use that as an advantage. You create a comfortable environment where people are willing to talk and willing to work things out.
>
> One other piece of advice to women would be realize that you are smart, you're advancing because you are working hard and you're doing well. Get reality checked from external people to confirm that you are doing well and you can kind of consider these positions within [specific fields] where there are very few women in the field.

Furthermore, Chair 5 provided unique advice to potential female candidates by encouraging them to develop their leadership competencies from as early as the undergraduate level so that they may build the confidence necessary to pursue leadership possibilities in academia one day.

> I think that being a woman is very exciting and I think that we bring a really unique perspective and a skill-set that really allows us to do things and do things well. So I think that my advice to young people and I think that you start that advice early as part of that vision I have for women, is that when they are in fact even undergraduates, as they're getting their first preparatory degree, is to talk about leadership and to build that leadership even at the undergraduate level. Having that experience will make it possible for them one day to say…. I think I'll do a PhD; I want to teach. And hopefully then what's going to happen is that because they have led in other ways, from undergraduate on, they're building a skill-set. So, I think it's important to encourage them to be active, and take leadership roles from the very beginning, and to appreciate that leadership is distributed it doesn't just reside with one person. And if they begin to get their own sense of what leadership is, and begin to build some confidence, as they're coming through the ranks in academia, I think that they'll be able to actually dream bigger, and take on those roles and move forward.

Finally, the provost of the institution suggested that women should go the extra mile in developing themselves by pursuing development opportunities beyond their colleges as they think about long-term leadership in academia:

> When I was a department chair, I also did a year faculty position in the vice chancellor for research office, and was able to work across disciplines and understand a little bit more about what was going on across the entire campus, which helped me then for future positions. What I'd say is to see what's out there and maybe move beyond your college or your discipline to see what other opportunities there are. And that might be with the vice-provost for research, that might be with the provost, that might be working on a committee that goes across campus, because as you think about moving to, if it's a vice-provost, or a provost, or a dean, you have to be able to work beyond your own discipline.

Separate Friendships from Professional Relationships

Another piece of advice that emerged from the research was that women need to be able to separate friendships from work in order to be effective in leading the department and making difficult decisions.

Chair 2 advised the women to be cautious about mixing friendships with work:

> Be able to separate the decisions that are made as a department chair from those that are made as a friend. You have to have professional relationships, and you also need to have friends, but you can't be both at the same time. So if they can separate themselves out, then they'll probably do very good.

Chair 5 also advised future female department chairs to be honest with themselves, and further substantiated Chair 2's advice on separation of friendships:

> Be true to yourself. I have to get up and look myself in the mirror. I try not to let emotions, personalities, or anything influence the decisions I have to make. It's very difficult coming out of the faculty role and coming into this role because people who have been friends try to gain favor. And the minute you do that you lose credibility. And honestly, in some ways I think it is more difficult for a woman than it is a man to separate that. I was really sad when I became associate chair and …. I realized that some people that I considered to be friends took advantage of my position. What people don't realize is that there's not a whole lot of power in this position. It's all a matter of just keeping the dominos from falling over. You know, it's a balancing act all the time.

Finally, Dean 4 added that while women are very good at being nurturing, he cautions women on being able to separate friendships when it comes to making tough decisions:

> I think one of the challenges would be for them to clearly separate themselves out as a leader from the group. I think many women are wonderful about seeing situations and helping and becoming part of a group or a close buddy or whatever it happens to be, because that's just how they're acculturated and it may have something to do with genetic makeup, and I don't want go there, [LAUGHING]. And it may well be that they have to step away from that approach. It's not that they won't be empathic with the people they're working with, but they have to distance themselves to some extent. And, you want be cordial with people but you have to be careful about being overly friendly and overly nurturing of those folks because you have to make hard decisions.

The data related to question four suggested that the participants believed that

women who aspire to the position of academic department chair need to develop knowledge and awareness of the roles, responsibilities, and challenges involved in the position before deciding to pursue it. Additionally, the participants recommended that women who want to become an academic department chair need to prepare themselves academically and professionally before seeking to obtain the position. These qualifications, they advised, should comprise sound research, teaching, service, interpersonal, communication, and leadership skills. Finally, the participants advised women seeking the position to know how to separate friendships from professional relationships in order to be seen as being fair minded and able to make tough decisions.

Summary

The data gathered for the study revealed some pertinent information regarding the knowledge, skills and training, personal and professional experiences, and challenges faced by female department chairs within a public four-year, high-research institution. The data also provided helpful advice for women aspiring to the position of department chair. First, the data related to research question one revealed that the female department chairs serving at State University did not receive any specific training to prepare them for the position. However, they did have sufficient academic credentials in research, teaching, and service. Several chair participants described the importance of prior professional experiences both in and outside of their institutions, which they believe facilitated their advancement to the position of department chair. In addition, the findings regarding research question one suggested that to successfully obtain the position of department chair, women need to possess significant interpersonal and communication skills and must be able to demonstrate an ability to deal with the personal or human side of the job.

Second, the findings regarding the second research question revealed that the female department chairs did not develop or use any particular strategy to become a chair – it just happened. However, they believed that earning tenure through establishing a good record of teaching and research, possessing good leadership skills, administrative and service experience, and being exemplary in their role as a faculty member, contributed toward their selection as a department chair. Additionally, the chair participants believed that their former and current mentors and support networks were critical players that greatly assisted them in their advancement to the position.

Third, research question three revealed that the female department chairs faced four unique challenges in obtaining their position that were not particularly faced by their male counterparts. These findings indicated that the female department chairs at State University experienced challenges with balancing their careers and with meeting their family obligations more-so than their male counterparts. More-over, they also admitted to experiencing resistance from their senior male colleagues who were not particularly in favor of being led by a woman serving in the position of department chair. In addition, the college deans in the study suggested that some women still face challenges due to their lack of appropriate credentials and preparedness for the position of department chair, as well as challenges brought about by the perceptions of people that exist within an institution regarding the ability of women to serve in leadership roles in research institutions.

Finally, question four generated advice to women who aspire to the position of department chair. The participants in the study advised women to ensure that they fully understood the roles, responsibilities and challenges involved with serving in the position of department chair before deciding to pursue the position, and also to ensure that they possessed

the academic, professional, and leadership credentials that are necessary, in order to obtain the position of department chair. They also offered a final piece of advice recommending that women be able to know how to separate friendships from professional relationships as part of effective leadership.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore the personal and professional experiences of women who were serving in the position of academic department chair in a public, four-year high-research university. This study was important because the participants provided specific information regarding the knowledge, training, personal and professional experiences, and challenges experienced by women currently serving as an academic department chair. In addition, the participants offered advice for women faculty who may aspire to the position of academic department chair within a public, very high research activity institution. The participants included eight women department chairs, four college deans, and one provost from one institution selected for this study.

This chapter will analyze, interpret, and discuss the study's findings, and offer conclusions substantiated by the research and the data collected in the study. Limitations regarding the methods of the study will be presented, and finally, recommendations for improved practice and for future research will be offered to both current and future researchers and practitioners who seek to further investigate or improve on practices related to this topic.

Overview of the Study

Qualitative case study methodology was employed to collect data for this study. Interviews were conducted, and written documents were analyzed to triangulate the data, strengthen the study's findings, and ensure credibility and trustworthiness. The findings of the study were analyzed based on each research question. This section presents each of the four research questions as well as a summary of the findings that emerged during the process of data analysis.

Research Question 1: What did the study participants perceive to be the qualifications, training, and skills necessary for women faculty to attain the position of academic department chair in a public, very high research activity institution?

In response to research question one, the findings of the study suggested that while the female academic department chairs at State University (the pseudonym for the site of this study) did not receive any training to prepare them directly for the position of academic department chair, they did possess the necessary knowledge, skills and experiences that facilitated their advancement to the position. The women chair participants credited several factors with helping them move into the position: academic achievements, research and teaching skills, service in prior administrative positions, internal and external committee service, and involvement in leadership initiatives and professional associations. In addition to the women chair perspectives, Dean 2 added that the important qualities that he looks for when hiring a department chair include their ability to lead effectively, garner the respect of their colleagues and various other constituents, their ability to multitask, and their ability to maintain honesty and integrity especially when faced with major challenges. A combination of all the above factors appear to help facilitate the progression of women to the position of department chair.

