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The purpose of this research is to describe how an established state-based women-only leadership development program for women in higher education prepares women to lead and explore how alumnae of the program understand leadership and perceive themselves as leaders. This embedded single case study followed a multiphase mixed methods design that gathered information about the program and its alumnae from program observations, document review, surveys, and interviews.

The findings from the surveys and interviews indicate that the program is professionally and personally impactful to the alumnae, in that it helps them build their network, understand higher education, gain confidence, and clarify their career goals. Strengths of the program, in this case, were the benefits of connections to and learning from women at other institutions in the state, demographic and professional diversity of the cohorts, the breadth of topics covered, and time away for structured reflection to explore their authentic leadership style. The majority (73%) of the 62 survey respondents indicated they were extremely or very satisfied with the program. The lowest level of satisfaction was from full professors, and the highest marks were from executives, staff, and department heads. The most cited points for needed improvements were offering alumnae events and advanced training after graduation. From a quantitative analysis of program impact, we found developing leader identity was the lowest-rated outcome of the program, yet an important factor in leadership development for women (Knipfer, Shaughnessy, Hentschel, & Schmid, 2017; Peterson, 2019; R. Selzer, Howton, & Wallace, 2017).

The second part of this research looked at women's perception of themselves as leaders, the influences of their ability to lead, and obstacles that they have faced. A third of participants described their style as collaborative, which supports previous research on women's leadership

styles (Madden, 2011; O'Neil, Hopkins, & Bilimoria, 2015; R. A. Selzer & Robles, 2019). The most common obstacles that these women faced in their pursuit of leadership were the structural blocks of organizational culture and bureaucracy, time-intensive administrative tasks, undeveloped leader identity, work-life balance, and ageism/generational differences. These obstacles are reflective of findings previous research women's paths to leadership (Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, 2013; Kezar, 2000; Knipfer et al., 2017; Lester & Sallee, 2017; Madsen, Longman, & Daniels, 2012).

Transformational leadership was the primary theory of this project, as it is the theme of the leadership program for the case. It is also one of the most cited theories of effective leadership (Anderson & Sun, 2017; Bass & Avolio, 1996) and is often linked to women in leadership (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003; Mokot, Tumbel, & Pangkey, 2019; Vinkenburg, van Engen, Eagly, & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2011) and organizational change (Abrell, Rowold, Weibler, & Moenninghoff, 2011; Groves, 2020). This case study provides a description and analysis of the curriculum of the program, feedback about the program, and perceptions about leadership from alumnae.

This case study explored a leadership development program and the thoughts of its alumnae about leadership. The design of the study and the findings could be valuable to leaders and designers of leadership development programs for women, particularly in fields where there is an underrepresentation of diversity in leadership positions. It might also be of interest to scholars and practitioners of higher education leadership, transformational leadership, and leader development.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
A MULTIPHASE MIXED METHODS CASE STUDY

by

Amy Williams Strickland

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to describe how a women's only leadership development program prepares women for leadership in higher education and explore how alumnae of the program understand and perceive themselves as leaders. The ultimate intent of this project is to address and improve inequity/inequality for women in academia and the overarching problems of underrepresentation of women in leadership roles.

Statement of the Problem

The underrepresentation of women in leadership roles in higher education and the challenges inherent in academic career progression for women is supported in the literature (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Madsen, 2011). Although there has been an increase in the number of women in leadership roles since the 1960s, when looking across degree-granting postsecondary institutions, men continue to hold the majority of the highest leadership positions. Data from the American Council on Education and the Center for Policy Research and Strategy suggest that women continue to hold entry-level, service, and teaching-only positions with less than one-third of full professor positions filled by females. Although the number of women presidents has increased over time, men still hold 73% of presidencies across institutions (H. L. Johnson, 2016).

Researchers from different disciplines have sought to explore and explain the reasons for the disparity among men and women leaders in higher education. Cultural assumptions and socialized behavior are foundations for the subtle and overt barriers for women's promotion and advancement into leadership positions (Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, 2013). Organizational culture and

socially constructed expectations for gendered behavior and gendered roles create additional challenges for women to navigate, above and beyond the typical challenges of leading in higher education.

Leadership development programs for women in higher education are critical to teach and support women as they progress through their careers (Madsen, 2011; Madsen, Longman, & Daniels, 2012). A program for women only can create space to candidly discuss and learn how to address the challenges that women commonly face, while strengthening their knowledge, skills, behaviors, and connections that make them better leaders. Over the past 40 years, academic leadership programs for women have grown, morphed, and waned with little published evidence of outcomes or what worked and what did not work. To date, few studies have examined the outcomes and impact of programs, and none of these studies explored the understanding of leadership among its alumni. Considering the importance and potential influence of these programs to educate and prepare women to take on leadership roles in higher education, it is important to offer programs that meet the leadership needs of its participants that will help them lead in and influence the future of higher education.

The scope of the first research question will focus on the structure and curriculum of the program. The second research question will focus on the alumnae's understanding of leadership and themselves as leaders.

Context

Leadership programs for women in higher education were established by grassroots efforts of higher education institutions and professional organizations to address the challenges women face as they progress through their careers in academia. As women became involved with these initial programs, they began to form leadership initiatives for women in their states and institutions. Many of these initiatives have grown and waned over the past 40 years with little

published evidence of outcomes or what worked and what did not work. Few studies have examined the outcomes, successes, or experiences of women who participated in these programs.

The leadership program that will be the center of this case study is the BRIDGES Leadership Program for Women, an established leader development resource for women working in higher education in North Carolina. The program began in 1993 to cultivate and support women as they pursue leadership in academic institutions in the state. This program has been involved in graduate research projects that are covered in detail in Chapter II. A comprehensive case study will build on this previous work and provide an in-depth look at the program and explore alumnae's understanding of leadership and themselves as leaders.

Theoretical Framework

The framework for this study is based on two theories: Transformational Leadership Theory and Cultural Feminist Theory. These theories relate to leadership development for women and, as explained further in Chapter IV, are a part of the foundation and function of the leadership program in this case study.

Transformational leadership is one of the most prominent and thoroughly researched leadership theories linked to effective leadership (Anderson & Sun, 2017; Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; Bass & Avolio, 1996; Wakefield, 2017). According to the two men who are considered founders of current transformational leadership theory, women are likely to be perceived as transformational leaders and follow a transformational leadership approach (Bass & Avolio, 1996). Since this statement from Bass and Avolio, empirical and non-empirical research has investigated women as transformational leaders (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Knipfer, Shaughnessy, Hentschel, & Schmid, 2017; Vinkenbunrg, Van Engen, Eagly, & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2011). Researchers have also linked Transformational Leadership to organizational culture and change (M. Z. Carter, Achilles, Field, & Mossholder, 2013; Eisenbach, Watson, & Pillai, 1999; van der

Voet, 2014) and leadership in higher education (Basham, 2012; Lo, Ramayah, & de Run, 2010; Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012). Considering the research citing organizational cultures in higher education as an obstacle to women progressing in their careers and advancing into leadership positions in the academy (Ballenger, 2011; Eddy & Ward, 2017; Jackson & O’Callaghan, 2009; Longman & Anderson, 2016; Madden, 2011), transformational leadership might be a way to shape a future for more diversity and inclusion in higher education leadership. Of note, the central theme for the leadership program, in this case, is Transformational Leadership, which was one of the reasons for selecting the program for the case study. Chapter IV goes into detail about the transformational leadership theme for the program. All of these factors shaped the foundation for this research project.

The second theory of this research project, Cultural Feminist Theory (Alcoff, 1988; Lewis, 2019), was not initially a theory that was considered for this project. However, as I began to see the program through different perspectives as the project progressed and I learned more about feminist theories, I realized that components of the program and some of the research articles that I used to analyze the case had concepts of Cultural Feminist Theory in them, albeit superficially and not explicitly stated. Cultural Feminist Theory follows the premise that there are essential differences between men and women that are based on biology and societal differences. Cultural feminists seek to maintain an environment that is free of “masculine values” of aggressiveness, divisiveness, competitiveness, and power-seeking toward an environment driven by inclusion, cooperation, and caring (Alcoff, 1988; Lewis, 2019). There are aspects of this theory that have been rightly questioned over time, most notably the binary classification of gender, stereotyping masculine and feminine values, and the exclusion of many factors that would be expressed through a more critical lens. Although there are weaknesses in this theory,

the premise of separateness between gender and superiority of feminine qualities were noted in this research.

Within the literature, there are no studies that explore women's academic leadership programs through the lens of transformational leadership theory and feminist theory. By having transformational leadership and cultural feminist theories as the framework for this study, a description of a leadership development program for women in higher education that incorporates guidance from a well-researched leadership theory of effective leadership and relates to ways of women's leadership will be developed.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study to describe the functioning and effectiveness of the program and explore alumnae's perceptions of themselves as leaders. The first research question is about the leadership program—How is an established leadership development program preparing women for leadership in higher education? This question was broken down into five sub-questions that are explained in detail in Chapter III. The findings for Research Question 1 are organized by sub-questions in Chapter IV. The second research question relates to the alumnae's perception of leadership—How do alumnae of a leadership development program understand leadership and themselves as leaders? The findings for Research Question 2 are presented in Chapter V.

Definitions of Terms

Collaborative leadership—Creating an environment of trust, mutual respect, and shared aspiration in which all can contribute fully and openly to achieving collective goals. It requires a focus on relationships, high-quality conversation, and results (Oxford Leadership, 2019).

Leadership style—The manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people (Newstrom, Davis, & Pierce, 1993).

Organizational culture—An organization’s expectations, experiences, philosophy, values, shared attitudes, beliefs, customs, and written/unwritten rules (Business Dictionary, 2019).

R1 and R2 Universities—Carnegie Research Classifications: R1 (Very High Research Activity), R2 (High Research Activity).

Second generation biases—Subtle or neutral appearing discriminate behavior against women as they reflect the values of the patriarchal society (S. B. Carter, 2011).

Self Determination Theory—A theory of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation related to cognitive and social development. Three components of the theory are autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and if met for an individual will be more effective and creative (Center for Self Determination Theory, 2019).

Servant leadership—Prioritizes the growth and well-being of people and the communities and seeks to develop and align an employee’s sense of purpose with the organizational mission. It puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible (Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, 2019).

Transformational leadership—The ability to develop, inspire, empower, and intellectually stimulate employees to work toward shared goals and vision (Bass & Avolio, 1993).

Significance of the Study

There is a need for future research to assess and continually improve quality leadership programs for women in higher education. By using research about leadership programs and how they apply to women as leaders, we can begin to share ideas based on best practices to prepare female leaders in academia and thus bridge the gender leadership gap. BRIDGES is an ideal program to investigate leadership development for women through a transformational leadership and feminist frame. In addition to the stakeholders who will directly benefit from the outcome of

this study, publication of the research project could benefit scholars and practitioners in leadership and leader development fields.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study are inherent to the single case design of one leadership program that serves public and private institutions in one state in the Southeast United States, bounded by a point in time. The sample for the interviews and the survey were alumnae who completed the program between 2012 and 2017. The observations and most of the document review were of the 2017 program. Considering the purpose of the study is to explore and describe the program and how alumnae understand leadership and themselves as leaders, causation and correlation of data are not an expectation.

The single case study hampers the ability to make direct comparisons and generalizations to other programs. However, since this study focuses on leadership development for women in higher education, some similarities can be made about leadership for women in higher education through analytic generalizations from theory and previous research (Yin, 2014). The empirical research on women's only leadership programs is sparse in the literature; therefore, non-empirical and theoretical research articles are also used to compare, contrast, and make meaning of the findings from this study.

The focus of this research is on a leadership program—its structure, curriculum, and impact, as well as accounts of how a subset of alumnae understands leadership and themselves as leaders. Maximum variation sampling based on age, race, professional position, and program cohort year was used to ensure this research captured information from different perspectives. While demographics are a part of the project, this research did not take a deep dive into the ways of knowing and being of different demographic groups or the intersectionality of identity roles and life experiences. This is an important topic that should be the focus of future research, as

women of color experience tiers of obstacles in their professional journey and hold fewer top leadership positions.

Another limitation of the study is related to the program being for women only and thus, following the binary categorizations of gender based on sex. People whose identity is not at one end of the gender continuum might be excluded from the program, or if they do participate might be hesitant to express their authentic selves and not have their leadership needs met. There are many avenues for future research on inclusive leader development that consider all facets of identity.

The scope of this project being from one researcher is also a limitation of the study. As the primary researcher of this project, each stage of the project was planned, implemented, analyzed, and interpreted primarily through one lens. Throughout the study, I made efforts to mitigate the effect of my perspectives and biases on the research and the participants.

Organization of the Study

The study is organized into six chapters, with this chapter being the first. In Chapter II, I examine the literature related to leadership theories, obstacles for women in leadership, and leadership development programs for women. In Chapter III, I describe the methods of the multiphase mixed methods study as well as information about the participants. Chapter IV covers the findings of the first research question related to the leadership program. The findings for the second research question regarding the perceptions of leadership by the alumnae are in Chapter V. The study concludes with a discussion of all findings in Chapter VI. Research procedures and program agendas are available as appendices. Appendix A is the consent form, Appendix B is the alumni survey, Appendix C is the interview protocol, and Appendix D has the agendas for the four parts of the 2017 BRIDGES program.

The next chapter provides a review of literature on leadership, women in leadership, historical understandings of gender differences, obstacles to leadership among women, the underrepresentation of women in higher education leadership, and leadership development programs for women.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This review of literature is a summary of research conducted on the topics of leadership theories, women in leadership, challenges for women in higher education, and leadership development programs. The review is organized to summarize the key sources of foundational information to understand leadership development programs for women in higher education, as well as the progression of research on the topic.

Search Description

Since the topics of leadership, leadership development, and women in leadership are well represented in the literature, I narrowed the search by using combinations of related key terms: women/female leadership in higher education, challenges/barriers for advancement, women-only leadership development, program evaluation of leadership programs, leadership research, leadership theories, leadership programs, leader/leadership development, higher education leadership, and higher education. The following databases were used to find recent and relevant articles on different combinations of search terms: EBSCO, ProQuest, Business Source Complete, Dissertations and Theses Global, Google Scholar, and general Google search.

Leadership

Historical Background

When considering research related to women's leadership and leadership development, it is important to understand the history and progression of scholarly work related to how we understand leadership. Leadership theories began and have evolved from Thomas Carlyle's earliest lectures and essays for Western societies in the mid-1800s characterizing the great heroes

over time. Often referred to as the Great Man perspective of leadership—or loosely as the Great Man Theory—Carlyle’s work was an introduction to leadership theory based solely on traits of famous male leaders. From this initial work, scholarly conversations continued to develop theories of leadership based on personal characteristics or traits, such as stamina, charisma, and persuasion (Daft, 2005; Yukl, 2008). The beginning of scholarly writings and research on leadership was conducted by white male researchers who collected data on White male leaders (Kezar, 2000). This early interpretation of leadership serves as a foundation of modern society’s androcentric bias toward stereotypical male traits as the most effective form of leadership. The foundation of leadership research supported a hierarchical, authoritative, and power-based paradigm that society continues to equate to quality leadership.

Beginning in the 1940s, 100 years after the writings of Carlyle, scholars began to explore behaviors of leaders and looked more closely at what leaders do rather than how they look. Research conducted at Ohio State University in the 1950s characterized the behaviors of leaders into two types of behaviors, people or relationship-oriented and task-oriented (Hemphill & Coons, 1957). A few years later, the organizational psychologist, Rensis Likert, most notably known for developing the 5-point Likert scale, expanded on the importance of relationships in leadership by identifying the participative leadership behaviors (Likert, 1961).

As research progressed away from traits and into behaviors, actions, and styles that can be taught, developed, and adapted, the foundation for the field of leadership development formed. This change in view opened the potential for leadership to people who were not White, male, and of a certain social class. A key assumption of leadership development is that every individual has the capacity for leadership, if the person has the desire for personal development to learn, grow, and change (Gaither, 1998).

From the 1960s to the 1980s, leadership research expanded beyond the focus of an individual leader to include how external factors or the situation at hand impacts effective leadership. In the 1960s, questions about the influence of situation and context on leadership entered scholarly discussions with Contingency Theory by Fielder (1964) and Situational Theory by Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (1969). Contingency and situational theories consider both individual and the external context together in determining leader effectiveness. In the early 1970s, organizational psychologists Vroom and Yetton (1973) expanded contingency theory to include the science of decision-making. This deeper understanding of leadership provided a foundation for content and guidance for the field of leadership development.

Later in that decade, leadership research began to address the relational aspects of leadership between the leader and the people being led. The political scientist and presidential biographer, James MacGregor Burns, continued the premise of Hemphill and Coons and classified leadership into two types: transactional and transforming leadership. Burns's (1978) definition of "transforming leadership" emphasized the relational aspect of leadership. He defined transforming leadership as one that creates a culture of caring, empowerment, and sharing around a shared vision (Burns, 1978). This work by Burns was the foundation of a different way of understanding leadership.

Transformational Leadership

Bernard Bass, and later Bruce Avolio, expanded the work of Burns and defined transformational leadership as the ability to inspire, influence, and intellectually stimulate others with charismatic behaviors that show consideration for others (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Yukl, 2008). Transformational leaders encourage their followers to look beyond their self-interests for the greater good of the organization. By doing so, transformational leaders can enhance followers' expectations, abilities, and willingness to take risks (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Burns, 1978). Eagerly

and Carli (2003) further expanded transformational leadership to include democratic and participatory decision-making, collaboration, delegation, and team building aptitudes.

The early work of Burns and Bass moved leadership research to a new genre of leadership theories that included attitudes, behaviors, and context as essential to effective leadership (Bryman, 1992). This difference in understanding leadership led to research on women as leaders. Up until the mid-1980s, there was no distinction between men and women leaders in the leadership literature. In the mid- to late-1980s, research on leadership began to emphasize the differences in traits, styles, and effectiveness of leadership by men and women. The gender approach to research tied in common gender stereotypes between male and female leadership styles (Astin & Leland, 1991). Women leaders were generally viewed as socially sensitive, empathetic, collaborative, nurturing, expressive, and helpful (Hall & Sandler, 1984), whereas male leaders are viewed as independent, assertive, and competent (Hall & Sandler, 1984; Eagly & Kite, 1987).

Women and Transformational Leadership

According to Bass and Avolio (1996), women are more likely to be perceived as transformational leaders and follow a transformational leadership approach. Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and Van Engen (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of 45 studies for comparisons of women and men regarding different types of leadership. Results from this study suggested that women demonstrate higher levels of transformational leadership behaviors and thus have an advantage over men as effective leaders, a conclusion that hints at views of gender superiority themes seen in Cultural Feminist Theory.

Vinkenburg et al. (2011) conducted two studies on gender stereotypes and promotion using samples of 271 and 514 businessmen and businesswomen. Their research suggested that compared to men, women display more behaviors of transformational leadership and fewer

behaviors of the less effective leadership approaches, laissez-faire, and management-by-exception. Vinkenburg et al. (2011) further explored the importance of the different aspects of transformational leadership as defined by Bass (1985)—idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration and the importance of each between men and women leaders. Following gender stereotypes, the concept of individualized consideration, which is the relational and supportive aspect of transformational leadership was perceived as more important for women to obtain compared to men and especially important for their promotion to senior management. Inspirational motivation, or the visionary aspect of transformational leadership, was perceived as more important for the promotion of men to CEO. This work suggests that it is more important for a female leader to exhibit supportive and nurturing behaviors to be promoted to executive leadership, whereas for men, it is how well they communicate a sense of vision and expectations for the future.

Interestingly, similar differences related to gender exists in leadership training when comparing programs that include men and those that are exclusively for women. A qualitative study by Sugiyama, Cavanagh, van Esch, Bilimoria, and Brown (2016) compared general leadership development programs (for men and women) to leadership programs designed for women-only. They found that general leadership programs for men and women emphasized an objective, non-emotional, defensive, and oppositional approach to leadership (i.e., separate knowing), one where the leader uses logic to identify weaknesses in the other person's ideas that do not align with the leader's experience or way of thinking. The general leadership programs focused on the development of the autonomous self and autonomous decision making that is transactional and emphasizes assertiveness, competitiveness, and independence (i.e., agentic leadership). Programs designed for women-only focused on developing a connected knowing that is relational, empathetic, and supportive of others. After listening and understanding the problem,

the leader uses logic to provide suggestions. The programs for women only were structured around the relational self and developing a leadership identity.

Women in Higher Education Leadership

The underrepresentation of women in leadership roles in higher education and the challenges inherent in academic career progression for women is well established in the literature (Eddy & Ward, 2015; Madsen, 2011; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Hall & Sandler, 1984). A publication by the Colorado Women's College summarizes the status and continued underrepresentation of women leaders in higher education (H. L. Johnson, 2016). Using data from the American Council on Education and the Center for Policy Research and Strategy, H. L. Johnson (2016) conveys that women continue to hold entry-level, service, and teaching-only positions. Females fill less than one-third of full professor positions. From 2008 to 2013, the number of women chief academic officers (CAO) increased by 8% in public and private institutions; however, women CAOs were most prevalent (55%) in institutions that award Associates degrees as the highest degree and lowest (26%) in doctoral-granting institutions. Interestingly, within the same period, the number of female CAOs declined by 22% in public and private doctoral schools, with the most notable decline (37%) in public doctoral-granting universities. Although the number of women presidents has increased over time, men still hold 73% of presidencies across all institutions (H. L. Johnson, 2016).

Obstacles for Women in Higher Education Leadership

Socialized behavior, cultural assumptions, and the resulting normalized practices result in subtle and overt barriers for women's advancement to leadership positions (Ibarra et al., 2013). A woman's ability and desire to advance professionally in the academy are influenced by institutional policies, practices, and procedures (Eddy & Ward, 2015). Organizational culture and socially constructed expectations for gendered behavior and gender roles create a difficult web in

which to navigate. Although deliberate discrimination of women in the workplace is now illegal in the United States, discrete “second generation” gender biases are a factor in the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles. “Sometimes discrimination is overt and easily identifiable. Other times, it is abstract, nebulous, and difficult to read and contest” (Maher & Thompson-Tetreault, 2011, p. 283). These second-generation biases are deeply embedded in the culture and systems of higher education (Ely & Meyerson, 2000).

If an institution’s norms favor the “ideal worker” who lives to work and has most of their responsibilities outside of work covered by someone else, it deters the advancement of women who balance the responsibilities of caring for family (Williams, 2000). There are also challenges for women who do not have to split their time with responsibilities outside of work. Expectations of following traditionally viewed gender behavior and gender roles disadvantage women as they pursue greater levels of leadership.

Several solutions have been proposed to mitigate the challenges of career progression and leadership for women in higher education. When considering the deeply engrained inequities of institutional norms and procedures, organizational change is key to improvements. This solution targets the root cause of the institutional barriers for women. However, with the degree of society’s binary views of gender that form definitive roles and expectations, it is a solution to aspire to over time and with continuous effort. If we had more women who were educated in effective leadership in positions of influence, they might be able to incrementally move the culture away from the traditional views of hierarchical/authoritative leadership and the inflexible expectations that are counter to work/life balance that value responsibilities outside of work (Williams, 2000). More women in leadership roles could also serve as mentors to future generations of women who could continue to lead the needed change.

Leadership Development

Scholarly research on leadership development has increased over the past 15 years, moving the field beyond its original practitioner scope (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2014). Day et al. (2014) compiled a review of leadership development research from the past 25 years. From their assessment, they suggest longer training programs and opportunities that prepare future leaders for the complexities of the future. The most common format of leadership development is short-term training, rather than more complex individualized personal and professional development. The challenges facing contemporary leaders tend to be too complex and ambiguous for it to be addressed successfully in these short-term training interventions. As a result of the challenges of future leadership needs, leadership development is moving toward understanding and enhancing developmental processes.

A common tool used in leadership development is self-awareness through the 360 multi-rater feedback assessment. The 360 feedback intends to set developmental goals to work toward self-other agreement (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992). Self-narratives have also been shown to be an effective tool in leadership development (Shamir & Eilam, 2005).

Leadership Development for Women in Higher Education

A program for women only can create a safe place to directly discuss and learn how to address the challenges that women commonly face while strengthening their knowledge, skills, behaviors, and values to become better leaders. Considering the importance and potential influence of these programs, the remainder of this literature review will focus on leadership development programs for women in higher education and how to ensure the program's quality and effectiveness through research and publication.

In the mid-1970s, women-only academic leadership programs were created to address the challenges that women face when moving into senior leadership roles. The federal government

attempted to bring equity for women in the United States through the Glass Ceiling Act of 1961, the Equal Pay Act of 1963, Title VII of Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Title IX of Higher Education Act of 1972. These legislative actions during the time of the feminist movements precipitated the beginning of professional development and support for women in higher education. Grassroots efforts at colleges, universities, and professional organizations established academic leadership programs to address the challenges that women face in their professional progression in academia. Two programs that began in the mid-1970s and remain prominent at the national level are the Higher Education Resources Services (HERS) and American Council for Education's Network. As women became involved with these initial programs, they began to form leadership initiatives for women in their states and institutions. Many of these initiatives have grown and waned over the past 40 years with little published evidence of outcomes or what worked or what did not work.

One of the most influential programs has been the Higher Education Resources Services (HERS) formed in 1972 by the Committee for the Concerns of Women in New England Colleges and Universities. The program began as a central registry of leadership talent and expanded to include academic career advising and educational seminars and courses. The program was first offered in 1976 as a month-long residential program at Bryn Mawr College. The HERS Wellesley College Institute began in 1977 and met in five two-day sessions. Its mission is to advance women leaders for changing academic institutions.

Soon after the HERS project was initiated, the American Council on Education established the National Identification Program in 1977 to identify talented women, increase their visibility as leaders, and connect people who share a commitment to the advancement of women in academia. Currently, the ACE National Identification Program, currently known as "The Network," involves 55 state committees across the nation that serve to identify qualified women

leaders, provide workshops, internships, and networking opportunities. From 1976, the American Council on Education's Office of Women in Higher Education (OWHE) provided leadership support and development through a state-based volunteer network. The goal of OWHE was to help women move from dean to president, although some state programs assisted women in moving from department chair to dean.

North Carolina was one of the first states to participate in the American Council on Education's National Identification Project (ACE/NIP) by establishing the Women Administrators in North Carolina Higher Education (WANCHE) in 1977. WANCHE provided support and created opportunities for women in higher education administration and leadership. It sought to increase the visibility of women administrators and support their professional development. WANCHE's mission was to advance women in higher education leadership in North Carolina by identifying new career opportunities, supporting, encouraging, and assisting their professional development. WANCHE's coordinators, board members, panelists, institutional liaisons, and speakers were upper-level administrators from public, private, and community colleges in North Carolina.

In 1992 WANCHE commissioned a study to research the extent that women held administrative roles in higher education in North Carolina. The study exposed a need for a leadership program for women in North Carolina higher education institutions (Pulley, 1993). The study inspired a group of 13 women from UNC-Chapel Hill and NC State University to develop a women's only leadership program for North Carolina colleges and universities called BRIDGES Leadership Program for Women. The founding women modeled the program based on their experiences with the Higher Education Resource Services (HERS) institute.

Over the 27 years of its existence, four research studies on different constructs of leadership have been investigated using samples from BRIDGES. Three of these studies (Flood, 2007; Greene, 1998; Sathy, 2001) also asked questions about the BRIDGES program.

The BRIDGES Program

BRIDGES was founded in 1993 and welcomed its 25th class in Fall 2017. BRIDGES is the only statewide leadership development program for women faculty, staff, and administrators from North Carolina universities and colleges. Whereas many leadership efforts strive to place women in the highest senior leadership positions, BRIDGES was established to reach a larger number of women and to symbolize an institutional commitment to help women be successful in higher education. The program is designed to cultivate and support women as they pursue leadership in academic institutions in North Carolina.

