It is imperative that women in higher education learn to promote and support each other within their organization. Looking to sustain leadership? Read on to explore how current women leader can mentor and support future female leaders using the 5 Anchors of Impact as a framework for creating a sustained leadership model.

Women Supporting Women: Using the *5 Anchors of Impact* as a Tool
for Uplifting Women Leaders

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It is somewhat saddening to visit a restaurant that serves lobster and see the uncovered tank of lobsters. The idea is to promote that the lobster is fresh, but the uncovered tank also demonstrates another, more fearsome concept. The tank is open but the lobsters do not escape. The reason being is that if one lobster starts to make an escape from the tank, the other lobsters will pull them back into the tank (Botteril, 2017). Applying this metaphor to women, sadly, the same can often be seen. As women work to succeed or rise within leadership positions, they are pulled back down by other women. This is referred to as the Lobster Syndrome.

Higher education and public-school education are not immune to the Lobster Syndrome amongst women in leadership. In higher education, there is an implicit aspect of competition built into the system. Scholarship, teaching, scholarship, service, scholarship . . . . often faculty are evaluated on what they produce in the scholarship arena regarding publications and grants (Huenneke, Stearns, Martinez, & Laurila, 2017). There is often less emphasis on the areas teamwork, collaboration, mentoring, and coaching.

In academia, faculty are often regarded only in how they produce (Huenneke, Stearns, Martinez,& Laurila, 2017) and collaborating with others is not always encouraged. Due to the competitive atmosphere in working toward promotion and tenure, collaborating or teaming with colleagues is usually encouraged if there is a clear benefit to the other faculty. Additionally, the work production, which includes the amount of grant money they bring into the university, how many publications produced, service on high level committees, or student evaluations is a very siloed and independent type of production. For women trying to be successful, it can be very discouraging if proper mentorship and guidance is not given.

Further, there is an additional demand for growth of the university through the awarding of grants and the development of research agendas (Mudrak et al., 2018; Bentley et al., 2013), which may increase isolation. This atmosphere of competition for faculty may seem ruthless and encourages self-preservation, and may lead to a deterioration within the academic climate for faculty (Teichler et al., 2013). For women, this could be disastrous since their voices could be muffled in academia instead of celebrated. Thus, the Lobster Syndrome continues and flourishes through this type of atmosphere.

Unfortunately, the trust that is needed among colleagues becomes absent due to strained relationships where trust is not felt or given. This atmosphere of competition also encourages a feeling of failure and insecurity. As Preuss (2017) stated for teachers who may find themselves working in isolation and who share commonalities with higher education colleagues, "I want teachers to… feel validated, loved on, and empowered" (p. 1). In higher education, this should be the sentiment also, where we have colleagues that build each other up, support, and guide them to successfully earn promotion, tenure, and advancement. In public education, there is more of a support system built where teachers across the country and world seek to support each other through sharing ideas, lesson plans, and other instructional materials.

In higher education, there is very little written about novice faculty and how they should navigate the high expectations of teaching, scholarship, and service. Specifically, there is very little written about how novice female faculty should engage in fulfilling the high expectations, and almost nothing that focuses on female leaders who are supported by their female colleagues. Academia is more than just teaching at a higher level. There are so many other facets to being an effective faculty member at today's universities. Fredrickson, McMahan, and Hansen-Thomas (2017) addressed the concepts and concerns with the expectations of new faculty:

> When entering into academia, new faculty members are introduced to the academic triumvirate: scholarship, teaching, and service. The expectation of junior faculty is often to be ultra-productive in all three aspects from day one; quality and quantity are expected in all areas. (p. 123)

These authors, like most, tend to leave out the expectations of female novice faculty and how to find support, collaboration, and mentorship from more seasoned female faculty or female leaders.

