

# On the Pathway to the Presidency

Characteristics of  
Higher Education's  
Senior Leadership



College and University Professional  
Association for Human Resources



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## Characteristics of Higher Education's Senior Leadership

by Jacqueline E. King and  
Gigi G. Gomez



**College and University Professional  
Association for Human Resources**



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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

As this report was completed, Jacqueline E. King was assistant vice president and Gigi G. Gomez was research associate in the ACE Center for Policy Analysis. Gomez is now senior research and policy analyst at the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.

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Numerous individuals at ACE and CUPA-HR share credit for this report. At CUPA-HR, Chief Executive Officer Andy Brantley enthusiastically supported this initiative from the moment it was proposed. Director of Research and Information Systems Ray Sizemore oversaw all the details of data collection and contributed to both the development of the survey and this report. Senior Research Associate Maria Rodriguez-Calcano assisted with replying to respondent queries and preparing the data for analysis.

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Finally, this report would not have been possible without the willingness of campus human resources officers, who contributed data on their institutions' senior leaders. ACE and CUPA-HR extend their special thanks to these individuals.

# Introduction

In 2007, the American Council on Education (ACE) released the 20th anniversary edition of its American College President Study, a detailed survey of the demographic characteristics, career backgrounds, roles, and duties of the leaders of American higher education.<sup>1</sup> A major finding of that study was that higher education is likely to experience a major change in presidential leadership during the next decade due to retirements. Almost half of all college presidents are aged 61 or older (see **Table 1**). If half of these individuals chose to retire in the next five years, one-quarter of college presidencies would become vacant. One concern arising from this finding is that if other senior leaders are of a similar age, higher education may find itself facing a shortage of qualified individuals ready to assume the presidency.

Another concern is whether higher education is prepared to take full advantage of the depth and richness of its talent pool to fill these crucial

**Table 1. Characteristics of College Presidents: 2006 and 1986**

	2006	1986
<b>Demographics</b>		
Women	23.0%	9.5%
African American	5.9%	5.0%
Hispanic	4.6%	2.2%
Asian American	0.9%	0.4%
American Indian	0.7%	0.5%
Other/Multiple race	1.5%	NA
All minority	13.6%	8.1%
Aged 50 or younger	8.1%	41.6%
Aged 51 or 60	42.6%	44.4%
Aged 61 or older	49.3%	13.9%
<b>Career History</b>		
Promoted to presidency internally	27.6%	27.0%
Faculty experience	68.9%	75.0%
Average years in current position	8.5	6.3

NA=Not available.

Note: Details may not add to totals due to rounding.

positions. During the past 20 years, the percentage of the nation's college and university presidents who are people of color rose only from 8 percent to 14 percent. When minority-serving institutions are excluded, racial/ethnic minority presidents today lead just

1 Unless otherwise noted, the source for all data on presidents included in this report is American Council on Education. (2007). *The American college president: 2007 edition*. Washington, DC: Author.

10 percent of colleges and universities. And although the proportion of presidencies held by women has more than doubled during the past 20 years, from 10 percent to 23 percent, the rate of change has slowed considerably since the mid 1990s. Despite a visible spate of appointments at highly selective institutions, women still are most highly concentrated at community colleges and least likely to head research universities. The retirement of current presidents may present an opportunity to increase the diversity of higher education's leaders.

Because of the American College President Study, we have a rich store of data on presidents. However, there is almost no information on those individuals in the senior campus administrative positions that most typically lead to the presidency. Are these individuals more diverse in terms of race and gender than current presidents? What is their age profile? Are many of them also nearing retirement? The On the Pathway to the Presidency Study is the first attempt to answer these questions. It is just one part of The Spectrum Initiative: Advancing Diversity in the College Presidency, a multiyear, multi-association project (see inside back cover for additional information).