Greene (1998) conducted a qualitative study of leadership patterns and career progression by interviewing 30 participants in the BRIDGES class of 1996. For the first part of the research, Greene conducted a qualitative formative evaluation. From the evaluation results, most (80%) of the participants were highly satisfied with the program. The most common use of the curricular content was in benchmarking (47%), knowledge of leadership roles (33%), and budgeting (30%). The second part of the study was a qualitative investigation of the interview responses using grounded theory to derive a BRIDGES leadership model that is based on the life experiences of women leaders in North Carolina institutions of higher education. The primary question to build this model was the participants' descriptions of their leadership styles. From this question, four descriptive nodes of leadership styles emerged: facilitator, professional, visionary, and nurturer. At the core of Greene's model is facilitation. Many of the participants' descriptions of their facilitation leadership style are incorporated into BRIDGES' definition of transformational leadership (The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2018). Greene (1998) compared the

findings with Mary Parker Follet's model of facilitation and a compilation of constructs from the literature related to networking and empowering leadership through organizational structure, use of power, and common purpose. Greene combined a critical pragmatic approach and grounded theory to create a draft of a BRIDGES' leadership model that held at its core the role of facilitation.

Viji Sathy (2001) conducted an evaluation of BRIDGES in 1999 by interviewing a random sample ($n=53$) of alumnae who participated in the first 5 years of the program, 1993-1997. Participants were asked to give examples of changes in their positions and their perspectives of changes in their leadership abilities, professional and personal development, and the extent to which the program empowered them. Common responses from the interviews indicated that the BRIDGES program was most strongly effective in leadership development, networking, and empowerment. Participants felt that their experiences in BRIDGES changed the way they thought about leadership and provided concrete leadership skills. Many women talked about broadening their view of leadership and having a better idea of what leadership entails. They gained skills in university operations, personnel management, time management, and budgeting. Some participants indicated that they were more proactive in groups, speaking up more, and improving their communication. There was little effect of BRIDGES on professional development or maintaining a balance between personal and professional demands.

Chena Flood (2007) investigated the personal development needs of women who participated in BRIDGES from 1993 to 2006. The purpose of the study was to determine whether the five personal development themes identified as essential for leadership development by Ruderman and Ohlott (2002) for women in corporate leadership roles are also relevant for women in academic leadership. Flood collected data using a mailed paper survey and received responses from 175 alumnae who were in BRIDGES I (1993) through BRIDGES XIV (2006) cohorts.

Participants were asked to indicate their belief about specific statements that related to the five developmental areas identified by Ruderman and Ohlott: authenticity, connection, agency, wholeness, and self-clarity. Among the entire group of participants, the professional development theme with the highest level of perceived importance was agency or the desire to control one's own destiny, whereas the lowest level of declared importance was authenticity or the desire for behaviors to be in concert with deeply held values and beliefs (Ruderman & Ohlott, 2002).

Dr. Flood also led her colleagues (C. W. Johnson, Flood, Ross, & Wilder, 2010) in a mini evaluation of BRIDGES in 2009 to explore how alumnae have advanced in leadership and to what degree the program impacted their career progression. Details of the survey were not included in the publication; however, a few results were presented. Most of the 54 respondents (69%) received a promotion since graduating from BRIDGES, and 56% of those receiving promotions believe that participating in BRIDGES had a moderate to high impact. Topics that were identified as being useful in the curriculum were creating a budget, managing the media, and understanding the North Carolina legislative process.

BRIDGES has been the focus of four research studies on different constructs of women in academic leadership in its 27 years of existence. The last comprehensive review of the BRIDGES program occurred 20 years ago. Not only will this research add to the literature on leadership development and women in higher education, but it will also be informative to the program itself. The Director of the BRIDGES program was supportive of this research project. She gave permission to use the name of the program throughout the research project, including in the final publication of the dissertation.

Educational Content of Leadership Programs

Tessens, White, and Web (2011) investigated the perceived developmental needs of female leaders who were senior academic leaders in Australia. The researchers organized the

skills into four areas: people management, personal skills, political skills, and operational skills. These women noted the importance of understanding oneself, self-esteem/confidence, networking, navigating political environments, building social capital, negotiation skills, social capital, financial management, and university higher education governance structures.

Sugiyama et al. (2016) studied the perceptions of senior women in a women's only academic leadership program related to the importance of 23 leadership competencies from The Leadership Architect by Lominger International (2011). They found that 'developing a mindset and skills to fit the next level of leadership' was the most important aspect of leadership development. 'Bringing out existing female strengths and authentic qualities for leadership' and 'developing a general self-awareness' were the second and third most-cited qualities. Work/life integration for differing roles and for maintaining a healthy lifestyle was also noted. Rounding out the top five topics was relationship building for ongoing support. Sugiyama et al. also gathered the impressions from two other groups of academic leaders, department heads, and participants in a co-educational leadership program with 50% men and 50% women. The three groups in the study agreed that the two competencies that were important for women leaders to develop are conflict management and leadership presence/presentation. For all leaders, the three groups agreed on the importance of communication skills, interpersonal relationships, operational/organizational skills, personal flexibility, and planning/problem solving were the most important skills for all leaders in an academic environment.

Spendlove (2007) explored the attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors for leaders in higher education related to Bartram's model of 112 components of leadership (Bartram, 2005), regardless of gender. Knowledge of university life, university systems, and academic processes topped the knowledge competencies. Self-awareness, being flexible, open, honest, discrete, visible, willing to be wrong/accept advice, and being sensitive to the views of others were

important. For behaviors, maintaining academic credibility, acting as a role model, thinking broadly/strategically, engaging and listening to people, negotiating, communicating, delegating, motivating, and building teams rounded out the behaviors of higher education leaders. “The most common attributes cited for effective university leadership were openness; honesty; the need to consult others; the ability to listen, negotiate and persuade; the ability to think broadly/strategically; and to engage with people” (Spendlove, 2007, p. 411), which relates to a transformational leadership style.

In 2002, Elizabeth McDaniel reported on the results of a qualitative study that identified core higher education leadership competencies (HELCC). In her research, a group of 30 former American Council of Education (ACE) fellows convened to identify characteristics and behaviors of executive leadership in higher education. Rather than identify presidential competencies, the participants were asked to describe general HELCC (or “core” competencies). McDaniel expressed that higher education is organizationally complex with interdependent systems influenced by tradition and shared governance. The findings from the study were organized based on the context of competencies of higher education: content, communication, and process competencies. Navigating a political environment was the most noted point within the context of higher education, followed by building relationships with different internal and external stakeholders. Content that was important to these interviewees were knowledge about academics, student affairs, advancement, athletics, technology, legal issues, and strategic planning. For process, a sense of humor, unselfishness, integrity and core values, and support for the leadership of others was noted. The ability to negotiate, make decisions that align with the mission/goals of the university, being inclusive and collaborative, and having a team-oriented behavior was valued. Beyond the typical verbal, nonverbal, and written communication was articulating a reason for decisions and engaging in an ongoing give-and-take conversation with stakeholders.

Measuring Outcomes and Impact of Leadership Development Programs

Few studies have examined the outcomes, successes, or experiences of women who participated in leadership development programs for women in higher education. Evaluations of women's leadership programs at the University of Cincinnati (Berryman-Fink, Lemaster, & Nelson, 2004; R. Selzer, Howton, & Wallace, 2017), an unnamed program (Brue & Brue, 2016), and a program for women in North Carolina (C. W. Johnson et al., 2010) have made it to the literature. Across these studies, the evaluation methods and outcomes differ. The differences in the purpose, structure, and content of these leadership programs are also notable.

Two articles were published about the University of Cincinnati's leadership program. Berryman-Fink et al. (2004) conducted an evaluative case study of the first cohort of the University of Cincinnati's Women's Leadership Program. The purpose of the program was to increase the number of high-level women administrators at the University. The program consisted of leadership workshops on decision-making, leadership styles, university finance/budgeting, university mission, enrollment management, entrepreneurship, assessment, technology, and career development. After completion of the program, participants were eligible to apply for administrative internships. In the first year, five graduates from the program received promotions to associate dean or higher rank. More recently, R. Selzer et al. (2017) used autoethnography to provide insight and evaluation of the leadership program at the University of Cincinnati. The intent of the research was to make the program better for future participants of the program. From this work, the authors declared that personal, interpersonal, and organizational change must occur, as well as leadership identity development.

Brue and Brue (2016) published a phenomenological account from interviews of seven alumnae from an un-named program to determine which learning components of a women-only program were the most helpful. Session topics were on leading courageously, communicating

effectively, influencing the organization, and thinking strategically. Prominent themes from the interviews were changes in their leadership experience, personal agency, and expanding professional networks that were deemed the most useful component of the program.

Although the results of an evaluation on Higher Education Resource Services (HERS) were not directly published, White (2012) alluded to the evaluation in her account of the history of the program. The advisory board conducted a comprehensive review from 2002 to 2007 using survey results from approximately 1,337 alumnae. The survey collected information on demographics, satisfaction, perception of effectiveness in career advancement, and perceptions of barriers. Of the survey respondents, 60% were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall program; 75% indicated that HERS had helped them achieve moderate to high effectiveness in their jobs; and 60% said the program helped them advance in their career (White, 2012).

Evaluations can serve as a basis for ensuring quality programming, participant reach, and impact of leadership programs. Comprehensive evaluations may be used to identify areas of a program that need improving, assess the program's effectiveness, determine the necessary inputs, and address issues of social justice (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). There is potential for using evaluation techniques to ensure a program is meeting the needs and expectations of the stakeholders.

Theoretical Framework

As stated in the theoretical framework section of Chapter I, the primary framework for this study is based on two theories: Transformational Leadership Theory and secondarily Cultural Feminist Theory. These theories relate to leadership development for women and are a part of the foundation and function of the leadership program in this case study.

Transformational leadership is one of the most prominent and thoroughly researched leadership theories linked to effective leadership (Anderson & Sun, 2017; Avolio et al., 2009;

Bass & Avolio, 1996; Wakefield, 2017). Women are likely to be perceived as transformational leaders and follow a transformational leadership approach (Bass & Avolio, 1996). Empirical and non-empirical research has investigated women as transformational leaders (Eagly et al., 2003; Knipfer et al., 2017; Vinkenburg et al., 2011). Researchers have also linked transformational leadership to organizational culture and change (M. Z. Carter et al., 2013; Eisenbach et al., 1999; van der Voet, 2014) and leadership in higher education (Basham, 2012; Lo et al., 2010; Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012). Transformational leadership might be a way to shape a future for more diversity and inclusion in higher education leadership.

The second theory of this research project, Cultural Feminist Theory (Alcoff, 1988; Lewis, 2019). Cultural Feminist Theory follows the premise that there are essential differences between men and women that are based on biology and societal differences. Cultural feminists seek to maintain an environment that is “free of masculinist values” (Alcoff, 1988, p. 408) of aggressiveness, divisiveness, competitiveness, power-seeking, and hierarchy toward an environment driven by inclusion, cooperation, and caring (Alcoff, 1988; Lewis, 2019).

Additionally, as conveyed earlier in this chapter, women often are perceived to follow a transformational leadership style. Silva and Grabe (2011) go one step further in relating the two concepts:

In many ways, being a transformational leader is congruent with being a feminist leader. As transformational leaders, many women adopt the same values that describe a feminist style of leadership, both of which value feminine characteristics that are often degraded in the workplace. (p. 35)

A recent research study sponsored by OxFam, an international group of charitable organizations focused on ending poverty, addressed the connection of feminist and transformational leadership theories (Wakefield, 2017). The research provided an account of the practices within Oxfam organizations that use transformative leadership to support women’s

rights. Although this work is not linked to higher education or professional development, it expresses observations about the links between the two theories and the progression of leadership theories. Wakefield (2017) expressed, “There is coherence between feminist leadership principles and practices and transformational leadership, despite the fact the theory was essentially gender blind, since it was developed based on studies of men” (p. 26). The underlying assumptions of the study, which I also share in this study, were: “most women leaders do not use explicit language about transformation and feminism; women leaders can be patriarchic and hierarchical; and men can be champions for women’s rights and transformative leaders” (Wakefield, 2017, p. 6). Wakefield’s timeline of leadership theories that highlight the development of Transformational Leadership Theory and its relationship to gender and leadership is presented in Figure 1.

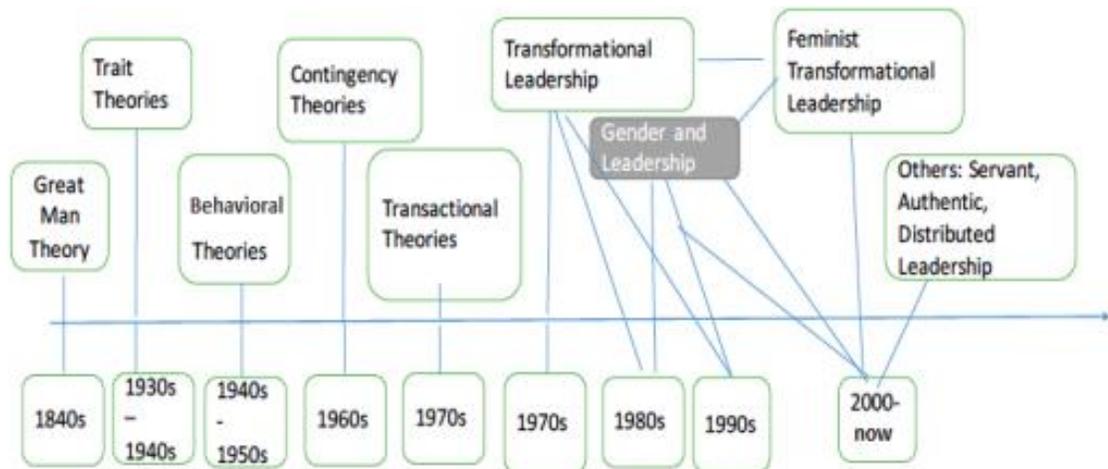


Figure 1. Timeline of Transformational and Feminist Leadership. Source: Wakefield (2017), p. 20.

In working with leadership and leadership development, it is important to understand the history and progression of leadership theories over the years. The expansion of leadership theories from the Great Man Theory of the mid-1800s through the new genre-theories of the 21st century has encompassed and been strengthened by research on gender and leadership.

Within the literature there are no studies that explore women's academic leadership programs through the lens of transformational leadership theory and feminist theory. A case on a leadership program for women that is guided by a transformational leadership theme will be a valuable addition to the literature on leadership development, feminism, and higher education administration. By combining feminist and transformational leadership theories as the framework for this study, a novel view of leadership development programs for women in higher education is made.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methods used in this research study to explore how a leadership development program prepares women for leadership in higher education and how its alumnae perceive themselves as leaders. The study was a single case study following a multiphase mixed methods design. This research provided an in-depth look at the program and the leadership perspectives of a sample of its alumnae. Using the mixed methods design allowed for greater breadth and depth of understanding about the program and the sample of alumnae (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Program observations, document review, a survey, and interviews were the sources of data for the study. In this chapter, I provide information about the case, research questions, research design, research procedures, participants, data collection, data analysis, validity/trustworthiness, and my position as a researcher.

The Case

As mentioned in Chapters I and II, the leadership program that is the focus of this case study is BRIDGES, an established leader development program for women working in four-year institutions of higher education in North Carolina. The program is designed to cultivate and support women as they progress through their careers at all levels and areas of public and private academic institutions in the state. The program places emphasis on enhancing knowledge of higher education, establishing professional networks, and planning for the next steps of career progression, with the ultimate goal of helping North Carolina women in higher education “claim, strengthen, and exercise their leadership capacities” (The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2018, “Program Overview,” para. 1).

The case is a Type 2 embedded single case with two units of analysis, the program and a sample of the alumnae (Yin, 2014, p. 50). The context for the case is a leadership development program for women in higher education. Figure 2 demonstrates the organization of the two units of analysis within the case and context.

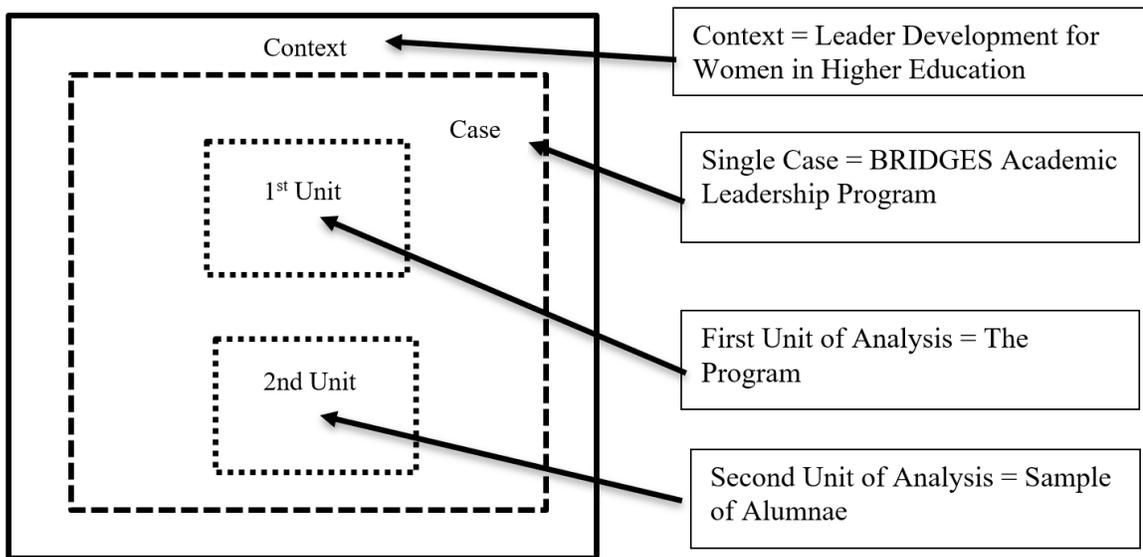


Figure 2. Embedded Single Case—Context, Case, and Units of Analysis.

Selecting the Case

The BRIDGES program was selected for its theme of Transformational Leadership, generalized scope, and purpose of developing leadership in women from different institutions in the state, functional areas of the institution, professional roles, demographics, and professional backgrounds. While some leadership programs focus on higher-level positions such as department heads, deans, provosts, and presidents, BRIDGES is an inclusive program that targets women with potential and the desire to acquire leadership roles and/or more professional responsibility. It targets faculty, staff, and administrators working in North Carolina public and private institutions who seek to develop their leadership skills, increase their professional

responsibilities, or move into administration and executive positions. The program is the only program for women in higher education that has a theme of transformational leadership. Thus, the rationale for the single case design is that it is critical to the exploration of transformational leadership as a theoretical framework for leadership development in higher education. Based on guidance from Yin (2014), there are five rationales for using a single case design: critical, unusual, common, revelatory, or longitudinal. This case is a critical case for analyzing transformational leadership and leadership development for women in higher education.

Other factors that were considered in choosing BRIDGES for the case were the program's longevity, reputation, and culture of participating in research about leadership and leadership development programs. With approximately 40 participants in the program for each of its previous 26 years, BRIDGES has brought together close to 1000 women of different ages, races, professions, and ranks from colleges and universities across North Carolina.

BRIDGES has a culture of supporting and participating in research about leadership and leadership development. This study is the fourth graduate-level research project on the program and leadership development. This research project, to a limited degree, expanded on the previous graduate work of Greene (1998), Sathy (2001), and Flood (2007) for the benefit of having some longitudinal data to investigate (Yin, 2014). Since the nature and intention of these research projects differed, there are only a few commonalities seen among these projects.

The last reason for selecting this case is my knowledge and familiarity with the program. As I explain later in this chapter, I completed the program in 2013. Through this research, I explored how other women experienced the program and the impact (if any) that it had on their lives. Because of my proximity to the study, I considered my positionality as I designed, conducted, and incrementally reported on the project. Positionality and bias concerns are also addressed later in this chapter.

Case Boundaries

The case is bounded by participation in the BRIDGES program and by time. Only women who completed the BRIDGES program were included in the study. After a preliminary review of the program's history and discussion with the executive director of the program, I chose to focus the case on alumnae who completed the program from 2012 to 2017. These years were selected because they represented the most recent content and implementation changes of the program.

The case investigated the perceptions about the program and different aspects of leadership from women who completed the program during these six years. Women who were active with BRIDGES at the time of the study but did not complete the program during these years were excluded; for example, advisory board members from earlier cohorts or women in support roles who never participated in the study were not included.

Setting

The BRIDGES program operates under the William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The program is structured around annual cohorts and meets for eight program days over four weekends in September through November, including two overnight weekends at the beginning and conclusion of the cohort's year. The program meets at a retreat center and the Friday Continuing Education Center in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

The program provides leadership development experiences to annual cohorts of women who work at public or private four-year institutions of higher education in North Carolina. The program's curriculum focuses on building knowledge and skills relevant to women in higher education. Educational experiences include presentations, case studies, activities, time for reflection, and connecting with other BRIDGES participants. Most of the educational content is

delivered by executive administrators from public and private institutions in North Carolina and leadership coaches. Findings from the observations of the 2017 BRIDGES program and more detail about the program are in Chapter IV. The agenda for each program day for the 2017 program are available in Appendix D.

My Relationship to the Case

My role in this project was as a researcher who gathered evidence to answer the research questions guiding this project, and secondarily provide feedback to the director of the program and counsel for how to revise and improve the program. As a graduate of this leadership program, a recent member of its advisory board, and former faculty and current administrator at two universities in the UNC system, my relationship to the case is multi-faceted.

The philosophical orientation that guides my worldview and my approach to this case is pragmatism. Pragmatists seek to collect information in ways that help to provide a thorough understanding to solve a problem and focus on the consequences of the research (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). Rather than searching for truth, pragmatists pursue results that work within the current context, environment, and issue being researched (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). The ultimate driver of this research is the underrepresentation of women, particularly women of color and lack of diversity in higher education leadership. Leadership development programs are one way to approach this problem and thus are the topic of this research project.

I first learned about the BRIDGES program through an internet search for leadership development opportunities in 2010 when my interest in leadership, leadership development, and higher education administration first began. In 2013, I applied to the program and was honored to receive the Chancellor's sponsorship award to participate in the program that year. The program was impactful for me, as it introduced the different functions of higher education institutions and helped me to see higher education operationally through the framework of my recent education

and training in an MBA program. After completing the BRIDGES program, I continued to pursue leadership training and have since participated in seven leadership programs—a total of five leadership programs related to higher education and two specifically for women in higher education.

In 2017, I was given permission to work with BRIDGES for this project and was able to be a non-participant observer of the program that year. In 2018, my role expanded when I was asked to join the BRIDGES advisory board, a team of 12 women who plan and implement the program days, as well as serve on the admissions selection committee. As a board member in 2018 and 2019, I was able to share information from the project to help guide decisions for the program and its curriculum for the 2018 and 2019 class. For the 2020 year, I will continue to work with the BRIDGES board as chair.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to describe how an established state-based women's only leadership development program prepares women for leadership in higher education and explore how alumnae of the program understand leadership and themselves as leaders.

RQ1. How is an established leadership development program preparing women for leadership in higher education?

- 1.1 What is the structure and curriculum of the program?
- 1.2 What are the strengths and areas of improvement for the program?
- 1.3 How satisfied are alumnae with their experiences in the program?
- 1.4 In what ways does the program have an impact on the alumnae?

1.5 Are there group differences (related to age, race/ethnicity, professional position) in program satisfaction and how the alumni perceive the program's impact?

RQ2. How do alumnae of a leadership development program understand themselves as leaders? What contributed to and challenged their leadership journey?

Research Design

This single case study followed a multiphase mixed methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Many mixed methods designs consist of two stages and are distinguished by timing and when the data is mixed. In multiphase, there are more than two stages. For this project, there are three that are distinguished by data source—observations/document review, survey, and interviews. Figure 3 provides a simple flowchart of the phases.

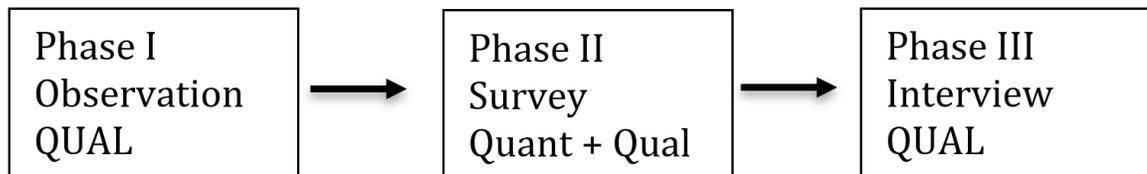


Figure 3. Multiphase Mixed Methods Flowchart.

The first phase was observations of the 2017 BRIDGES program to gather information about the structure and curriculum of the program for Research Question 1. The second phase was a survey consisting of questions that provided quantitative and qualitative data for Research Questions 1 and 2. Quantitative data from the survey assessed program satisfaction, impact, and demographic data. This data was also used to assess if there were group differences among participants' responses (Maxwell, 2013). Qualitative data from open-ended questions on the survey explored the impact of the program, strengths of the program, recommendations for improvement, obstacles to leadership, and leadership styles. Data from the survey was used to

select interview participants through purposive maximal variation sampling for the third phase of the project. The third phase of the project was interviewing to collect in-depth perspectives, expand upon the findings in the survey, and provide additional information about their perspectives and understanding of leadership and themselves as leaders for Research Question 2.

Research Procedures

The participants of the study were women who completed the BRIDGES leadership program from 2012 to 2017, a period that represents recent content and organization of the program. Alumnae who completed the program in this timeframe and for whom the BRIDGES administrative office had valid contact information made up the sampling frame. Non-probability sampling was used in this exploratory and descriptive project, as the study was not experimental, and causation was not being sought (Blair & Blair, 2015).

Recruitment for the study was through email with a link to the Qualtrics survey. Of the 210 women contacted via email, only five emails were returned with notices that the email addresses were no longer valid. The total number of women in the 2012-2017 cohorts was 211 (as noted in Table 1), which also includes my enrollment in 2013; therefore, the number of alumnae contacted is 210. Attempts to find recent email addresses via the internet for these alumnae were unsuccessful; therefore, email requests were sent to the 205 women in the sampling frame. The survey was open for 3 weeks, during which four reminder emails were sent to people who had not opened or completed the survey. The response rate for the survey was 30% for partial completion and 28% for full completion. Of the 205 alumnae with viable email addresses, 62 women were willing to participate in the study; however, five women did not complete the survey beyond the first five to seven questions that cover quantitative data for program impact. The survey protocol is available for review in Appendix B. The responses of these five women who did not complete the entire survey are included in the findings for the questions that they completed. Throughout

this document the number of responses is presented with the results for each survey question. The goal for the number of participants was 50 for the survey from different cohorts, universities, and positions. This target was exceeded in the first invitation; therefore, targeted recruitment emails for respondents were not warranted. The last question on the survey was for women to indicate whether they were willing to participate in the follow-up interview. From this list of 35 willing participants, I used maximal variation sampling techniques to prioritize who was asked to participate to ensure varied perspectives in the third phase of this study.

Twelve semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted from alumnae of classes 2012 through 2017 of the BRIDGES program. Interviewees were chosen based on variation among BRIDGES cohorts, institution, professional title, race/ethnicity, age, and their responses from the survey for the degree to which they were satisfied with the program. Sixteen alumnae were identified as potential interviewees and emailed with interview invitations. Twelve women completed the interviews, two women did not reply to the email, and two women scheduled an interview but were not able to participate. The duration of the 12 telephone interviews ranged from 24 to 54 minutes. The interview protocol and questions are available in Appendix C.

Participants

The sample of this study consisted of alumnae who completed the program from 2012 to 2017, which represents a sector of the alumnae who experienced the most recent content and implementation of the program. Sixty-two women participated in the survey and 12 women participated in the interviews. Of the 205 alumnae in the sampling frame, 62 women provided at least partial responses to the survey. Consent to participate in the research project was included in the introduction of the survey and at the beginning of the interview. The consent form is included in Appendix A. The women who completed the survey worked at 20 different public and private institutions across the state and varied in age, race, and professional title. Twelve women who

completed the survey participated in the interview phase of the study. Variation in cohort, institution, position, age, and race also existed in the interview sample.

