

"I came to the Institute needing a shot in the arm, and I got a shot in the motivation," remarked one participant after attending the University of South Florida's Women and Administration Institute. Designed as an intensive summer residential program, the Institute encourages women to move up the career ladder into administrative positions in the public schools. For individual participants the Institute provides a context for setting career goals and for developing positive, fair attitudes toward sex and race practices in teaching, counseling, and administration.¹

Important features for those interested in conducting similar programs are outlined in Figure 1. This management plan can be a guide for others who want to start their own programs for encouraging women toward positions of leadership in educational organizations.

Selecting a Co-leader. The strengths of an interdisciplinary pair of program leaders must be emphasized. We have found that certain combinations of competencies and background characteristics of program leaders are essential. At least one leader must have experience and credibility in leadership training per se, and one must be affiliated with the target population to be served and, thus, be credible to the members of that population. Both will be role models and should be strong advocates of the philosophy that ability to lead is not sex-linked.

Planning. Planning for the Institute began one full year prior to the first program offered in July 1975 and involved establishing an advisory council of staff development officers from surrounding school systems. Some council members helped select and arrange financial support for participants while others advertised, collected

Training Women for Administrative Roles

Ellen Kimmel, Dorothy Harlow,
and Mary Topping



Photo: Bonnie Becker, Fairfax County Public Schools, Fairfax, Virginia.

The Women and Administration Institute is designed to increase the number of women in leadership positions in educational organizations.

names of interested people, arranged for field experiences, and/or served as role models. Consultation with a person experienced in organizing national conferences proved to be invaluable.

*The Program.*² Participants and leaders reside on campus for three weeks and are engaged in program activities from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m., Monday through Friday. The primary emphasis is on reading textual material; writing original and scholarly papers; doing field observation research that culminates in case studies; and discussing data and theories about organizational behavior, psychology of leadership, and the documented status of women in society

generally and in education particularly.

¹ A national survey of the availability of special programs for potential women administrators revealed that the University of South Florida is among the first, if not *the* first, to develop such a program. See: Ellen Kimmel, Dorothy Harlow, and Mary Topping. "Special Programs to Promote Women into Educational Administration." *Phi Delta Kappan* 60(8): 586-89; 1979.

² For a fuller description of the program content and results, see: D. N. Harlow and E. B. Kimmel. "Womanpower Development: A Program for Professionals." *Proceedings, Academy of Management, Southwest Division, 1976*. pp. 229-33; and D. N. Harlow and E. Kimmel. "Management Development Programs: For Women by Women?" Paper presented at the meetings of the Academy of Management, Kissimmee, Florida, August 1977.

The foundation of the program is academic. Formally, ten beginning graduate credit hours are earned for "Management of Professionals" and "Women and the Educational Process" and are applicable as elective credit toward an M.S. in Management, an M.Ed., or an Educational Specialist degree. Participants are able to meet the workload required for this large number of credits by reading in advance and completing papers after the formal three-week session is over. Admittedly, the demands are high, but defensible, and the participants report their pleasure at finding themselves capable of stretching to meet them. As one participant said, "This was like basic training—good!"

The Participants. The participants are either selected and sent to the Institute by their county school systems or they apply and, if qualified, are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. All have at least a B.A. and 14 of the 71 "graduates" were in supervisory positions when accepted into the program. Most were classroom teachers with a median of 8.6 years of experience in public education (the range was from 1 to 26 years).

Objectives and Evaluation

The ultimate goal of the Institute is to increase the number of women who will become leaders in

the public school system. Based on experience, we have determined that each participant should:

1. Increase her knowledge of the status of women in education and American society.
2. Increase her knowledge of organizational behavior theory and administrative applications.
3. Increase her competence in specific management/administrative skills.
4. Show a more liberal attitude toward the rights and responsibilities of women in society.
5. Increase her awareness and acceptance of self and others.
6. Display more positive and stronger feelings/perceptions about career related concepts.
7. Define more clearly and concisely her career goals.
8. Indicate a higher career aspiration level.
9. Seek administrative or, if applicable, higher administrative positions in the public schools.

*Impact assessment.*³ Clearly and unmistakably, an important element of any program is impact assessment. The program design of our Institute calls for a variety of standardized and nonstandardized instruments, roughly 15 in number, to be administered pre and post, to collect information about the participants, and to attempt to assess the impact of the

Institute. (Detailed information on the use of, and the results obtained with, the instruments may be obtained by writing to the authors.)

We made the realistic assumption that, if women are to seek and gain leadership positions, they must first aspire to such action. Thus, career aspiration level was considered a main dependent variable. To measure this, we asked participants at the beginning of the Institute and again at the end to speculate about the job they would be holding five years hence. Results indicated that the materials and activities encouraged the majority of those who attended to think of themselves as potential administrators and/or capable of climbing further up the career ladder.

One warning is in order. Many of our participants began to consider alternate sectors of the economy as attractive possibilities for their talents after meeting "role models" from business, industry, and government as well as from the schools. Schools may experience "brain drain" of competent women who are sought more aggressively by other organizations. One woman responded to our "aspiration" instrument with, "I'm so open to new possibilities, I can't even think about the schools."

Much descriptive information collected during the Institute provides feedback to the participants who leave far more knowledgeable about themselves. Apparently, this met a great need for many participants, one of whom wrote us, "I felt so ignorant of my identity. You've opened windows into who I am. I feel challenged to keep on exploring."

Participants are also asked to complete, pre- and post-Institute, the Attitudes Toward Women

³Special recognition goes to the University of South Florida College of Education's Instructional Design and Evaluation Applications (I/D/E/A/) Center for its support of the data analyses.