Working to find ways that women can support and guide other women in academia, specifically as leaders within organizations is important if there is to be efficacy for female leadership within higher education. Exploring how current women leaders can mentor and support future female leaders through the use of the *5 Anchors of Impact©* as a framework for creating a sustained leadership model within higher education. Examining this through the theoretical lens of critical urgency, there is an argument created for the need of this framework to build, mentor, and maintain female leaders within the academy. As the nation has undergone dramatic changes and explosive events, things of familiarity and safety were allowed to rise to the top instead of continuing to grow and develop. An example of this would be the rise of male leaders in academia since the pandemic (Dahlberg & Higginbotham, 2021). In the theoretical lens using critical urgency, the necessity of being proactive instead of reactive demonstrates that often organizations, such as higher education, tend to move more quickly into reactive modes instead of looking to be proactive, especially in leadership during times of stress or urgency (Brearley, 2018). Often the ability to be proactive can alleviate the need to be as reactive (Sangfroid Strategy, 2020). As higher education is looking to be more proactive instead of reactive within their leadership and implement women leaders mentoring other women into daily practice, it is important that critical thinking, thus critical urgency is addressed first (Love, 2020).

The *5 Anchors of Impact©* is a tool for leaders to use as they work through critical or urgent times, including how to create a climate of women supporting other women on a campus. The 5 Anchors of Impact are:

- ***Organization***
- ***Politics***
- ***Safety and Order***
- ***Traditions***
- **Teaching and Learning.** (Trujillo-Jenks & Fredrickson, 2020b, p. 3)

The 5 Anchors are a proven framework for leaders in the development of higher education culture. Through the lens of critical urgency, even during times of urgency or instability, using the 5 Anchors of Impact framework, can assist higher education to successfully navigate these waters while keeping priorities in place and not slipping back into what is easy (Trujillo-Jenks &

Fredrickson, 2020a). As the *5 Anchors of Impact* framework is adopted by more leaders in higher education, the hope is creating an open and collaborative space within higher education where women mentor and support other women. The 5 Anchors of Impact Framework follow with a brief description and examples of what they could look like in higher education.

Organization Anchor

It is imperative that women in higher education learn to promote and support each other within their organization. The **Organization** is the big picture, the main hub, and/or the main part that all other sub-organizations belong. There is a scenario that is seen in many organizations, not just higher education, where women who feel threatened look to sabotage other women who are succeeding. For example, as a junior assistant professor, it is not uncommon to feel isolated and nervous, especially as one sets out to learn the expectations of a university. What is not expected is to have other women purposefully block your efforts in succeeding by ignoring your requests for assistance or guidance. Another example is when women in higher education attain leadership positions and are not supported by other women because of jealousy, insecurity, or envy. So, how do we, as women, ensure this sabotaging stops, or better yet, doesn't begin within an organization?

First, we must remind ourselves that we must empower others and help each other in the pursuit of success. There are different ways to do this and the best way is to see ourselves as leaders. We are leaders in each aspect of our lives, especially in higher education, and we have areas that we are very knowledgeable and skilled. We need to think in this manner so that we see our own value.

Second, as we see ourselves as leaders, we need to see our effect on the organization, and sub-organizations, that we work within. As academic faculty and staff, we are leaders within our classrooms and offices, which are sub-organizations of the larger one (the university). Thinking about how we lead within our own organization and sub-organizations will help us understand the impact we have on others, specifically in how we conduct our jobs.

Lastly, as leaders of sub-organizations within our larger organization, we must understand the different leadership styles that can empower us and that can also help empower others. Although there has been so much research and articles written about leadership styles, it is important to acknowledge that leadership has many faces. As a leader, there is a time and place for a certain style with a certain situation and sometimes, several styles may be used in one situation. For example, with a new colleague, the directive leadership style may be appropriate in order to establish what policies and rules must be followed within an organization. Another example would be collaborative leadership to be used when it is imperative that all voices within a group are heard and valued. No matter the leadership style, empowering our fellow female colleagues and giving them the support they need is essential for all members of an organization to thrive.