The women in the survey sample represented the six cohort years of BRIDGES included in this bounded case. The following demographic tables demonstrate the representation of the different cohorts, race, age, institution, and professional title. The numbers of survey and interview participants from each cohort are presented in Table 1. There were more responses from the most recent BRIDGES classes 2015-2017. Data were compared by cohort during the initial data analysis to ensure the impressions from one cohort did not impact the overall interpretations of the sample.

Table 1

Number of Survey and Interview Participants from Each Cohort

BRIDGES Cohort	Total Participants in BRIDGES Cohorts	Survey Participants	Interview Participants
2012	35	7	3
2013	34	8	1
2014	36	8	2
2015	35	12	3
2016	36	11	1
2017	35	16	2
Totals	211	62	12

Fifty-five survey respondents reported their race/ethnicity. Most of the survey participants are White (70.9%), followed by Black/African American (16.4%), Asian (5.4%), Two or More Races (5.4%), and Native American (1.8%). Interview participants were 50% White, 33% Black, 8% Asian, and 8% Native American. Table 2 contains the number of each participant's race in the survey and interviews.

Table 2

Race of Survey and Interview Participants

Race	Survey Participants	Interview participants
White	39	6
Black/African American	9	4
Asian	3	1
Two or more Races	3	0
Native American	1	1
Did not disclose race	7	0
Totals	62	12

Demographics of the survey participants were further reviewed by race and age in Table 3. Four women who completed the study chose not to disclose their age, in addition to the five who did not complete the survey; thus, the total number of women reporting their age is 53 women. The mean age of the 53 women who entered their age in the survey was 48 years, ranging from 33 to 65 years, with a median of 47 years and a standard deviation of 7.54. The mean age of the women who were interviewed was 49.9 years, with a median of 49 years, and a standard deviation of 6.2. One of the 12 women who were interviewed chose not to disclose her age.

Table 3

Survey Participants by Race and Age Range

Race	Age Ranges						Total	
	30-35	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59		60-65
American Indian/Alaska Native				1				1
Asian		1	2					3
Black/African American			2	2	2	2		8
Two or More Races			1		1			2
White	1	2	8	14	6	3	5	39
Totals	1	3	13	17	9	5	5	53

The women were from 20 higher education institutions and a research institute in North Carolina, which included 13 state-supported public universities and six private colleges and universities. Five of the universities were minority-serving institutions. Most of the sample (87%) were from public institutions, and 9.7% of the sample were from minority-serving institutions. Table 4 provides the type of institutions and the number of survey participants from each institution. Data on interview participants by institution are not reported to protect the identities of the participants.

Table 4
Survey and Interview Participants by Institution Type

Higher Education Institution	Institutions per Category	Survey Participants
Public, Doctoral Granting (R1)	2	18
Private, Doctoral Granting (R1)	1	1
Public, Doctoral Granting, Regional (R2)	5	21
Public, Doctoral Granting, Regional	2	8
Private, Doctoral Granting	2	5
Public, Masters Level, Regional, Minority Serving	2	2
Public, Baccalaureate Level, Regional	2	3
Private, Baccalaureate Level	3	3
Research Institute	1	1
Total	20	62

Survey respondents reported their professional titles as an open-ended question on the survey. Most of the positions of survey respondents were in areas of Academic Affairs (77%), followed by Student Affairs (8%), Enrollment/Retention (6%), Business Affairs (3%), Research (3%), and Equity/Inclusion (1%). As noted in Table 5, the most common professional roles of the

survey respondents were associate professors, director/executive directors, professors, and associate deans. Eighteen different professional roles were listed.

Table 5
Professional Titles of Survey Participants

Professional Title	Survey Participants	Interview Participants
Associate Professor	13	2
Director/Exec Director	10	2
Professor	9	1
Associate Dean	7	2
Department Chair	5	2
Assistant Professor	4	1
Assistant Dean	3	0
Associate Director	2	0
Assistant Director	1	0
Assistant Provost	1	1
Assistant Vice Chancellor	1	1
Associate Department Head	1	0
Dean	1	0
Instructional Designer	1	0
Nontenure Tract Faculty	1	0
Production Manager	1	0
Research Associate	1	0
Totals	62	12

Selecting Interview Participants

Of the 53 women who completed the entire survey, 35 indicated that they would be willing to participate in the interview. The list of willing interview participants was organized by cohort year, organization, professional role, race, and age to ensure as many perspectives as possible. Three to four women from each cohort were identified based on variation in institution,

role, race, and age. Twelve women were sent emails requesting their participation, agreed to participate, and interviews were scheduled. Two of the interviewees were not able to take the call for the interview due to conflict in their schedule and time-sensitive work demands. Attempts were made to reschedule but to no avail. Two alternates were identified that balanced the cohorts, institutions, and age. These two alternates agreed to the telephone interviews.

Interview Participants

The first interview was with a 44-year-old Asian associate professor who works in a regional public institution. The second interview was with a Black 47-year-old woman who serves as associate dean at an R1 public university. The third interview was with a Black 51-year-old department head who works at a regional institution. The fourth interview was with a White department chair who worked at a regional public institution. The fifth interview was with a White 41-year-old assistant provost who works at a regional university. The sixth interview was a professor at a public liberal arts university. She did not disclose her demographic information. The seventh interview was with a White 40-year-old assistant professor at a private liberal arts college. The eighth interview was with a Black 55-year-old director/administrator at an R1 research-intensive university. The ninth interview was with a Black 54-year-old executive director at a doctoral-granting, minority-serving public institution. The 10th interview was with a Native American executive at a public regional university. The 11th interview was with a White 58-year-old associate dean who works at a private university. The 12th interview was with a White 60-year-old associate dean who works at a regional university.

Data Collection

The sequence of data collection was observations/document review, survey, and interviews with results from one phase influencing the development of the next phase. Observations of the 2017 BRIDGES program and review of supporting documents were used to

gather preliminary information to describe the program structure, settings, and learning activities for Research Question 1. Information from the review of literature, previous findings from research projects, and observations/document review were used to develop the survey. Questions for the semi-structured interviews were based on information from the peer-reviewed publications, textbooks, and survey findings. Data from the surveys also guided sampling for the interviews. Table 6 presents the data collection techniques used as the primary source of data to answer the research questions and sub-questions.

Table 6

Data Collection Techniques by Research Question

Research Question	Research Technique
RQ1. How is an established leadership development program preparing women for leadership in higher education?	
1.1 What is the structure and curriculum of the program?	Observations Program Agendas & Supporting Documents
1.2 What are the strengths and opportunities for improvement of the program?	Survey
1.3 How satisfied are alumnae with their experiences in the program?	Survey
1.4 In what ways does the program have an impact on the alumnae?	Survey
1.5 Are there group differences (related to age, race/ethnicity, professional position) in program satisfaction and how the alumnae perceived the program's impact?	Survey
RQ2. How do alumnae of a leadership development program understand themselves leaders and leadership in higher education? What contributed to and challenged their leadership journey?	Interviews & Survey

In October 2017, the survey was pilot tested with five BRIDGES participants, four advisory board members (who are alumnae), and the executive director of the program. Feedback from these nine women was given verbally and in writing. The women who participated in this

review recommended changes in the wording of the questions, the response options, and the organization of the survey. The questions were modified based on the feedback that helped to clarify the questions and improve the flow of the survey.

The survey, which is provided in Appendix B, consisted of 18 questions. It began with a 5-scale question used to assess satisfaction. The next four questions targeted the extent to which the program met different objectives and constructs of leadership. Response options for these questions are based on a 5-item Likert scale that assessed the extent including options of ‘not at all, somewhat, neutral, moderate extent, and great extent.’ There were six open-ended questions with free-form text boxes. Three demographics questions were at the end of the survey and asked about age, race/ethnicity, and job title. The participants’ cohort year was determined from the directory document and added to the data files. A table that provides detail about the survey data is available in Appendix B.

Data Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were used to give meaning to the information collected. Data analysis occurred in phases as the case study project occurred. Qualitative thematic and pattern analysis techniques were used to analyze the information from the open-ended survey questions and interview transcripts. Coding, or aggregating text into categories and labeling them, was the first step in finding themes among the data. Initially, I had planned to follow a lean coding approach where the number of codes is fixed at 25-30 codes and 5-7 themes as analysis occurs (Creswell, 2013). Lean coding intended to streamline the process of aggregation of information to codes and codes to themes; however, I reverted to open coding due to the degree of variance of responses. Codes emerged from the data rather than using a priori codes from the literature. Codes were assigned labels that described the content or nature of the information in a manner that was analyzed and aggregated into themes. After the second round of

coding, I read the content again and recursively analyzed for similar content, themes, and patterns to see the greater meaning of the data (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative data software was helpful in the aggregation of information, codes, and themes. For this project, I used ATLAS.ti 8 and Excel to organize and analyze the qualitative data.

Statistical analysis of quantitative data was mostly descriptive statistics, e.g., frequencies of categorical data and averages. These data are displayed in narratives and tables and integrated with findings from qualitative analysis. Group differences by cohort, age range, race, and position were assessed for responses to the program impact and satisfaction questions on the survey. Statistical comparisons of group differences were conducted using the Kruskal Wallis test for non-parametric data. SPSS version 24 and Excel were used to analyze the quantitative data. The methods of data collection, sampling, data analysis, and limitations are included in Table 7.

Table 7

Sample, Analysis, and Limitations for Each Data Collection Technique

Data Collection	Sample	Data Analysis	Limitations of Data
Observation & Document Review	Observations of eight program days. Review program agenda for 2013, 2016, 2017, 2018. Review program materials for 2017.	Review for content, similarities and differences.	Four years of agenda were available.
Surveys	Alumnae ($n=62$)	Frequencies Descriptive statistics	Small sample Non-parametric data Categorical data
Interviews	Alumnae ($n=12$)	Code Patterns Themes	Volunteer sampling for survey & volunteer and purposive sampling

The three phases of the study occurred sequentially with data collection, analysis, and interpretation occurring during each phase before moving to the next. After data analysis and interpretation of the first phase, the program was not clearly and directly aligning with the primary theoretical framework of the study, Transformational Leadership Theory. This finding and the pragmatist orientation of the project led me to approach the second phase using a survey to investigate the effectiveness of the program with a question for participants to define transformational leadership, rather than dive deeper into the components of Transformational Leadership Theory. Transformational leadership continued to be intertwined in the second and third phases of the project to gather information on the understanding of transformational leadership. A timeline of the research project is provided in Table 8, and the three phases of the student timing of research steps are presented in Figure 4.

Table 8

Timeline for Research Project

Dates	Action
Nov 12, 2016	Verbal proposal to BRIDGES director
Jan 27, 2017	Confirmation and approval from BRIDGES director
May 9, 2017	Overview of study presented to BRIDGES Advisory Board
August 2017	IRB application
September – November 2017	Program Observation
October 2017	Pilot the survey with BRIDGES alumnae & director
Nov 2017-March 2018	Finalize survey in Qualtrics & test Survey with BRIDGES board
April, 2018	Survey open
May-July 2018	Analyze survey data and plan for interviews
Aug-Sept 2018	Interviews

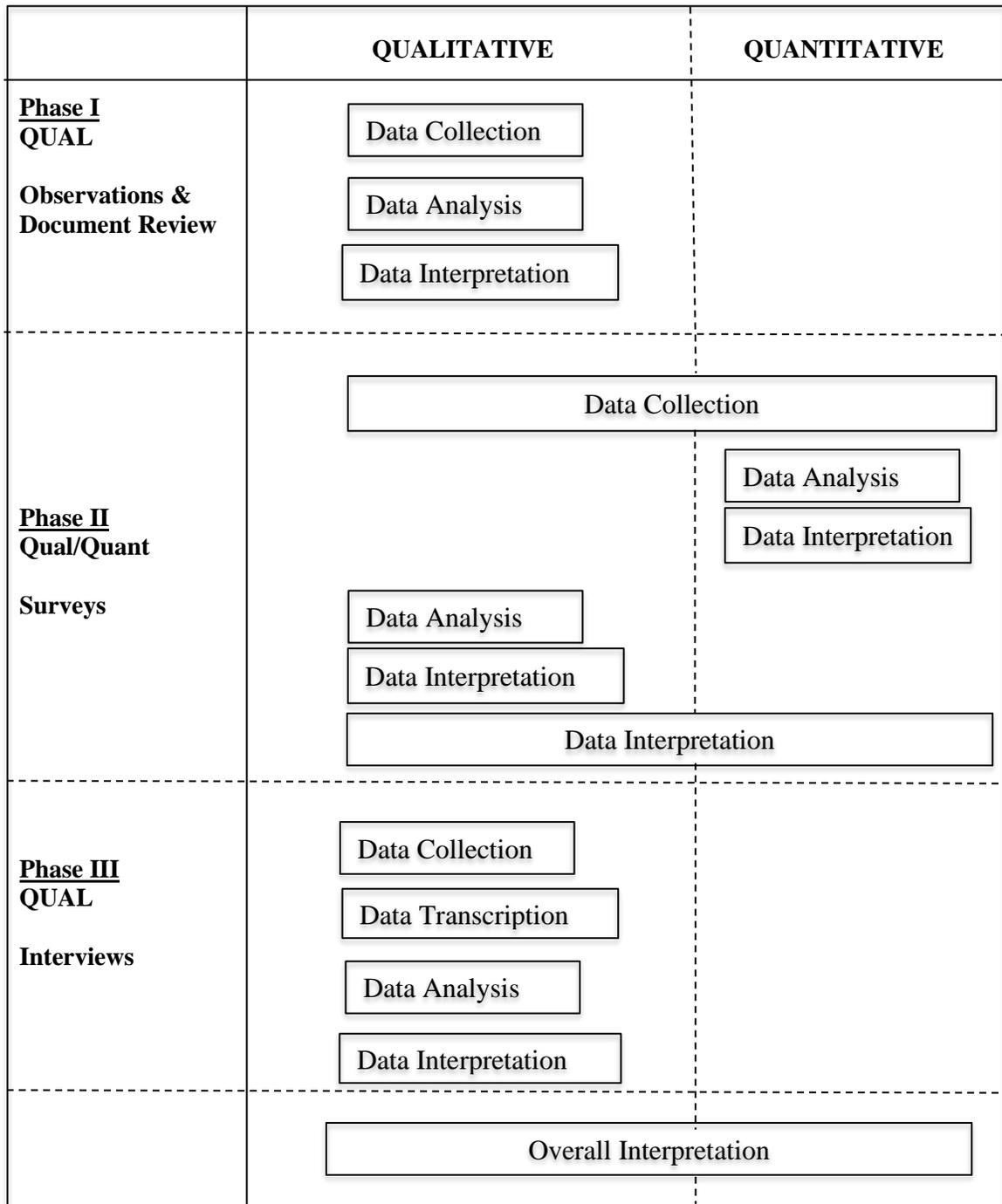


Figure 4. Multiphase Mixed Methods Design (QUAL + quant).

Validity/Trustworthiness

Three considerations for data dependability (trustworthiness, confirmability, and credibility) were considered when designing and conducting this study—construct validity, external validity, and reliability (Yin, 2014). Construct validity relates to how well the instruments measure the concepts of the study. Collecting multiple sources of evidence and collaborating with the director and members of the advisory board about the case study were tactics that attempt to mitigate threats to construct validity. The interviews were semi-structured to allow for clarifying questions during the interviews. External validity is concerned with whether the findings are generalizable beyond this study (Yin, 2014). By describing the program, other programs may use this case to determine if it is a relatable comparison. For reliability, the concern is that the case, particularly the data collection techniques, can be repeated. Protocols for the interviews are in the appendices and may be used to repeat part or all of the study.

There are several types of validity to consider in quantitative research: content validity, construct validity, and criterion-related validity (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Content validity is whether the questions are representative of possible items. Survey questions were adapted from information about the program, previous research on the program, peer-reviewed articles on related topics, and research methods and program evaluation textbooks. Construct validity ensures that the technique measures what it is intended to measure. Pilot testing of the survey questions with alumnae and board members and clarifying questions throughout the interviews added to the content and construct validity (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Criterion-related validity is whether scores relate to an external standard. Considering the nature of this case and the lack of literature published about the topic, external standards were limited. Findings were compared to other research projects conducted on BRIDGES and other leadership programs.

Researcher Role and Potential Bias

My experiences and previous involvement with the BRIDGES program leads to logical questions of researcher bias and reactivity (Maxwell, 2013). As a graduate of this leadership program, a recent member of its advisory board, and former faculty and administrator at one of the universities in the UNC system, I was aware of the potential for bias in making decisions during every step of this project. Although this familiarity with the program and the UNC system was advantageous in planning and implementing the project, it can raise concerns for neutrality in data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

Realizing these potential threats to validity, I considered research bias and reactivity at each stage of the research. Throughout the project, I considered the influence of my perspectives that came from my pragmatic approach to research and familiarity with the program. As I made decisions about the study, I asked myself, “Am I being fair and impartial?” I reflected on thoughts and emotions that arose as I observed the program, read literature and other material for the study, selected questions and participants, read responses, and analyzed/interpreted the data. It was a continuous exercise in mindfulness, a practice that I have been doing for twelve years. Responses and viewpoints from the participants of the study were included in this work, regardless of whether they are positive, negative, or neutral. As I read responses from alumnae that reflected my experiences and impressions with the program, I held those thoughts separately and worked with only the information at hand.

In addition to filling gaps in the literature about higher education leadership development programs and women leaders, my role in this project is also impacted by my philosophical orientation toward pragmatism. My pragmatic approach to this research project was to gather, analyze, and compile information to inform decision-making about the implementation and

overall effectiveness of leadership programs. The intention is to use research in ways that bring a positive impact in the pursuit of the highest quality of leadership programs.

Summary

This multiphase, mixed methods, embedded single case study of the BRIDGES program used observations, document review, surveys, and interviews to provide insight and facilitate understanding of a leadership development program for women in higher education (Stake, 1995). Few studies have examined the outcomes, successes, or experiences of program participants, and even fewer have documented their operations and effectiveness in peer-reviewed publications. Such research is important because of the potential to reveal concepts that can improve leadership programs to best help women navigate the challenges for women as leaders in higher education.

The next chapter presents the findings for Research Question 1 about the program—how it operates, its impact, strengths, and areas for improvement.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Research Question 1: The Program

This chapter presents the findings for the first research question and sub-questions that were described in the first three chapters. Chapter IV presents findings of how and to what extent the leadership program prepares women for leadership in higher education. The first research question addresses how the program is preparing women for leadership in higher education.

There are five sub-questions to Research Question 1:

1. What is the structure and curriculum of the program?
2. What are the strengths and areas of improvement of the program?
3. How satisfied are alumnae with their experiences in the program?
4. In what ways does the program have an impact on the alumnae?
5. Are there group differences (related to age, race/ethnicity, and professional role) in program satisfaction and how the alumnae perceived the program's impact?

Data from observations of the program in 2017 and surveys conducted in 2018 are compiled and presented together to answer this research question. Documentation of the findings for the second research question to address the participants and their perception of leadership is in Chapter V.

Research Question 1.1.a: Program Structure

To answer the first sub-question for Research Question 1 on the program structure, I reviewed the program's website, previous research about the program, and materials from the

advisory board. From these documents, I found the following information about the structure of the program, as well as the descriptive information about the program in Chapters I, II, and III.

BRIDGES strives to be a resource for female leaders to lead at their institutions, across disciplines and rank. BRIDGES is the only state-based leadership development program for women faculty, staff, and administrators in higher education. It was established in 1993 as a grassroots initiative by a group of women from two prominent institutions in the University of North Carolina System. The initial purpose of the program was to develop potential leaders, as well as symbolize the state's commitment to helping women's success in higher education (Greene, 1998).

Most leadership programs in higher education focus on higher-level academic positions—department heads, deans, provosts, and presidents, while others are for student support or Student Affairs. The BRIDGES program is for women leaders from different functional areas of the institution, professional roles, demographics, and professional backgrounds. It targets faculty, staff, and administrators from 4-year public and private institutions.

The BRIDGES program is a part of the Professional Development and Enrichments Programs division of the UNC-Chapel Hill Friday Center for Continuing Education. The professional development and enrichment programs at the Friday Center are run by a director, a program facilitator, and a registration manager. The BRIDGES program has an advisory board of twelve program alumnae. The advisory board meets monthly from February through December. Board members guide the director on topics and presenters for the program based on session evaluations from the previous year and their knowledge and connections to higher education leaders. Post evaluations are reviewed after each session and tweaks are made in the next session based on the feedback. An admissions committee of the board reviews applications and selects the next cohort for the program. Each board member has assigned responsibility for a program

weekend. On their assigned weekend, board members support planning and logistics, communicate with presenters, logistics, introduce speakers, and provide general assistance to the program's operations.

The program occurs over eight program days (four Fridays and four Saturdays) in September through November. There are two overnight weekends at the beginning and the end of the cohort's year. The conference center is an upscale, relaxed, professional environment less than a mile from the BRIDGES office. The retreat environment offers opportunities for personal and social time. There are many spaces outdoors and indoors for informal gatherings and private areas for individual reflection, whether it be on the patio, by the fire, in several lounge areas, or in the lobby. The second and third weekends are day programs at the Friday Continuing Education Center in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, the home of the BRIDGES program office.

As of 2018, the program cost is \$2,200 and includes program materials and meals for the four weekends and lodging in Chapel Hill on the first and fourth weekends. Most institutions cover the cost of the tuition and reimburse the participants for additional travel costs as professional development funds.

The program is designed for annual cohorts of women who work at public or private four-year institutions of higher education in North Carolina. Each year the admissions committee of the BRIDGES advisory board reviews applications and selects 35 to 40 women based on leadership potential and diversity in race, age, professional role, and institution. Information for this study was collected from BRIDGES XX (2012) through BRIDGES XV (2017).

The BRIDGES program provides an opportunity for women who work in all divisions and levels of 4-year colleges and universities in North Carolina to learn about the functions of higher education and develop their leadership skills and knowledge. The program is a combination of residential and day programming that emphasizes and values diversity and

helping women reach their leadership potential. The second part of Research Question 1.1 is about the program curriculum. The next section covers the educational content of the program.

Research Question 1.1.b: Program Curriculum

Information about the curriculum of the program is based on observations of the 2017 BRIDGES program and review of agendas and course materials. This section begins with an overview of the curriculum. Information from each of the four parts of the program is presented under subsections Part 1 through Part 4.

The program's curriculum focuses on building knowledge and skills relevant to women in higher education. It is shaped by research and best practices on leadership development, academic leadership, and women in leadership. Leadership coaches, executives, administrators, faculty, and staff from public and private institutions deliver educational content. Decisions about the content and who will present are determined by the director with assistance from the advisory board. Half of the presenters have a long-standing commitment to BRIDGES and have been involved with the program for years.

The curriculum is centered around the subjects of higher education and leadership development for women. The program provides foundational knowledge of functional areas of an institution—finance and budgets, human resources, legal counsel, fundraising, grant writing, and crisis management. The content on leadership skill development covers self-awareness, communication, negotiation, navigating political environments, goal setting, and time and energy management. The curriculum also addresses implicit bias, generational, and gender differences.

The content is delivered as structured face-to-face sessions by a content expert who presents the information and guides the class through interactive activities related to the topic. All members of the cohort learn the same content at the same pace. Learning activities include

presentations, think-pair-share, table discussions, group discussions, case studies, and role-play. There is also structured time for reflection and networking/connecting with members of the class.

Some aspects of the program follow a student-centered approach that allows for individualized leadership development experiences. These experiences include participation in a 360-degree multi-source feedback inventory, an option to work with a career/executive coach, and beginning in 2017, creating a leadership narrative. A couple of topics in the program are presented from a problem-centered approach. The learning activities for the crisis management and negotiation sessions are based on scenarios derived from actual events where the class analyzes the situation and works in groups to role-play and solve problems.

The program has four objectives: (a) Develop insights into leadership, with particular focus on the special skills and attributes women bring to their leadership roles, (b) Acquire an understanding of the many facets of colleges and universities, (c) Refine and improve cross-cultural communication skills, and (d) Create a program of personal and professional development to benefit themselves and their institutions. From the review of the 2017 program, three of these objectives were covered in the curriculum throughout the program that year—the first, second, and fourth. Although there was a communication session, it focused on presentations and common obstacles for women leaders. Cross-cultural communication was not addressed or mentioned in the program. The first objective, “. . . special skills and attributes women bring to their leadership roles” hints toward aspects of Cultural Feminist theory described earlier in Chapters I and II.

Beginning in 1999, BRIDGES has followed a theme of developing transformational leaders and transformational leadership. The program’s interpretation of transformational leadership was developed from research about the program by Greene (1998). From this work, BRIDGES defined transformational leaders as those who have values and who are prepared to

precipitate change: “Transformational leaders facilitate the development of leadership in those around them and rally community members to tackle difficult problems together.

Transformational leaders know when it is time to transform a situation and develop something new and different” (The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2018, “Bridges Theme: Leading in a Time of Transformation,” paras. 3–4). As we will see later in the chapter, this definition of transformational leadership aligns loosely with the theoretical work of Burns, Bass, and Avolio or from research on the theory.

The program is divided into four parts with each part designed around a theme related to transformational leadership: Part I, Developing a Transformational Perspective; Part II, Using Resources in a Transformational Context; Part III, Transforming for Continuity and Change; and Part IV, Transforming Together. For the 2017 program year, I gathered information about the program as a non-participant observer. The following information is from those observations as well as agendas, handouts from the sessions, and program materials.

Part I: Developing a transformational perspective. Part I of the program focuses on internal transformation and self-awareness. It sets the tone for the program with a deep dive into authenticity and privilege. The class is encouraged to get to know each other and to know more about themselves. This opening session is a time of orientation and introduction, where everyone can be themselves, in an environment that is comfortable and safe—where each person can be authentic if he or she chooses. An environment where women feel safe to be authentic and vulnerable is often viewed as a strength and common practice in leadership programs for women (DeFrank-Cole, Latimer, Neidermeyer, & Wheatly, 2016; Evans, Hess, Abdelhamid, & Stepleman, 2017; R. Selzer et al., 2017; Vinnicombe & Singh, 2003).

In the 2017 opening session, the president of a private college shared her experiences and perceptions of privilege. She spoke about how she found safety as a child in a school of minority

students by being small, going unnoticed, and just passing through life. She described lacking confidence and just passing through life as an impoverished life. “[Being small and going unnoticed] keeps people from understanding themselves and each other. How can we live an authentic life of purpose if we remain small and unnoticed?” She encouraged the class to seek opportunities to talk to and be with people who are different from themselves. “From these interactions, you can learn about yourself, especially if you disagree with their perceptions and thoughts.” She encouraged the class to explore their privileges and what influences their life by realizing and questioning the differences in the way people perceive life.

Question what influences your life and your ideas of your perfect self. Think about what is influencing your perception of your authentic self, versus who you should be. Who you should be often comes from a position of authority or an external expectation. There is no perfect balance in life, but there is something grounding in having authenticity and purpose. No one is so defined by their circumstances that they cannot be their authentic selves.

My observation of the cohort during this presentation was that every member of the class sat mesmerized by what she was saying and the motivation that she was imparting to the class. This was the first presentation of several to create the space for authentic self-exploration.

The next session on power and privilege was by a leadership consultant. After a presentation on terms to describe leadership, the presenter turned the conversation to leadership identity. She led the class in a silent reflection to explore who they are as a leader, their purpose as a leader, and their commitments. Before the weekend, the presenter asked the class to take the Harvard Implicit Associate Test. Each member of the class chose three biases to test themselves—skin tone, gender, race, religion, sexuality, and age. The class discussed with women at their tables surprising aspects of their results and their experiences taking the test. Then they were asked to visualize themselves in a role at work and consider what they had learned about themselves from the bias test. She then provided four cases for the class to discuss how the

subjects of the case were being devalued and disrespected; how you would feel if you were in their position; who was responsible for remedying the situation; and what actions should be taken.

