Breaking Through Bias: Glass Ceilings, Cliffs, Slippers & Broken Rungs

Amy Bonomi, PhD, MPH
Professor & Chair of the Board
Women’s Leadership Institute
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan
Goals of Today’s Presentation

Outline/define four central problems facing women & the organizations they occupy:

• Glass ceilings
• Broken rungs
• Glass cliffs
• Glass slippers

Describe how this impacts organizations

Describe root source of glass ceilings, cliffs, slippers & broken rungs

Outline strategies to work with women early in their careers – Women’s Leadership Institute, Michigan State University
Part 1: Problems Facing Women & their Organizations
Glass Ceiling

Barriers women face in achieving the highest levels of leadership (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995; Fortune 500, 2019; Am. Council on Education, 2017)

Women comprise:

• 6.6% of CEOs
• 25.5% of board seat holders
• 30% of university presidents
Broken Rung – First Step to Manager is Biggest Obstacle

• For 100 men who receive their first promotion, only 72 women achieve similar promotions (McKinsey & LeanIn.Org 2019)

  • Men end up with 62% of manager positions while women hold just 38%

  • Women can’t catch up with men at senior levels of management
And, When Women Are Promoted …
Glass Cliff

Tendency for women to achieve leadership positions when organizations are in crisis and their risk of failure is high. *(Ryan & Haslam, 2005)*
And, Women Face Biased Evaluations ...
Glass Slipper

• “Think-leader-think-male” phenomenon assumes that leadership traits like "strong" and "competent" belong to men. (Schein, Journal of Social Issues 2001)

• Women aren’t qualified for leadership – but they qualify to wear a glass slipper. (Bonomi, 2019 in J. Sims, Kaiser Interview)
Expectancy Bias, Gender Norms, Role Incongruity

VIOLATION OF PRESCRIPTIVE GENDER NORMS Leads to Social Penalties

MEN “AGENTIC”
- Strong
- Decisive
- Assertive
- Tough
- Authoritative
- Independent

WOMEN “COMMUNAL”
- Nurturing
- Nice
- Supportive
- Helpful
- Sympathetic
- Dependent

AGENTIC BEHAVIORS...
Valued in men; unacceptable in women

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Managers Use More Positive Words to Describe Men in Performance Reviews and More Negative Ones to Describe Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words used to describe men</th>
<th>Words used to describe women</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>Compassionate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Indecisive</td>
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IN DECREASING ORDER OF RELATIVE FREQUENCY

SOURCE: AN ANALYSIS OF 81,000 PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS, DAVID G. SMITH ET AL., 2018

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The Same is True in Evaluations of Women Professors
The diagram shows the frequency of the terms 'Strict' and 'Brilliant' in reviews of female and male professors, categorized by department. The frequency is measured in terms of millions of words of text.

Source: Analysis of RateMyProfessor.com reviews by Ben Schmid: "Gendered Language in Teacher Reviews"
Credit: Alyson Hurt/NPR
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Professor Martin (Man)</th>
<th>Professor Mitchell (Woman)</th>
<th>Difference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personality</strong></td>
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<td>15.6%</td>
<td>-11.2***</td>
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<td>32.2%</td>
<td>-17***</td>
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<td>11.0%</td>
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<td>15.6%</td>
<td>17.1***</td>
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<td>-9.9**</td>
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<td>-10.6**</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6.6%</td>
<td>-6.6*</td>
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<td>22.0%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>-5.5**</td>
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University Course Evaluations
Rate My Professors
“I want you personally to know I hated every day in your course, and if I wasn’t forced to take this, I never would have … anytime you mention this course to anyone who has taken it, they automatically know that you are a horrific teacher, and that they will hate every day in your class … everyone hates this class”
Part 2: Why Do the Glass Ceiling, Cliff, Slipper & Broken Rung Matter?
15% net profit increase for a typical firm when at least 30% of corporate leadership includes women (CEOs, board seats, other C-suite positions)

(Noland, Moran & Kotschwar, Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2016)
2. Better Equity Practices

When women are at the board rank & CEO level (Glass & Cook, 2017)

- Women more likely to be appointed CEO & to have longer tenures
- More emphasis on recruiting, retaining, and advancing people of color

• Firms with women CEOs have twice the number of women board members, compared to the market average (23% vs 11%)
3. Women Disrupt the Status Quo

*(McGuire, 2019)*
On Being A (Glass) “Cliff Dweller”

Incredible opportunity to reinvent, to be a force for change and real innovation, not defend the status quo …

Patricia McGuire
President, Trinity Washington Univ.
Part 3: Root/Source of the Glass Ceiling, Cliff, Slipper, Broken Rung
Outmoded Institutional Structures & Bias: “Double Bind” Facing Women Leaders
(Catalyst, 2007)

EXTREME PERCEPTIONS:
• Nurturing women are “too soft”
• Agentic, decisive women are “too tough”
• In sum, women are never just right

HIGHER COMPETENCE THRESHOLD:
• Have to be twice as good to get half the credit

COMPETENT OR DISLIKED:
• Women are perceived as competent OR liked, but RARELY BOTH!
The “Likeability” Trap
(see Joan Williams, NY Times, August 16, 2019; Bonomi, 2019; Rennison, 2019)

Women who enact hard decisions are deemed unlikeable, even violent:

“She made positive changes for her academic unit, but she used a steak knife and now there’s blood on the floor. She needed to use a butter knife.”