## **DATA AND METHODS**

This study asked campus human resources officers to answer a limited number of questions using information typically found in human resources databases. In summer 2007, ACE and CUPA-HR invited human resources professionals at more than 4,300 regionally accredited, degree-granting institutions and institution systems to complete a short web-based survey seeking the following information for individuals in 35 senior executive positions: age, gender, race/ethnicity, start date in current position, and whether they were hired from an external position or promoted internally. See Appendix for the complete list of positions and summary data on each position.

Eight hundred fifty-two institutions provided information about more than 9,700 individuals in senior leadership positions, for an overall response rate of 20 percent. However, the response rate varied considerably by Carnegie type, ranging from 48 percent at doctorate-granting institutions to 8 percent at special focus institutions. This report will focus on four types of institutions, using the 2005 Carnegie "basic" classification: doctorate-granting institutions (48 percent response rate), master's institutions (34 percent response rate), baccalaureate institutions (25 percent response rate), and associate's colleges (15 percent response rate). Where appropriate, the data are weighted so that totals for all institutions better reflect the national distribution of institutions by Carnegie type.

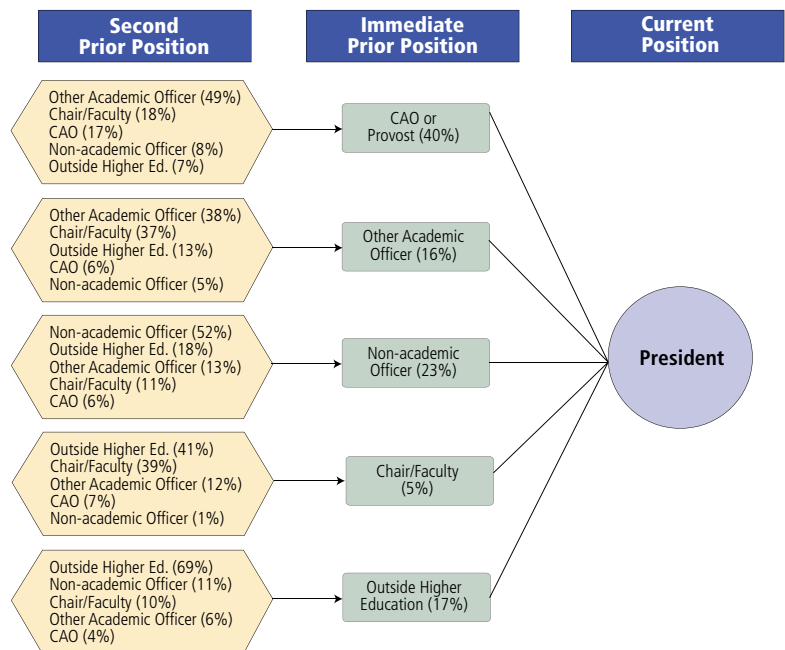
# Pathways to the Presidency

According to *The American College President: 2007 Edition*, only 13 percent of presidents came directly from a position outside academe. Twenty-one percent came to their current presidency immediately after leading another institution, and 4 percent moved directly to the presidency from a faculty or department chair position. The remaining 61 percent of presidents came from other senior administrative positions within higher education.

**Figure 1** maps the pathway to the presidency for leaders serving in their first presidency. The most common role was chief academic officer (CAO) or provost: 40 percent of these presidents came from this position, and 85 percent of this group had served as faculty or academic administrators prior to becoming CAO. Another 16 percent of first-time presidents occupied other senior executive positions in academic affairs such as associate provost or dean; similarly, more than 80 percent of these individuals came to these positions from academic administrative or faculty roles.<sup>2</sup> Twenty-three percent of those in their first presidency held senior executive positions in non-academic areas such as finance, development, or student affairs; 5 percent served as faculty or depart-

ment chairs; and 17 percent worked outside higher education. Because positions in academic affairs most typically lead to the presidency, this report pays special attention to those positions. Also, because almost 70 percent of presidents have served as faculty members at some point in their academic careers, the report also references the faculty as the primary point of entry to the presidential career pathway.