An exercise that leads to personal and professional self-reflection is the 360 multi-source feedback activity. To gain a better understanding of their perception of themselves at work and other's perceptions of them, each cohort member participates in a 360 multi-source feedback activity from the Center for Creative Leadership. Before the first weekend, each woman and her supervisor, direct reports, and colleagues complete the survey. The assessment measures the participant's strengths and areas for development for 15 job-related skills and the perceived level of importance of each skill in the woman's current role. On the second day of the first weekend, each woman receives access to their 360 feedback reports, which compares their impressions of their strengths, weaknesses, and importance of leadership skills with the perceptions of the people they work with and for. Two members of the board are trained to review the assessment tool and guide the class through their feedback. The class is given time to reflect on information from their feedback reports and informally join with other women to talk about the findings if they wish. The 360 multi-rater feedback instruments gained popularity in the 1990s when General Electric, under the leadership of Jack Welch, publicly adopted it for internal leadership development and succession planning. Shortly after, management and leadership development scholars began to research and publish the concept in management, leadership, and human resources journals (Day, 2000; McCauley & Hezlett, 2002). It is still a well-known and respected tool to help the person being reviewed become aware of the perceived strengths and weaknesses as perceived by different people and roles in the workplace (Kanaslan & Iyem, 2016; Kumar & Jayakrushna, 2017).

In 2017, the program added a component for each woman in the class to develop a leadership narrative over the course of the program as a way to develop their leadership identity. In this first year of the activity, it was described as developing your leadership story as a combination of thoughts, examples, stories, assertions, and guidance that you want to communicate as a leader. The leadership narrative was designed around a guest storyteller who told the Ghanaian story of Sankofa, a story that inspires the listeners to honor from where they came. The class was instructed to identify, narrow, reflect, refine, and transmit leadership lessons of their life into a story. Guiding questions were provided for the leadership narrative that paralleled the storyteller: Who am I? Who do I belong to? What contributions do I want to make? What principles are important to me? What do I value in leaders? What have I learned from my successes and failures? What impact do I want to have at work and in life? The project had five steps that each member of the class worked on throughout the four parts of the program. In the last session before the graduation ceremony, the class chose one of their classmates to share their leadership story, and then volunteers shared their stories with the entire class.

Part I of the BRIDGES program is a time for the cohort to get to know each other, get to know themselves better, and to think about what they want to accomplish professionally. Discussion topics encourage women to build on their self-awareness and be aware of how their thoughts and experiences influence the way they work and their potential and performance as a leader.

Part II: Using our resources in a transformational context. The topics for Part II are finance, budgeting, and human resources. The vice-chancellor for finance from a regional, public R2 university, who has over 25 years of experience in higher education, has led the finance and budgeting session for several years. In 2017 the session began with an overview of the system budget and relationship with the state legislature while adding context with historical

comparisons, other state systems, and private institutions. His session provided a detailed description of the North Carolina state funding model and the use restrictions of different types of funds. The second presenter in the finance and budgeting session in the 2017 year was a dean at another regional R2 public university. She gave her perspective and advice on how to stay informed about the state budgets, books to read, and other resources. She covered common budget pitfalls, ways to determine your budgeting style, and common issues that deans face in public institutions.

The session on human resources (HR) has gone through changes over the past few years from panel discussions to presentation/lectures by current and retired human resources executives and administrators. In 2017 the session was by an associate vice chancellor at an R1 institution in the state system. He provided a history of human resources, the role of HR in higher education, and linked HR to transformational leadership. He led a brief discussion of the meaning of transformational leadership and provided stories of leaders whom he perceived as transformational, as well as characteristics of effective leaders. As a developing scholar of transformational research, I perceived the session to be well-researched and representative of scholarly work on transformational leadership and leadership development. However, the post-session evaluations of the session indicated that the session was not well-received and fell flat with the 2017 class.

Another session in Part II was on generational differences led by a leadership and generational expert from a large public regional research-intensive institution. The class was divided by age according to decades and each group discussed their goals, values, priorities, and challenges. The energy from the lively discussion was palpable during this session. At the end of the session the presenter provided guidance for women based on their decade of life. She encouraged all women to take time for reflection to consider generational differences when

working with colleagues in different age groups and look for informal mentoring from many different people along the way.

The session on negotiation has had different speakers over the years. In 2017, it was led by two alumnae of the program and focused on salary negotiation from a gender discrepancy approach. They presented a list of options to negotiate, as well as 10 negotiation tactics adapted from *The Only Negotiating Guide You'll Ever Need* by Peter Stark and Jane Flaherty. The presenters created and distributed a negotiation planning guide for hiring negotiations in higher education. The presenters referred to the implicit bias survey that the cohort took before Part I to address the gender and race preferences in hiring. In the second half of the session, the class performed a role-play activity of four roles—hiring role, hiring mentor role, candidate role, and candidate mentor role.

The session on “Getting out of My Own Way” was also led by a former BRIDGES alumna. She led the class in four activities. The first was a visioning exercise based on professional desires and strengths/weaknesses. The second activity was on their impressions of success, leadership, and confidence among women in their lives. The third activity was developing their stretch goal, and the fourth was developing habits to reach that goal. After each activity, the women in the class shared their thoughts at their tables and then opened the discussion up to the entire group. One discussion that led to open and authentic conversations was when they were sharing their memories of influential people in their lives and their impressions of women in leadership roles. The point was made that these memories influence how they make decisions and lead. As I walked around the room, I heard stories about fathers, mothers, aunts, grandparents, mentors, co-workers, and friends who taught them lessons of what women should act and be like. A point that was made frequently during the discussion was how these people communicated and influenced others.

A session that has been a part of BRIDGES for many years is about the importance of physical activity. The presenter is a faculty member of Exercise and Sport Science at a public R1 institution. She presented information on health and skill components of fitness, the importance of physical fitness in everyday life, and how to adopt a fitness routine. She also led the class in exercises and stretches that can be done at work during the workday.

Part II develops the cohort's knowledge of the functional areas of colleges and universities—finance/budgeting, human resources, and crisis management. It also is a time to build knowledge and skills in negotiation, goal setting, generational differences, and implicit bias, while continuing to dive into self-awareness and questioning their assumptions and impressions. Emphasis on self-care is also a part of this weekend with the session on physical activity.

Part III: Transforming for continuity and change. Part III continues with knowledge and skill-building in the topics of fund-raising, grant writing, communication, leading in a politicized environment, higher education law, and women as transformational leaders. In 2017, Part III of the program began with a presentation by a director of development from a private research-intensive university. The session was an open discussion about the importance of building relationships, listening to people, and making connections. She shared that fundraising is about listening to what people are interested in and what they want to be a part of, and then making connections between the potential donors' interests and opportunities at the university for the donors to invest in and help make it happen. Throughout the discussion, the presenter highlighted the similarities in the characteristics of a good fundraiser and a good leader. She told stories of her personal journey, wins, and losses and how she persisted through them.

The session on grant writing was conducted by a director of a Science and Technology center at an R2 regional university. She guided the cohort through her three steps of grant writing—preparing to write, putting it on paper, and building a writing team. She provided tips

for each step of the process with an emphasis on how to be innovative and brainstorm. She led the group through a brainstorming activity to develop a proposal idea and answer the big six questions (who, what, when, where, why, and how) about their idea. As she discussed the last step in the grant writing process, she covered the key players of a writing team—planners, innovators, problem solvers, clear thinkers, and writers. She then led small groups in an activity to work as a team and brainstorm ideas to solve a common problem in higher education.

After lunch, the next session covered legal issues in higher education and was led by the vice-chancellor and general counsel from a large, public university who has presented at BRIDGES for many years. The session began with the first amendment and free speech in higher education. Differences in laws for public and private institutions is the first main point of the presentation. Most of the presentation is about laws and restrictions for public institutions with examples of judicial cases that support and explain each topic. At the end of the presentation, he guided the class through conversations about recent scenarios on college campuses and what should have been done to prevent and/or respond to the problem.

The second day of Part III of the program is on politics in the workplace, communication, institutional context, and work/life balance. For several years, a vice chancellor for Student Affairs with over 20 years in higher education has led a discussion about politics in the workplace. She tells stories and entertains questions for the entire class to discuss. The session centers around problem-solving, motivation, and educating women on the reality of the political game. The key message is helping women to understand their institution's politics and to plan how to work within it while maintaining their integrity and values. She advised having confidence and not showing emotions is an essential lesson for women. She described the four common adverse outcomes of office politics—spreading rumors, gaining favor by flattering the

boss, taking credit for other's work, and sabotaging other's work. She also provided ways to work around them.

The next session on communication and effective presentations was held by an associate professor of Business at an R1 public institution. His talk focused on the communication differences between introverts and extroverts. He provided tools for introverts to energize and bring energy to their communication and presentations. He encouraged women to be authentic leaders, even if the deck is stacked against you. "Academia is filled with arrogance and pompousness. The burdens of prejudice and stereotypes are heavier for women—so you be you." The activity for the session was to draft a recruiting sentence that includes the points: Where am I? Where am I going? What is different about me? What do I want to contribute? He then reviewed the characteristics of an effective presentation and showed examples of Ted Talks and YouTube presentations as examples of exemplary presentation skills.

The last session of Part III on institutional context and work/life balance was led by a dean of Arts and Sciences at a research-intensive regional institution. This session was based on the challenges that women face in their professional lives. "Leading is difficult in a culture that defines leadership according to male behaviors and mannerisms." She encouraged the class to have a reputation for integrity and do the right thing over and over again. Good leaders develop through a never-ending process of self-study, education, training, and experience. She advised them to take control of their time, not to strive for perfection, QTIP (quit taking it personally), remember why you embraced this career, take care of yourself, develop a community, identify your stressors, understand if the stress is real, maintain focus, look at your systems, consider your environment, be aware of your work rhythm, and understand the importance of play. The activity for this session was for the class to map the connections between their personal history and professional path and then share their trajectories with their table. She then led a time of

reflection for the women to think about their leader identity and themselves as leaders. As her presentation progressed to work/life balance, she emphasized that trying to achieve work/life balance is an impossible goal. “We should be talking about work/life culture—so we understand we have a life outside of work. You are one person who inhabits both worlds.” She encouraged the class to keep these questions in mind: How can I continue to grow as an academic leader? What can the institution do for me? What can I do for myself?

Part IV: Transforming together. Part IV focuses on living your purpose, bringing it all together, and celebrating the cohort’s accomplishments. Day seven of the program began with a session on applying to their professional lives what the class had learned in the program. This session was led by an executive coach and consultant who has over 30 years of experience in leadership training. The session began with an open discussion about what the class wants to bring back to their institutions. The points that were shared were conversations about implicit bias, transparency, mentoring, online presence, prioritizing health, and constructive/empowering conversations. When asked about the doubts that women have in bringing their takeaways from BRIDGES to their institutions some thoughts were: What will people think of me? Will other people have an interest in this work? Will there be any resources to support this? Can I justify the time that I will spend on this approach to leadership? She led the class through a copyright-protected leadership visualization activity to represent their current situation and then for their future self. Some of the visuals shared with the class were: Elastagirl (I can handle anything), a hamster in the exercise wheel, a backed-up water hose (with pressure building up), Alice in Wonderland (bigger than anything else in her world), a big goldfish in a small bowl, a fish in the ocean alone not seeking just navigating, and a tug of war. The facilitator led the class through visualizations of how to prepare for the future and visualize themselves in their future.

The second session of the day was on crisis management and led by the vice chancellor for Student Affairs from an R1 institution in the university system. Usually, the crisis management session is in Part II; however, in 2017, the presenter was only available to attend the last session, so the schedule was revised to accommodate him. Topics in the presentation were how to determine if there is a crisis, what is the difference between risk management and crisis management, and what to do during and after a crisis. “Judgement is the most important thing. Make the right decision at the right time. You have to have alligator skin to do administrative jobs in higher ed.” This session culminated in the class working in groups to discuss and present their plans of action for case studies that he developed during his 25 years in Student Affairs.

The last day of the program is a day of reflection and sharing among the class. The reflection centered around questions about the lessons that each woman learned during the program. Women worked in pairs to discuss qualities that they value in leaders, what they have learned from their successes and failures, their leadership philosophy, and the insights that they gained during the BRIDGES program. After the discussion in pairs, women volunteered to share their experiences with the entire class. In 2017 the class interpreted the leadership narrative activity as a creative writing exercise. Some connected their progression through life to determine her identity in her discipline. Another narrative was a reflection of what she wanted to share as a mentor to other women, as she developed her identity as a mentor. Another narrative was a reflection of how leadership had chosen her and her realization that she had a responsibility to lead and make a difference. Another narrative was about her personal journey and linking it to her grandmothers’ birthday.

The program concludes with a graduation ceremony with a graduation speaker from the cohort who is elected from the class and a closing keynote speaker. The graduation speaker recaps the memories and experiences of the program and adds personal notes about the

participants and the program. BRIDGES alumnae from other cohorts are invited to attend the luncheon and graduation ceremony to meet the current graduating class. The keynote speaker in 2017, an executive coach and former top executive in the banking and investment industry, shared how she became successful and how she prioritized and managed her time.

The BRIDGES curriculum develops knowledge of the functional areas of higher education and covers topics important to women leaders in academia. Understanding functions that define the organizational structure in higher education is a main component of the programming for BRIDGES. Finance and budgets, human resources, legal counsel, fundraising, grant writing, and crisis management have sessions dedicated specifically to these functional areas, as do areas of interpersonal skills—self-awareness, communication, negotiation, navigating political environments, goal setting, and time and energy management, implicit bias, and generational and gender differences. These competencies are reflected in the work of Tessens et al. (2011), Petrie (2011), Freeman and Kochan (2013), and Sugiyama et al. (2016). Research by Tessens et al. (2011) also provides ideas for content that was not covered in BRIDGES. Skills that were found to be important in these studies that were not covered in BRIDGES were conflict management, team building, change management, capacity building, managing up-down-across, time management, emotional intelligence, effective decision making, and operational/business planning. Most of the content covered by BRIDGES was also emphasized in these studies. Tessens et al. (2011) noted the importance of understanding oneself, self-esteem/confidence, networking, navigating political environments, building social capital, negotiation skills, social capital, financial management, and university higher education governance structures.

BRIDGES provides fundamental knowledge and skills that are deemed important to leaders in higher education with a special interest in women leaders. The program covers knowledge of higher education functioning, as well as the attributes of leaders in higher education

and specific skills that have been found to be important in women's development toward leadership. From other studies, we can see that there might be content for BRIDGES to consider to further meet the needs of different levels of potential women leaders in higher education.

What do women hope to learn from BRIDGES? At the end of the first day of the 2017 program during the observation, everyone in the cohort was asked to share verbally with the group what they hoped to learn from the program. I neither planned to collect this information, nor was this a planned activity for the program, but an on-the-spot activity from one of the board members. As the women shared their hopes for the program, I took note of what they said. The quotes that I was able to capture verbatim are presented below. Of the 35 responses documented, references to career planning, developing leadership skills, leading with authenticity, and reigniting their passion were the most common responses.

Career planning. The most common theme of the responses was about their career. Fifteen of the responses (43%) focused on the future of their career. Four of the women indicated they specifically wanted to figure out the next steps in their career, three others more broadly sought to determine their overall career path, and two women indicated they have reached a ceiling and want to find a new job. One woman who was returning to academia after working in industry shared,

I want to take my career to next level, now that I am back in the academy. How can I best manage the program that I am responsible for? I think that I have much more to offer. I want to grow and develop. I want the university to benefit from all of my experience. I want to up my game.

Several women indicated that they were participating in the program to determine if administration was for them. "Is administration a role for me? Or should I be a more active force without having the official title and role? I am a doer—things fall on me. Do I want to be a leader

or support other leaders?” Another woman echoed the question of whether she should pursue an administrative role.

On a personal level, I applied to see if I fit with this group [of women administrators]. Administrators seem so perfect. I want to absorb your perspectives of aspects of leadership in higher education—to say ooh I’ve never thought about that—I better have a plan for that.

Leadership skills. Ten of the 35 women expressed the desire to build their leadership skills and apply what they learn to their professional lives. Specific leadership skills mentioned were how to lead a team, how to motivate others in an uncertain environment, how to communicate, and how to navigate bureaucracies.

Some of the quotes regarding leadership skills were related to situations that women face in academia. One woman indicated that she wanted to refine her skills of asserting herself and advocating for herself in a male-dominated environment. Another woman who is a non-tenure track faculty expressed, “I struggle because I am in a male dominated area and not racially diverse. I struggle with leading in this environment. I want to learn how to be a better leader related to gender and race.”

Other quotes relate specifically to the challenges of women needing to balance the expectations of multiple roles and responsibilities.

I want to maximize my leadership skills. I am early in my career. How to balance desire for obtaining tenure, being a clinician, starting a family, and maintaining my identity. How to be a career woman and have a family?

Another woman described how having children had changed the way she sees herself, her career, and her potential for leadership roles.

Motherhood changed me in ways that I did not know it would. Being a mother has influenced my teaching—more of a mentor to students. Have not had a chance to pursue

leadership roles because of raising children. Much more empathetic now. How is this going to influence my leadership skills?

Another woman expressed that she wants to develop her network of women to have connections that can help her with the challenges in her work.

I am looking for a network of women in NC outside of my profession and be more candid to talk about the challenges of my work. How to lead in a group. How to apply what I have learned in other leadership program. How to get people to function as a team.

Women face different expectations for leadership skills compared to men (Sugiyama et al., 2016). In this preliminary information from the 2017 cohort, the women are expressing a need for how to lead in a male-dominated field, an environment that is not demographically diverse, as well as balance competing demands on their time.

Authenticity. The ability to be authentic in their leadership was a point made by two members of the cohort. One of the women expressed her need to learn how to be authentic, transparent, and kind while having conversations with authority figures with whom she disagrees.

How do I navigate bureaucracies while still maintaining who I am. It is important for me to be a transparent. Be my same person no matter who I am working with. I am usually a yes person—What can I take on. I now have to disagree with my supervisor. How can I manage, influence, and reprimand people while still being my kind self?

The other woman expressed that she wants to determine the next steps in her career that aligns with her authentic self—rather than taking opportunities as they come or doing things other people think she should do.

Figure out next steps for career. Being authentic. Align the decision that I make with who I am. Not what others expect me to be. Not what opportunities presenting itself and then reacting to that. I want to do something that aligns with my authentic self. jazzes me up and building on that. I'm a faculty member who leads some things. Do I want to be an administrator and take on that role?

Confidence/Imposter syndrome. Confidence and imposter syndrome are common internal obstacles with women in leadership positions (Clark, 2011; Harris & Leberman, 2012). One woman expressed that she needed confidence and knowledge of how to market herself.

I'm confident and insecure at the same time. How do I market myself? I need help with confidence to verbally market myself. I look good on paper but feel that I cannot articulate it well.

Another woman would like to build confidence in communicating a vision and get people excited about it.

How do I effectively communicate the vision for how the program should be going? I want to convey confidence to get people on board. How to better communicate a vision and collaborate to make that happen.

Imposter syndrome or a feeling of inadequacy was something with which another woman was wanting help. She also is challenged by people who are opposed to her values.

Imposter syndrome is an issue. In my current work, I listen to others. I have a hard time filtering the energy of people who are opposed to equity or something that is useful or productive.

Another woman's comment related to the opening speaker's lessons of privilege and living a purposeful life. She sought the courage to not operate under the radar.

Break free from my "smallness" and trying to be under the radar—[The opening speaker this morning] confirmed for me that I am on the right track. By living under the radar, I have been missing out and now I realize that others will be missing out too.

Impact/Passion. Three women expressed that they wanted to find ways to follow their passions and make a difference. One woman indicated she wanted to widen her influence and impact in the areas about which she cares. Another woman was exploring how she could have

more influence on social justice and equity in her current role. Another woman applied to the program because of the theme transformational leadership.

I was attracted to program because of theme transformational leadership. How can I have a meaningful, transformational impact on a larger group? How can I be involved in something that has real meaning that is sustainable?

The 2017 cohort of BRIDGES expressed their hopes for what they wanted to gain from the program. Many of their thoughts aligned with some of the values of the program—to help with career progression, develop leadership skills, build confidence, strengthen their ability to lead authentically, and have a positive impact through their work.

The next section moves from observations and information from the 2017 cohort (Phase I of the project) to data gathered from the sample of alumnae from 2012-2017 cohorts (Phase II of the project).

Research Question 1.2.a: Perceived Strengths of the Program

The second sub-question of research question one was to understand how alumnae perceived the BRIDGES program; several questions were asked on a survey that was sent to over 205 alumnae who participated in the program from 2012 to 2017. Fifty-four alumna responded to an open-ended question that asked about the strengths of the program. The responses fell into 16 codes that were further organized into three categories—Interpersonal, Program Management and Content, and Program Environment. The themes frequencies of the codes for strengths of the program are listed in Table 9.

Table 9

Strengths of the BRIDGES Program

Themes	Strengths of BRIDGES Program	Frequencies of Codes
Interpersonal	Network/connections	26
	Women from different institutions	8
	Support from other women	3
	Diverse cohort	3
	Learning from other women's stories and experiences	3
Program Management	Program topics	9
	Breadth of topics covered	5
	Well organized	3
	Reputation, Prestige, Honor	3
	Coaching Sessions	2
	360 Multi-rater feedback	2
Environment	Retreat/time away	7
	Reflection	6
	Safe space	4
	Women only	3

By far, the most frequently stated strength of the program was the network and connections that were established with other women in the program. Twenty-six of the 54 responses (48%) mentioned expanding their network and making connections was a strength of the program. The opportunity to network and make personal and professional connections was also expressed as a key benefit in the interviews in this study and has been a strength of the program over the years.

Under the category of interpersonal benefits, alumnae valued building their network and making connections, interacting with and learning from women from different institutions, receiving support from other women, and the diversity of the cohort. In addition to learning from

the content of the program's curriculum, learning from other women's experiences and learning what is happening at other institutions is noted as a benefit to participating in the program. An associate professor conveyed "It's motivational to be in a group of 'Sisters' working towards positive change. It's motivational and educational to hear the stories of others in parallel struggles towards self-development and leadership."

Another strength of the program was the professional and demographic diversity of the class. An associate dean shared, "It pulls women together from all spaces and aspects of higher education." Another reply from an associate department head was "Diversity of people from different universities, roles at their institutions, and cultural/racial. Also having the opportunity to interact with some high-level people, like university presidents and provosts" was noted as a strength."

For another woman who is a dean, the strength of the program was the "Opportunity to connect with other women across higher ed, in different positions and roles. Reflective and conversational space to step away from our busy lives and roles to think about ourselves as leaders." Another woman who is a production manager agreed with the importance of reflection, "Self-reflection opportunities. The sessions made me slow down and focus on my path." The following response from a professor also found benefit in the time away,

Opportunity to be exposed to many different aspects of leadership. Time to think about your leadership style, aspirations etc. I never have time to think about this stuff since my life is crazy with lots of different work responsibilities, kids, pets, ailing parents etc. I'm sure most if not all participants feel the same. It was thoroughly refreshing to be away from all that periodically to focus on leadership aspirations, opportunities, styles etc. Lots of different types of sessions addressing different issues. The breadth of topics in the sessions. I think there was something for everyone. ~Professor

The retreat-like atmosphere provided a respite and time away to learn, connect, and reflect. Seven women referred to the benefit of the retreat and time away. Six of those mentioned

that the downtime allowed time for reflection. An assistant professor responded, “It provided needed space and place to safely discuss in an open and honest way the challenges of academic leadership for women. The lodging and food and snacks provided comfort and respite.”

Looking at the second overall theme, Program Management and Content, the strengths were the quality and breadth of the program topics and speakers, the 360-feedback activity, and coaching sessions. Comments from several women conveyed that the program was well organized and had a strong reputation. Four women mentioned how the program provided a safe space to be themselves. A research associate commented, “Amazing program that brings us all together and creates a wonderful atmosphere where everyone feels comfortable sharing themselves. Three women expressed their appreciation for the program being a space for women-only. A director responded, “Providing a place for women to discuss leadership issues from their points of view.” Another woman felt so strongly about it that she expressed her response in all caps, “ALL WOMEN! The content my class received was well conceived and well delivered.”

Having a structured time and space to reflect on personal and professional development is a valuable component of leadership development programs for women (R. Selzer et al., 2017). This is particularly important for programs that strive to encourage vulnerability and build authenticity (DeFrank-Cole et al., 2016).

Research Question 1.2b: Suggestions for Improvements

Fifty-two alumni responded to the open-ended survey question that asked for examples of what could be done differently to meet their leadership development needs. Responses were coded and organized into two categorical themes, Program Management and Program Content. The frequencies of the responses from the suggestions are provided in Table 10.

Table 10

Suggestions for Improvements for Program Management and Program Content

Suggestions for Improvements	Frequencies
No improvements	4
Program Management	
More opportunities for alumni engagement	19
Continue training after graduation	7
Add more interactive activities to sessions	5
Mentoring after graduation	3
Opportunities for advanced training	2
Extend length of program	2
Better instructions for the leadership narrative	1
Streamline program days	1
More structured networking during program	1
Program Content	
More training on specific leadership skills	5
More focus on faculty development	3
Target individual needs/career stages	2
More content on emotional intelligence	1
More information on community colleges	1
Improve quality presenters (better prepared)	1
Less marketing yourself	1
More content on leadership styles	1
More content on diversity/inclusion	1
More content on succession planning in HE	1
Less information in general	1
More organizational leadership & UNC system leaders	1
More content on mental health	1
Add online content between sessions	1

The most common suggestions for program improvement are opportunities for alumni engagement and continued training after graduation. Over one-third of the responses were about

providing future opportunities for training and networking. A department head commented, “Offer continuing education options—I REALLY would appreciate opportunities to meet with BRIDGES participants from all classes to refresh our skills, network, etc.” Another point made by a professor,

Since I graduated from BRIDGES it has been quite difficult to network with my sisters, especially beyond my institution. The only real opportunity has been to go to graduation and on some occasions that has not provided ready opportunities to share and interact. BRIDGES could assist graduates by providing more ways for more people to contribute leadership skills. For several years, it has seemed to include some ideas/people but not all. That needs to change!

These thoughts continued in comments from an associate dean, “Provide ongoing support for BRIDGES members, like a BRIDGES Part II. Leadership skills are not developed in a vacuum or overnight. I think an opportunity to come back and connect would be helpful.” The need for continued support and connection resonated in other responses—“I definitely wanted to have a sense of connection when I left. I wish the program had a follow through so we could handle challenges with support once we left.”

An administrative director suggested the program develop online training for continued development after the program, “After the main program, develop online training components that can be carried out one to two years after the BRIDGES graduation.”

Continuing education and more advanced training targeted to specific needs were also a common theme. An associate dean commented, “Perhaps create a course that participants could take after their initial session. There needs to be a bit more engagement after the sessions are over. Perhaps offer sessions for women in different stages in their career.” The thought of targeting programming to meet the needs of different roles in higher education was conveyed as a part of the response from a professor,

I personally wished that there was more advanced leadership training, organizational leadership and connection with UNC system leaders. Perhaps there could be a spin-out for mature leaders aiming to take on higher levels of leadership in the University. There are still many barriers to break out of middle level leadership management positions into organizational leadership. As a mature leader at the University, I enjoyed working with the younger emerging leaders but felt that there was not as much offered in the way of organizational leadership. Can we have an advanced BRIDGES follow up session where we learn more about the UNC System and organizational leadership? Otherwise, we may be stuck in the middle level. Also, we should be encouraging the emerging leaders to pursue mentoring programs throughout their careers. As more become available, these are helpful. Finding mentors as we advance in our careers is more difficult. I have resorted to hiring a coach out of my personal funds to help with professional development. ~Professor

The request for more specific and advanced leadership training was expressed five times in the survey responses. Three women thought that the program should focus more on faculty development and target individual needs and career stages. In the survey responses, alumnae requested more content on emotional intelligence, mental health, diversity/inclusion, succession planning, organizational leadership, community colleges and leadership styles. One woman, an administrative director, stated, “We really didn’t talk about the different types of leadership styles.” Another woman also expressed the need for generalized leadership content, rather than a women’s only focus. Her response also points to the main tenants of Cultural Feminist theory.

