

## UNIVERSITY VALUES FOR TODAY: CENTRAL EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES

XXIX Anniversary of the Magna Charta Universitatum Jubilee Meeting of the Hungarian Rectors' Conference

**WORLD CAFÉ SESSION 10:**

**AUGUST 31 2017**

### **RESOLUTION RESISTANT SEGREGATION: Gender Equality**

**Host: Gülsün Sağlamer, President, EWORA**

#### **BACKGROUND**

An increasing number of women are excelling in higher education careers in Europe in 2010s. However the EU SHE Figures (2015) demonstrates that women are still underrepresented in academia: Women only constitute 33% of researchers, 21% of full professors and 20% of heads of higher education institutions. The European Research Area (ERA) encourages stakeholders in higher education to pursue gender equality through institutional change in decision-making, human resources (HR) management, funding, and research programs.

#### **THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF CHALLENGES IN GENDER EQUALITY**

There are three dimensions to the challenges of gender equality in higher education; Each requiring a unique type of change:

- Cultural Change
- Structural Change
- Individual Change

**Individual Change** requires the encouragement and empowerment of women in academia.

While the removal of barriers to career progress for women in higher education may be effective, it alone may not be enough to affect demonstrable change.

To increase the number of women occupying decision-maker positions, it may be first necessary to break candidates' "learned helplessness" that might be holding them back from pursuing / engaging leadership opportunities.



© Photograph by Getty Images for the opening of the academic year in October 2005. Photo by Roger Stone

#### **WHAT IS THE ROLE OF LEADERS AND LEADERSHIP?**

'Progress on gender equality at universities is critically dependent on visible commitment from the top. It is crucial that the ultimate responsibility for achieving change is steadfastly shouldered by the university's highest leadership and that those responsible for implementing policy throughout the university have direct access to and leverage with the university rector and / vice rector with a specific responsibility for gender equality.'

**LERU, 2012**

**RESOLUTION RESISTANT SEGREGATION: Gender Equality**  
**Host: Gülsün Sağlamer, President, EWORA**

**For Sustainable Success in Affecting Change  
 Higher Education Leadership Should Have:**

- A strong vision and mission to integrate top down and bottom up processes in an excellent way,
- Comprehensive knowledge of the institution and its hinterland in which it operates, and
- Should be capable of establishing a sustainable system within the institution in order to guarantee the further developments.



THE GENDER CHALLENGE IN RESEARCH FUNDING:  
 Assessing the European National Scenes", 2009 EC, DG

**QUESTIONS TO BE DISCUSSED:**

**Goal: More Women Leaders in Higher Education**

- Have you had any negative or positive experiences related to unconscious gender bias in recruitment and promotion processes at your institution?
- What are the main barriers or obstacles for women academics when they intend to reach decision-making positions?
- How could institutions empower and encourage women academics to run for leadership positions?
- Has your institution been implementing Gender Equality Plan?
  - If "YES"; Do you think it works?
  - Are there areas that need improvement?

**RESISTANCE TO CHANGE**

‘Resistance is viewed as being a natural and inevitable part of the change process and as something that exists within the individual.

Resistance occurs because it threatens the status quo or increases the fear of and anxiety about real or imagined consequences.

A phenomenon that emerges during processes of change — such as when gender equality policies are implemented — and that is aimed at maintaining the status quo and opposing change.’

**LOMBARDO & MERGAERT 2013**

**REFERENCES**

EC (2015). She Figures 2015, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, Brussels.  
[http://ec.europa.eu/research/swafs/pdf/pub\\_gender\\_equality/she\\_figures\\_2015-final.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/swafs/pdf/pub_gender_equality/she_figures_2015-final.pdf)

LERU (2012). Women, Research and Universities: Excellence Without Gender Bias,  
[http://www.leru.org/files/publications/LERU\\_Paper\\_Women\\_universities\\_and\\_research.pdf](http://www.leru.org/files/publications/LERU_Paper_Women_universities_and_research.pdf)

Lombardo, E. and Mergaert, L. (2013). Gender Mainstreaming and Resistance to Gender Training: A Framework for Studying Implementation. NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research, 21 (4), 296-311.

FESTA Project, Resistance Handbook, Resistance Toolkit, 2016, <https://www.resge.eu>



## **REPORT**

*Table hosted by:*

*Professor Gülsün Saglamer*

*Rapporteur:*

*David Lock, Secretary General, MCO*

(Readers should see the introductory note prepared by Professor Saglamer which sets out clearly the dimensions of the challenges in gender equality, the role of leaders and leadership and deals with resistance to change.)

During discussion, the promotion process was identified as a key area for action. Some institutions had a "gender equality plan" (GEP) in place and these were recommended as good practice. It is also mentioned that GEPs' should have actions to achieve transparency in recruitment and promotion processes to achieve gender balance.

Work-Life balance is another important problem to be solved for women academics. Some universities had introduced structural change to maintain a balance of men and women in decision making bodies. Some had made facilities and options, such as nurseries, schools and flexible working hours available to enable women to facilitate their engagement and provide opportunities for them to progress.

Regarding international mobility there were significant differences in gender opportunity. Men were typically able to go abroad as their wives take care of the children. If women go to work abroad, for example for post-doctoral experience, they have to take the children with them. Mobility brings greater visibility to female and male academics and become more involved in international academic networks. This could be beneficial in other ways too – such as increased research funding.

The pay-gap between men and women was another significant matter. Systems should be in place for women to make a request for their situation to be improved.

"Making Change" was another discussion item. In any change process there is a resistance. It is very important to define "Who is resisting? and Why? " then the efficient and effective strategies should be developed to realize the change. Strong leadership is vital for reforms to happen. Leadership development can be instrumental in removing barriers in women's minds about what can be achieved and can help to deal with structural unconscious bias.