One skill acknowledged by all participants was the importance of having strong interpersonal and communication skills. Chair 5 discussed that being flexible and building and maintaining positive relationships with others contributed toward her success in the position. All of the dean participants noted that the possession of interpersonal and communication skills was a major contributing factor that helped the women chair participants advance to their current position of department chair. Specifically, the dean participants indicated that they looked for competencies including listening skills, oral and written communication skills, and an ability to

build positive relationships with others, in potential department chair candidates. The provost also highlighted that an ability to listen well is a critical asset of any effective department chair, perhaps more-so for women.

Research Question 2: What intentional strategies (personal and professional) did the women department chairs believe facilitated their advancement to their current position?

The findings regarding the second research question revealed that the female academic department chair participants did not intentionally seek, develop, or employ any particular strategy in order to become an academic department chair. The women department chairs felt that factors such as exemplary teaching, research, leadership, administrative, and service records contributed significantly toward their attainment of the position. The women suggested that doing their best work, being recognized as a productive member of the faculty, and being actively involved academic and service initiatives both within and outside of State University, were significant ingredients in their appointment to the position.

Another finding that emerged from research question two was that the women chairs indicated that mentoring and support networks were important in helping them advance to the position of academic department chair. The women participants discussed how mentoring from other academicians within their institution, particularly their college deans and former department chairs, as well as those from other universities were instrumental in their professional development and career success. Furthermore, the women also acknowledged that having the support of family, friends, as well as female mentors who can empathize with them, was a significant element in their becoming a department chair. Two of the four college deans further supported the importance of mentorship in the career advancement of the women department chairs.

Research Question 3: What were the principal gender-based challenges that the women faced in achieving their current position as academic department chair?

In addressing research question three, the female academic department chairs revealed that they encountered several challenges that they believed were not routinely faced by their male counterparts. The women chairs expressed having difficulty with balancing their careers while meeting the needs of their families. They felt that as women, they were expected to shoulder more responsibility to care for their spouses, children, and even an elderly parent, compared to their male colleagues. Another challenge expressed by the women chairs was that they experienced resistance from some male faculty who were not necessarily supportive of a woman serving in the position of department chair. Specifically, they believed that one of their greatest challenges as chair involved connecting with, and being accepted by their male colleagues. As a result, the women participants felt that they had to be more aggressive in their leadership style in order to get their male faculty to comply with their requests and abide by university and college policies and procedures.

Another finding that stemmed from the study's third research question was that the dean participants implied that women encountered difficulty in becoming a department chair in a research university due to their perceived limited academic and professional preparedness for the position. The deans indicated that many women faculty in research universities tend to be less qualified than men colleagues who are often able to build stronger academic credentials and gain leadership experience. Much of this advantage for men is due to the numbers that hold tenure and have achieved the rank of full professor as compared to women. As a result, men are more likely to be recommended by their colleagues for the chair position and selected by their deans to serve. The deans further highlighted institutional barriers such as prevailing stereotypical views

of women, as a hindrance to their advancement into leadership positions. Specifically, these stereotypes portray women academic leaders as less assertive and less effective than their male counterparts.

Research Question 4: What advice would the study participants offer to women faculty who aspire to become an academic department chair in a public, very high research activity institution?

With regard to research question four, the study's participants provided advice to women who aspire to the position of academic department chair. Both the chair and dean participants recommended that women must to be fully cognizant prior to pursuing the position of department chair of the responsibilities and challenges associated with the position.

Moreover, the participants advised women faculty that want to become a chair at some point in their career that they need to prepare by building a solid academic record, securing tenure, and working to advance to the rank of full professor. They also need to acquire as much leadership experience as possible. Women faculty were further advised to develop a checklist of the skills, experiences, and credentials they will need for the position. In addition, potential women chairs were encouraged to find ways to acquire administrative leadership experience through serving in various leadership positions, serving on committees, and through being active in professional academic organizations.

A final finding that emerged from research question four was the importance of learning to separate friendships from work relationships. Both chair and dean participants in the study believed that women chairs must learn how to separate decisions made as department chair from those that are made as a friend. All of the study participants stressed the importance of integrity

and learning how to be impartial, as well as being able to resist allowing friendships to cloud their judgment.

Discussion of the Findings and Conclusions

This study provides empirical research to assist in understanding the personal and professional experiences that eight women academic department chairs faced in becoming a department chair at State University. In addition, the study presents pertinent advice for women who may desire to serve in the role of chair sometime during their professional career. Based on the data collected and literature reviewed, the following findings and conclusions are presented by related research question in the following sections.

Research Question 1

The primary goal of the study's first question was to identify the relevant knowledge, training, and skills, that the study participants believed facilitated the advancement of eight female faculty to their current positions of department chairs at State University. According to the study participants ,the primary determinants of whether women are situated to become a chair at State University is based on their academic and research record, leadership potential, institutional and professional service activities, involvement in professional associations, and having outstanding interpersonal skills. None of the study's participants received any formal leadership training or development to prepare them to become a department chair. Some however did receive advice from the incumbent they were replacing or other colleagues, but most had to learn while on the job. This lack of training for wannabe chairs and chair-elects is substantiated in the literature by researchers who assert that in most instances department chairs receive no formal training and preparation before moving into the position (Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Lumpkin, 2004; Treadwell, 1997; Wescott, 2000; Whitsett, 2007).

The issue of lack of formal training for the position was a concern raised by all of the department chairs. Their responses implied that they would have been better equipped to handle their jobs if they had received some form of training while a faculty member. Given the information provided by the women chair participants, there is a need to provide training for women transitioning into the role of department chair at State University. As stated by researchers throughout the literature, the department chair serves in the most important leadership role within higher education administration and training and development is necessary (Barge & Musambira; 1992; Bennett, 1982; Gmelch & Parkay, 1999; Maerten, 1991; Treadwell, 1997; Williams, 1991).

Thus, future administrators must think about developing training strategies to assist department chairs in preparing and transitioning into the important position of department chair. The literature and the data support the fact that women chairs learn their roles, responsibilities and challenges while they are serving in the position (Hickson & Stacks, 1992; Lumpkin, 2004; Smith & Stewart, 1999), which makes it more difficult to perform their jobs effectively. Consequently, by implementing training such as workshops and leadership development for department chairs, senior administrators would better assist women chairs prepare for position and develop greater skills once in the position.

Despite their lack of formal training, the female department chairs who participated in the study did indicate that their academic qualifications, teaching and research experience, committee service, administrative experience, and professional affiliations, contributed significantly to their being selected as chair, but did not necessarily prepare them for the job. Taio (2006) and Treadwell (1997) suggested that academic credentials were essential to become

a chair, but training and professional development were needed to prepare women for the position of department chair.

While having a record of academic, administrative, and professional accomplishments were considered essential to become a chair, the study participants also acknowledged that having solid interpersonal and communication skills were necessary attributes. Female department chairs must possess the ability to communicate both oral and written, to actively listen, to interact and work well with others. These are significant traits and vital skills that leaders in today's higher education institutions must have. As liaisons between faculty and administrators, department chairs are in constant communication with various constituents both on and off their campuses. As such, technical skills alone are no longer sufficient to successfully fulfill the duties of the position. It is also critical for women to use empathic skills to work with all members of their department.

The dean participants in particular indicated that when combined with their academic experience and leadership skills, female chairs who also possess strong interpersonal and communication skills tend to be viewed more favorably during the hiring process. The consensus among the deans was that they would be more likely to hire a female department chair who has demonstrated superior interpersonal skills. This finding was consistent with Gmelch and Parkay (1999) who suggested that for department chairs to successfully fulfill their administrative duties, they need to be able to work well with, and develop positive interpersonal relationships with students, colleagues, staff, as well as administrators. Furthermore, Gmelch (2004) supported this view by asserting that department chairs must have a healthy combination of soft skills, which include communication skills, conflict resolution skills, and negotiation skills in order to be successful.