Politics Anchor

As one promotes to a leadership position, they become politicians. What this means is that they must no longer be passive in understanding the policies, rules, and regulations that govern the organization because knowing these will help them combat any threat to their organization and sub-organization. The **Politics Anchor** includes external and internal forces that affect the organization in both a positive and negative manner. It can be anything that impacts the

organization and allows for decisions to be made for certain outcomes. The politics of an organization is important to recognize because those politics drive some people into either aiding or sabotaging others' efforts to succeed.

An example of how politics plays an important role within an organization would be to recall a time when a university had a no-confidence vote for a Provost or Dean. At one university, it took one vote to oust a Provost from office, while at another university, it took 4 different votes within a 3-year time period before a Dean was finally removed from her position. The main factor in both instances is politics. For the Provost, the faculty seemed to have more political clout within their organization because it only took one vote to have the Provost removed. There could be many reasons for this, such as access to media, Regents, or donors who could be persuaded to write something or make decisions about funding that could damage the university. In the case of the Dean, it seems that the Dean had more political pawns in her corner that influenced the university to keep her longer than the faculty wanted her. She was able to weather the disdain of the faculty due to her political protection from both internal and external influences.

What makes the Politics Anchor so interesting is the internal and external influences, because before you are in a situation that may seem dire, one never truly knows how or what will affect an outcome. For the Provost, being removed one month later after the vote of no-confidence was a shock and disappointment, but it illustrates beautifully how both internal and external influences can change an organization and the minds of those within or outside of an organization.

When focusing on higher education female faculty and staff, the politics may come down to gender: Which gender is seen as more promotable or more like a leader? This is when it is so important for women to help other women in being promoted to and succeeding in upper positions. Although it may be difficult at times to see one woman promoted over another, especially if the political influences are not reputable, the point that a woman can be promoted is a victory. The "how" she got promoted may cause others to back away from playing the politics needed for promotion, which can harm the probability of other women seeking promotions. Therefore, understanding the **Politics Anchor** and how it lives within an organization can only help women in higher education flourish.

Safety and Order Anchor

Rules, procedures, expectations, and policies, both written and unwritten, define the **Safety and Order Anchor**. This Anchor is important because it provides the security that those in academia should feel within their organization and should be provided through mentorship, coaching, support, and validation. When the safety and order are compromised, the probability of success is affected because a female in higher education may not know the rules of what is and isn't allowed or how to proceed with certain things in a proper and approved manner. Additionally, safety and order should be constant and not contingent upon certain accomplishments or quid pro quo.

When women feel secure doing their job in academia, they appear to be happy, productive in teaching, scholarship, and service, and they feel valued and validated. A safe and orderly environment becomes one where colleagues collaborate, mentor, and coach each other and do not feel threatened by each others' successes. It is an environment where colleagues flourish and are encouraged to flourish by their peers. A great example of this is when colleagues send notes of

congratulations when a peer has been awarded a huge grant, or when a colleague has received a deserved promotion.

An environment where safety and order are not present looks very chaotic and threatening. It can be one where leaders lead top-down and usurp others' ideas and accomplishments as their own. It is where rules are not followed, or even respected, and anything goes until it doesn't. It can be a place where colleagues are allowed to belittle and disparage others as they climb their ladder of success. Overall, it is a place where high turnover is common, unfulfilled positions stay open for months at a time, and people feel that their organization does not care about them.

It is unfortunate, but as has been reported in a informal survey, female faculty and staff have reported specific instances where they have been told that they aren't ready for a leadership role, that a promotion will not be given due to a candidate's perceived lack of diversity, or that a demotion will need to occur since a superior feels that a female leader "just doesn't have it". These types of sabotage contribute to an unsafe and disorderly environment. These types of gate-keeping also discourage other women to pursue advancement opportunities and enforce the thought that women do not support other women. To help ensure that all faculty and staff within any organization feel that the safety and order will be in support of them, it is good to remember that there are rules, procedures, expectations, and policies, both written and unwritten, that can be found within any organization.