I found the connections with the participants strong and meaningful, but I found the curriculum a little thin. I also struggled with some of the essentialist leanings and language (women are this, women are that). I value women-only space to discuss and reflect, but don’t think the curriculum need to be so exclusively female in focus. There’s a lot of great leadership literature (Kouzes & Posner, etc.) and work in higher ed (Bolman & Deal, etc.) that I wish we had included. ~Dean

Recommendations for specific skills development were expressed in the response from a professor,

When men do leadership training programs, they get a lot of serious content—negotiation skills, management styles, etc.—none of which was covered in BRIDGES. Giving women fluffier content does women a disservice and does not help level the playing field.

Another point in support of developing specific leadership skills was from a professor, “There was a little too much touchy, feely stuff. I really dislike this type of thing.” One participant expressed her frustration with the nature of some of the sessions by saying, “BRIDGES is not a self-help program, it’s a leadership program.”

This survey question also spurred responses regarding particular sessions in the program. One woman expressed disappointment in the diversity session.

The weakest piece of the experience was the presentation on bias and diversity. Several participants have connections to stronger presenters that are more informed about issues surrounding bias, diversity and inclusion. Ending a session on that topic with a video created by [a company] (a homophobic, Christian-centric company) reflects a huge chasm in understanding the issues associated with bias and diversity. ~ Associate professor

Another woman who participated in the 2017 cohort pointed out the need to clarify the expectations and instructions for leadership narrative activity.

The whole business of “telling your story and your leadership narrative” was really not thought out very well at all. As participants we were confused about what we were supposed to do the whole time and frankly we got about four different answers from the BRIDGES leaders about what we were supposed to do. That being said, “telling you story” struck a chord with me and I’ve used this idea multiple times since bridges. The lesson of if you don’t tell your story someone else will tell it and tell it wrong is extremely powerful. I think the material could have been covered in 3 weeks. For those of us who have to travel 3 hours and spend 4 weekends away from family, it was frustrating to see that some of the time was not utilized effectively.

Another point that was brought up several times in the improvement responses is increasing and varying the learning activities during the sessions. Five women brought up the need for more interactive activities in the sessions. One professor responded, “Spend less time lecturing and more time networking . . . many of the talks could have been shorter and more time spent in discussion.” Another professor echoed these thoughts, “More team-based sessions. Most sessions were heavily focused on lectures by experts and not very participatory more participation

would benefit everyone.” Incorporating more interactive activities into the curriculum has been a priority for BRIDGES over the past few years. Based on informal conversations with the director of the program, there have been more examples of interactive learning in the past few years, compared to earlier years of the timeframe of this study.

The next section continues with data from the survey about the overall satisfaction with the program.

Research Question 1.3: Satisfaction with the Program

The first question on the survey asked about the level of overall satisfaction the alumnae had with the program. The majority (72.6%) of survey respondents indicated that they were extremely or very satisfied with their experiences in the program. Of the 62 alumnae who responded to the satisfaction question, 14 (22.6%) were extremely satisfied, 31 (50%) were very satisfied, 15 (24%) were moderately satisfied, one was slightly satisfied, and one was not at all satisfied. Table 11 shows the levels of satisfaction.

Table 11

Overall Satisfaction with the BRIDGES Program by Race

Extremely Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Not at all Satisfied	Totals
14	31	15	1	1	62

Although there was not an option for participants to convey the reasons behind their degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, responses to other questions on the survey, for example the question on opportunities for improvement or the open-ended text box for general feedback about BRIDGES, provided some insight into the two alumnae who indicated they were slightly or not satisfied at all.

The alumna who indicated that she was not at all satisfied with the program is an associate dean. When asked what could be done to improve the program, she responded with the quote that was highlighted in the suggestions for improvement (Research Question 1.2) section.

Keep the level of the content higher. When men do leadership training programs, they get a lot of serious content—negotiation skills, management styles, etc.—none of which was covered in BRIDGES. Giving women fluffier content does women a disservice and does not help level the playing field.

The alumna who is a professor indicated that she was slightly satisfied provided the following feedback,

I would like to see the program be focused on women in academia. I was totally surprised that in my class the majority of the women were in administration. I would guess that at least 40% or more did not have PhDs. I really thought that I would be with other faculty. I wanted to figure out how to get myself ready to transition from the classroom into academic leadership.

Overall, most (72.6%) participants indicated they were extremely or very satisfied with the program. These findings compare to Greene's (1998) qualitative study of 30 interviews from participants of the BRIDGES 1996 class. From her study, 80% of participants were highly satisfied with the program. The most common application of knowledge from the program in 1996 was in benchmarking or comparing their experiences to those at other institutions (47%), knowledge of leadership roles (33%), and budgeting (30%).

In a comparison of the Higher Education Resource Services (HERS) program from 2002 to 2007, 60% of the 1,337 alumnae surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied with the HERS program; 75% indicated that HERS had helped them achieve moderate to high effectiveness in their jobs; and 60% said the program helped them advance in their career (White, 2012).

Research Question 1.4: Program Impact

Another component of the study explored the impact of the program and the extent to which the leadership development program meets the expectations of the participants and the program’s goals. Program impact was assessed several ways on the survey: a set of Likert-style questions, an open-ended question about personal/professional impact, and a question about whether the respondents had received a promotion or increased responsibility in their jobs since completing the program. Examples of how BRIDGES helped the participants understand higher education and utilize knowledge/skills from the program were noted in the open-ended responses.

Research Question 1.4a: Extent of program impact. Questions 2-5 of the survey assessed the extent to which alumnae applied content from the program to their jobs, contributed to their ability to lead, helped them to understand colleges and universities, and changed their perception of themselves as a leader. Sixty-two alumnae of the leadership program responded to these questions. The results of these survey questions are presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Responses to Survey Questions Regarding Impact of the Program on Professional Lives (N=62)

Survey Questions (SQ)	Great extent	Moderate Extent	Neutral	Somewhat	Not at All
SQ2. To what extent have you used knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or values from BRIDGES during your job in academia?	15 (24.2%)	31 (50%)	2 (3.2%)	12 (19.3%)	2 (3.2%)
SQ3. To what extent do you think BRIDGES contributed to your ability to lead in higher education?	12 (19.3%)	28 (45.2%)	7 (11.3%)	12 (19.3%)	3 (4.8%)
SQ4. To what extent did BRIDGES help you acquire an understanding of the many facets of colleges and universities?	21 (33.9%)	27 (43.5%)	3 (4.8%)	11 (17.7%)	0 (0.0%)
SQ5. To what extent did BRIDGES change the way you perceive yourself as a leader (your leader identity)?	17 (27.4%)	21 (33.9%)	11 (17.7%)	8 (12.9%)	5 (8%)

Understanding facets of colleges and universities. Of the four Likert-style questions that assessed the extent of impact, understanding the facets of colleges and universities received the greatest number of positive marks. One-third (34%) of respondents indicated that the program contributed to their understanding of colleges and universities ‘to a great extent,’ over three-quarters (77.4%) indicated to a moderate or great extent, and no respondents selected “not at all” for this question.

Several responses to the open-ended survey question on personal/professional impact provided examples of how BRIDGES helped them to understand the different facets of colleges and universities. In these responses, six women mentioned the program had given them a better understanding of the UNC system. For several women, this enhanced understanding of the UNC system and some of the challenges at other campuses expanded and balanced their perspective beyond their own campuses and departments.

It helped me to understand the UNC system much better and in that it made me understand that it wasn't just my department or institution that was struggling with certain issues. It's enormously helpful to commiserate with others because it makes you feel less “targeted.” It was also helpful to learn how other institutions and individuals were addressing the problems and consider their best practices as possible solutions for us. ~Department Chair

A quote from another woman also addressed the benefit of connecting with women from other disciplines to bring a more balanced and holistic scope to her work.

Gave me a wider perspective on the systemic issues faced by university system. Exposed me to different disciplines within education. Allowed me to form some lateral connections outside of my own discipline which has been useful in terms of finding a more balanced perspective. ~Associate Professor

Being able to understand the bigger picture of higher education and knowledge of the challenges at other institutions has a positive impact on how they understand and interact with their work.

For two women, participation in the program deepened their understanding of higher education and inspired them to pursue doctoral degrees.

BRIDGES helped me identify what areas of academia I needed to focus on learning about (operations and culture) that I had not previously thought were relevant to me and my career path in the academy. As a result of my shift in focus, I have acquired new knowledge, skills, and abilities. I am now working on earning my doctorate in educational leadership—something I had only dreamed about before. I have also learned how to manage state budgets, and as a result have a deeper understanding of how and why state university operations function as they do. My connections from BRIDGES have led to invitations to speak at several other universities, invitations to serve on boards, and led to a promotion into a department and role that use my experience and strengths to the fullest. I am 100% happier in my career today because of BRIDGES!
~Instructional Designer

For another woman, she found it helpful to compare her understanding of higher education to others' knowledge. Like the instructional designer, the program inspired her to pursue a doctoral degree.

It offered opportunity to learn from experiences of others and somewhat measure my knowledge of higher education in comparison to others. I realized that although I have an understanding of the systems and had the drive, I needed a terminal degree to move forward. It pushed me to pursue my doctorate. ~Director

For another participant, the increased knowledge of higher education began to cast some doubt on how well institutions are positioned to fulfill their missions.

The initial impact was greater than the long-term impact has been. At first, it influenced me to be more hopeful for the future of higher ed in general, and my potential role, in particular. However, it may also have planted the first seeds of doubt regarding how well the structure of colleges and universities supports achievement of their missions.
~Associate Professor

Understanding the facets and functioning of higher education, how the internal systems of higher education work, and understanding university and academic life are important competencies of higher education leaders (McDaniel, 2002; Spendlove, 2007). It is thus an

essential component of leadership development in higher education and, as noted earlier in this chapter, one of the strengths of the BRIDGES program.

Use of knowledge, skills, values from BRIDGES. The number of survey participants who indicated that they had used knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or values from the program in their academic jobs received the second-highest marks in this set of four questions. Forty-six respondents (74%) indicated that they had used their experiences in the program to a ‘great extent’ or ‘moderate extent’ in their jobs, and of those, 24% indicated to ‘a great extent.’ From the open-ended survey question, women used knowledge and skills from BRIDGES to perceive and approach their jobs, institutions, and careers differently. One participant expressed how her experiences in BRIDGES changed her perspective of her work and continues to help her make decisions.

I was able to immediately apply some of the things I learned to the issues I face in my current leadership role. As an example, I head a committee that makes admissions and awards decisions for a program. Until now I had been looking at this committee as a group of people who made admissions and awards decisions. Because of BRIDGES, I started looking at this group as a team and myself as a team leader. I think this completely changed dynamics, participation, and ability to accomplish a lot more than admission decisions. Also, because of BRIDGES I am approaching my career very differently. When I am faced with decisions, I can sometimes hear some of the BRIDGES instructors’ voices in my head. It’s really interesting. I wasn’t expecting that. I have already used some of the things we learned to turn some potentially unpleasant situations to my advantage. ~Professor

Another woman expressed similar thoughts in that BRIDGES, “assisted me with leading my staff more effectively. I have greater insight into myself as a leader.” While another woman indicated her experiences had “helped me in managing my interpersonal interactions with my colleagues and with administrators in my university.” One woman recalled how she applied knowledge of her own campus during the BRIDGES sessions and found ways to build her strengths in her current position.

Many of the discussions made me think about things being discussed at my campus and how I could fit into the discussions and solutions. I also saw that there are ways to tailor my position to better fit my strengths. ~Director

One of the benefits of having a diverse cohort of participants in the BRIDGES program is helping women to understand the realities and challenges of people who are different from themselves. One woman expressed how BRIDGES had helped her to be more sensitive to the challenges that minority women face in higher education.

I have used quite a bit of the content in my job, such as Title IX, 'politics,' how financials work throughout UNC system, etc. I am also (I hope) more sensitive to the additional challenges that AA (and other URM) women face in higher education. ~Associate Department Chair

Ability to lead. The third highest marks for impact was their perception of the extent the program contributed to their ability to lead. Forty alumnae (64%) indicated that the program contributed to their ability to lead to a great or moderate extent. However, this question also received the least number of 'to a great extent' responses among the four Likert-style questions and the greatest number (24%) of somewhat or 'not at all' responses. Responses from the open-ended question about impact did not explicitly state how the program had contributed to their ability to lead. However, the question on promotion that will be discussed later in the chapter provides some examples.

Leader identity. The extent to which the program changed the way they perceive themselves as a leader received the lowest number (61%) of moderate and great extent responses and the most responses (8%) for 'not at all.' There were several examples in the responses that were related to changing the way they perceive themselves as leaders. One woman reconceptualized herself as a leader, and another felt confirmed in her leadership style.

BRIDGES enabled me to reconceptualize myself as a leader at this stage in my career rather than waiting to become someone recognized as a leader by others because of a particular position.

The program certainly helped me figure out my personal leadership style, in particular the activities related to finding a metaphor. More than anything else I came to understand that my leadership style was okay, that I didn't need to conform to others' ideas about leadership.

BRIDGES solidified a lot of what I had learned already as an administrator, but I still learned a lot of new things too and had time to reflect on certain aspects of my own leadership style. I really enjoyed meeting women working in different contexts and at different universities and the group of women who have been through the program before and after me.

From the Likert questions on the survey and responses to the open-ended question, the extent of program impact is most pronounced with understanding the facets of higher education, followed by the use of knowledge and the ability to lead. The extent to which the program helped women change their perspective of themselves as a leader had the lowest marks for impact.

Research Question 1.4b: Perceived personal/professional impact of the program. To gain insight into the personal and professional impact of the program, an open-ended question was included in the survey. Fifty-four responses were recorded for the question on the survey: In what ways did your participation in the program impact you personally and/or professionally? All of the responses to this question were reviewed to identify codes and themes within the data. Twelve codes emerged and were organized into three categorical themes: external impact, internal impact, and content knowledge. The most frequent topic echoed the most prominent strength of the program—networks and connections. Building their network and making connections with other women in higher education was the most frequently stated impact of the alumnae, followed by increased confidence and knowledge of leadership principles. The themes and codes are in Table 13.

Table 13

Perceived Personal/Professional Impact of BRIDGES

Themes	Personal/Professional Impact	Frequency
External impact/Interpersonal	Network/connections	18
	Learning from stories/experience of other women in the cohort	5
	Knowledge of functions on other campuses	4
	Establish new friendships	3
Internal impact/Intrapersonal	Increased confidence	10
	Clarify goals	5
	Time for personal/professional reflection	5
	360-degree feedback activity from CCL	4
	Encouraged to pursue doctorates	2
Content knowledge	Knowledge of leadership principles	8
	Understanding UNC System	6
	Understanding higher education in general	5
	Understanding finance/budgeting	3

Network and connections. The importance of building a network during the BRIDGES program is a recurring theme in this study. Often the term network refers to professional connections; however, from the responses to this question, alumnae of the BRIDGES program also developed a network of personal connections and relationships. A professor shared that the friendships and support from other alumnae were more impactful than career progression.

I have a great network of women who I can engage with as professional mentors. I feel that I could contact them for advice and that they would provide thoughtful input. My participation has impacted me far more personally with friendship and support rather than helping me move my career forward. Professor

Another alumna, as associate dean, expressed a similar sentiment about friends she has made in the program.

Personally—I remain connected with many women I met during BRIDGES. They are not only colleagues; I consider them dear friends who add value to my life. Associate Dean

Increased confidence. Ten women indicated that their experiences in BRIDGES increased their confidence. One alumna said, “BRIDGES gave me confidence and also helped me to be more conscious of listening as a leader. It helped to prepare me for my current role as a department chair.” Another woman said that BRIDGES gave her “. . . more tools for reflection and self-worth.” Another woman said the program “created more confidence and belief of being able to accomplish my goals.” Other themes that were noted in the responses for personal/professional impact were helping them to clarify their goals/make career decisions and develop their leader identity.

Clarify career goals. Several women attributed an enhanced knowledge of themselves that helped them to clarify their goals and make career decisions.

I was seeking a transformation in myself and my goals at the time I attended Bridges in order to find deeper satisfaction in my profession and Bridges was part of that journey. I think it reinforced my desire and determination to make a definitive change and strive to do more. Associate Professor

I was unsure of my next professional steps and reluctant to apply for an opportunity because of this uncertainty. BRIDGES helped me dig into my goals, strengths, and areas for growth. I was able to tap into my core desires and to become more open to possibilities. Associate Professor & Director

It was very helpful for me to be part of a cohort of women leaders considering our professional pathways. I was able to reflect with them about goals (both personal and professional) and to move through some areas in which I felt stuck.

Validated me as a leader, gave me credibility in my own eyes. Helped me to get over my self-doubt to see the opportunity for positive influence to help others.

BRIDGES offered stretches of time dedicated to thinking only about my own development. It gave me the time and space to think critically about what I was doing intentionally and unintentionally to both spur and hinder my own development as a leader, and offered me many, many avenues to consider when thinking about action plans to implement going forward. Direct feedback from my peers and my coworkers also helped me to better understand where my strengths and weaknesses lie.

The responses to the open-ended question about perceived personal and/or professional impact expanded on the responses to the first set of survey questions that asked about the extent of different aspects of impact. Responses to this question demonstrated the perceived impact of building their network and increasing their confidence. Clarifying career goals and developing/changing their perception of themselves as leaders were also noted in the responses.

Research Question 1.4c: Promotion/increased responsibility. Another survey question that explored information on the impact of the program was the extent to which the program played a part in receiving promotions or increased responsibility after completing the program, and if yes, to briefly describe it. Fifty-five women responded to the question. Twenty-five women (45%) received a promotion or more responsibility and 30 women had not. Twenty-two of the women who had received a promotion provided comments. Five of these women indicated that BRIDGES did not contribute to their promotion/increased responsibility. The most common link between their professional movement and experiences in BRIDGES was increased confidence and a sense of empowerment.

BRIDGES helped me to develop my confidence which enables me to be comfortable taking on different responsibilities and lead at higher levels. – Research Associate

I was able to voice my desire to take on more responsibility and work at a higher level of leadership within my organization. – Associate Director

I needed to advocate for myself to acquire my promotion. I would say that being in a cohort of women that have struggled professionally, I gained a bit more confidence. Although I have not connected with my cohort, I think the encouragement and similarities did impact my ability to take action. – Director Admissions

I received multiple leadership awards after completing the program. I also had the courage to change my career path and am now in a more challenging position at a non-profit research institute. – Production Manager

I earned tenure, which I subsequently gave up to take a better position at another institution, but BRIDGES empowered me to make both leaps with both knowledge and confidence. – Assistant Professor

I learned a lot about the university system. I also learned a lot from the experiences shared by participants. BRIDGES taught me to know when “to go for it” and be prepared when I did finally apply for a leadership position. – Assistant Dean

From the responses for Research Question 1.4, the program impacts the alumnae most prevalently through building their network, building their confidence, and understanding the facets of colleges and universities. The program also helped alumnae to clarify their career goals and to a lesser extent develop their leader identities.

Research Question 1.5: Group Differences in Satisfaction and Program Impact

The next step in assessing impact was to determine if there were group differences among the responses to the first five questions in the survey on satisfaction and program impact.

Differences among demographic groups related to age range, race/ethnicity, professional role, and BRIDGES cohort year were assessed for the first five survey questions. First, the normality of the data was assessed and was not normally distributed; therefore, the Kruskal Wallis test for nonparametric data was used to determine differences among groups. The mean ranks of responses to the five survey questions were compared among groups of cohorts, age ranges, professional titles, and race. Differences in mean ranks were only noted for program satisfaction ($H = 20.062, p = .003$) and understanding the facets of colleges and universities ($H = 21.649, p = .001$).

Mean ranks from the different cohorts, age ranges, and races neither differed for program satisfaction, nor were there differences among these groups with their use of content from the program, ability to lead, functional knowledge of institutions, or their perception of themselves as a leader. Differences were noted only for professional position. The distribution of satisfaction data (Table 14) and understanding of facets of higher education (Table 15) by professional position are presented in the following tables.

Table 14

Overall Satisfaction with the BRIDGES Program by Professional Position

Position	Extremely Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Not at all Satisfied	Total
Assistant/Associate Professor	4	10	3	0	0	17
Professor	1	3	4	1	0	9
Department Chair	2	4	0	0	0	6
Deans, Assistant/Associate	1	5	4	0	1	11
Executive	1	1	0	0	0	2
Directors	2	7	4	0	0	13
Staff	3	1	0	0	0	4
Totals	14	31	15	1	1	62

Table 15

Extent to Which BRIDGES Developed Their Understanding of Higher Education by Professional Position

Position	Great Extent	Moderate Extent	Neutral	Somewhat	Not at All	Total
Assistant/Associate Professor	8	8	1	0	0	17
Professor	0	3	1	5	0	9
Department Chair	2	4	0	0	0	6
Deans, Assistant/Associate	4	5	0	2	0	11
Executive	0	1	0	1	0	2
Director	3	6	1	3	0	13
Staff	4	0	0	0	0	4
Totals	21	27	3	11	0	62

The data in Table 14 show that respondents at professor rank have the lowest satisfaction, as only four (44%) of professors were extremely or very satisfied with the program. Satisfaction among deans, associate deans, and assistant deans was also low, as only one in 11 said they were extremely satisfied, the lowest of any professional role group. The highest number of moderately

satisfied responses were from deans and associate/assistant deans, and the only response for 'not satisfied at all' was from this group. The highest degree of satisfaction was with department chairs ($n=6$), staff ($n=4$), and executives ($n=2$). All of the survey participants in these roles were extremely or very satisfied.

The ratings of participants at professor rank are also low for the program's impact on their understanding of the different facets of colleges and universities. Over half of the nine said the program had somewhat of an effect on their knowledge. The greatest perceived impact for understanding higher education institutions was by department chairs and staff, as all of the survey participants in these roles indicated a great or moderate extent. Assistant and associate professors also indicated the program had a great or moderate impact, with 94% of respondents in these roles on their understanding of higher education institutions.

When looking at group differences of perceptions of program satisfaction and program impact, department chairs, assistant and associate professors, and staff have the most favorable impression. Professors, deans, and associate/assistant deans who replied to the survey had the lowest satisfaction and perceived benefits of the BRIDGES program, improving their understanding of the functions of higher education.

Program impact was measured in several ways in this study. There were quantitative measures of the extent to which the program alumnae applied content from the BRIDGES program to their jobs, contributed to their ability to lead, helped them to understand colleges and universities, and changed their perception of themselves as a leader. An open-ended question provided a more thorough explanation of how they perceived the program impacting their personal and professional lives. The final assessment of impact was whether the women received a promotion after completing the program and if the BRIDGES program played a part in that.

Summary of Findings for Research Question 1

Through this research question, I sought to explore the degree to which a program is meeting the leadership development needs of the women who complete the program. Responses from the survey indicate that women are generally satisfied with their experiences in the program. The program is most effective at helping women understand the many facets of colleges and universities and the least effect on changing the way alumnae perceive themselves as leaders. Most of the alumnae (65%) thought that the program impacted their ability to lead by a moderate to a great extent. The most prominent strength of the program is the network and connections that arise from the program. The most frequent suggestions for improvement were to keep the connections going with more alumni engagement activities.

The next chapter presents information about the understanding and experiences of leadership among the participants. It will explore the women's understanding of transformational leadership, their leadership styles, the influences on their leadership, and the obstacles they have faced along the way. The participants are the second unit of analysis in this embedded case.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS: LEADERSHIP AND THE PARTICIPANTS

Research Question 2

The second research question looked at how alumnae of a leadership development program understand and experience leadership. Information for Research Question 2 was gathered and analyzed from interviews and surveys conducted in 2018 from participants of the BRIDGES cohorts of 2012-2017.

This chapter begins with the findings from a survey question that asked alumnae for their definition of transformational leadership and continues with an analysis of the target of transformational change in their definition. The next section presents survey responses to a fill-in-the-blank question that asked the participants to convey three terms that describe their leadership style. This is followed by more in-depth information from the interviews about the women's perception of themselves as leaders and the things that have influenced their leadership journey. The next section is about obstacles that the survey respondents face in their professional roles. This is followed by responses from the interviews on how to change organizational culture to be more supportive of women and minorities.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership was the theme of the BRIDGES program and a well-known leadership theory related to effective leadership and women in leadership roles. In order to explore how alumnae perceived the meaning of transformational leadership, an open-ended survey question asked the survey respondents: What does transformational leadership mean to

you? Fifty-five women responded to the survey question. The first analysis of the responses was how often terms were used in the definitions. The words change, others, positive, vision, and organization were the most common terms in their definitions. When looking at content themes among the definitions, several themes were noted in this analysis and are patterned throughout the study: collaboration, team focus, shared vision, organizational change, and diversity/inclusion.

Collaborative/Team-oriented leadership. Working in teams, collaborative leadership, and working together combined was the most common theme after the general similarities of change and improvement. Several quotes that had a collaborative or team focus also mentioned creating or implementing a vision.

Taking a longer-term view to strategically determine the direction we need to go and goals we can achieve, and then leading the faculty to work toward those achievements. Leading the team through intentional steps forward, with each contributing in the way they are best equipped.

Working with other people, creating a vision and goals, empowering each other, supporting each other, collaborative growth

Transformational leaders have a shared vision and are able to clearly communicate that shared vision with those on their team. They are connected, committed, have a strong character, and demonstrate compassion and caring to their team members.

Working together for change. It is a committed collaborative effect to create a vision to make the change(s)

Supporting those around you in bringing enhanced value to a project or service. Helping each of those on your team to recognize their unique qualities and maximize these for their own development.

To me it means transforming my own leadership capacity to facilitate the best work of the team, but also leading transformation in organizations—by being present, but also by leveraging my own position to create space for underrepresented voices in higher ed leadership.

Shared vision. Creating, communicating, and striving for a vision were mentioned in several quotes from survey respondents.

Transformational leaders have a shared vision and are able to clearly communicate that shared vision with those on their team. They are connected, committed, have a strong character, and demonstrate compassion and caring to their team members.

Taking a longer-term view to strategically determine the direction we need to go and goals we can achieve, and then leading the faculty to work toward those achievements. Leading the team through intentional steps forward, with each contributing in the way they are best equipped.

Transformational leadership to me means the ability to see the vision, sell it to others and have their participation and buy in and continue to grow as a person, department, unit, college.

Transformational leaders have a vision and can motivate others to see that same vision and work together towards making it a reality, while adjusting things as needed.

Working together to for change. It is a committed collaborative effect to create a vision to make the change(s).

Organizational change. Organizational culture/structure/operations were a part of the definitions of four alumnae.

Transformational leadership involves leadership that helps to transform oneself and others and that, in the process, fundamentally re-orientes the structure and culture of an institution.

Transformational leadership means making decisions and implementing plans that truly change the way an organization operates or changes the services and supports an organization offers. I might add that transformational—to me, at least—is a high bar to clear. Truly transformational practices require a high level of commitment, planning, and execution. I don't use the term casually.

TL means, to me, that we/I use leadership positions to make structural changes to the status quo. I use my voice and position to help others rise and therefore have more equitable representation in structures of power. TL also means that I foster learning and growth, in myself and those around me.

Equity, diversity, inclusion. The theme of supporting equity, diversity, and inclusion was a focus of five women's views of transformational leadership. The following quotes speak to transformational leadership as an approach for equity and social justice.

Leading a diverse team that works well together—where every voice is heard, and each individual’s strengths are appreciated. Taking risks, learning from mistakes and building on what works, but still trying to innovate and move forward

To me it means transforming my own leadership capacity to facilitate the best work of the team, but also leading transformation in organizations—by being present, but also by leveraging my own position to create space for underrepresented voices in higher ed leadership.

As a transformational leader there should be evidence of socially just changes that have changed your system.

I went into the program wanting to dig deeper into real ways of dealing with diversity and inclusion. At this point in the history of higher education, I think getting that piece right is the MOST transformational thing we can do. We only scratched the surface in BRIDGES and at times the information presented was incredibly lacking.