The research findings and literature confirm that interpersonal skills, notable oral and written communication skills, as well as a keen ability to interact well with students, faculty, staff, and administrators, are paramount to the success of female department chairs in institutions such as State University. Not only are those skills necessary to helping women faculty advance to the position of department chair, they are also essential to sustaining and effectively executing the roles and responsibilities involved with the position. Thus, female faculty aspiring to the position must develop those competencies in order to be competitive for the position.

Research Question 2

The goal of the study's second question was to determine whether the women department chairs in this study utilized any particular strategies to help them attain the position of department chair. Strategies in this study referred to whether the women participants at State University were intentional in their thoughts and/or actions, and whether they purposefully pursued the chair position in their department. The key findings suggest that the women did not use any formal strategies in becoming a chair, rather someone saw potential in them and asked them to serve.

When they became faculty members, the women participants indicated that they had no interests in becoming a department chair. Each of the eight women chairs were asked to serve in the position either by the dean of their college, the faculty members in their department, or by their incumbent chair. Furthermore, most of the women noted that they did not intend to remain as chair, and that they would return to the faculty when they completed their initial term of service. Based on this finding it would seem that women faculty to do not enter the professoriate with the intention or even interest in serving as department chair. Dyer and Miller (1999) corroborated this finding by discussing that department chairs are not particularly deliberate or strategic about seeking the position. In fact, they suggested that department chairs develop

success strategies only while they are already serving in the position. During their tenure in the department chair position, department chairs tend to focus their attention on being a capable academic leader, creating positive working relationships, recognizing areas that need development and improvement, and making a commitment to effect change (Dyer & Miller, 1999). Based on the findings and the literature, it seems that the primary reason why women faculty build their academic record is to position themselves for tenure, and promotion from assistant professor, to associate professor, to full-professor, as well as becoming a competent teacher, researcher, and advisor. Becoming department chair is not generally one of their career goals.

To encourage and help more women prepare to serve as an academic administrator, current and former chairs, deans, and administrators can begin to identify women faculty that have demonstrated leadership ability earlier in their academic careers, and provide mentoring and coaching to build competence and confidence to assume administrative roles. By creating both formal and informal opportunities for women to facilitate a thorough understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and challenges involved with the department chair position, more women faculty would be better equipped to decide whether they want to pursue the position, and effectively fulfill the duties involved. Through intentional effort, university leaders can prepare and recruit women faculty to become academic department chairs, deans, and senior academic administrators in research universities.

Another finding that emerged from research question two was that the female academic department chair participants believed that former and current mentors and support networks were critical in assisting them in their advancement in both their academic and administrative careers. Mentoring was discussed as one of the key contributors to the development and success

of the women faculty members, generally and perhaps more so than with men. This finding was consistent with Shollen et al. (2008) who suggested that mentoring is a vital part of professional development, particularly for women faculty. In addition, they posited that mentoring helps women develop their career goals, and attain the necessary knowledge, skills, and experience that are needed to advance in their careers. The study participants suggested that without mentorship, women would experience a more difficult transition into the chair position.

The academic department chairs as well as the college deans, and the provost acknowledged that receiving support and encouragement along the way from former academic department chairs, senior academic leaders, colleagues, family members, and especially from other females, greatly facilitated the advancement and professional development of the women. This finding was consistent with Filetti (2009) and Litchenberg (2011) who stressed the importance of mentorship as a means of building positive relationships and support systems between faculty and staff, supporting and guiding colleagues, and providing helpful supervision and counsel. In addition, the data collected from the college deans and the provost further reinforced the importance of mentorship and support, particularly from other women as contributors toward the development and success of the female academic department chairs. The consensus regarding women mentors was that, having gone through similar academic, professional and personal experiences, they were in the best position to advise, counsel, guide and empathize with the female department chairs in the study in building their academic portfolio and venturing into administration. Given the findings and the literature, women should purposefully build a network of trusted mentors and advisors to help guide them in shaping their academic careers. Chief among this network would be other women who have the ability to be empathetic and offer advice and guidance. More importantly, as women make career plans, they

should consider if they are suited for the job of department chair, and if so, gain the experience and skills they will need to be effective. Senior administrators must identify and work to afford rising women faculty leaders with the mentoring and coaching to prepare them to step into the chair position.

Research Question 3

Research question three focused on determining whether the female participants faced unique challenges in becoming a chair, particularly those not faced by men. Several of the women chairs indicated they did indeed believe they, as well as most females, faced special challenges. There were three challenges discussed by the female chairs: (a) challenges connected to work-life issues, (b) challenges related to encountering resistance from some male colleagues, and (c) challenges related to the fact that many in the academy perceive women as less qualified.

Throughout the literature over the past 30 years it has been widely noted that women who are trying to pursue careers in leadership positions must overcome numerous hurdles. The women chairs in the study indicated that they were challenged with balancing their careers and with meeting the needs of their families more-so than their male counterparts. They felt that as professional women with families, they shouldered the majority of their family and household obligations when compared to their male counterparts in similar or senior leadership positions. The burden of family responsibilities has historically been placed on women because they are often viewed as the primary homemakers and caretakers. However, this burden becomes increasingly difficult to balance when women decide to add a professional career into the mix.

The women participants as well as the deans all indicated that the challenge that women face in balancing their work-life and family-life is tremendous. This finding was corroborated in the literature by several researchers including Colbeck and Drago (2005), Nunez-Smith et al.

(2007), Spalter-Roth and Erskine (2005), and White (2005). All of these researchers agree that compared to men, women disproportionately assume the burden and pressures of the responsibility for taking care of their families. Furthermore, they suggested that if not carefully managed, family commitments can adversely impact the success of women in their careers as well as their ability to move up the administrative ladder.

Another challenge that the women chair participants admitted to facing was that their formal authority was being contested in the workplace particularly by their male colleagues. Specifically, the female academic department chairs experienced resistance primarily from senior males who did not particularly favor a woman serving in the position of academic department chair. Overall, the findings regarding this issue revealed that the women chairs felt that their authority was routinely challenged and that their leadership style was always under scrutiny.

The women chairs at State University acknowledged that they faced resistance from their male colleagues regardless of the leadership strategies that they employed. For example, if they were aggressive, they were criticized for overcompensating because they were not a man, and if they chose to display empathy and compassion, they were perceived as weak. Two of the women chairs indicated that they had to develop "thick skin" and become more aggressive in order to deal with their male colleagues. This finding was consistent with Hagedorn and Laden (2002) who suggested that women working particularly in four-year research institutions tend to be challenged more-so than women in two-year institutions. Furthermore, Twale and DeLuca (2008) contended that women who are moving up the leadership ladder in academia tend to experience increased defiance from their male counterparts who feel threatened by their advancement.

A third challenge that emerged from research question three was that the women chairs were perceived by their colleagues and administrators as less qualified than their male counterparts. The dean participants in particular, having hired or appointed numerous department chairs, felt that many female department chairs who want to serve in the position sometimes do not present as strong academic credentials and lack leadership preparedness for the position. The data also revealed that even though many women possess the required credentials, they still have to work harder to prove that they are worthy of serving in a leadership position and that they can effectively execute their assigned duties. This finding was supported in the literature by Taio (2006) who observed that women in leadership positions must work significantly harder than males, and must continually "overachieve" to be seen as successful.

It appears that women are expected to perform their leadership duties flawlessly with very little room for error. People within an institution have become used to males in leadership and tend to be less receptive toward women serving in such positions. This finding was consistent with Eagly and Karau (2002), and Eagly and Diekman (2005) who posited that compared to men, women are regarded as less able and less capable leaders, because they function in a male-dominated leadership environment. Senior-level administrators must educate faculty and staff to help change this perception of women leaders. It is a known fact that women perform their leadership roles differently from men. However, both men and women leaders possess unique strengths that serve to benefit an institution. Educating faculty, staff, and administrators about the differences between how women can lead effectively might help in allowing them to develop an open mind toward embracing more women as leaders in higher education.