**Figure 1. Pathways to the Presidency: 2006**



Note: Details may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Current presidents who were presidents in their immediate prior position were omitted from this analysis.

<sup>2</sup> The American College President Study did not distinguish between line positions within academic affairs (such as deans of academic colleges) and staff positions (such as assistant or associate provosts). As a result, it is not possible to determine empirically which type of position more typically leads to the presidency. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that the line position of dean is the more typical pathway to the presidency.

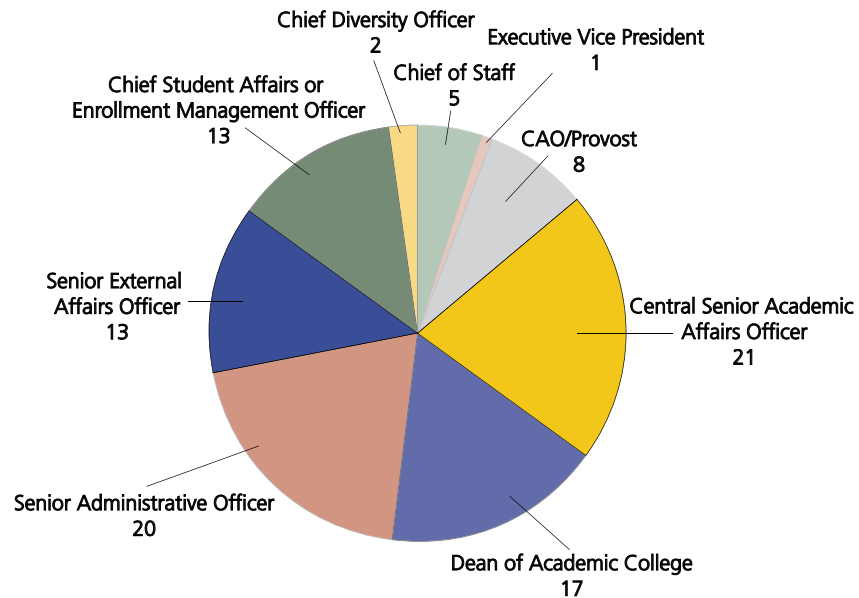
Throughout this report, the 35 positions for which data were gathered are aggregated into the following categories:

- Chiefs of staff.
- Executive vice presidents.
- CAOs/provosts.
- Central senior academic affairs officers (e.g., associate provost, dean of graduate studies).
- Deans of academic colleges.
- Senior administrative officers (e.g., chief financial officer, chief human resources officer, general counsel).
- Senior external affairs officers (e.g., chief development officer, chief government relations officer).
- Chief student affairs or enrollment management officers.
- Chief diversity officers.

(For a complete list of positions and how they were grouped, see Appendix.)