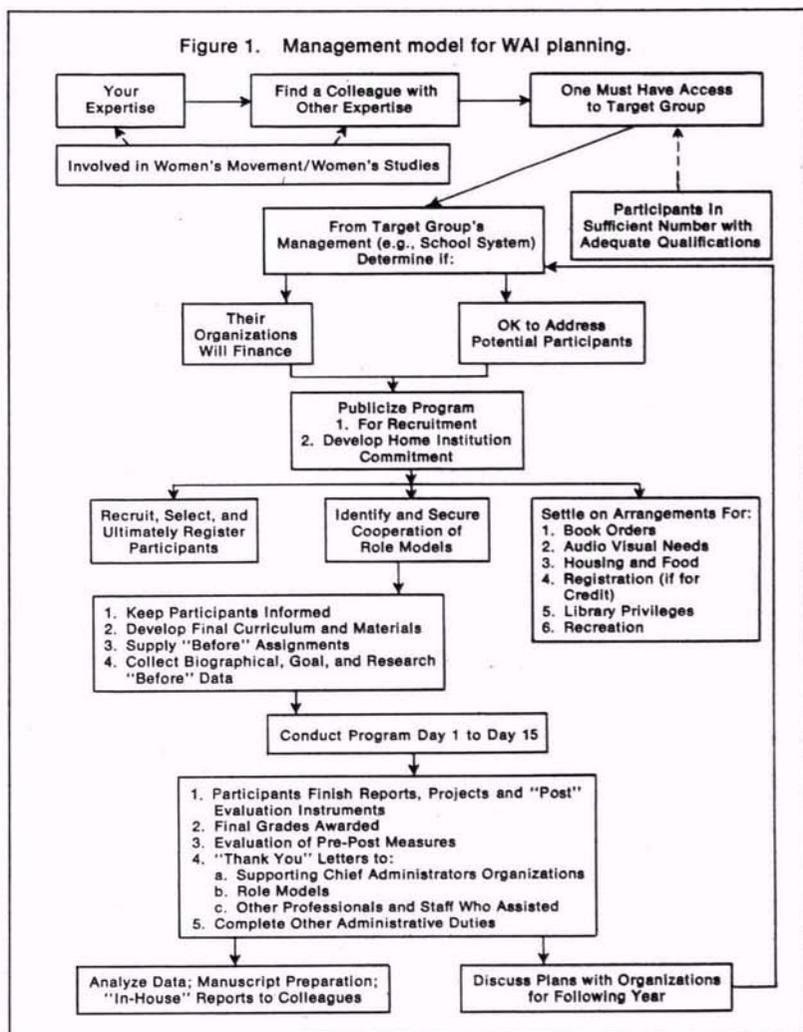
Ellen Kimmel (left) is Professor of Educational Psychology; Dorothy Harlow (center) is Professor of Management, College of Business; and Mary Topping is a Ph.D. student in Research and Evaluation; all at the University of South Florida, Tampa.

Scale⁴ that measures "traditional" (low scores) versus "liberal" (high scores) attitudes toward rights and roles of women in our society. All groups had higher post-test scores, a particularly desirable outcome since most of these women will supervise many women if they attain a leadership role in the schools.

Most training activities are discussed in terms of organization benefits, but what are the costs? Lowered job satisfaction? We decided in 1976 and again in 1977 to ask those attending to fill out a job satisfaction questionnaire⁵ before and after training. When the pre- and post-test results were compared, it was found that a majority of the participants were less satisfied with their current position at the end of the Institute than at the beginning. "I am not the same woman I was before the Institute. I know more and see farther—things don't look the same," a participant summed up the notion that growth may produce dissatisfaction with the status quo.

Data obtained in follow-up telephone interviews indicated that all participants of our first institutes are on the move educationally, several into doctoral programs. It is realistic for many to seek more training, since an advanced degree or additional certification may be required for placement in a position of leadership. Many graduates, already qualified educationally, were interviewing for and a number had gained administrative positions. Further, measured increased positive attitudes toward self and others indicated that participants had the confidence to succeed once given the opportunity.

In their words, "I'm on my way to self-actualization, ready to contribute at a much higher level to my school and community." "This mind expanding experience has moved me educationally and psychologically toward a more satisfying use of my skills. I'm proud of my output and ready to forge



ahead!" "Would you believe superintendent of schools in 10 years?" "Whatever happens, my growth won't stop—if I can't get promoted, I'll just start consulting. Somewhere my potential will get realized."

Although it will be years before women are appointed to administrative positions proportional to their number in the professional ranks, it is imperative that special training and encouragement be offered to those who might be interested in climbing the organizational ladder. Conducting short-term institutes similar to the one offered at the University of South Florida is one effective method of moving in this direction and re-

sponding positively to Title IX's requirements for sex fair employment opportunities.⁶ *ET*

⁴ J. T. Spence and R. Helmreich. "The Attitudes Toward Women Scale: An Objective Instrument to Measure Attitudes Toward the Rights and Roles of Women in Contemporary Society." *JSAS, Catalogue of Selected Documents in Psychology* 2(66): 1972.

⁵ W. E. Sedlacek. "An Empirical Description of Available Theory and Research on Job Satisfaction." Paper presented at the meetings of the Midwestern Psychological Association, Kansas City, May 1966.

⁶ Inquiries about participation in the University of South Florida Institute may be directed to Dr. Ellen Kimmel (FAO 295) or Dr. Dorothy Harlow (BUS 485), University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida 33620.

Copyright © 1979 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.