A related challenge that emerged from research question three was that of salary inequity. One female chair discussed how she experienced major resistance from upper administration when she asked for an increase in her salary to make it comparable to those of other male department chairs serving in her field. She felt that she would not have encountered such difficulty had she been a male. Allan (2011) suggested that women in leadership positions today are still fighting for equality in salary despite having similar qualifications as males in comparable positions. Therefore, higher education institutions must find ways to fairly compensate women who possess the required credentials that are comparable to those of males serving in similar leadership positions.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question focused on soliciting advice that would be helpful to women faculty who want to become department chairs at some point in their careers. There were three notable pieces of advice that emerged: (a) women need to understand exactly what the chair position entails before deciding to pursue it, (b) they must be adequately prepared, and (c) they must learn to separate friendships from work relations. The chair participants suggested that women must understand prior to seeking the chair position the roles and responsibilities of the position. Future women chairs should take the time to learn why the position is important, however they must recognize it can also be extremely frustrating due to the challenges and pressures associated with the position. This suggestion was consistent with the research of Bennett (1982), Gmelch and Burns (1993), Seagren et al. (1993), and Tucker (1984) who discussed that the department chair's job is filled with great challenges and stresses involving being productive faculty leaders and keeping up with the tremendous workload of their jobs. Thus, women faculty who aspire to the position must thoroughly study the position to acquaint

themselves with the pros and cons of serving as department chair. By doing so, they will be better equipped to decide whether they are a good “fit” for the position and if so, whether they are adequately prepared to take on this responsibility, face the challenges, and handle them effectively.

The second piece of advice which was offered by all of the participants in the study, suggested that women aspiring to the position of department chair must equip themselves with the academic, professional, and leadership credentials that are necessary, to make them competitive and qualified enough to be selected for the position. All of the participants advised that women seeking the position of academic department chair within State University must possess a terminal academic degree, have a record of scholarship and teaching, committee service, administrative service, and leadership experience. In addition, women candidates must possess strong interpersonal skills. This finding was consistent with Taio (2006), Treadwell (1997) and, Gmelch and Burns (1994) who noted that without the necessary skills and qualifications, it is very unlikely that one would be able to obtain the position of department chair. A good combination of technical and soft skills are essential in helping women qualify for the position of department chair. Having those competencies also allows women to develop the credibility and confidence that they need to pursue the position and perform the duties involved with the position.

The final piece of advice offered particularly by the women chairs is that women seeking the position must be professional and learn how to separate friendships from work before seeking the position. The participants indicated that making the distinction between benefiting friends versus benefiting and serving the entire department can sometimes be difficult. Gmelch and Parkay (1999) corroborated this advice by suggesting that chairs must be able to work "with and

through their colleagues"(p. 15), by developing relationships and remaining connected. Filetti (2009) added that chairs must "support and guide their colleagues" (p. 343).

It is inevitable that friendships will develop in the workplace. In fact, many chairs come into the position having already established friendships with some of the faculty members in their department. However, to be able to effectively execute the duties of the department chair, working relationship must supersede friendships. Knowing when and where to draw the line between friendship and supporting all faculty and staff is important. The goal of the chair is to lead her department and move it forward. Thus, building positive and healthy relationships, and finding ways to work collaboratively with all members of the department is necessary if the unit is to be successful.

Limitations

There were several limitations that emerged based on the design and conduct of the study. The purpose of the study was to explore the personal and professional experiences that women department chairs encountered in the process of obtaining the position. Because case study methodology was employed in this inquiry, the issue of transferability arises. The study reflected the experiences of participants from only one public, very high research activity institution, and was also limited in sample size and diversity. While the findings of the study revealed the personal and professional experiences of female academic department chairs who serve in a public, four-year, high-research institution, caution should be taken in transferring the results of this study to other college and university contexts. The results of this study may not necessarily be applicable to female academic department chairs serving in institutions other than State University.

A second limitation of the study relates to the sample of female department chairs in the study. The design of the study only included currently serving department chairs at the time of data collection. As a result, former women department chairs were excluded and White females comprised all of the eight chair participants. From a racial and ethnic perspective, this study did not include the viewpoints of minorities. The study included only one female chair who was foreign-born but had lived in the U.S. for approximately 25 years. Due to the lack of representation of racial and ethnic diversity within the sample, the findings of the study may be limited in scope to the study site.

The final limitation of the study involved the researcher as the primary data collection instrument. The richness and depth of the data collected in the study relied heavily on the researcher's ability to conduct face-to-face interviews as well as her ability to engage and entice each participant to provide rich, reflective, and candid responses. This fact potentially influenced her analysis and interpretation of the data.

Recommendations for Future Research

Women still lag behind men in obtaining academic leadership positions in higher education institutions. The research has shown that the department chair position is no exception. There is still more research that needs to be done to understand the experiences and challenges that women who serve in the position must be prepared to face. This section contains recommendations that provide some guidance for future researchers and scholars who seek to acquire a deeper understanding and investigation of women who become or seek to be an academic department chair.

First, future researchers could conduct a similar qualitative study involving a sample of female academic department chairs and college deans from multiple institutions in similar

geographical locations, in order to determine whether the career experiences of female academic department chairs are comparable to the career experiences of the women from State University, Second, a study involving both male and female academic department chairs at different four-year research institutions should be conducted. Researchers can compare and contrast the career experiences of both groups in order to acquire a deeper and a more holistic understanding of the personal and professional experiences they face in order to become an academic department chair. Third, future researchers could consider conducting a similar qualitative study which explores the experiences of male academic department chairs to determine whether they endured similar career experiences or faced similar or different challenges from women department chairs in obtaining the position of academic department chair within a four-year high-research activity institution.

Fourth, a mixed-methods study using a national representative sample from public research universities could be conducted to investigate the career paths of women serving in the department chair position in order to achieve a holistic understanding of their personal and professional career experiences and challenges. Fifth, future researchers should investigate if White females and minority females face similar or different experiences and challenges in becoming a department chair in a research university. Discovering the career progression experiences and challenges that women face in major research institutions could greatly benefit the next generation of women in successfully achieving this important administrative position. Finally, future researchers might consider conducting a qualitative study, which is similar to the present study, in a four-year private research higher education institution to determine the experiences and challenges faced by female department chairs in such an institution.

Implications for Improved Practice

The study offers several recommendations and suggestions that might be helpful for higher education leaders and administrators who wish to create change and awareness regarding current practices pertaining to the career paths of women in public, very high research activity institutions, who aspire to or serve as an academic department chair.

Higher education leaders should consider providing all tenure track faculty with formalized professional development opportunities that build their leadership and management skills, so that as they rise through the ranks, they will be adequately prepared to participate in department, college, university, and national leadership roles. In addition, they should consider conducting training sessions and workshops that include leadership, understanding academic administration, budgeting, dealing with difficult colleagues, as well as other relevant topics. Institutions should prepare to help their faculty to become faculty leaders, ready for future service as academic administrators.

Training and development opportunities are needed for department chairs after they are appointed to the position. In particular, professional development funds should be made available for female chairs to attend national conferences and workshops focused specifically on developing academic department chairs. Additionally, higher education leaders should focus their efforts on providing continuous institutional-based training, support, and networking opportunities to women serving in the role of academic department chair throughout their entire tenure in the position.

Given the importance of mentorship of women in higher education, senior administrators should assist women in building a support network of professionals both within and outside of their institutions. Particular focus should be placed on pairing women up with other professional

women who are successful administrators within the academy. Furthermore, a university council of women academic chairs could be formed to help create a network for women to share their concerns and personal experiences, and information pertinent to the roles and responsibilities of the department chair, such as budget management and faculty evaluation. In addition, the council would provide them with opportunities to exchange ideas and offer and receive advice unique to women regarding the department chair position.

Higher education administrators should strive to eradicate stereotypes about women who serve in leadership positions in postsecondary institutions, by implementing educational sessions and workshops for faculty and staff that help to increase awareness, acceptance, and appreciation for women serving in the role of department chair. This might be implemented in an effort to positively redirect the perceptions of people toward women serving in leadership roles within higher education institutions, and to help them understand that women are, have been, and can continue to be effective leaders.