**Figure 2** illustrates the distribution of incumbents reported by the responding institutions.

**Figure 2. Percentage Distribution of Incumbents Reported by Responding Institutions**



Note: Details may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

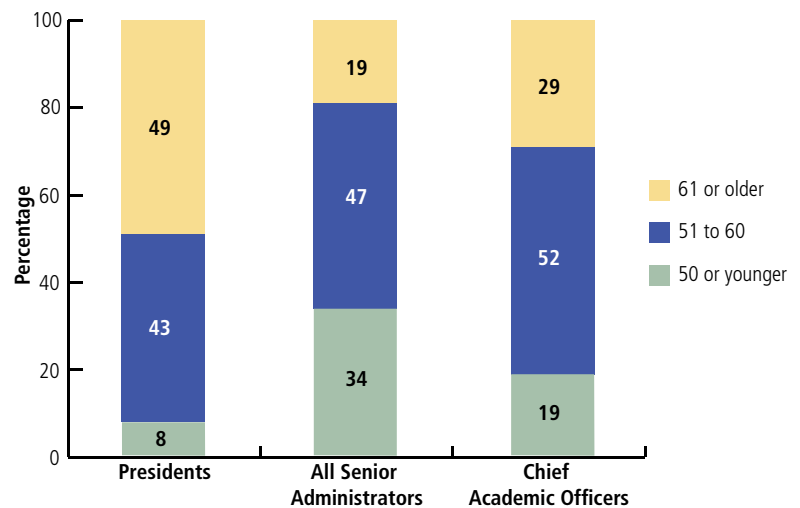
# Leadership Profile

## ALL INSTITUTIONS

The survey data suggest that senior leaders are, as a group, younger than presidents and more likely to be women. A similar share of presidents and senior leaders are people of color (see Table 1 on page iii and Table 2 on page 4). Sixteen percent of all senior campus administrators are people of color, compared with 14 percent of presidents.<sup>3</sup> In contrast, women are much more likely to serve in senior leadership roles other than the presidency: 45 percent of senior administrators are women, compared with 23 percent of presidents. With an average age of 53, senior administrators are generally younger than presidents, who have an average age of 60. Further, while half of presidents are aged 61 or older, only 19 percent of senior administrators fall into this age category. The largest group of senior administrators (47 percent) are aged 51 to 60, but 34 percent are aged 50 or younger, compared with only 8 percent of presidents (see Figure 3).

In addition to demographics, the survey also asked about length of time in current position and whether individuals were hired from outside the institution or promoted to their current position internally. Senior campus administrators have held their positions for an average of 6.5 years, much less than the average 8.5 year tenure of presidents. They were far more likely than presidents to have been promoted internally; 49 percent were promoted from within their institution, versus 28 percent of presidents.

Figure 3. Percentage Distribution of Presidents and Senior Administrators, by Age



Note: Details may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

<sup>3</sup> Survey responses were received from relatively few minority-serving institutions (historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and tribal colleges), which may have depressed the results for minority senior administrators.

**Table 2. Characteristics of Senior Administrators: All Institution Types**

	Chief of Staff	Executive Vice President	CAO/Provost	Central Senior Academic Affairs Officer	Dean of Academic College	Senior Administrative Officer	Senior External Affairs Officer	Chief Student Affairs or Enrollment Management Officer	Chief Diversity Officer	Total
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
White	83.3	79.8	90.5	85.0	85.8	87.0	89.8	79.7	17.6	84.2
African American	9.0	12.3	5.0	7.6	7.2	8.2	5.4	13.3	59.0	9.3
Asian American	1.7	1.9	1.9	1.8	2.8	1.2	0.3	0.8	4.5	1.6
American Indian	0.6	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.4	3.9	0.4
Hispanic	5.5	6.0	2.4	4.6	2.4	2.8	4.1	5.4	13.2	4.0
Other/Multiple races	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	1.3	0.4	0.2	0.3	1.7	0.5
<b>Gender</b>										
Female	54.7	31.0	38.0	50.3	35.5	42.9	49.1	45.4	55.6	44.6
Male	45.3	69.0	62.0	49.7	64.5	57.1	50.9	54.6	44.4	55.4
<b>Age</b>										
50 or younger	30.5	13.1	19.4	29.7	25.8	37.4	44.0	45.1	50.5	34.0
51 to 60	45.7	66.4	51.8	48.3	50.2	47.9	41.3	42.8	34.7	46.9
61 or older	23.8	20.5	28.8	22.0	24.0	14.8	14.7	12.1	14.8	19.1
<b>Years in Current Position</b>										
Two years or less	33.0	36.4	44.1	40.2	36.7	29.1	37.5	36.1	52.2	36.7
Three to five years	22.6	19.0	26.0	22.7	24.3	19.3	23.2	21.0	17.8	22.2
Six to 10 years	22.2	27.2	18.0	19.8	21.8	27.6	23.8	21.7	15.7	22.4
11 years or more	22.2	17.4	11.9	17.4	17.2	24.1	15.5	21.1	14.3	18.6
<b>Type of Hire</b>										
External	47.7	47.7	50.4	37.6	44.9	61.6	63.3	50.7	63.7	51.0
Internal	52.3	52.3	49.6	62.4	55.1	38.4	36.7	49.3	36.3	49.0
	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)
<b>Average Age</b>	54.4	57.1	56.2	54.1	55.2	52.7	51.3	50.6	48.9	53.3
<b>Average Years in Position</b>	6.9	7.2	5.2	6.6	6.2	7.5	5.9	6.7	4.8	6.5