(see Bonomi, 2019)
Women’s “Likeability”… Evaluations
Objective: Change perception I am standoffish, uncaring or unfriendly. Get connected to management team.

Update: Had lunch with Nina P. 
Attended Auto Show
Scheduled lunches:
  - Gregory: 2/15
  - Brian: 2/19
  - Lisa: 3/25
  - Linda: 3/15
Letters of Recommendation/Nomination
Day in and day out Jane Jones demonstrates the characteristics of an individual committed to academics, athletics, leadership, people, service, and integrity. Selecting her to receive your scholarship would continue your distinguished tradition of granting the award to students who meet the highest standards.

I have known Jane for approximately fifteen years and her list of academic and athletic accomplishments is long. What distinguishes Jane, however, is that she isn't one to simply "show up"; instead she throws herself into a team or organization and works diligently to make a difference. She takes on leadership positions and inspires others by acting with honesty and integrity, collaborating with others, and conducting herself in a respectful and courteous manner. Jane looks for what needs to be done rather than waiting to be told. She provides encouragement, celebrates others’ victories and attributes success to the team.

Jane approaches everything she does with determination and dedication. There is no such thing as an “off season” to Jane—instead she trains her body and her mind on a daily basis.

The Committee likely has many outstanding candidates to consider for the scholarship award. I encourage you to look closely at Jane because she will be a guaranteed return on your investment. In the short-term she will succeed academically and athletically, be active in student affairs, be a friend to many, and she will leave her college a better place. In the long-term, however, she will be a visionary who leads us to a better place and she will remember to help those who follow.
Day in and day out Jane Jones demonstrates the characteristics of an individual committed to academics, athletics, leadership, people, service, and integrity. Selecting her to receive your scholarship would continue your distinguished tradition of granting the award to students who meet the highest standards.

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Part 4: What to Do? Strategies – Formal & Informal
Strategies to Buffer Against the Glass Ceiling, Cliff, and Slipper (Ch 20: Bonomi & Rennison, 2019)

- Networking opportunities at intersectional identities
- Mentoring
- Professional development tailored to women’s needs
- Competency-based approaches to recruit, evaluate and promote women
- Cultivate women for leadership opportunities & support them once there!
- Call out biased practices when applied to women
- Environmental cues – statues, portraits, social media presence
- Engage allies (men!)
Strategies
Need to Start Early
Vision / Mission

To ignite women leaders…

to create equity for women worldwide
Event Program

About the Women’s Leadership Institute
The Women’s Leadership Institute (WLI) is a collaborative office between the College of Human Development and Family Studies and the Department of Modern Media in the College of Communication Arts and Sciences at Michigan State University. Alumni, professionals, graduate students, faculty, and staff participate in WLI programs to enhance their leadership development.

Our Mission
Igniting Women Leaders

Our Vision
Advancing Leadership Equity for Women Globally

Event Details
Co-hosted and curriculum development by:

Dr. Amy Bonomi
Director of Family and Youth Studies
Associate Professor of Gender-based Violence

Dr. Amanda Guinot Talbot
Motion-Graphics and Business Entrepreneurship
Assistant Professor

Panelists

Tiffany Jones  Speaker/Presenter

Carolyn Woo

Anne Whelan

Event Program
IGNITING WOMEN LEADERS

The overall goal of the Women's Leadership Institute (WLI) is to support, advance, and empower women in achieving their leadership aspirations. This goal is achieved by providing evidence-based leadership curricula with tools and assets building opportunities and facilitating a growing network of meaningful connections with alumni, faculty, and community partners.

EVENTS & PROGRAMS

Since 2019, the WLI has offered programming focused on leading in today's world, leadership, and influence, culture, resilience, and gender bias.

In 2019 $1000 was awarded to the inaugural Emerging Leaders Scholarship Competition. Participants have consistently reported that they feel more empowered, and confident, now WLI events.

WLI has hosted e-suite executives from the medical community, academics, athletics, legal, and mayor recall.

Over 1000 students served through social events, small group discussions, panel discussions, and panel discussions.

After each WLI event, evaluation via focus group and quantitative survey have been conducted.

IMPACT

9.3 Likelihood of attending future events

The largest goals reported by attendees have been the following:

- Sense of confidence in ability
- Strategies to navigate gender dynamics
- Increased skills in communication
- Increased self-awareness
- Togetherness and lifting other women up
- Finding and pursuing your passion
- Resolving micro-aggressions

9.5 Relevance of the WLI

“[WLI event] changed my life. It was so helpful, what a valuable experience.”