Senior-level administrators should take purposeful steps to promote diversity by increasing and promoting more qualified women to the position of academic department chair, in order to achieve a fairer balance between women and men who serve in the role of department chair on their campuses.

Deans and senior-level academic administrators must be knowledgeable about the unique challenges faced by women faculty and chairs, such as family responsibilities, career demands, and finding a healthy work-life balance. Moreover, institutional leaders should further address salary inequities that exist between male and female academic administrators by working to ensure fair and equitable financial compensation for both.

Senior administrators should work on creating a more family-friendly working environment by offering flexible work schedules, child-care facilities, and services that support the needs of working women with children and elderly family members. Having a supportive work climate for women professionals could attract and thus retain more highly qualified women willing and able to put in the long hours necessary to be a high-achieving faculty member and department chair. Furthermore, for women to be able to effectively fulfill their duties, all family members need to provide them with as much help and support as possible. Thus, women serving in the department chair position must find ways to balance their work and family lives by seeking help and commitment from their family members including their spouses, children, parents, and other relatives.

Women faculty should focus much of their time and efforts toward building strong academic credentials and professional experience to qualify themselves to be considered for the position of department chair. Specifically, they should build an exemplary record of teaching and research experience, including publications, presentations, and receipt of extramural funding. It is also important for women faculty to gain experience by serving on departmental and institutional committees, and active engagement in professional academic associations. By developing solid academic credentials, they would increase their chances of advancing to the position of department chair.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the personal and professional experiences of women serving in the position of department chair at State University, a public, very high research activity institution. Four research questions guided and provided rich, in-depth, and detailed descriptions of the participants in this study. Specifically, the study examined

the knowledge, training, experience, and skills that are necessary to become a department chair, whether the women department chairs employed any strategies to be selected for the position, the unique, gender-based challenges faced by the women chairs in obtaining the position, and finally soliciting advice for aspiring female department chairs to adequately prepare for the position. This collective case study was significant because it was one of the first to qualitatively address the experiences and unique challenges encountered by women who have attained the position of department chair, traditionally occupied by males in a public, four-year, high-intensive research institution.

The participants in the study offered advice to women faculty who aspire to become a department chair at State University. Women faculty must learn from current and former women administrators and become more intentional in their plans and actions. Leadership in higher education requires a diverse group of competent individuals, particularly women, who understand the trends, issues, and problems occurring and can relate to the growing number of female and minority students entering the academy. As more women enter the ranks of tenured full-professor in research universities, academic leadership opportunities will become more plentiful. Women faculty should consider academic administration in connection with their career plan. They must ensure they have the necessary academic credentials and accomplishments to receive consideration. Women faculty must further develop support networks and gain the skills required to administer large, diverse academic departments. Preparation for the unique challenges faced by women, including dealing with difficult male colleagues, challenging long held negative stereotypical views of females, and having the courage and fortitude to make hard decisions is necessary. Finally, women must be able to strike

an appropriate work-life balance in order to handle the myriad of responsibilities associated with their jobs and those at home.

This study was unique in the sense that it qualitatively focused on women serving in the position of department chair within a public research institution, while other studies have simply examined other facets of department chairs in general. The findings complimented the existing literature, and also brought to light the similarities as well as differences associated with being a female department chair in a male-dominated leadership environment. By being aware of the women chair participants' unique experience and challenges, academic deans and chief academic officers can assume a pivotal role in helping more women advance to this first-level leadership position, find success, and consequently increase the possibility of their climbing up the leadership ladder.

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Appendix A

Emails of Initial Correspondence (Department Chairs, Deans)

Good Afternoon All,

I sincerely hope you had a pleasant winter break. I know it is probably your first day back at work, but I thought I would contact you before your schedules get too hectic.

My name is Tamara St.Marthe, and I am a doctoral student majoring in Higher Education Leadership in the College of Education and Health Professions at the University of Arkansas. I am contacting you because you are a female who is a current Department Chair at [State University]. I am currently working on my dissertation, and I am contacting you because I really need your help to be able to complete it. The title of my study is "Female Academic Department Chairs at a Public, Very High Research Activity University: Exploring Their Career Pathways to Success". I am trying to find out your individual experiences in arriving at the position of department chair. It is still rare that women get promoted to leadership positions within four-year research institutions, so the fact that you are serving in this position is very admirable, yet critical to understanding what it takes for women to advance into the Department Chair role in a public four-year high research institution.

I would be so grateful if you would agree to participate in my study. It is a qualitative study, and I must conduct one-on-one interviews with my participants in order to produce viable results. My timeline for conducting the study is Friday, January 6th, 2012 to Friday, February 17th, 2012. Based on your responses, the interview should last between half an hour to one hour. I would be very grateful if you would please let me know if you are able to help me at your earliest convenience. Should you agree to participate in my study, I will be available to meet with you at your convenience. I will send you an official letter further detailing my study within one week.

Thank you so very much for your kind consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Tamara St.Marthe, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate
Higher Education Leadership Program
College of Education and Health Professions
University of Arkansas

Good Afternoon All,

I sincerely hope you had a pleasant winter break. I know it is probably your first day back at work, but I thought I would contact you before your schedules get too hectic.

My name is Tamara St.Marthe, and I am a doctoral student majoring in Higher Education Leadership in the College of Education and Health Professions at the University of Arkansas. I am contacting you because you are the Dean of a College that has a female Department Chair at [State University]. I am currently working on my dissertation, and I am contacting you because I really need your help to be able to complete it. The title of my study is "Female Academic Department Chairs at a Public, Very High Research Activity University: Exploring Their Career Pathways to Success". I am trying to find out what it takes to arrive at the position of department chair. It is still rare that women get promoted to leadership positions within four-year research institutions, so the fact that your college has a female serving in this position is very admirable, yet critical to understanding what it takes for women to advance into the Department Chair role in a public four-year high research institution.

I would be so grateful if you would agree to participate in my study. It is a qualitative study, and I must conduct one-on-one interviews with my participants in order to produce viable results. My timeline for conducting the study is Friday, January 6th, 2012 to Friday, February 17th, 2012. Based on your responses, the interview should last between half an hour to forty-five minutes. I would be very grateful if you would please let me know if you are able to help me at your earliest convenience. Should you agree to participate in my study, I will be available to meet with you at your convenience. I will send you an official letter further detailing my study within one week.

Thank you so very much for your kind consideration.

Yours sincerely,
Tamara St.Marthe, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate
Higher Education Leadership Program
College of Education and Health Professions
University of Arkansas

Appendix B

Letter of Approval From The Institutional Review Board

January 5, 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO: Tamara St. Marthe
John Murry

FROM: Ro Windwalker
IRB Coordinator

RE: New Protocol Approval

IRB Protocol #: 11-12-367

Protocol Title: Female Department Chairs at a Public, Very High Research University: Exploring Their Career Pathways to Success

Review Type: 0 EXEMPT 1 EXPEDITED 0 FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 01/04/2012 Expiration Date: 12/22/2012

Your protocol has been approved by the IRB. Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. If you wish to continue the project past the approved project period (see above), you must submit a request, using the form Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects, prior to the expiration date. This form is available from the IRB Coordinator or on the Research Compliance website (http://vpred.uark.edu/210.php). As a courtesy, you will be sent a reminder two months in advance of that date. However, failure to receive a reminder does not negate your obligation to make the request in sufficient time for review and approval. Federal regulations prohibit retroactive approval of continuation. Failure to receive approval to continue the project prior to the expiration date will result in Termination of the protocol approval. The IRB Coordinator can give you guidance on submission times.

This protocol has been approved for 17 participants. If you wish to make any modifications in the approved protocol, including enrolling more than this number, you must seek approval prior to implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 210 Administration Building, 5-2208, or irb@uark.edu.