Note: For a complete list of positions, with group assignments, see Appendix.

**Race and ethnicity.** The profiles vary for each type of position surveyed, with one important exception. Except for chief diversity officers, 82 percent of whom are people of color but who represent only 2 percent of the positions reported in this study, 20 percent or less of individuals in each type of position are racial or ethnic minorities. Chief diversity officers notwithstanding, the share of administrators who are people of color ranges from 10 percent among chief academic officers to 20 percent among executive vice presidents and chief student affairs or enrollment management officers. These data suggest that, in order for more people of color to rise to the presidency, either institutions must promote these individuals serving in positions such as chief diversity officer or chief student affairs officer that do not as typically lead to a presidency, or campuses must work harder to elevate people of color into the senior academic affairs positions that are the most common pathways to the presidency.

For African Americans, Hispanics, and American Indians, greatly expanding the number of presidents will likely require increasing the number of people entering faculty positions, as each group's share of senior academic affairs officers roughly mirrors its share of tenured full-time faculty (see **Table 3**). One important exception exists: 6 percent of faculty are Asian American, but Asian Americans represent

only 2 percent of CAOs and other central senior academic administrators, and only 3 percent of deans. In this case, a pool of potential leaders is available, but institutions must do a better job of attracting Asian-American faculty into the administrative ranks.

**Table 3. Distribution of Full-Time Tenured Faculty and Senior Academic Administrators, by Race/Ethnicity**

	Faculty	CAO/ Provost	Central Senior Academic Affairs Officer	Dean of Academic College
Race/Ethnicity	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
White	85.2	90.5	85.0	85.8
African American	4.5	5.0	7.6	7.2
Asian American	6.2	1.9	1.8	2.8
American Indian	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.5
Hispanic	2.9	2.4	4.6	2.4
Other/Multiple race	NA	0.0	0.6	1.3

Source for data on faculty: Cook, B. & Cordova, D. (2006). *Minorities in higher education: Twenty-second annual status report*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

**Gender.** The proportion of women among senior administrators is large but varied, ranging from approximately 55 percent for chiefs of staff and chief diversity officers to 31 percent for executive vice presidents (see Table 2). Thirty-eight percent of chief academic officers, and 36 percent of deans of academic colleges are women.<sup>4</sup> Across institution types, women are more likely to serve in central academic affairs roles (such as associate provosts or deans of graduate studies) that are most typically staff—rather than line—positions; 50 percent of all central senior academic affairs officers are women.

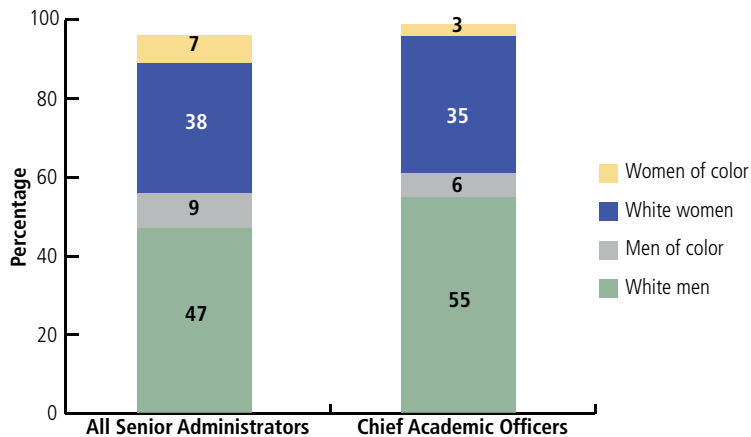
4 To minimize burden on the responding institutions, this survey focused only on positions that are at least somewhat likely to lead directly to a presidency, as evidenced by the American College President Study. The survey therefore excluded several dean positions that are often held by women, such as deans of colleges of nursing or education, that rarely lead to a presidency. If these positions had been included, the percentage of deanships held by women certainly would have risen.