Target of transformation. One aspect of the responses about transformational leadership that stood out during data analysis was the differences in the target for the change or transformation. Thirty-five of the 55 responses identified a target for change in their definition. Some women interpreted transformational leadership to mean transforming themselves as leaders, some thought of it as transforming other people, and some mentioned transforming their department or institution. The counts of the different targets for their meaning of transformational leadership are in Table 16.

Table 16

Transformational Leadership

Targets of Transformational Leadership	Counts
Self	4
Others/subordinates	2
Institution	6
Self & others	6
Self & institution	2
Others & institution	8
Self, others, & institution	7
No specific target in response	20

The definitions that targeted change in themselves were the simplest of the responses. The following are the four examples of their definitions of transformational leadership: “Change the way you lead so that others follow”; “Personal understanding and development to transform understanding of your capabilities”; “Changing your mindset about how and why you lead”; and “Intentional personal change and intentional work to not only become a leader but also be seen as a leader.”

Two women targeted others in their meaning of transformational leadership, with the following quotes: Transformational leadership is the “ability to shape and facilitate development in others” and transformational leadership is “supporting those around you in bringing enhanced value to a project or service. Helping each of those on your team to recognize their unique qualities and maximize these for their own development.”

Six women referred to the target of the change as their unit or institution without mention of changing or improving themselves or others. Most of these responses were nonspecifically related to positive change in the organization. Twenty-two of the responses targeted a combination of self, others, and institution in their perception of transformational leadership, with only two responses addressing changes to self/institution. An example of a definition that considers all three targets follows.

Transformational leadership should be transformational to oneself, colleagues and the institution. Transformational leaders can transform themselves and those they work with and in the process improve their institutions. Transformational leadership allows everyone to bring their best selves to work and to feel appreciated for their contributions to the organization.

The variance in these definitions, in the definitions from the program, and from the scholarly work on transformational leaders is pronounced. It suggests a need for the program to define transformational leadership and consider if a strategic approach toward an impact on a

greater scale is within the scope and vision of the program. Could this program seek to impact the inequity and inequality in higher education and the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles, particularly of minority women?

Leadership Styles

A question on the survey asked for alumnae to list three terms or phrases that describe their leadership style. Fifty-five alumnae responded to the question and provided 64 different terms or phrases. The frequencies of the terms that were submitted are presented in Table 17.

Table 17

Frequency of Terms to Describe Leadership Styles

Terms to Describe Leadership Styles	Frequencies
Collaborative	20
Servant/Service oriented	10
Inclusive	6
Strategic	5
Supportive	5

For less frequently mentioned terms, those mentioned four times were Democratic, Transparent, Transformational/Transformative, and Team focused; those mentioned three times were Authentic, Decisive, Thoughtful, Visionary, Coaching/mentoring, and Flexible/adaptable; those mentioned twice were Appreciative/AI, Empowering, Fair, Flexible, Innovative, Policy driven, Relational, Support, Advocate/advocacy, Energetic/enthusiastic, Humane/humanistic, Passionate, and Problem-solving; and those mentioned once were Big picture, Help others achieve goals, Approachable, Know your audience, Committed, Compassionate, Consensus, Consistent, Constructive, Consultative, Culturally responsive, Decision-maker, Engaging, Influential, Inspirational, Motivating, Organized, Open, Pacesetting, Participatory, Persevering,

Personal/relational, Person-centered, Pluralistic, Prepared, Proactive, Progressive, Resourceful, Respect, Responsive, Steady, Transformative, Trustworthy, and Values-based.

The most common terms to describe leadership style were collaborative and servant/service-oriented. Information from the interviews also supports collaboration as a central theme in the leadership approach of the 12 women who were interviewed. The data from the interviews suggested that the term collaboration is used to describe collaborative and inclusive decision-making and problem-solving, which is a component of the democratic leadership style.

These findings align with the literature about women's leadership styles that most often describe women's leadership as collaborative, relational, communal, and consensus-building (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Madden, 2011). If women follow and identify with a collaborative leadership style, they might feel out of place or at odds in an organizational culture that is autocratic, hierarchical, and power-driven (Ruderman & Ohlott, 2002). This mismatch of core values and approach to leadership can inspire women to search for ways to balance and stay true to their authentic leadership style while surviving in an organizational culture that differs from their authentic leadership styles. Research by Jean-Marie, Williams, and Sherman (2009) suggests that women of color use collaborative leadership styles to work around the stereotypes about women and minority groups. Whether the collaborative leadership style is a mechanism to work around masculinized expectations of leadership or the collaborative style and team focus is more naturally inherent in the socialized identity of women is still a question (Jean-Marie et al., 2009; Madden, 2011).

The next section on perceptions as a leader presents information gathered in the interviews with 12 alumnae of the program.

Self-Perceptions as a Leader

The first question in the interviews was: How do you describe/perceive yourself as a leader? The themes of collaboration, servant leader, inclusive, and team-oriented were also noted in the interview responses. Often in the responses these themes are integrated and used interchangeably.

Collaborative/Team-oriented leaders/Inclusive. An assistant professor (Interview 7) at a private institution who on the survey used the terms collaborative, mindful, and progressive to describe her leadership style further explained how she integrates collaboration and strengths building in her leadership approach.

I would say that I am someone who is very conscious both of collaboration and of integrating the strengths of the people that I'm working with . . . I feel like from my perspective as someone who has transitioned at a point in my career where I was in a leadership role in many capacities on my previous campus and I'm taking on leadership roles at my current campus, that being that person in the room who says what are the collective priorities? What do we have that we can bring to the table now to better attain our common goals? . . . I really see my strengths as being someone who can sit in a room with a diverse group of colleagues and, bring people to a common place and maximize the skills and really the visions of the people in the room.

An associate dean (Interview 11) at a private institution who described her leadership style as collaborative, appreciative, and service-oriented further expressed, "I really try to be collaborative in my approach. I can be very decisive. I don't have any problem making decisions, but I would rather have lots of input in making those decisions."

A director (Interview 8) at a research-intensive university described her leadership style as inclusive, collaborative, organized, and team-oriented.

I'm very much a person who wants to include everybody, wants team input, wants the team to be involved in decisions. I'm also an encouraging leader and I think insightful. I'm an insightful leader and one that wants to hear different perspectives. I guess I'm

kind of pulling things out of people to, to try to work with them and I'm a developmental leader as well. I'm always trying to help people to reach their potential as well.

Interview 9 was a director who is a team-oriented leader. She describes her leadership style as encouraging, approachable, and team-focused.

I always describe myself as someone who is very team oriented. I'm one who likes to make sure that everyone knows how important they are. I am one who values or wants to make sure that everyone knows what their valued. I want to have a great work environment. I strive to be the leader who provides that. I also am a leader that wants to develop professional growth. I know that I have and where I work now, I have a big generational spread, I have employees as young as 24 and as old as 67 and some are comfortable where they are and that's great. And I know some of them want to. This was not their last stomping ground and I wanted to make sure that I provide them the tools or the mentorship to go to the next stage. I don't want folks to be afraid of me. I've been in positions where I've had a, a leader where people were afraid to talk to them or afraid to give an opinion for fear of backlash.

A professor at a liberal arts university (Interview 6) cautioned about too much collaboration and the potential for diffused action or no action at all as a result of trying to please everyone. This perspective began early in her career when she learned there are consequences to not taking a stand.

You know, we live in a very up-talking, up-smiling culture. We have a tendency to focus on happy cooperation and collaborative work. All of that is good, but sometimes too much openness and not an ability to identify a path or what you might consider to be a more productive path. Not being able to voice that or speak that or influence that and just letting everything wash away—I think sometimes creates paralysis in the process. Not only a believer [in your decisions/the path] but of the whole reason that you're leading. Which to me is to make a healthy community for the scholars and for the students. I think my most important lesson came relatively early in my career when there was a lot of political give and take. I didn't take sides and I discovered that that was a political decision that had sequences. So, as a leader, I would say the most important thing is to really understand your issues and although it's important to be open minded, not to be afraid to commit to what you think is right and to be clear about it.

Pluralistic leader. A term to describe leadership style that was new to this project came out of the interview. An assistant provost (Interview 5) from a public regional university describes herself as a pluralistic leader who is collaborative, team-focused, thoughtful, deliberate, and purposefully slow.

I prioritize a lot of things as a leader and I think I tend to prioritize the relationship building, coalition building, teamwork and ensuring that many voices are present. My definition or my approach to leadership, I often think is guided by this concept that's called pluralistic leadership, which pluralistic leadership contends that leaders have an awareness of our own identities and our own positionality and power and that we use that knowledge to help both acknowledge different views and negotiate among those.

I think in order to be able to allow for shared governance and to allow lots of voices and things to be heard. So instead of fighting against that culture, I really embrace it. I try to work within that kind of shared governance culture in the institution. Things don't have to change here on a dime for the most part.

Initially defined by Taylor Cox, Jr. in his book *Cultural Diversity in Organizations: Theory, Research, and Practice* (1993), Cox describes how inclusiveness shapes this theory.

Pluralistic leaders produce an environment that values diversity, draws on the collective voices and resources of the campus, fully integrates all cultures into the organizational structure, minimizes institutional cultural bias, and reduces inter-group conflict. (p. 67)

Adriana Kezar (2000) supports the benefits of pluralistic leaders who value diversity and inclusiveness, especially in metropolitan higher education institutions. Incorporating the work of Roya Ayman (1993), Kezar states that pluralistic leaders value diversity and inclusion and thus, hire and promote people from diverse backgrounds, thus enhancing productivity, decision making, and satisfaction among employees. Pluralistic leaders in higher education might also "curb assimilation (the process whereby people model characteristics that are incompatible with their identities in order to be leaders)" (Kezar, 2002, p. 68). Kezar (2002) continues to identify three principles to

facilitate the development of pluralist leaders: (1) an awareness of how identity and power impact leadership beliefs; (2) an acknowledgment of multiple interpretations of institutional leadership and personal philosophies of leadership; and, (3) an opportunity for negotiation among multiple interpretations of institutional leadership and personal philosophies of leadership. (p. 68)

Servant leaders. Three of the interviewees explicitly referred to themselves as servant leaders. An academic associate dean (Interview 12) at a public R2 university used the terms servant leadership and policy support to describe her leadership style. “My perception would be more of a servant leader type. I don’t think you can lead unless you’re willing to help, to follow or to help basically on the ground level.” The examples that she gave for servant leader were tied to her role of support on committees at the university, college, and department levels.

An associate dean (Interview 2) describes herself as an engaging, supportive, and inclusive servant leader. “I am a servant leader. I really do give myself to others. I feel like my role is to serve our students, our faculty and our staff.” She goes on to explain how inclusive excellence is a guiding principle for her.

People have to be open and to be willing to accept new ideas and new things. Because if you bring people to the table, you’ve got to be open to listening to what they have to say and you have to value what people are bringing to the table because bringing them is half of the step, that’s just getting halfway there. You’ve got to be open to do a little bit more. You know, people say we want to be diverse, but just having me at the table, it’s just, you know, that’s just part one. Listening to me, valuing me, you know, accepting my expertise is another thing that’s being inclusive, you know, allow me to express my ideas and be who I am is being inclusive.

One of my biggest things is harmony and I like for people to be included in what we do. I don’t like to make decisions on my own unless I have to or need to. Sometimes that is the case. I like for people to be included in the decisions that we make. And you know, I always tell people you can have diversity and not be inclusive at all. You know, you can. I think our office is diverse, but that doesn’t mean I’m inclusive. Being inclusive means that I am actually listening to what people are saying that I am bringing in their ideas and I am accepting of the things that they want to do. So, I think a lot of times we are happy to be diverse but we’re not inclusive. So, I definitely strive to be more inclusive probably than anything. I think when we get the diverse part down, then we can get tighter on the inclusive aspect.

Interview 11 was an academic associate dean at a private institution who describes her leadership style as collaborative, appreciative, and service-oriented. She was one of the few interviewees who mentioned the needs of the organization in addition to the needs of employees.

In terms of managing my own team, I try to be a servant leader. I don't know how successful I am at that, but I really try to focus on the needs of the organization and the needs the group and therefore try not to read minds and ask people for input before moving ahead.

Leader identity. Among the 12 interviews, there were differences in how strongly they saw themselves as leaders. Three of the women indicated that they did not see themselves as leaders, did not really think about themselves as leaders, or still struggled with their leadership identity. The first interviewee, an associate professor (Interview 1) from a regional public university responded,

Well, I don't really always sort of think of myself as a leader per se, so that's maybe a difficult question to answer. Although I would say I strive to improve leadership skills as people call leadership skills. I think of myself more as kind of a problem solver, somebody who tries to connect people and motivate people with varying degrees of success. I think if you had to like say in leadership terminology, maybe more of a participative leader.

The third interview participant, a department chair, first responded that she does not necessarily think about leadership, yet followed with examples of how her position, longevity, and day-to-day activities relate to leadership. She also mentioned problem-solving as a way she leads.

That [question] kind of stumped me because I don't think I've spent a lot of time thinking about it. So, I would describe myself as a leader. I am the department head, and in that sense, I have direct reports. So, there is a sense of leading that. I've been on campus for over 20 years. And just that knowledge and historical memory kind of puts you in a place of leadership whether you want it or not. I think of myself as a leader in those, those sort of big ways, but also in small ways. Even without the title. I think wherever I am, I have the opportunity to demonstrate leadership . . . I'm sure sometimes we're just sitting

around problem solving and, you know, taking the initiative to come up with ways to provide clarity about our purpose of what we're doing.

An associate dean from a private institution expressed that part of the reason why she does not have a strong sense of leader identity is because of the nature of her responsibilities in her current position.

I guess I still struggle with my leader identity. Part of the reason I'm struggling with this is because in the last few years, I haven't felt like I've had much opportunity to lead. I've been told to do what I'm told.

For one interviewee, an associate dean (Interview 2), leadership was not an intentional part of her career progression.

I fell into this role. I didn't strive to be a leader. I didn't set out and have any specific goals to be a leader, you know, I think I just applied for different types of positions that had leadership roles and they just kinda kept growing into more supervision type roles.

Information from the interview about their leader styles expanded on the theme of collaborative and servant leadership. Another theme that was noted in the interviews was the differences in the level of self-leadership perception, as several women suggested they do not have a strong sense of themselves as leaders. The next question followed the self-perception question in the interview and inquired about the influences of their leadership style.

What Influenced the Way You Perceive Yourself as a Leader?

The second interview question asked what influenced their leader identity or how they perceive themselves as leaders. Professional experience, formal and informal mentoring relationships, leadership development programs, and observing others in leadership roles were noted in the analysis of the responses. One interviewee (Interview 3), a department head, summed up the themes of this section in her response, "I went to BRIDGES. I've been to other formal

programs. I've been mentored by some really good people. And again, just making a lot of observations.”

Influences: professional experience. Of these themes, professional experiences were the most frequently noted examples of influences on leader identity. Five of the 12 interview participants attributed professional experience as influencing the way they lead and their leadership identity. A director of training and education (Interview 8) responded,

I think that [various roles across the institution] really has influenced or contributed to my development as a leader because I've had lots of exposure to different leadership theories and different leadership practices. All my professional life has really contributed to my development as a leader.

One interviewee, an associate dean (Interview 11), simply replied, “30 years of experience” as her response to the question. Another referred to the 17 years at the university in another role and then more recently as a faculty member, and associate dean and academic committee leader (Interview 12).

I was in a professional position for seventeen and half years at the university before I moved over into a faculty position. And then, once you move over into a faculty position then you're put on committees. Initially when you're put on committees, you know, you're, you're just a worker or whatever. And then if you serve on a particular committee long term, then you know, maybe you have the opportunity to chair something like that. I've chaired several committees at the department or the chair level, I don't think I really chaired any of the college level, but I have at the university level and that probably gave more experience of developing leader identity. It also gave a higher profile, especially the university committees across campus. So, people get to know you and your work and how you conduct committees. They get to see that firsthand.

An executive (Interview 10) at a regional public university began her career in academia as an entry-level employee in the division that she currently leads. She emphasized the value of leaving the university and working with leaders in the community and industry.

I think starting from entry level . . . and then being promoted, going through every function [of my dept] having a variety of wonderful opportunities with state the local government, university and private industry . . . Having those opportunities to work with different CEO's or work with different chancellors or chiefs of staff and teams that has really helped me develop it. It helped me become a more well-rounded professional. I think especially in our culture, you have to leave [the university] and come back.

The first interviewee, an associate professor, credits her work of making connections between different departments at her institution. "I do feel like doing those types of things [forging connections] have helped me to get a bigger perspective. That is probably useful to me in terms of trying to motivate people and do my job."

Longevity and historical knowledge were also mentioned when describing their leader identity. "Part of it has to do with simply having survived, particularly in academic circles for decades" (Interview 6). Another participant supported this with the following quote "I've been on campus for over 20 years and just that knowledge and historical memory kind of puts you in a place of leadership whether you want it or not" (Interview 3).

Influences: Mentoring. Mentoring relationships were the next most frequent response to this interview question. Four women had compelling stories about the difference that their mentors made for them. The first quote is from an associate professor at a private institution who has been mentored by female and male faculty and administrators. She considers herself fortunate to work with people who nurture junior faculty and students in an industry that does not often value them.

I have been lucky to have good mentors and some of those mentors have been female faculty and administrators, but some have been male as well. Um, I think the common characteristic of all of them is that they have been people who have been openly nurturing of junior scholars and of students, um, in, in an industry that often doesn't value that, especially in male leaders. Um, so having mentors who really were more than advocates, but, but role models is very important to me as well. ~Associate Professor (Interview 7)

Another woman who is an assistant provost says the formal and informal mentors in her career have contributed the most to her leadership development.

Having women mentors, formal and informal as well as having developed a network of peer women in the field. I think those two things have contributed most to my development as a leader, so the ability to work closely with other women mentors who have been successful both at my institution and not at my institution and to be able to learn from their experiences has been really important to me. (Interview 5)

A department chair has a long-standing mentor relationship with her primary mentor, a former undergraduate teacher and doctoral professor, who was also a department chair in her discipline.

I had a mentor that I worked with throughout my undergraduate career and throughout my, well until a year after my PhD, and still occasionally do some work with him and keep in touch. It was interesting because his experience was at a time in a different institution in a time where academia was very, very different from what it is today, and so his role as chair was very different from what my role of chair is, but I still see some aspects of the way that he led when he was chair coming through and things that I'm doing. . . . Also, having colleagues [other department chairs] to talk to about strategy and how to prioritize action. Having those people that are contemporaneous chairs, who I could turn to and talk to about things and talk about strategies and when to panic and when to just let something ride out has been really valuable to me . . . I've identified a handful of people that will never get kicked out of my office because they helped me to do a better job even if I'm just listening to them talk about the path. (Interview 4)

A coordinator, who is a minority at a predominantly White rural institution, shared that she received support and informal mentorship from two faculty members.

There were many minority faculty and staff who were aware of some of the potential challenges in being a faculty member on this campus and wanted to ensure my success and also helped me to understand the landscape. There were two faculty members who, for the first 3 years, they met weekly with me every week for coffee and conversation. So, it wasn't a formal sort of, we're going to talk about this, but I realized that that really was one of the most helpful experiences that I had. I had two faculty members, as questions came up, I knew each week I was going to see them. I could ask things. Sometimes they just talked, and I just listened. (Interview 3)

Mentorship is often an influential part of a person developing as a leader. The mentoring relationships are formal and informal. The women who were interviewed had mentors who were male and female over the years. They expressed that this mentorship and support from others was an important part of their professional development.

Influences: Observing other leaders. In addition to formal and informal mentoring relationships, several women who were interviewed stated that observing other leaders in leadership roles helped them to know what to do and what not to do and was influential on their perception of themselves as a leader.

An assistant professor (Interview 7) attributed the negative actions of leaders as what she would not want to do, “The longer you’re in any industry, you probably learn as much from what not to do than you learn from having good mentors and role models.” Others observed leaders in various roles across their institution and former leaders in their current leadership role.

Part of it is watching other people lead, people who have done it well, people who had challenges. Seeing what I would perceive as good leadership. Talking to those individuals when I’ve observed them. Sometimes it’s been in a formal role, somebody leading a committee or an initiative across campus and I’ve been part of that experience but not leading it. Asking them maybe at the beginning, how they are planning to achieve the objective or maybe at the end afterwards maybe there was some conflict which inevitably rises a lot in academe. Asking them how they skillfully handled it, how they might have done it differently. (Interview 3)

Another woman, a department chair, purposely observed the actions of the former department chair before she was appointed to the role.

I was super attentive when our previous chair was in the position for two years because I knew I was planning on applying for the position and I wanted to know as much as I could. And even after making that effort I had no idea what was going on or kind of what the reality is at this level. (Interview 4)

Observing the actions, decisions, and communication of people in different leadership roles can be beneficial and influential in paving the leadership path. Paying attention to what is going on, what is working and not working is an important step in understanding the organizational culture and seeking opportunities for leadership.

Influences: Leadership development programs. A few interviewees mentioned leadership development programs, along with what was most beneficial to them about the programs. An associate dean found the multi-rater 360 feedback exercises helpful.

I've done a number of leadership programs, BRIDGES being the most recent one. One of the things I've found most helpful through those leadership programs are the 360 exercises—they were very helpful in my development. (Interview 11)

An assistant provost attributed her professional development to the network that she has established as a result of participating in leadership development programs.

I've gone through a number of leadership and development programs throughout the years—like BRIDGES and [a community leadership program]. What I have gotten the most out of them is a network of peers. While I do think I learned from both men and women, I think what has influenced or contributed to my development the most has been those relationships with other women in the field. (Interview 5)

Influences: Disciplinary perspectives of higher education. Other comments were related to their discipline and their overall view of what higher education should be as influencing their leadership identity. An assistant professor of indigenous studies shared her perspective.

Because of my research specialty in indigenous studies, reading and thinking both historically, but then also about current day, the systems that value consensus and value listening and collaboration have inspired me to use some of those same leadership skills that are culturally valued in indigenous communities in my own approach to leadership on my campus. (Interview 7)

Another woman who is a professor expressed that she aims to honor a traditional idea of the academy and ensure that other points of view are heard and that she, as a leader, articulates a path going forward.

My desire to live in a supportive and healthy, open academic culture. My belief that stepping forward and being able to hear others' points of view, but still being able to articulate and direct a constructive path. I mean not being afraid to take sides. (Interview 6)

This interviewee, who is a director in student services, refers to the golden rule as inspiration for her leader identity.

I think part of it how I want to, I would want to be treated as a person, but then also how I look at how people will want to be treated. I look at things as a customer service model, how you, how you want to treat people, how people want to be treated. So, I try to cater my leadership to look at my staff and see how this person wants me to treat them. (Interview 9)

Professional experience, mentoring, observing others, leadership development programs, and disciplinary perspectives are themes that were mentioned in the interviews. The first four fall in line with common influences for women's leadership development; however, the influence of disciplinary perspective is not as well known.

The next section is information from a survey question that asked alumnae to describe the obstacles that they have faced in their leadership journey. Understanding the obstacles that women face is valuable to consider when designing and revising leadership development programs for these women.

Obstacles to Leadership

To understand the challenges that women in academia face in their professional lives, a survey question asked about the obstacles that impede the alumnae's ability to be the best leader in higher education that they can be. The question was a part of the survey to get a broader

perspective of the type of challenges. The barriers that were most commonly mentioned were organizational culture/bureaucracy/politics, administrative tasks, leader identity/agency, competing goals/work-life balance, opportunities for advancement, and ageism/generational differences.

Obstacles: Organizational culture/bureaucracy/politics. Obstacles related to organizational culture/bureaucracy/politics were mentioned most frequently in the responses—34 of the 53 women who responded to the question referenced this as an obstacle. Several women responded with brief generalizations of their obstacles such as “The political landscape of academia”; “Lack of communication from my administrators; bureaucracy”; and “Systematic bias within structure of university, disappointment with priorities of administration, questioning of relevancy,” whereas other women were more descriptive in their accounts.

There were several comments about leadership roles being pre-determined by executive leaders and a lack of transparency and trust with upper administration. The first response is from a woman who is expressing the challenges of being looked over and not considered for leadership roles.

I think it can be tricky for someone who has been at one institution for a long time to signal to senior leadership that they have grown and are ready for new challenges. Sometimes decisions are made before you have the opportunity to put yourself forward.

This pre-determination of potential leaders was echoed by another woman who expressed that the siloed culture of higher education led to the need for leaders to protect their territory and power.

Where I am now it seems that you must be ‘invited’ to be a leader. The organization ask for ‘excellence’ but clearly there are silos/kingdoms mapped out among the leadership and fight for territory creates issues all around.

Trust is another point that was made by several women. One alumna shared that her reputation was affected by the actions of a person who was above her in the organization: “I have found myself as collateral damage due to a situation beyond my control at a layer of administration above me.” While another woman does not trust that administrators above her will support her if she makes tough decisions.

Lack of confidence that those above me have my back when I make tough decisions. Lack of transparency for some aspects of administration. Faculty members who are very unproductive and there’s nothing constructive I can do about it. Yes, I can give them more courses to teach, but they don’t do that well either, so it’s hurting the department to do so.

A lack of transparency and resistance to change among administrators was an obstacle for one woman. Her point was that if she knew the reasons for decisions, she would be able to lead and promote the change more effectively.

Sometimes I have big ideas that would produce change, and others are not able to fully consider the ideas seriously because they are not as open to change as I am. I am open with information too—and when I do not have full details, I can become somewhat frustrated because I do not understand why things are happening as they are operationally. I always assume there is a good reason, I just wish I knew the reasons so I could more effectively promote change that could benefit the university.

Gender and age discrimination were also a theme in responses to obstacles in their organizational culture and bureaucracy. Seven women described gender and/or age as obstacles in their institutions. One woman responded directly and briefly, “My age and gender have been barriers.” Another woman wrote, “There are challenges in higher education of those in leadership above me who ascribe to more authoritarian style. Generational difference and preferences of leadership.” Other quotes of obstacles related to gender and race included male leaders that do not recognize or appreciate a different way of leading.

I work in an environment that largely does not recognize or appreciate women's ways of knowing and leading. Often our approach is very relational. As a result, I often find that men do not appreciate or see the value in leadership that is different from what they are used to.

Another woman expressed that she has been constantly challenged in her leadership role by her direct reports and sub-reports because of her race and gender. The support of senior-level administrators has helped her to be more influential in her leadership.

I work in a very low diverse institution and I am constantly challenged in my leadership role because I am unlike any that have come before me (White or male). However, I have a strong senior level administration that supports my work, so my direct reports and sub reports have come around, but they continue to challenge in subversive ways.

One response to obstacles was the limited number of opportunities for leadership roles among women at her institution. Competition among women for these positions has created a culture where women do not facilitate other women's advancement.

I think that there are limited opportunities at my institution and in my unit to assume leadership positions as a woman. In some ways other women at my institution have not facilitated my advancement in that specific way. So, I have by necessity needed to get creative in finding ways to lead. This has been somewhat frustrating because the \$ rewards typically come more from positions than from leading behind the scenes.

Several important factors that block women from leadership roles were expressed in the open-ended survey responses. Pre-determined selections of potential leaders by senior administrators, lack of trust and transparency of administrators, resistance to change, age/gender discrimination, and a limited number of leadership roles for women were all components of the bureaucracy and politics at their institutions.

Obstacles: Leader identity and internal obstacles. The second most frequent theme was leader identity/internal obstacles. Thirteen women noted obstacles that impede their abilities as internal doubts, self-image, fear of upsetting others, leader identity, questioning

commitment, and imposter syndrome. One woman mentioned confidence in her response: “self-doubt, easily intimidated by those in higher positions of power.” Another woman indicated that her expectations and need for control were her obstacles, “Too high of expectations. Getting out of the way. Wanting to control too much.” Another woman recently realized she experiences imposter syndrome, “[It] has impeded my ability to lead and also adds drastically to my stress levels.” The following quotes are responses that point to internal/individual obstacles.