Appendix C

Letters of Invitation (Chair, Dean, Provost)

Letter of Invitation

January 9th, 2012

Dear (name):

As an academic administrator, you are one of 12 women who currently hold the position of Department Chair at [State University], a public, very high research activity institution. It is because of this accomplishment that I am inviting you to participate in my dissertation research through the Higher Education Leadership Program at the University of Arkansas, which examines the career pathways of women who have attained the position of department chair at [State University].

The results of this study will help to outline the career pathways of women who have attained the position of department chair at [State University], a public, very high research activity institution. Your insight and experiences will be important to women who endeavor to serve as department chair in a public, very high research activity institution and will contribute to the current gap in the literature in this area.

I have also included a letter of informed consent that summarizes the purpose, procedures, and ethical considerations associated with this study. You will suffer no negative consequences for not participating in the study or for withdrawing from the study. There are no anticipated risks associated with participation in this study. All information will be coded for confidentiality, and will be accessible only to the researcher. Your name and the name of your department will not be published. You will be provided an opportunity to review the study when concluded, prior to publication.

I am aware that you have many demands on your time, however, I would be grateful if you would give forty-five minutes to one hour of your time for a face-to-face interview scheduled at your convenience. In order to analyze the data with integrity, I would like to record the interview. Please consider participating in this study. Your participation is critical to the success of this study. I will contact you face-to-face within the next two weeks to confirm your participation, answer any questions you may have, and schedule an interview time.

Thank you so much in advance.

Yours Respectfully,

Tamara St.Marthe
Doctoral Candidate
University of Arkansas
(XXX)XXX-XXXX

Letter of Invitation

Dear (name):

As a senior academic administrator, you are a Dean of a college that has a female who currently holds the position of Department Chair at [State University], a public, very high research activity institution. It is because of this accomplishment that I am inviting you to participate in my dissertation research through the Higher Education Leadership Program at the University of Arkansas, which examines the career pathways of women who have attained the position of department chair at the [State University].

The results of this study will help to outline the career pathways of women who have attained the position of department chair at [State University], a public, very high research activity institution. Your insight and experiences will be important to women who endeavor to serve as department chair in a public, very high research activity institution and will contribute to the current gap in the literature in this area.

I have also included a letter of informed consent that summarizes the purpose, procedures, and ethical considerations associated with this study. You will suffer no negative consequences for not participating in the study or for withdrawing from the study. There are no anticipated risks associated with participation in this study. All information will be coded for confidentiality, and will be accessible only to the researcher. Your name and the name of your college will not be published. You will be provided an opportunity to review the study when concluded, prior to publication.

I am aware that you have many demands on your time, however, I would be grateful if you would give half an hour to forty-five minutes of your time for a face-to-face interview scheduled at your convenience. In order to analyze the data with integrity, I would like to record the interview. Please consider participating in this study. Your participation is critical to the success of this study. I will contact you face-to-face within the next two weeks to confirm your participation, answer any questions you may have, and schedule an interview time.

Thank you so much in advance.

Yours Respectfully,

Tamara St.Marthe
Doctoral Candidate
University of Arkansas
(XXX)XXX-XXXX

Letter of Invitation

Dear (name):

As a senior academic administrator at [State University], you are a woman who currently holds the position of Chief Academic Officer/Provost at [State University], a public, very high research activity institution. It is because of this accomplishment that I am inviting you to participate in my dissertation research through the Higher Education Leadership Program at the University of Arkansas, which examines the career pathways of women who have attained the position of department chair at [State University].

The results of this study will help to outline the career pathways of women who have attained the position of department chair at [State University], a public, very high research activity institution. Your insight and experiences will be important to women who endeavor to serve as department chair in a public, very high research activity institution and will contribute to the current gap in the literature in this area.

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I am aware that you have many demands on your time, however, I would be grateful if you would give half an hour to forty-five minutes of your time for a face-to-face interview scheduled at your convenience. In order to analyze the data with integrity, I would like to record the interview. Please consider participating in this study. Your participation is critical to the success of this study. I will contact you face-to-face within the next two weeks to confirm your participation, answer any questions you may have, and schedule an interview time.

Thank you so much in advance.

Yours Respectfully,

Tamara St.Marthe
Doctoral Candidate
University of Arkansas
(XXX)XXX-XXXX
XXXXX@uark.edu

Appendix D

Informed Consent Form (Chair, Dean, Provost)

Female Academic Department Chairs at a Public, Very High Research Activity University: Exploring Their Career Pathways to Success

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Principal Researcher: Tamara St.Marthe
Faculty Advisor: Dr. John Murry Jr.

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

As an academic administrator at [State University], you are one of 12 women who currently hold the position of Department Chair at [State University], a public, four-year, high-research institution. It is because of this achievement that I am inviting you to participate in my dissertation research through the Higher Education Leadership Program at the University of Arkansas which examines the career pathways of women who have attained the position of department chair at [State University].

Principal Researcher:
Tamara St.Marthe, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate
Higher Education Leadership Program
College of Education and Health Professions
University of Arkansas
Graduate Education Building
Fayetteville, AR 72701
XXXXX@uark.edu

Faculty Advisor:
John W. Murry, Jr.
Higher Education Program Coordinator
Associate Professor of Higher Education
College of Education and Health Professions
116 Graduate Education Building
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR 72701
jmurry@uark.edu
Office Phone (479) 575-3082

Purpose of this research study: The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify, describe, and analyze the personal and professional experiences and the career pathways of female department chairs at [State University], and to provide important advice to facilitate the advancement of women who aspire to the department chair position in a public, very high research activity institution.

Participants in this study: There will be an expected minimum of ten participants and a maximum of 17 participants in this study. The participants are women who are current department chairs at [State University], deans who hired the female department chairs, and the provost of [State University].

What participants will be required to do: You will be asked to submit a curriculum vita for the researcher to use to verify your career path. You will also be asked to participate in an interview that will be conducted face-to face, be digitally recorded, and last no longer than one hour. After the data have been compiled and analyzed, you will be provided an opportunity to read the findings of the researcher and provide any corrections or feedback.

Possible risks or discomforts: There are no anticipated risks or discomforts associated with participating in the study.

What are the possible benefits of this study: The benefits include contributing to the current research on women department chairs in public, very high research activity institutions as well as providing important advice to women who aspire to the position of department chair in public, very high research activity institutions.

Length of the study: For this study, you will be asked to participate in one interview that will be conducted face-to face, be digitally recorded, and last no longer than one hour.

Will I receive compensation for my time and inconvenience if I choose to participate in this study?
Your participation in this interview study is completely voluntary. There is no monetary compensation for participating.

Will I have to pay for anything?
There will be no costs associated with your participation in this study.

What are the options if I do not want to be in the study?
If you do not want to be in this study, you may refuse to participate. Also, you may withdraw your participation at any time during the study. Your job and relationship with [State University] will not be affected in any way if you refuse to participate.

How will my confidentiality be protected?
All information will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law and University policy. Your name and institution will not be recorded with your interview responses. The researcher will not identify your responses, nor mention your name or institution in the study. Recordings and transcripts will be stored on a password-protected computer.

Will I know the results of the study?
At the conclusion of the study you will have the right to request feedback about the results after the data have been compiled and analyzed. You may contact the faculty advisor, Dr. John Murry Jr. at jmurry@uark.edu or principal researcher, Tamara St.Marthe at XXXXX@uark.edu. You will receive a copy of this form for your files.

What do I do if I have questions about the research study?
You have the right to contact the Principal Researcher or Faculty Advisor as listed below for any concerns that you may have.

Principal Researcher's Name and Contact Information:

Tamara St.Marthe, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate/Graduate Assistant
Higher Education Leadership Program
College of Education and Health Professions
University of Arkansas
230 Graduate Education Building
Fayetteville, AR 72701
XXXXX@uark.edu

Faculty Advisor's name and Contact Information:

John W. Murry, Jr.
Higher Education Program Coordinator
Associate Professor of Higher Education
College of Education and Health Professions
116 Graduate Education Building
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR 72701
jmurry@uark.edu
Office Phone (479) 575-3082

You may also contact the University of Arkansas Research Compliance office listed below if you have questions about your rights as a participant, or to discuss any concerns about, or problems with the research.