“I am a returning member and it keeps getting better! Always something new to take away.”

“It’s life-changing, pattern breaking material.”

“I learned to own my story with confidence.”

“I feel refreshed and refreshed. I feel like I can do anything.”

Learn more: linkedin.com/in/amy-bryant-36468375/
Impact!

- *More than 1,000 Students Served*
- *Relevance is rated as 9.5/10*

"It [a WLI event] ended up changing my life, it was so inspiring, what a valuable experience."

"I am a returning member, and it keeps getting better! Always something new to take away."

"Very life changing, pattern breaking material!"

"I learned to own my story with confidence."

"I learned to always be myself."

I learned to be proud of who I am.

"I feel refreshed and refocused."
STUDENT FEEDBACK: WHAT DID YOU ENJOY MOST?

1) The overall program!

2) The panelists!

3) Diversity of the panelists

4) Networking opportunities
THE OVERALL PROGRAM! A FEW EXAMPLES:

• The entire event was excellent. Panel was very thorough, everything tied together.
• I loved everything about this event! The questions asked, the panelists, the answers to the questions, everything was excellent!
• I loved the entire event! the questions were relevant and I loved hearing the panelists and what they had to say.
• The culture and climate that was set. I believed in the women speaking and the environment fit them.
• The questions were very well planned and modernized – excellent!
• I left feeling empowered!
• I felt very inspired and empowered leaving!
The panelists were great! All were very engaging and fun to listen to!
Encouragement, inspiration and advice/tips from powerful women!
The authenticity! I felt like I was at a table with just the three panelists, not in a crowd with over 100 people!
I feel like I got a lot of genuine advice on how to see myself as a leader and be bold in my leadership.
I was given inspiration and affirmation about who I am and where I’m going.
All of the panelists were *fantastic*, but Carolyn Woo is INCREDIBLE! I hope we continue to engage her. I especially appreciated her comment about how it IS possible to be liked and considered competent, because while it is more common for women to either be liked OR considered competent, I think it is important for students to know that it DOESN'T HAVE to be that way. We don't have to choose between those options.
DIVERSITY! A FEW EXAMPLES:

• Having never been before, I love how different the speakers where -- ages, backgrounds ...!

• I loved the diversity of the panelists and the depth and breadth to which they answered the questions.

• The panel was diverse in age, race and even experience. That really helped in solidifying the idea that there is no one set way to advance in your career.

• The diversity of perspectives of the panelists.

• I resonate with Dr. Woo soooooo much since I was an international student once and have been doubting myself in navigating how to continue to grow and develop in my career.

• Carolyn Woo was the reason I went. Being an Asian immigrant female (triple marginalized) it was inspirational to listen to her. She was so authentic, wise, and inspirational. She is my role model now. I wish we had such Asian American leaders at MSU.
Meeting other alumni supporting the program and the diverse women on the panel. Younger, older, of different backgrounds, all face the same issues.

I most definitely enjoyed the networking session afterward. My friend and I met this fantastic fellow student and we had a great conversation about women leadership and the difficulties of it. We used the questions asked in the panel as a foundation to jump off from and continued our conversation from there.
Engagement Opportunities

- Student mentoring
- Institute table moderators
- Participate and attend WLI programming and events
- Host MSU WLI focused alumna and friends luncheons
In Women Leading Change in Academia: Breaking the Glass Ceiling, Cliff, and Slipper, a groundbreaking collection, Callie Rennison and Amy Bonomi convene the perspectives of diverse women academic leaders who discuss their rise to key leadership positions and effective change-making in higher education, despite underlying structural barriers and bias that disadvantage women.

Contributors underscore the revolutionary power and innovation that women leaders bring to bear to improve upon business as usual in the academy—even in the “glass cliff” scenario when their risk of failure should be highest. Women across leadership positions—presidents, provosts, deans, and department chairs—discuss leading strategic planning, culture change, and navigating the “double bind,” along with strategies for successful negotiation, networking, mentoring, and work-life balance. Contributors also underscore strategies for leading powerful innovation and change in the academy early in their careers when they do not hold formal administrative roles and experience marginalization by “the system” due to identity.

Women Leading Change in Academia is intended for women, allies, and institutions committed to equitable conditions for women leaders to be maximally impactful.

Callie Rennison, Ph.D. is a professor and has served as associate dean of faculty affairs in the School of Public Affairs at the University of Colorado Denver. She has also served as the director of the Office of Equity and as a Title IX coordinator for the University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Medical Campuses.

Amy Bonomi, Ph.D., M.P.H. is director of the Children and Youth Institute at Michigan State University. She serves as a special advisor to the Office of the Provost, co-administers MSU’s Women’s Leadership Institute, and was chair of the Human Development and Family Studies department from 2013-2019.
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