The safety and order of an organization can be felt by outsiders who must audit or review an organization's outcomes. Therefore, the **Safety and Orderly Anchor** can be seen as the foundation that an organization rests upon, and which can be used to assure that an inviting and welcoming environment has been established. Understanding these and knowing how to promote safety and order is essential and can help make certain that all persons within the organization feel included.

Traditions Anchor

What makes an organization unique and what is held as important and even sacred describes the **Traditions Anchor**. Traditions are important because it tells the story of an organization, where it has been and where it plans to go, and it helps others identify what is important and not important. An example of traditions can be the Alma Mater sung at all graduation ceremonies, pep rallies before a big game, and homecoming each fall and/or spring so that alums may help celebrate the traditions established by the organization. Traditions can also be open and known, or hidden and secret. Examples of these types of traditions are monthly happy hours for certain groups of people within an organization, or certain dress or insignia that is worn to identify a certain group within an organization.

The point of traditions is to help those within an organization to feel a part of something and to feel validated as a member. For female faculty and staff in higher education, traditions can be seen as fun and inviting, a way to become a part of something great, and a way to make a mark in teaching, scholarship, and/or service. Traditions can be used to encourage conformity and individuality, and it can be used to promote both a healthy or unhealthy environment. With traditions, not everyone will be accepting of what is seen as important but recognizing the importance of traditions can help women encourage other women.

An example of this is a female pursuing a higher position and preparing the different presentations for the different audiences that she will meet. As this female prepares, other females become available to help constructively critique the presentations and give advice on how to approach the different audiences by telling what traditions need to be illuminated and how to address certain issues in a traditional manner. Especially if a female seeking the higher position is new to an organization, the assistance from more tenured females ensures that the traditions held sacred will be respected.

As one may have fond memories of high school or college days and as one remembers the traditions that were reinforced and created during the good 'ol days, it may be easier to reason why traditions would be important to those within an organization. For women working in higher education, it is always good to note the attention given to traditions because those are what help define the organization.

Teaching and Learning Anchor

So, how do we ensure that women in academia are given opportunities to succeed and flourish in academia? It is through the **Teaching and Learning Anchor**, which can look like professional development, filling leadership capacity, and/or and increasing the knowledge of those within an organization to help them feel like they belong. There are so many ways for teaching and learning to occur and allowing faculty and staff within an organization to find their preferred way is best. Therefore, it can look like a book study, a professional learning community, bringing someone in to present on a topic, and/or promoting someone's research by having that someone teach others how to lead successful research projects.

No matter what it looks like or how teaching and learning occurs, BOTH teaching and learning must occur. Teaching can occur at any time, and usually does when colleagues come together and discuss and contemplate on ideas. Therefore, learning is automatically an outcome where teaching is done because those who listen, contribute to, and ask questions are learning. So, teaching and learning cannot be separated and each can impact the productivity of an organization.

For women in academia, teaching and learning is a must because they help increase the level of understanding in any given topic and help educate to help improve the output of those within an organization. Teaching and learning also can help with increasing civility, ethics, while decreasing microaggressions and back-biting. It is a way to help everyone within a certain organization to get to know how each other works and how each other flourishes, and what is important for a set of colleagues. It allows for the building of a healthy environment and adds to everyone's knowledge about each other. Teaching and learning increases the capacity of what Preuss (2017) wanted for all teachers: validation, love, and empowerment.

Conclusion

The *5 Anchors of Impact*, which include Organization, Politics, Safety and Order, Traditions, and Teaching and Learning can help women to support other women. The 5 Anchors can help women to not fall into the Lobster Syndrome trap and even reverse that where women support and push each other up instead of down. Although more studies on how women can help other women feel successful in higher education is needed, incorporating the *5 Anchors of Impact* can help women

see the importance of the framework within their organization. It can also help organizations find ways to encourage teamwork, collaboration, mentoring, and coaching.

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