Ro Windwalker, CIP
Institutional Review Board Coordinator
Research Compliance
University of Arkansas
120 Ozark Hall
Fayetteville, AR 72701-1201
479-575-2208
irb@uark.edu

I have read the above statement and have been able to ask questions and express concerns, which have been satisfactorily responded to by the investigator. I understand the purpose of the study as well as the potential benefits and risks that are involved. I understand that participation is voluntary. I understand that significant new findings developed during this research will be shared with the participant. I understand that no rights have been waived by signing the consent form. I have been given a copy of the consent form.

_____

Female Academic Department Chairs at a Public, Very High Research Activity University: Exploring Their Career Pathways to Success

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Principal Researcher: Tamara St.Marthe
Faculty Advisor: Dr. John Murry Jr.

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

As a senior academic administrator at [State University], you are a woman currently holds the position of Chief Academic Officer/Provost at [State University], a public, very high research activity institution. It is because of this accomplishment that I am inviting you to participate in my dissertation research through the Higher Education Leadership Program at the University of Arkansas, which examines the career pathways of women who have attained the position of department chair at [State University].

Principal Researcher:
Tamara St.Marthe, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate/Graduate Assistant
Higher Education Leadership Program
College of Education and Health Professions
University of Arkansas
230 Graduate Education Building
Fayetteville, AR 72701
XXXXX@uark.edu

Faculty Advisor:
John W. Murry, Jr.
Higher Education Program Coordinator
Associate Professor of Higher Education
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116 Graduate Education Building
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Fayetteville, AR 72701
jmurry@uark.edu
Office Phone (479) 575-3082

Purpose of this research study: The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify, describe, and analyze the personal and professional experiences and the career pathways of female department chairs at the [State University], and to provide important advice to facilitate the advancement of women who aspire to the department chair position in a public, very high research activity institution.

Participants in this study: There will be an expected minimum of ten participants and a maximum of 17 participants in this study. The participants are women who are current

department chairs, deans who hired the female department chairs, and the provost of [State University].

What participants will be required to do: You will be asked to submit a curriculum vita for the researcher to use to verify your career path. You will also be asked to participate in an interview that will be conducted face-to face, be digitally recorded, and last no longer than one hour. After the data have been compiled and analyzed, you will be provided an opportunity to read the findings of the researcher and provide any corrections or feedback.

Possible risks or discomforts: There are no anticipated risks or discomforts associated with participating in the study.

What are the possible benefits of this study: The benefits include contributing to the current research on women department chairs in public, very high research activity institutions as well as providing important advice to women who aspire to the position of department chair in public, very high research activity institutions.

Length of the study: For this study, you will be asked to participate in one interview that will be conducted face-to face, be digitally recorded, and last no longer than one hour.

Will I receive compensation for my time and inconvenience if I choose to participate in this study?
Your participation in this interview study is completely voluntary. There is no monetary compensation for participating.

Will I have to pay for anything?
There will be no costs associated with your participation in this study.

What are the options if I do not want to be in the study?
If you do not want to be in this study, you may refuse to participate. Also, you may withdraw your participation at any time during the study. Your job and relationship with [State University] will not be affected in any way if you refuse to participate.

How will my confidentiality be protected?
All information will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law and University policy. Your name and institution will not be recorded with your interview responses. The researcher will not identify your responses, nor mention your name or institution in the study. Recordings and transcripts will be stored on a password-protected computer.

Will I know the results of the study?
At the conclusion of the study you will have the right to request feedback about the results after the data have been compiled and analyzed. You may contact the faculty advisor, Dr. John Murry Jr. at jmurry@uark.edu or principal researcher, Tamara St.Marthe at XXXXX@uark.edu. You will receive a copy of this form for your files.

What do I do if I have questions about the research study?
You have the right to contact the Principal Researcher or Faculty Advisor as listed below for any concerns that you may have.

Principal Researcher's Name and Contact Information:

Tamara St.Marthe, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate/Graduate Assistant
Higher Education Leadership Program
College of Education and Health Professions
University of Arkansas
230 Graduate Education Building
Fayetteville, AR 72701
XXXXX@uark.edu
Cell phone: (XXX) XXX-XXXX

Faculty Advisor's Name and Contact Information:

John W. Murry, Jr.
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Associate Professor of Higher Education
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I have read the above statement and have been able to ask questions and express concerns, which have been satisfactorily responded to by the investigator. I understand the purpose of the study as well as the potential benefits and risks that are involved. I understand that participation is voluntary. I understand that significant new findings developed during this research will be shared with the participant. I understand that no rights have been waived by signing the consent form. I have been given a copy of the consent form.

_____

Female Academic Department Chairs at a Public, Very High Research Activity University: Exploring Their Career Pathways to Success

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Principal Researcher: Tamara St.Marthe
Faculty Advisor: Dr. John Murry Jr.

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

As a senior academic administrator at [State University], you are a Dean of a college that has a female who currently holds the position of Department Chair at [State University], a public, four-year, research institution. It is because of this accomplishment that I am inviting you to participate in my dissertation research through the Higher Education Leadership Program at the University of Arkansas, which examines the career pathways of women who have attained the position of department chair at [State University].

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Participants in this study: There will be an expected minimum of ten participants and a maximum of 17 participants in this study. The participants are women who are current

department chairs at [State University], deans who hired the female department chairs, and the provost of [State University].

What participants will be required to do: You will be asked to submit a curriculum vita for the researcher to use to verify your career path. You will also be asked to participate in an interview that will be conducted face-to face, be digitally recorded, and last no longer than one hour. After the data have been compiled and analyzed, you will be provided an opportunity to read the findings of the researcher and provide any corrections or feedback.

Possible risks or discomforts: There are no anticipated risks or discomforts associated with participating in the study.

What are the possible benefits of this study: The benefits include contributing to the current research on women department chairs in public, very high research activity institutions as well as providing important advice to women who aspire to the position of department chair in public, very high research activity institutions.

Length of the study: For this study, you will be asked to participate in one interview that will be conducted face-to face, be digitally recorded, and last no longer than forty-five minutes.

Will I receive compensation for my time and inconvenience if I choose to participate in this study?
Your participation in this interview study is completely voluntary. There is no monetary compensation for participating.

Will I have to pay for anything?
There will be no costs associated with your participation in this study.

What are the options if I do not want to be in the study?
If you do not want to be in this study, you may refuse to participate. Also, you may withdraw your participation at any time during the study. Your job and relationship with [State University] will not be affected in any way if you refuse to participate.

How will my confidentiality be protected?
All information will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law and University policy. Your name and institution will not be recorded with your interview responses. The researcher will not identify your responses, nor mention your name or institution in the study. Recordings and transcripts will be stored on a password-protected computer.

Will I know the results of the study?
At the conclusion of the study you will have the right to request feedback about the results after the data have been compiled and analyzed. You may contact the faculty advisor, Dr. John Murry Jr. at jmurry@uark.edu or principal researcher, Tamara St.Marthe at XXXXX@uark.edu. You will receive a copy of this form for your files.

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You have the right to contact the Principal Researcher or Faculty Advisor as listed below for any concerns that you may have.

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Tamara St.Marthe, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate/Graduate Assistant
Higher Education Leadership Program
College of Education and Health Professions
University of Arkansas
230 Graduate Education Building
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Cell phone: (XXX) XXX-XXXX

Faculty Advisor's name and Contact Information:

John W. Murry, Jr.
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Associate Professor of Higher Education
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I have read the above statement and have been able to ask questions and express concerns, which have been satisfactorily responded to by the investigator. I understand the purpose of the study as well as the potential benefits and risks that are involved. I understand that participation is voluntary. I understand that significant new findings developed during this research will be shared with the participant. I understand that no rights have been waived by signing the consent form. I have been given a copy of the consent form.

_____

Appendix E

Interview Protocol A

Interview Protocol A -<u>Department Chair</u>

Project: Female Academic Department Chairs at a Public, Very High Research Activity University: Exploring Their Career Pathways to Success.