The first response is from a woman who does not see herself as a leader and is aware of how political higher education leadership can be.

Internal: leadership self-image. Often times, I do not see myself as a leader and I know this influences my interaction style. External: Leadership in higher ed seems politicized on some levels.

Another response is from a woman who is not able decide as to whether she is going to pursue a leadership position in higher education. One of her concerns is that her current position is not on a tenure track.

The greatest obstacle I face is myself. I have not fully committed to pursue leadership in higher ed because I seem to be constantly scanning the environment to see if I should be doing something else. I have a strong sense of what success in this field will entail, but I have yet to commit to any one course of action. An obstacle that I feel is important, but may not actually be, is that I do not hold a tenure line in a department. I’m wondering how that will impact my mobility in academic administration, and what I can do to account for it.

A fear of upsetting others is an obstacle. Her preferred communication style is direct, yet she curtails the way she communicates as not to upset others.

The #1 thing is me. I am afraid of upsetting others with honest feedback. I have a tendency to want to tell people exactly what is on my mind, but I almost never do because I want to remain a positive influence on those around me. I am working to find a way to provide feedback without feeling like I am upsetting others.

From these survey responses, internal thoughts and impressions are a common obstacle to being an effective leader or pursuing leadership roles. Several women noted an underdeveloped leadership identity and confidence.

Obstacles: Administrative duties. Another obstacle to leadership was the number of administrative duties in their work. The following quotes demonstrate how they are trying to balance their time. One alumna complained that the reward for good work was more work:

“Workload demands—It seems that the better I am, the more work I am given to accomplish.”

Another woman expressed that she feels like she lives by hers and others to do list.

There are too many external demands that result in me spending most of my time completing tasks . . . sometimes I feel like I’m living my and others’ to-do lists. To be a better leader, I would have to figure out how to get the needed tasks done and find more time and energy for the visionary.

An administrator in student affairs has thousands of contracts each year, six staff and two graduate assistants, but no designated administrative support to process thousands of contracts each year.

I need more administrative support. I spend way too much time signing forms, processing paperwork, comparing spreadsheets, etc. when I could be focusing on solutions to problems. I have an office of 6 staff and 2 GAs, and we have thousands of contacts with students, faculty, staff, and parents each year, but we have no administrative support. I have trouble communicating the needs I have professionally. I tend to let others put their needs in front of my needs—e.g., other offices need positions, so I don’t push hard enough to get a position for my office.

Another woman at a small liberal arts college shared that her position as a department head was not viewed as a leadership position, more of an administrative support position.

In my current position as department chair at a small college, I am not recognized as a leader. Chair positions do not carry any authority as they do at large institutions. I have responsibilities that often fall to administrative assistants. I also have no room for

advancement. In the next year, I plan on doing an exhaustive job search, and I will be moving away from a faculty position.

Obstacles: Competing priorities. Another obstacle that was not as prominently reported as expected was the balance of time and energy caring for family members. Five of the 53 women who responded to the survey mentioned work-family balance as an obstacle. “Personal obstacles surround being a mother, wife, daughter/caregiver” and “I have many competing priorities—my health and family are included here—and I believe balance is important.” One woman gave the sole response of “time with my son.” One woman mentioned family first in her description of competing goals.

Competing goals. Focus on family, my disciplinary areas, and service to the university/field. There is only so much time and so many resources. Where do I want to focus? How do these pieces fit together?

Women face internal and external obstacles in their personal and professional lives, from gender, race, and age discrimination to an internal lack of confidence and doubts about not being worthy of their leadership position. Responses from these survey participants indicated that organizational culture and bureaucracy, under-developed confidence and leader identity, too many administrative tasks, and work/life responsibilities impeded their ability to lead and rise to higher levels of leadership.

Changing Organizational Culture and Bureaucracy

In response to the number of quotes related to organizational culture and bureaucracy from the survey, I asked the interview participants what they thought could be done to improve organizational culture and/or bureaucracy to make it be less of an obstacle for leadership.

Common themes among their responses were educating leaders about the obstacles, developing

trust throughout the organization, accepting new ways of thinking, and changing policies to be more supportive of all employees and students.

Educate leaders about obstacles. Three interviewees expressed the importance of educating and discussing the obstacles that are caused by organizational norms, bureaucracy, and culture with executive leaders. The first quote spoke to the need for there to be more voices of influence to point out obstacles for achievement.

Well, I think that we need to educate leaders about it. you know, it's one thing for people who are, who are experiencing those obstacles to recognize they are there, but people who aren't experienced obstacles have no idea is there at all and so they'll just continue to perpetuate that . . . Currently there's not enough voices in the room to point things out or to show that. So. So we do need to help leaders and existing leaders to understand that those obstacles are real and that they do exist, what they are and provide strategies to decrease, decrease those. (Interview 8)

Another woman echoed the need for having people in positions in support of a more inclusive and supportive working environment.

You have to have people in positions to say you need to lessen that bureaucracy, if you've got all the power . . . So if you just flooding the market with more women or minorities, that doesn't necessarily change any of the bureaucracy. It does, it looks nice on paper when you can start marketing, how your diversity looks. Because you have to have open ears at the higher levels to take that into consideration and I think until that happens, or basically they get replaced by people at certain levels, you know, replacement does not happen often. And I've heard the university administration is kind of like rearranging cemetery, takes a very long time. (Interview 12)

The other response related to educating leaders was about breaking down silos and being honest about bureaucracy. This woman expressed a need for people to become comfortable with having difficult conversations.

That is definitely one obstacle that I have, bureaucracy. That's a tough one. We've got to break down silos. You've got to have those difficult conversations. To be honest about what the bureaucracy is. People don't want to do it because it means challenging conversations to have and it may make people uncomfortable. I see it as, be comfortable

with being uncomfortable and just say what it is. People aren't, aren't ready to do that. One of the challenges, people are lazy and don't want to be challenged because we're comfortable doing the same things over and over, but you got to have difficult conversations to get past that kind of stuff. We must have difficult conversations about the realities and impact of the bureaucracies. (Interview 2)

Another interviewee followed a similar line of thinking to educate and develop leaders to be aware of the obstacles and how to change the culture to be supportive of effective leadership.

Well, I think some of it is the training in the pipeline. So here at my institution we have a focus on diversity in a lot of our faculty positions and so we have written that we would like diverse applicants to apply. I think that maybe some version of that in academic environment, the mentoring and skill development, leadership development, providing opportunities. Some of it can be on an informal basis. I find that that observation to be true and just my experience was that it tended to be women, but some men as well who said, you need to do this and asked me where I wanted to go, what my aspirations were. I think a lot of it is tradition and tradition is always hard to change. Uh, I don't know. Um, man, that's a hard one. (Interview 3)

Another interviewee agreed that organizational change must come from the top down and that executive leaders must lead change through their decisions and actions.

It has to come from the top down. If there is no buy in from the top down, I don't see much change. If the chancellor or the president of the institution does not start the culture change. It will be difficult to change it. To top leaders: lead by example . . . make a statement, let it be known, hey, we're not going to do things like we used to do. We're going to do things fairly and then let people see the change. (Interview 9)

Educating leaders about the obstacles that are occurring in organizations can be a first step in changing culture and bureaucracy to support women and minorities. As one of the interviewees stated, these honest conversations are often difficult for some people to have. For open dialogue to be effective, executive leaders must value diverse ways of thinking and not internalize different ways of knowing and leading as a threat.

Trust. Responses from two interviewees, an associate dean and an executive, both mentioned trust as a factor affecting bureaucracy and culture. The first point about trust centered on trusting people to do their job and not being ruled by fear.

We've been talking a lot in my organization about the speed of trust. You can get a lot more done if you trust people to do what you hired them to do. In my particular situation, we seem to be ruled by fear. Every single thing that we could do is assessed by what's the worst that could happen and what do we have to do to make sure it doesn't happen again. I think we need to have a little trust. We need to be prepared if things go wrong, but you will never have the ability to prevent anything from going wrong. You get paralyzed if you don't take any chances. (Interview 11)

The second quote about trust was leading change by requiring data and reporting on desired outcomes. Having valid data that everyone can trust to demonstrate the institution's effectiveness and for internal decision making is important and not yet a reality at some institutions.

I think trust is a huge issue. That there's this responsibility to be good financial stewards and there's a perception that universities are not. And I think being more transactional, transparent with our data and why we do what we do, that we're not a business that you run as a board of governor. This is an educational institution and here's the data and building that trust and changing the bureaucracy. In the state of North Carolina [UNC System], President Spellings' strategic initiatives are holding chancellors accountable for the data, the data requirement alone is going to be huge. This is an educational institution and here's the data and building that trust and changing the bureaucracy. Because when people ask for something and our systems are antiquated or we all run our own—some have Banner, some have Peoplesoft. We don't talk to each other and we can't deliver the data to squash the allegation or the perception that we're not doing something. There is that aspect of trust. And so, you know, I'm not saying women can do it better, but of course we can. But I think here's the obstacle let's, expose it in a way that we're learning, we're teaching. (Interview 10)

Trust is essential in effective leadership—a leader's trust in employees and employees' trust in leadership. Trust in information and data from which decisions are made is also essential in a data-driven industry. Trust is a foundation for healthy and productive work environments. However, if the circles of trust among leadership are purposefully small and insular to maintain

the status quo or protect power, it can adversely affect organizational culture, as is noted in the next section on new ways of thinking.

Need new models and ways of thinking. Two interviewees discussed the need for models of leadership and overall success that differ from the traditional models and ways of thinking. The first quote is about differences in men's and women's stereotypical leadership styles and how women try to change their leadership style to fit into the common attributes of a leader, which are founded in male approaches to leadership.

How do you address the good boys club? There are differences in men and women. Is it that we're trying to mold ourselves too much to fit into the male definition of what it is to be successful and that the institutions are kind of molded that way and there needs to be more definitions of success with different models. I think that people are trying to do that and open that up, [for example] the Me-Too movement. I think that some of the good things that are coming out of that is looking at ways that we think about proceed, (Interview 1)

The second quote is from a woman who thinks higher education is due for a complete revision that benefits and meets the needs of students, faculty, parents, and society. In her view, there is little incentive for leaders to do anything differently.

I agree that the culture, the bureaucracy, and the enforced conformity is the greatest obstacle. I think people need to rethink how our institutions should look and how they should function. People who are running these institutions make a lot of money and they also have a lot of power. Why should they change? Um, the only thing that would make them change is if something manifest that's equally attractive to the whole educational enterprise . . . I think that if you try to learn to function in a diseased culture, you're going to function in a diseased way. The people who have control of our institutions, not all of them, there are true, benevolent and philanthropic and constructive leaders as well, but by and large, the whole system is meant to keep the people in power and money in place and until you come up with another system that's equally attractive to students, parents, to society, to faculty. Unless you come up with another way of doing it that successfully competes. So, you have to have a successfully competing vision of how institutions can work, how education can be delivered, how society can benefit. (Interview 6)

Disruptive innovation has been popular in the business world since the term was coined in the late 1990s by Clayton Christensen (Christensen, 1997). Higher education is slow to follow business. There are too many deep and long-standing structures that keep the current ways of knowing and doing in place, particularly with public universities and the influence of the state legislature on financial resources, national government regulations, and leadership.

Review and change policies. The response from another interviewee was about the difficulty of changing organizational culture. She went on to say that changing bureaucracy is a more realistic goal and gave an example of how her institution is approaching the obstacles imposed by policies.

Organizational culture is not something that you change easily. And not to say that it can't be changed, but I don't know that I, that my focus wouldn't be on lessening obstacles imposed by an organizational culture. I would say organizational culture is what we all live in. It's what it's around us every day now. I do think we could do a lot to lessen obstacles imposed by bureaucracy and I think that's something that we can all work at. And I wonder if. I wonder specifically if there are things that are preventing women from leading that are kind of embedded in our bureaucracy.

And so one thing that we've been doing as an institution here is really looking at, um, our institutional policies and procedures and trying to find out what are there some unintended consequences around some of our policies, um, that from a bureaucratic standpoint are holding back women or anyone for that matter. We're kind of undertaking this policy audit to really kind of look at what are some of those unintended consequences. I think you can influence some stuff on the surface, but I think if you're really getting kind of at the deep, deeply held institutional culture and values, um, the that work takes, is a lot slower and happens over time. (Interview 5)

A key theme of the section on changing organizational culture and bureaucracy to address obstacles for women and other minority groups is having the right people in positions of influence. More leaders at the table who have different ways of knowing and leading might help executives realize and understand the obstacles that are suppressing and oppressing potential leaders. These new voices can contribute to new models and to changing policies and procedures that interfere with the optimal work of different groups of people.

Summary of Research Question 2

The second research question looked at how alumnae of the BRIDGES program understand themselves as leaders and what has contributed and challenged their leadership journey. Responses from the survey addressed how alumnae perceive their leadership styles. The term that the survey respondents used most frequently to describe their leadership style was collaborative. Of the 64 terms used to describe the leadership style of the 55 alumni (36% of the sample), the most common term used to describe leadership style was collaborative. Servant or service-oriented was the next most common term used (18%), inclusive (11%), strategic (9%), and supportive (9%). Other terms used were team-focused, democratic, transparent, transformational/transformative, visionary, authentic, decisive, thoughtful, and coaching/mentoring. These themes were observed in the responses from the 12 interviews, as well.

To understand the challenges that these women face in their professional lives, they were asked to describe the obstacles that impede their ability to be the best higher education leader that they can be. The things that impeded their ability to lead and pursue leadership roles were organizational culture/bureaucracy, leader identity/agency, competing goals/work-life balance, administrative tasks, politics, upper administration, opportunities for advancement, and ageism/generational differences. Being expected to do administrative tasks and politics/lack of influence, challenges from upper administration, and few opportunities for advancement were also noted.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

The last chapter of this dissertation is a discussion of the findings, limitations, and implications of this research project and the need for future research on leadership development and its potential to impact leadership culture of higher education. The summary of the findings sections that follow is organized by the two main research questions. The last sections relate to both research questions.

Summary of Findings

Research Question 1

The first research question explored how the leadership development program in the case study prepares women for leadership in higher education. This question was addressed in the first and second phases of the multiphase mixed methods study. The first phase about the structure and curriculum of the program was based on observations of the 2017 program and review of documents from the program. Based on published articles about leadership development programs and higher education, the program's curriculum provides knowledge and skills relevant to women's leadership development in higher education. Knowledge of functional areas in higher education, such as finance and budgets, human resources, legal counsel, fundraising, grant writing, and crisis management, helps a leader to see the university as an interconnected functioning system rather than siloed departments and independent units. Based on feedback from the alumnae surveys, this knowledge, particularly on the topics of finance, human resources, and higher education law, has been beneficial to alumnae. The content to develop skills focused on self-awareness, communication, negotiation, navigating political environments, goal setting,

time/energy management, and awareness of others (implicit bias, generational, and gender differences) are also beneficial to higher education leaders, particularly women and minority groups. These topics were most often presented from the perspective of being a women leader, focusing on common internal and external obstacles for women in leadership positions. From the literature, there are ideas for additional content that supports skills in leadership and management, such as conflict management, team building, change management, capacity building, managing up-down-across, emotional intelligence, effective decision making, and operational/business planning (Tessens et al., 2011). These skills were noted as beneficial for women leaders in higher education and might be a good addition to the curriculum. As we saw in Chapter IV, some women expressed a desire for more management and leadership skill development in BRIDGES, rather than the “fluffy” content that is often covered in women’s only programs.

The second phase of the research project used a survey to collect information from the participants about their impressions of the program. Findings from this second phase indicated the program generally has a positive impact both professionally and personally on the alumnae. Participants benefited from the program by making connections with women in higher education, learning about the different facets and functions of higher education, gaining confidence in themselves, and clarifying their career goals. The perceived strengths of the program were the demographically and professionally diverse group of women who participated in the program each year, the breadth of topics covered, and a program structure that allowed time and guidance for connecting with each other and personal time for reflection. The most cited areas for improvement were for alumnae engagement opportunities, the continuation of training after graduation, and more training on specific leadership skills.

Program satisfaction and four quantitative indicators of program impact were assessed through responses to the survey. Feedback from the survey indicates that women are satisfied

with their experiences in the program, as 73% of the 62 alumnae said they were extremely/very satisfied, and only 3% were slightly satisfied/not satisfied at all.

From the four Likert style questions inquiring about impact, the program is most effective at helping women understand the many facets of colleges and universities (77% indicated moderate to a great extent). Also notable is the number of respondents who indicated that they had used knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or values from the program in their academic jobs—half of the respondents selected to a moderate extent and 24% to ‘a great extent.’ The survey respondents’ perception of the program’s impact on their ability to lead in higher education was mixed. Most of the alumnae (65%) thought that the program impacted their ability to lead by a moderate to great extent; however, this question also received the least number of ‘to a great extent’ responses among the four Likert-type extent questions and the greatest of respondents (24%) who selected ‘somewhat’ or ‘not at all.’ The program had the least effect on changing the way alumnae perceive themselves as leaders, with 8% of respondents expressing that the program had no impact on their leader identity and the lowest percentage (61%) of moderate to great extent responses. Of the four quantitative ratings for impact, the lowest rating was for changing the way they saw themselves as leaders or developing/enhancing leader identity, an important factor in leadership development for women (Knipher et al., 2017; Peterson, 2019; R. Selzer et al., 2017).

Group differences among age groups, race, age, and program cohort year were assessed related to satisfaction and quantitative program impact measures using Kruskal–Wallis. Differences in mean ranks were noted for program satisfaction and the program objective, understanding the facets of college and universities. No differences were noted between race, age, or cohort groups. There were differences among groupings of professional position/rank. Full professors responded with the lowest satisfaction ratings and rated the lowest responses for

program impact of understanding the different facets of higher education. These findings suggest a possible need for differentiation in leadership programming for senior faculty and other professional roles in higher education, a point that might be counter to the overall strength of the program being diverse and inclusive of different professional positions, as well as demographic characteristics.

The program impact was also assessed with open-ended survey questions. The fourth objective for the program was to create a program of personal and professional development to benefit the participants and their institutions. From the open-ended questions on the survey, we were able to see that building their network, strengthening their confidence, and having a better understanding of higher education and the UNC system were the most frequent responses. When asked about the personal and professional impact of the program, the most common response to this open-ended question was building their professional network and connections ($n=18$), which is a theme that is seen throughout the study. Building confidence and knowledge of leadership principles were also mentioned frequently ($n=10$ each). Participants indicated that they had a better understanding of the UNC system ($n=6$) and what was going on at other institutions ($n=4$). There were also several ($n=5$) responses about the benefit of learning from the stories and experiences of women from other disciplines and campuses. Time for reflection and the 360-degree feedback exercise was also noted as impactful.

Another indicator of the impact of the program was how their experiences in the program played a role in them receiving a promotion or increased responsibility. Twenty-five of the 55 women who answered the question received a promotion. Of the 22 women who provided comments, six contributed increased confidence/empowerment from their BRIDGES experiences. Two women attributed an enhanced knowledge of themselves that helped to clarify their goals

and make decisions about their careers. Five women said that the program had no impact on their promotion/increased responsibility.

The most prominent strength of the program, per survey and interview responses, is the network and connections that arise from the program. Women reported using these connections differently, but by far the most frequently stated strength compared to other open-ended responses. Another notable strength is the ability for women to learn what was going on at other institutions. The program provides time away to reflect on their professional lives and a “safe space” to share experiences and challenges that are occurring in their professional, and sometimes personal lives. Learning from the experiences and stories of other women is also a common theme in the study.

The perceived areas for improvement within the program were collected in an open-ended question to which 52 alumnae responded. The most frequent responses were the desire for more alumni engagement activities, i.e., additional training sessions (advanced topics, online, centralized, or on different campuses) and/or mentoring. Another request was for more interactive activities during the program days and a deeper dive into training on specific leadership skills.

Through this research question, I sought to explore how the program was educating and impacting the program participants and the degree to which a program is meeting the leadership development needs of the participants. Observations of the program, review of documents and supporting materials, responses to the survey, and comparisons with information in the literature painted a picture of what the program was doing well and how it could improve.

With the next section we move from information about the program to the second unit of analysis, the participants.

Research Question 2

The second research question of this project looked at women's definition of transformation leadership, their perception of themselves as leaders, the influences on their ability to lead, and obstacles that they have faced. Information for these questions was compiled from responses from the second phase of the study (survey) and the third phase (interview). Survey data provided information regarding how alumnae define transformational leadership, describe their leadership style, the obstacles that they face.

The theme that guides the BRIDGES program is transformational leadership. In order to determine how BRIDGES alumnae define transformational leadership, an open-ended question was added to the survey: What does transformational leadership mean to you? The definitions varied widely among the 55 women who responded to this question. The terms that were used the most frequently in their definitions were change, others, positive, vision, and organization. When comparing the responses to the theory of transformational leadership by Bass and Avolio (1996), the most common finding was related to individualized consideration, the relational component of transformational leadership. Individual consideration is where leaders address the needs of their subordinates, emphasizing their progression to higher levels, and treat followers individually (differently) and equitably.

Close to one-third of the 55 women who responded to the leadership style survey question described their style as collaborative, which supports previous research on women's leadership styles (Madden, 2011; O'Neil, Hopkins, & Bilimoria, 2015; R. A. Selzer & Robles, 2019). Responses from interviews also had themes of collaborative, servant, and team-based leadership as the women described how they perceived themselves as leaders and how they follow a collaborative decision-making process. The responses ranged from being "very

conscious both of collaboration and of integrating the strengths of the people that I'm working with" to other quotes that specified collaboration as a regular practice in decision making.

Responses from the interviews about their self-perception as leaders also showed weak associations and identifications as a leader in their current roles. One response was, "Well, I don't really always sort of think of myself as a leader per se" and another was clearly stated "I still struggle with my leader identity," while another said, "I don't think I've spent a lot of time thinking about [me as a leader]." Women's perceptions of themselves as leaders and their leadership identity is a topic that received some attention during the 2017 program. It was also the lowest-rated quantitative impact measure from the survey about the preparation that these women obtain from the program. It was also one of the lowest-rated topics among survey respondents based on an importance scale of leadership competencies included in the survey, but not presented as a part of this study. A follow-up question to the self-perceptions of leadership was what had influenced the way they perceive themselves as leaders. Professional experiences, mentoring, observing other leaders, and leadership development programs and worldviews shaped by their academic discipline all played a role in how they perceive themselves as leaders.

Information from the surveys also provided insight into the obstacles that these women faced in their leadership progression of higher education. The most common obstacles were the structural blocks of organizational culture and bureaucracy that did not support women leaders, time-intensive administrative tasks, interpersonal leader identity and agency, competing goals and work-life balance, and ageism/generational differences. These obstacles are reflective of findings from previous research women's paths to leadership (Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Ibarra et al., 2013; Kezar, 2000; Knipfer et al., 2017; Lester & Sallee, 2017; Madsen et al., 2012).

Discussion

How is an established leadership development program preparing women for leadership in higher education? The impact of the program is strongest at helping women understand the many facets of colleges and universities (77% indicated moderate to a great extent), which aligns with how the program is structured. The curriculum develops knowledge of the functional areas of higher education and covers topics important to women leaders in academia. Understanding different organizational functions in higher education is a prominent part of the curriculum and, as noted in this research and previous research on the program, is one of its strengths. Individual sessions were dedicated to finance and budgeting, human resources, legal, fundraising, grant writing, and crisis management have sessions. Woven within the curriculum were lessons and educational experiences in developing interpersonal skills through self-awareness, communication, negotiation, navigating political environments, goal setting, and time and energy management, implicit bias, and generational and gender differences. These competencies are reflected in the previous research on leadership development (Freeman & Kochan, 2013; Petrie, 2011; Sugiyama et al., 2016; Tessens et al., 2011). There are some topics and competencies that are important for leaders in higher education but are not emphasized in the BRIDGES program. There may be a benefit for the inclusion of lessons on conflict management, team building, change management, capacity building, managing up-down-across, time management, emotional intelligence, effective decision making, and operational/business planning (Tessens et al., 2011).

The program had less of an impact on changing the way alumnae perceive themselves as leaders. From this research study, there is a limited but growing number of ways that women can enhance their leader identity. In previous years, there were no structured opportunities for women to reflect on and develop their leader identities. In 2017, the advisory board emphasized the content in a few sessions and added a leader narrative assignment for the class to complete over

the course of the program; however, it was not implemented well. With the 2018 class, a great deal of effort has been made to structure the assignment and improve instructions.

As discussed in the Limitations section of this chapter, the tools used to assess leadership development limit the quality of information obtained from the research participants. If different research tools were used, the research could demonstrate a more complete and complex view of what is involved in leadership development. Changes in leadership capacity and the development of knowledge and skills are often assessed with indirect self-perception data in surveys and interviews. The use of autoethnography during the program and continuing after the program through leadership experiences can tie together knowledge gained during the program to other developmental experiences after the program. Recent studies (R. Selzer et al., 2017) have used autoethnography to look at personal experiences within the program. Ethnography allows for a deeper understanding of how women are experiencing the program and their leadership journey, which allows for more opportunity to explore intersectionality and explore the perspectives of all women. Auto-ethnography can be used as an evaluation tool and as a method to deepen the program participants' understanding of themselves as leaders and their leader identity. It also allows space for women to explore the many dimensions of their identity and bring out socially conscious benefits to the programs. This could be a bridge for individuals participating in leadership development programs to lead organizational and societal change against secondary discrimination, oppression, and unequal treatment of minority groups.

Research on leadership development can be more useful if it is from a longitudinal account, where there are direct assessments of learning that occur as participants progress through the program. Participants could benefit from autoethnography to more deeply explore the intersectional ties of their experiences and self-concept as they strengthen their leadership skills. We need to have long-term research on the programs to cover generational changes in

expectations, differences in leadership needs for higher education. Program outcome measures need to extend to as many perspectives as possible to capture and honor the perspectives of people from all ways of knowing.

Transformational leadership was the primary theory of this project, as it is the theme of the leadership program for the case. It is also one of the most cited theories of effective leadership (Anderson & Sun, 2017; Bass & Avolio, 1996) and is often linked to women in leadership (Eagly et al., 2003; Mokot et al., 2019; Vinkenburg et al., 2011) and organizational change (Abrell et al., 2011; Groves, 2020). Although the program's theme is transformational leadership, the findings from this study indicate a closer alignment with the motivational theory Self Determination Theory and its concepts of competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2012). The content for the program builds competence about higher education, autonomy comes from increased competence/empowerment, and connections and affiliations strengthen relatedness. With most of the women voluntarily participating, most people who apply are likely intrinsically motivated. With the program following and structured around Self Determination Theory, one must question if this could impact the satisfaction ratings and other indicators of the program's success.

Limitations

Single case study. Limitations of the study can be attributed to the design of the study as an exploratory single case study. Looking at one program for women, who voluntarily participated in a leadership development program from 2012-2017 will limit generalizations. If one also considers the women were working in higher education institutions in one state in the Southeast region of the United States—a state that ranks 10th in state and local government support for education in the United States (State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, 2018), it further limits the generalizations to other programs. The boundaries of the

case by time, with observations from 2017 and most information from alumnae who completed the program in 2012-2017, also limits the generalizability of the program. There are limitations in generalizability with any single case study. Limitations in higher education and women's leadership might be influenced by regional and state differences in higher education and women's rights in different countries as well as the political environment of public versus private institutions. Generalizability is based on analytic generalizations with comparisons to literature and previous research on gender, leadership, leadership development, and higher education leadership.

Exploratory design. Considering the purpose of the study is to explore and describe the program and how alumnae understand leadership and themselves as leaders, causation and correlation of data are not an expectation. Exploratory case studies are beneficial for initial exploration and evaluation. For this study, I sought to explore and describe how the program was functioning and how alumnae perceived leadership and themselves as leaders. As research progresses, designs that involve comparisons, direct measures of knowledge acquisition, and program effectiveness will be useful to the program and the literature.