Time of Interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:
Position of Interviewee:

Over the past 25 years, numerous studies have been conducted on the career experiences of senior-level female administrators in higher education institutions. These studies have identified the career pathways pursued by senior female academic and administrative leaders, barriers and challenges faced by women in the process of advancing to higher positions, roles of women administrators, and the perceived keys to success for women administrators in higher education institutions.

However, the career pathways of first-level women academic administrators, specifically women department chairs in public, four-year high-research institutions have not been studied. Thus, the focus of this study is to identify, analyze, and describe the personal and professional experiences and the career pathways of female department chairs at a public, four-year high-research institution. This study also seeks to identify and provide important advice to facilitate the advancement of women who aspire to department chair positions at public, four-year high-research institutions.

This interview will be conducted face-to-face and digitally recorded. The questions that will be asked are open-ended. All information will be coded for confidentiality, and will be accessible only to the researcher. Your name and your department will not be published. It will be less than one hour in length.

Questions:

How did you obtain your current position as department chair? For example, were you hired following a search or internal application process, were you asked to serve, did you volunteer, or were you elected to your position by departmental staff or faculty? Can you describe your experience?

What professional experiences and specific skills and training did you have at the time of your appointment to the position of department chair? Do you believe that any of those experiences contributed to your advancement to your current position?

What if any, personal and/or professional strategies did you use in your advancement to your current position? How important were those strategies in your advancing into your current position?

In achieving your position of department chair, was there a particular person or a network of people who provided you with support, encouragement, or feedback in your career advancement? Please explain.

As a woman, do you believe you faced any unique challenges in advancing to your current position that your male colleagues generally did not experience? Did your experiences serve to help or hinder your advancement?

After serving in this position, what do you think will be your next career move?

Based upon your experiences, what advice or suggestions would you provide to women who would like to become an academic department chair?

Is there anything that I have not asked you that you believe is important to understand your experiences of becoming a department chair in a four-year research university?

Thank you for your participation in this study. All of the information gathered in this study will remain confidential, and your name and any other identifying information will not be revealed.

Nondirective probes for open-ended questions:

Is there anything else you would like to add?
Can you explain this a bit further?
Why do you feel this way?
Can you be more specific about this?
Why is this?
Can you tell me more about this?

Appendix F

Interview Protocol B

Interview Protocol B - <u>Dean</u>

Project: Female Academic Department Chairs at a Public, Very High Research Activity University: Exploring Their Career Pathways to Success.

Time of Interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:
Position of Interviewee:

Over the past 25 years, numerous studies have been conducted on the career experiences of senior-level female administrators in higher education institutions. These studies have identified the career pathways pursued by senior female academic and administrative leaders, barriers and challenges faced by women in the process of advancing to higher positions, roles of women administrators, and the perceived keys to success for women administrators in higher education institutions.

However, the career pathways of first-level women academic administrators, specifically women department chairs in four-year public, high-research institutions have not been studied. Thus, the focus of this study is to identify, analyze, and describe the personal and professional experiences and the career pathways of female department chairs at a public, four-year high-research institution. This study also seeks to identify and provide important advice to facilitate the advancement of women who aspire to department chair positions at public, four-year high-research institutions.

This interview will be conducted face-to-face and digitally recorded. The questions that will be asked are open-ended. All information will be coded for confidentiality, and will be accessible only to the researcher. Your name and the name of your college will not be published. This interview will last about thirty minutes.

Questions:

What is the process your college used to select (department head's name) as department chair? Was she hired, was she asked to serve, did she volunteer, was she elected to her position by departmental staff and faculty? Please explain.

From your experience, why was (department chair's name) chosen to serve in this position?

What, do you believe were the most important qualifications, skills and abilities that (female department chair's) name possessed, that helped advance her into her current position?

Based on your professional experience, what do you believe to be the greatest challenge(s) that women face in advancing into the position of department chair, within a public, four-year, research institution?

Based on your experience as a college-level academic administrator, what advice would you offer to women who aspire to the position of department chair within a public, very high research activity institution?

Thank you for your participation in this study. All of the information gathered in this study will remain confidential, and your name and any other identifying information will not be revealed.

Nondirective probes for open-ended questions:

Is there anything else you would like to add?
Can you explain this a bit further?
Why do you feel this way?
Can you be more specific about this?
Why is this?
Can you tell me more about this?

Appendix G

Interview Protocol C

Interview Protocol C - <u>Provost</u>

Project: Female Academic Department Chairs at a Public, Very High Research Activity University: Exploring Their Career Pathways to Success.

Time of Interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:
Position of Interviewee:

Over the past 25 years, numerous studies have been conducted on the career experiences of senior-level female administrators in higher education institutions. These studies have identified the career pathways pursued by senior female academic and administrative leaders, barriers and challenges faced by women in the process of advancing to higher positions, roles of women administrators, and the perceived keys to success for women administrators in higher education institutions.

However, the career pathways of first-level women academic administrators, specifically women department chairs in public, four-year high-research institutions have not been studied. Thus, the focus of this study is to identify, analyze, and describe the personal and professional experiences and the career pathways of female department chairs at a public, four-year high-research institution. This study also seeks to identify and provide important advice to facilitate the advancement of women who aspire to department chair positions at public, four-year high-research institutions.

This interview will be conducted face-to-face and digitally recorded. The questions that will be asked are open-ended. All information will be coded for confidentiality, and will be accessible only to the researcher. Your name will not be published. This interview will last about thirty minutes.

Questions:

From your experience in higher education, what do you believe are the most important abilities and qualifications that women should possess if they want to be successful in obtaining the position of department chair?

Do you believe that women who desire to become department chairs in public, very high research activity institutions face unique challenges not faced by their male counterparts? Can you explain this a bit further?

What important advice would you offer to women who aspire to become a department chair in a public, very high research activity institution?

What advice would you offer to women department chairs who aspire to senior leadership positions within public, very high research activity institutions?

Thank you for your participation in this study. All of the information gathered in this study will remain confidential, and your name and any other identifying information will not be revealed.

Nondirective probes for open-ended questions:

Is there anything else you would like to add?
Can you explain this a bit further?
Why do you feel this way?
Can you be more specific about this?
Why is this?
Can you tell me more about this?

Appendix H

Letter of Appreciation

Dear Dr. (Name),

It was such a pleasure meeting with you today. I would like to thank you once again for participating in my study. I really appreciate your invaluable help and insight. I know that your contribution will be very significant in adding toward the current literature on women department chairs/heads in four-year research institutions. Once again, thank you very much, and you are such an inspiration. I will be in touch with you soon for a review of the transcripts. Have a great week.

Yours sincerely,

Tamara

Tamara St.Marthe, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate/Graduate Assistant
Higher Education Leadership Program
College of Education and Health Professions
University of Arkansas
230 Graduate Education Building
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Appendix I

Member Checking Correspondence

Thank You Letter and Request for Internal Validity Check

Dear (name),

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere thanks to you for participating in my dissertation research. Because of your participation in my dissertation research, I as well as other women will hopefully become more effective leaders within the field of higher education. Based on the rich content of your stories, I also believe the research findings will inspire more women to pursue careers in higher education leadership. Specifically, it is my hope that more women will develop a better understanding of the nature of departmental chair-ship within a four-year research institution, and will choose to become effective women leaders.

Attached for your review is your personal interview transcript. Please read this document carefully and assess the validity of your responses by 12:00 p.m., Tuesday, February 7th, 2012.

As a researcher, protecting your anonymity and respecting your responses are of paramount importance. So again, neither your name, your department, or any other identifying information will be included in the study. Furthermore, pseudonyms will be assigned to any other identifying names and information you have provided to ensure your protection. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me through email at XXXXX@uark.edu, or by telephone at (XXX) XXX- XXXX. If I do not hear from you by 12:00 p.m., Tuesday, February 7th, 2012, I will assume that you approve the narratives as I have distributed them to you. Once again, I sincerely thank you for giving me this incredible honor to learn so much from you.

Yours sincerely,

Tamara St.Marthe
Doctoral Candidate
Higher Education Leadership Program
University of Arkansas