One researcher. Another limitation of the study is that a sole researcher designed, implemented, analyzed, interpreted, and documented the case, limiting the case to primarily one lens. This limitation was mitigated through time and reflection as I sought to be a neutral presence in a case where I had multiple roles in the past and future. Throughout the study, I made efforts to question the effect of my perspectives and biases on the research and the participants. For those points that aligned with my perspectives, I made a conscious effort to use a neutral approach and neutral language in analysis and interpretation. The data from this research was heavy in qualitative information and quotations. Where possible, I included as many verbatim quotations as possible to show the raw data as a true example of their thoughts and expressions.

Data collection. The next limitation relates to most of the data for the case being retrospectively collected from alumnae. As mentioned by Huber (2011) and reiterated by Brue and Brue (2016), evaluation of leadership development programs often relies on self-reported perceptions in post-hoc surveys and interviews from participants of the program. The same is true for research on leader development with interviews and surveys. Information from post-hoc interviews is likely to be influenced by attributional and interviewer expectancy bias (Huber 2011). Responses might be influenced by a desire to give the answer that the interviewer wants to hear, or repeat phrases or ideas used in the questioning in their responses. Expectancy and attributional biases might also occur in survey data. For example, in this case, the theoretical theme of the program being studied was transformational leadership. Does this influence the study participants to use the terms transformational or other terms related to it in their perception of themselves as leaders? Therefore, it is difficult to make solid claims about the effectiveness of the programs at the individual or organizational levels.

Diversity and critical theory. This research did not do a deep dive into the ways of knowing and being of different demographic groups or the intersectionality of identity roles and life experiences that are critical to leadership, especially authentic leadership. This is an area that needs further research, as it is not uncommon for leadership programs for women to focus only on gender and not on all of the other identity components (Eddy, Khawaja, & Ward, 2017). To ensure as many voices were considered in this research, maximum variation sampling based on age, race, professional position, and program cohort year was used to ensure this research captured information from different perspectives. This is an important topic that should be the focus of future research, as women of color experience many tiers of obstacles in their professional journey and hold fewer top leadership positions.

Binary gender. Much of the research that provided meaning for this study and the program itself followed a binary categorization of gender based on sex. The voices of people whose identity is not at one end of the gender continuum will likely not be heard or considered in research and programs that focus on women only. As mentioned in Chapter I and later in this chapter, there are many avenues for future research on inclusive leader development that consider all facets of identity. A hope for the future of leadership would be to move beyond the binary views of gender and subconscious concepts of role congruity that assigns notions that men are competent and better leaders.

Implications

The potential impact and implications of this research are multi-faceted. From the narrowest scope, it will benefit the program that is the focus of the case. The study highlights the strengths of the program and what the program is doing to impact the participants, both professionally and personally. Ideas for improvement are also included in the study—alumnae engagement, advanced educational opportunities, management skills training, and activities to enhance the participants' self-concept as a leader.

The implications extend beyond the program in this case to other leader development programs for women. How can a leadership development program meet the professional development needs and prepare women for leadership roles for the current and future challenges of higher education? Leadership development programs for women are important to ensure there are women with an understanding of leadership skills and knowledge necessary to lead in higher education. However, as we have seen in the stated needs for improvement from this study and others (Selzer & Robles, 2019), many of these programs are a one-time engagement that ends after completion of the program. There is a need for continued education, connections, guidance, and support from these programs. Mentoring and executive coaching can meet some of the needs

for guidance and support, but from the continued connections and education from the program, there are not many opportunities for long term impact and continuing of building networks, one of the main strengths of the program.

A question for the future of women's only leadership programs to consider is: To whom are these programs targeted and who are they excluding because of that? The continuum of gender beyond the simple binary view based on sex categories male/female or masculine/feminine. "Moving beyond simple binary concepts of men and women is critical to taking full advantage of leadership capacity in colleges and universities" (Eddy et al., 2017, p. 2). People who do not fit into the binary view of gender/sex categories are not included and are ignored. Leadership development programs focus on developing agency and confidence of women and not changing the structural barriers to minorities advancing to leadership positions in higher education. There needs to be an organizational and societal transformation that addresses the secondary discrimination norms. Binary views of gender in women-only programs have a tendency not to consider race, class, sexual orientation, and other aspects of identity. "Any comprehensive analysis of gender needs to consider all aspects of identity and intersectionality" (Eddy et al., 2017, p. 4). We need frames for exploration, investigation, analysis, and understanding of leadership that differ from androcentric and Eurocentric frameworks of leadership. There is also a need for research that moves beyond improving confidence, leader identity, and expanding networks for personal gain to focus on improving equity and organizational culture. There is a need for research on structural barriers and secondary discriminatory practices that impede people from different backgrounds and with different conceptual frameworks and perspectives to attain strategic leadership positions.

Leadership development programs can be a way to improve gender inequity and inequality in higher education by educating potential leaders and non-executive leaders on how to

influence the environment. Bilen-Green, Froelich, and Jacobson (2008) state, “More women in strategic leadership positions provide a greater understanding of pragmatic work policy obstacles, enhanced networking possibilities, and demonstration of a shifting organizational culture—all which can facilitate more equal participation in the academy” (p. 1). More women in leadership roles can bring awareness to second-generation bias; indirect discrimination; and improve the recruitment, retention, and promotion of female faculty. From this research and previously conducted research, Table 18 provides recommendations for leadership development for women in higher education.

Table 18

Recommendations for Leadership Development Programs in Higher Education

Design leadership development programs that include lower level leadership positions
Adopt a goal of improving organizational culture/daily operations to increase the number of women in key decision-making roles
Have learning activities to develop leader identity and build confidence
Provide relevant content with specific skills and opportunities for advanced training Develop specific skills to prepare women for leading in the future
Offer time to reflect and get away as a break from conflicting responsibilities
Offer opportunities to learn from each other
Offer opportunities to network and connect during and after the program. Teach participants how to network and maintain connections
Involve alumni in creating and offering alumni engagement activities

Suggestions for Future Research

The suggestions for future research build on ideas posed in the Limitations and Implications section. With so few studies on the effectiveness of leadership development programs for women in higher education, there is still a need for research to investigate how leadership development programs can meet the professional development needs of women in higher education, address the leadership challenges of higher education, and prepare women to

lead higher education in the future. The future of higher education is an important consideration because of the uncertainty of what higher education will look like and the leadership skills these future models will require. Following a pragmatic philosophical orientation and using a mixed methods design to research the complexities of higher education leadership might provide an understanding of the causes and potential solutions to the underrepresentation of diverse leaders in higher education.

An avenue for research about leadership development in higher education might be to explore how programs might teach aspiring mid-level and upper-level leaders to influence organizational culture in support of diversity in leadership. Transformational Leadership Theory and its impact on organizational change could be a model to investigate movement toward an equitable and highly functioning institution. A research question that could guide this project is: In what ways can a leadership development program use Transformational Leadership Theory to influence and change organizational culture in higher education to support diverse leaders?

In order to explore how to support aspiring minority leaders in higher education, research could be designed to determine how leadership development programs in higher education can go beyond the binary views of women-only programs to include ways of considering intersectionality of a person's identity. Designing leadership development opportunities that explore and shape the layers of self-concept could also enhance and strengthen a person's ability to be authentic in their leadership. Are there ways, beyond leadership journals and autoethnography, to include leadership identity work in the programs as a way to enhance self-efficacy, confidence, and authenticity? Based on this case study research, this branch of research has the most potential to contribute to our understanding of inclusive leadership programming.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to describe how an established state-based women's only leadership development program for women in higher education prepares women for leadership in higher education and explore how alumnae of the program understand and perceive leadership and themselves as leaders. Over the past 40 years, academic leadership programs for women have grown, morphed, and waned with little published evidence of outcomes and the experiences of women who participated in these programs. In addition to the stakeholders who will directly benefit from a case study of this academic leadership program for women, this project could benefit scholars and practitioners in leadership, leader development, and professional development for women.

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APPENDIX A
CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO
CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT

Project Title: Evaluation of a Leadership Development Program for Women in Higher Education

Principal Investigator and Faculty Advisor: Amy Strickland (Principal Investigator) and Dr. Colleen Fairbanks (Faculty Advisor)

Participant's Name: _____

What are some general things you should know about research studies?

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in the study is voluntary. You may choose not to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. There may not be any direct benefit to you for being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies. If you choose not to be in the study or leave the study before it is done, it will not affect your relationship with the researcher or the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Details about this study are discussed in this consent form. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.

You will be given a copy of this consent form. If you have any questions about this study at any time, you should ask the researchers named in this consent form. Their contact information is below.

What is the study about?

This is a research project that will describe how an established leadership development program prepares women for leadership in higher education. We will collect data from BRIDGES alumnae, the BRIDGES program director, and BRIDGES advisory board for this evaluative case study. Your participation is voluntary.

Why are you asking me?

We are asking you to be a part of the study because you are a BRIDGES alumnus and we value your opinion. We are asking BRIDGES sisters from the beginning class of 1993 to the Class of 2017 to be a part of this study and complete the electronic survey.

What will you ask me to do if I agree to be in the study?

You will be asked to complete a survey and possibly an interview that may occur on the telephone or face-to-face, if you prefer. The survey will be sent to you via email and will likely take 15-20 minutes to complete. The interview is designed to take 30 minutes but may run to a maximum time of one hour. If you have questions about the study, please contact Amy

Strickland, the principal investigator, via email amy_strickland@uncg.edu or telephone, 336-256-0575.

Is there any audio/video recording?

In an effort to capture all of your thoughts and perceptions about the BRIDGES program, I will digitally record the interviews. "Because your voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the recording, your confidentiality for things you say on the recording cannot be guaranteed although the researcher will try to limit access to the recording as described below."

What are the risks to me?

"The Institutional Review Board at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro has determined that participation in this study poses minimal risk to participants."

If you have questions, want more information or have suggestions, please contact Amy Strickland, the principal investigator, via email amy_strickland@uncg.edu or telephone, 336-256-0575.

If you have any concerns about your rights, how you are being treated, concerns or complaints about this project or benefits or risks associated with being in this study please contact the Office of Research Integrity at UNCG toll-free at (855)-251-2351.

Are there any benefits to society as a result of me taking part in this research?

There are not benefits to society as a result of you taking part in this research.

Are there any benefits to *me* for taking part in this research study?

"There are no direct benefits to participants in this study."

Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?

"There are no costs to you or payments made for participating in this study."

How will you keep my information confidential?

"All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law." Information will be kept confidential by not identifying participants by name when data are disseminated. The data will be kept for one year electronically in password-protected files on the UNCG Box.

"Absolute confidentiality of data provided through the Internet cannot be guaranteed due to the limited protections of Internet access. Please be sure to close your browser when finished so no one will be able to see what you have been doing." Alternatively, add security statement from commercial survey tool used for the study.

What if I want to leave the study?

"You have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw at any time, without penalty. If you do withdraw, it will not affect you in any way. If you choose to withdraw, you may request that any of your data which has been collected be destroyed unless it is in a de-identifiable state. The investigators also have the right to stop your participation at any time. This could be because you have had an unexpected reaction, or have failed to follow instructions, or because the entire study has been stopped."

What about new information/changes in the study?

“If significant new information relating to the study becomes available which may relate to your willingness to continue to participate, this information will be provided to you.”

Voluntary Consent by Participant:

“By signing this consent form/completing this survey/activity (used for an IRB-approved waiver of signature) you are agreeing that you read, or it has been read to you, and you fully understand the contents of this document and are openly willing consent to take part in this study. All of your questions concerning this study have been answered. By signing this form, you are agreeing that you are 18 years of age or older and are agreeing to participate, in this study described to you by” Amy Strickland.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B
ALUMNI SURVEY

2018 Survey for BRIDGES Alumni

This 18-question survey is part of a case study research project focusing on a state-based leadership program for women in higher education.

This survey follows UNC Greensboro’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines and requires your consent to participate in a research study. The following information is required by IRB: Alumni of the program from the past ten years are being asked to complete the survey - participation is voluntary. Information obtained in this study is confidential and will be kept on the University’s 3 Lock cloud-based storage. If you agree to participate in the second phase of this study (a 20-minute telephone interview) we will need to collect identifying information to be able contact you. However, your identifying information will be delinked from your responses before the data is stored. If you do not wish to complete the survey, simply select no to the next question.

If you have questions or concerns about this study, please contact Amy Strickland at amy_strickland@uncg.edu or 336-971-9089. You may also contact Dr. Coleen Fairbanks, the faculty advisor for the project at cmfairba@uncg.edu or UNC Greensboro’s Office of Research Integrity Director at 1-855-251-2351.

By completing this survey, you are consenting to participant in the research study, Leadership Development for Women in Higher Education: A Sequential Mixed Methods Study.

Are you willing to complete the survey?

Yes or No

If no, skip to End of Survey

Block 1

1. What is your overall satisfaction with the BRIDGES Leadership program?

Not at all satisfied

Slightly satisfied

Moderately satisfied

Very satisfied

Extremely satisfied

Block 2

The next six questions ask about the extent to which the BRIDGES program contributed to your personal and professional lives.

Not at all

Somewhat

Neutral

Moderate

Great extent

2. To what extent have you used knowledge, skills, and/or connections from BRIDGES in your personal or professional lives?

Not at all

Somewhat

Neutral

Moderate extent

Great extent

3. To what extent do you think BRIDGES contributed to your ability to lead in higher education?
Not at all Somewhat Neutral Moderate extent Great extent

4. To what extent did BRIDGES help you acquire an understanding of the many facets of colleges and universities?
Not at all Somewhat Neutral Moderate extent Great extent

5. To what extent did BRIDGES change the way you perceive yourself as a leader (i.e., your leader identity)?
Not at all Somewhat Neutral Moderate extent Great extent

Block 3

6. In what ways did your participation in BRIDGES impact you personally and/or professionally?

Block 4

7. Have you received a promotion and/or acquired a higher level of leadership responsibility after completing BRIDGES?
Yes or No

If yes,

If your experiences or connections from BRIDGES contributed to your promotion or your ability to lead at higher levels, briefly describe it here.

Block – Program Satisfaction and Feedback

Questions 8-12 inquire about your leadership style, obstacles to leadership, the importance of personal and interpersonal skills, and your interpretation of transformational leadership.

8. Provide three words/phrases that describe your leadership style.

9. Briefly describe or list the internal and/or external obstacles that impede your ability to be the best leader you can be?

10. A theme of BRIDGES is Transformational leadership. What does “transformational leadership” mean to you?

Block 6

The purpose of the next question is to gather information about the importance of potential topics for women’s-only academic leadership programs. If there are topics or skills that are not included in the list, please enter it in the Other text boxes.

11. How important is it to include the following personal/interpersonal skills in a leader development program for women in higher education?

Neutral, Not important, Slightly important, Moderately important, Extremely important

- a. Communicating as a Leader, Communication Strategy
- b. Conflict Resolution

- c. Confidence, Self Esteem, Agency, Imposter Syndrome
- d. Decision making
- e. Developing Leader Identity
- f. Maintaining a Credible Professional Profile, Marketing Yourself
- g. Managing Change
- h. Mentoring Relationships, Coaching, Sponsoring Others
- i. Mindfulness in Leadership, Emotional Intelligence / Agility
- j. Navigating Power Dynamics & Political Environments
- k. Negotiating
- l. Self Awareness
- m. Team Building
- n. Using Technology in Leadership (eLeadership)
- o. Working with Others – Managing Up, Down, & Across Roles
- Other
- Other
- Other

Block 7

Questions 12-14 provide an opportunity for you to share your impressions of the BRIDGES program.

12. What are the strengths of the BRIDGES program?

13. What could BRIDGES do differently to meet your leadership development needs?

14. Is there anything else you would like for us to know about your BRIDGES experience? Yes or No

Q18 If yes – Please provide your thoughts here

Block 8

The final four questions are demographics – age, current job, race/ethnicity and your willingness to participate in a short interview.

15. What is your current age?

16. What is your professional title?

17. What is your race/ethnicity?

Block 9

18. Are you willing to participate in a 20- to 30-minute interview to provide additional information about your experience with Bridges, your perspectives of yourself as a leader, and leadership in higher education? The interviews may be face to face or via telephone - depending on your preference.

Yes or No

Thank you for your willingness to complete an interview! Please provide the best way to reach you to schedule the interview.

Block 10

Thank you for completing the survey! Once you submit your survey, you will not be able to access it again.

Would you like to submit the survey now? Yes or No

Survey Questions by Research Question with Variables/Type of Data Technique

Survey Questions (SQ) by Research Questions & Sub-Questions		Variables & Type of Data
RQ1.2 Is the program impacting the ability of alumnae to lead in higher education?		
	SQ2. To what extent have you used knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or values from BRIDGES during your job in academia?	Application of content (Ordinal)
	SQ3. To what extent do you think BRIDGES developed your ability to lead in higher education?	Ability to lead (Ordinal)
	SQ4. To what extent did BRIDGES help you acquire an understanding of the many facets of colleges and universities?	Understanding of colleges/universities (Ordinal)
	SQ5. To what extent did BRIDGES change the way you perceive yourself as a leader (your leader identity)?	Leader Identity (Ordinal)
	SQ6: In what ways did your participation in the program impact you personally and/or professionally	Impact Qualitative data
	SQ7. Have you received a promotion and/or acquired a higher level of leadership responsibility after completing BRIDGES? [Skip Logic – If Yes: If your experiences or connections from BRIDGES contributed to your promotion or your ability to lead at higher levels, briefly describe.	Impact (Ordinal) Skip logic: Qualitative data
RQ1.3 Are there group differences (related to age, race/ethnicity, professional position) in how the alumnae perceived the program to impact their ability to lead in higher education?		
	SQ15. What is your age?	Age (Raw data is interval. Can be transformed to categorical if put in ranges) - Independent variable
	SQ16. What is your current position in higher education?	Professional position (Categorical) – Independent variable
	SQ17. What is your race/ethnicity?	Race/ethnicity (Categorical) – Independent variable
<p><i>Dependent variables: application of content (SQ2), perception of ability to lead (SQ3), understanding of colleges (SQ4), leader identity (SQ5), impact (SQ6)</i></p> <p><i>Independent variables: age, current position, race/ethnicity</i></p>		

RQ1.4 How satisfied are alumnae with their experiences in the program? What are the strengths and areas of improvement for the program?		
	SQ1. What is your overall satisfaction with the BRIDGES Leadership program?	Satisfaction (Ordinal)
	SQ11. Rate the following personal/interpersonal skills based on how important they are to include in leadership development for women in higher education.	Needs assessment (Ordinal)
	SQ12. What are the strengths of the BRIDGES program?	Program Evaluation Qualitative data
	SQ13. What could BRIDGES do differently to meet your leadership development needs?	Program Evaluation Qualitative data
	SQ14. Is there anything else you would like for us to know about your BRIDGES experience? If yes, please provide your thoughts here	Program evaluation Qualitative data
RQ2. How do alumnae of a leadership development program understand leadership, transformational leadership, and themselves as leaders in higher education?		
	SQ8. A theme of BRIDGES is Transformational leadership. What does “transformational leader” mean to you?	Transformational leader – Qualitative data
	SQ9. Provide three words to describe your leadership style.	Leadership style – Qualitative data
	SQ10. Briefly describe or list the internal and/or external obstacles that impede your ability to be the best leader you can be?	Challenges to leadership - Qualitative data

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (CRESWELL, 2013)

Email request to participate in the interviews:

Dear _____,

Thank you for completing the survey for the BRIDGES program evaluation several months ago.

After reviewing the data and the sampling frame, you are one of 12 alumnae selected to provide additional information on women leaders in higher education.

To make the process as easy as possible, the interviews will be over the telephone and will last 20-45 minutes. I will send the questions to you in advance to facilitate and possibly expedite the flow of the interview.

If you are still willing to participate, please email your date/time preferences for the call.

I am happy to answer questions, 336-971-9089.

Kind regards,
Amy Strickland

Email to confirm date/time of interview and get permission to audio record the call:

Thank you! Yes, _____ *Date/Time* works for me. Is the best number to reach you _____?

The interview questions are attached, if you would like to review prior to our conversation. It is a semi-structured interview; therefore, we may stray slightly from the questions that are attached.

Since this BRIDGES project is part of my dissertation on women leaders in higher education, I would like to record our telephone interview to help document the qualitative data. Your identity will be protected. Do I have your permission to record our conversation?

I look forward to speaking with you.

Interview Questions

Do you have any questions before we get started?

You as a leader:

1. How do you **describe yourself as a leader**? How do you perceive yourself as a leader?
2. What has **influenced or contributed to the development of your leader identity** and how you perceive yourself as a leader? *For example: professional/personal experiences, people, programs, interactions, situations, mentors/sponsors, etc.*

Higher education:

3. What are the three biggest **challenges for higher education** today?
4. What are your predictions for the **future of higher education**?
5. What will be essential for higher education **leaders to know, do, and be to succeed in the future**?
6. Do you think **leadership programs designed for women** are needed to prepare future women leaders in higher education? Why or why not?

Follow up to survey of 63 BRIDGES alumnae:

The most common obstacle to the respondents' ability to lead was organizational culture and bureaucracy.

7. What could be done to lessen the **obstacles imposed by organizational culture/bureaucracy** that impede effective leadership in higher education?

When defining transformational leadership (TL), more alumni referenced addressing the needs of subordinates/followers and elevating them to new levels than any other component of transformational leadership. Few to no alumni included communicating a shared vision; being an authentic/respected role model; being charismatic; and encouraging followers to think outside the box in their definition of TL.

8. What are your **thoughts on these findings**? Do you think women tend to emphasize the needs of their subordinates and elevate them (following a relational leadership style)? Why do you suppose communicating a shared vision was not often included in their definition?

The top five personal/interpersonal skills for leadership development for women in higher education are:

- Communicating as a leader
- Conflict resolution
- Navigating power dynamics and political environments
- Negotiating
- Decision making

9. What does "communicating as a leader" mean to you?
10. Describe how you navigate power dynamics and political environments where you work.

Closing Questions:

11. Is there anything else you would like for us to know about your BRIDGES experience?
12. Is there anything I did not ask that you expected I would ask?

13. Would you like to review the transcript and my codes/themes of the interview to ensure that I am interpreting your responses correctly?

APPENDIX D

2017 BRIDGES PROGRAM AGENDA

2017 BRIDGES Academic Leadership for Women Part I – Developing a Transformational Perspective

September 8 – 9, 2017

Rizzo Conference Center, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Coordinators: Four BRIDGES Advisory Board Members+

Friday, September 8

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 11:30 a.m. | Registration/Room Check in |
| 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. | Lunch and learn . . . about each other! <i>DuBose House</i> |
| 1:00 – 2:30 | Welcome & Introductions <i>McLean Hall Meeting Room 340</i>
Lecturer, Interdisciplinary Studies
Public R1 University |
| 2:30 – 3:30 | <i>Keynote Presentation:</i>

Of White and Hearing Privilege
President, Private Liberal Arts College |
| 3:30 | Break |
| 3:45 – 6:00 | Sharing Your Story: Getting to Know Oneself as a Leader
Program Coordinator, African American Cultural Center
Public R1 University |
| 6:00 – 7:30 | Dinner <i>DuBose House</i> |
| 7:30 | Relax, Relate, Release! – Free Time! . . . and a little HOMEWORK . . . |

Harvard IAT – Implicit Association Test: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html>
Go to this link, find *Project Implicit Social Attitudes* and click “Register” to get started.

Participants have a choice of taking **THREE** of the following 10-minute tests prior to training:
Skin Tone Gender-Career Race Religion Sexuality Age

Please take the test by midnight, Friday, September 8, 2017

Saturday, September 9

- 6:30 – 9:00 a.m. Breakfast (*Please check out of room by Noon*)
- 9:00 – 10:15 **Giving and Receiving Feedback/SKILLSCOPE**
SKILLSCOPE Feedback Reports
- Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Regional University
- Associate Dean, School of Education
Regional, Minority Serving University
- 10:30 Break
- 11:00 **Privilege, Power and Managing Difference**
Diversity & Inclusion Consultant
- 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. Lunch DuBose House
- 1:00 **Privilege, Power and Managing Difference (continued)**
- 4:30 Adjourn/Online Evaluation

**BRIDGES Part II: Using Our Resources in a
Transformational Context**

October 6 – 7, 2017

The William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education

Coordinators: Four BRIDGES Advisory Board Members

Friday, October 6

Noon

Lunch

1:00 p.m.

Welcome and Introduction

Independent Human Resources Consultant

Financing Higher Education

Multiple Perspectives on the Budgeting Process

Overview, State Budgets

Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance
Regional University

Chair/Dean/Division Director Perspective

Dean
Regional, R2 University

3:15

Break

3:30 – 5:30

Leadership and Human Resources

Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources
Regional R2 University

5:30 – 6:30

Dinner

6:30 – 8:00

Our Work is Never Done

Director, Honor's Program
Regional, R2 University

8:00 p.m.

Adjourn

Saturday, October 7 **HOME GAME (UNC/NOTRE DAME) 3:30 p.m.**

8:30 a.m.

Continental Breakfast *Center Atrium*

9:00 - 10:15 a.m.

**Move It or Lose It! How to Stay Active with a Busy
Schedule**

Worksite Wellness Researcher

	R1 Public University
10:15	Break
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Strategic Negotiation for Women Leaders in Higher Education Education Development Specialist Regional University
	Office of Academic Affairs and Dept of Educational Leadership Regional University
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 – 2:00 p.m.	Strategic Negotiation for Women Leaders in Higher Education (Continued) Education Development Specialist Regional University
	Office of Academic Affairs and Dept of Educational Leadership Regional University
2:00	Break
2:15	Getting Out of My Own Way: It's My Time! Diversity Consultant
4:15 p.m.	Adjourn/Online Evaluation

**BRIDGES Part III: Transforming for
Continuity and Change**

October 27 – October 28, 2017

The William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education

Coordinators: Four BRIDGES Board Members

Friday, October 27

Noon

Lunch

1:00-2:30 p.m.

Welcome and Introduction

BRIDGES Advisory Board
RTI International

Higher Education Development Panel

Fundraising for Everyone: 7 Approaches to Success

Director of Development and Major Gifts
Private, R1 University

Do You Have a Game Plan? Strategies for Writing Winning Proposals

Director, STEM Center for Excellence for Active Learning
Regional, Minority Serving University

2:30

Break

2:45 - 5:15

Legal Issues in Higher Education

Vice Chancellor and General Counsel
Regional University

5:30

Dinner

7:00 p.m. Adjourn

Saturday, October 28

8:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast

9:00 – 10:30

Politics in the Workplace

Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
Regional University

10:30 -10:45

Break

- 10:45-12:30 p.m. **Leadership in Presentations**
Associate Professor of Management
Public R1 University
- 12:30 – 1:30 Lunch
Vote for Graduation Class Speaker and 2018 Advisory Board Representative
- 1:30 – 2:45 **Women as Transformational Leaders:
Institutional Context and Work/Life Balance**
Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Regional University
- 2:45 Break
- 3:00 – 4:00 **Women as Transformational Leaders (continued)**
- 4:00 Election Results/Evaluation/Adjourn

BRIDGES Part IV – Transforming Together

November 17 – 18, 2017

**Rizzo Conference Center &
The William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education**

Coordinators: Four BRIDGES Advisory Board Members

Friday, November 17

- Noon Lunch and Room Check In
- 1:00 p.m. **Welcome and Introduction**
BRIDGES Advisory Board Chair
Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Regional University
- Living Your Learning**
Leadership Consultant
- 3:30 Break . . . *the calm before the storm* . . .
- 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. **Crisis Management on College Campuses**
Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
Public R1 University
- 6:00-7:00 Dinner
- 7:00 Relax, Relate, Release! Free Time!

Saturday, November 18

- 8:00 a.m. Breakfast and Room Check Out
- 9:00 *Depart from Rizzo and drive to the Friday Center*
- 9:30 -11:45 **BRIDGES Reflections and Leadership Narratives**
BRIDGES Advisory Board
Associate Dean, Regional University
- 11:45 a.m. Lunch with Alumnae
- 1:00 – 2:00 BRIDGES Graduation Ceremony
Keynote Speaker: Senior Managing Partner, SAGE Leadership