As noted in the previous section, the vast majority of both women and men in senior administrative roles are white. Only 16 percent of all senior administrators, and less than 10 percent of CAOs, are people of color, with men of color twice as likely as women of color to be CAOs (6 percent versus 3 percent) (see **Figure 4**). The racial/ethnic distribution of all senior administrators does not differ significantly by gender. Overall, 7 percent of senior administrators are women of color and 9 percent are men of color. These data confirm what many in academe have suspected: There is a significant pool of white women in senior administrative roles who could rise to the presidency.

**Age.** The age of senior administrators varies by both type of position and gender. The youngest leaders are senior external affairs officers, chief student affairs and enrollment management officers, and chief diversity officers. In each of these position types, 44 percent or more of incumbents are aged 50 or younger. The oldest leaders are in the executive vice president and chief academic officer positions. Twenty-nine percent of chief academic officers are aged 61 or older, suggesting that a significant segment of CAOs is likely to opt to retire or return to a faculty position rather than seek a presidency (see Figure 3 on page 3). As among presidents, women senior administrators are slightly younger than their male counterparts. The average age of women is 52, compared with 54 for men; no significant differences in age by race/ethnicity exist.

**Time in Position.** Average time in office ranges from less than five years for chief diversity officers, who are often the first to serve in this relatively new type of role, to 7.5 years for senior administrative officers. Also at the low end of the range are CAOs (5.2 years on average) and senior officers in external affairs (5.9 years). This average tenure for senior officers in external affairs is not surprising, given the keen competition in higher education for top fund raisers, but it is rather surprising that the average tenure of CAOs is

**Figure 4. Percentage Distribution of All Senior Administrators and CAOs, by Race/Ethnicity and Gender**



Note: Details may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

only five years. Forty-four percent of CAOs have been in office for two years or less, and another 26 percent have served for three to five years. The relatively short time in office for most CAOs may reflect their interest in either pursuing a presidency or returning to the faculty, or it may be due to turnover at the presidential level, as new presidents often seek to appoint their own chief academic officers.

**Location of Previous Position.** As a group, senior campus executives are just as likely to have been promoted internally as hired externally, refuting the commonly held assumption that one must switch institutions in order to advance in higher education. The only positions in which 60 percent or more of incumbents were hired externally were chief diversity officers (64 percent), senior officers in external affairs (63 percent), and senior administrative officers (62 percent). Fifty percent or more of CAOs, executive vice presidents, chiefs of staff, deans, and central academic affairs officers were promoted from inside the institution. This finding suggests that succession planning could be used on campuses to advance more women and people of color into the senior roles that most typically lead to a presidency.

## DOCTORATE-GRANTING INSTITUTIONS

As a group, senior administrators at doctorate-granting institutions are somewhat older and less diverse than their peers at other types of institutions. The average age of administrators at these institutions is 55, and ranges from 51 for chief diversity officers to 59 for chief academic officers and executive vice presidents (see **Table 4** on next page). The American College President Study found that the two most common paths to the presidency at doctorate-granting institutions are through the positions of chief academic officer (33 percent of presidents came from this position) and senior academic affairs officer (21 percent of presidents). Given that 41 percent of CAOs at these universities are aged 61 or older, many of these leaders may choose to retire or return to the faculty rather than seek a presidency. Thus, it may be difficult to fill presidential vacancies with chief academic officers from this type of institution. However, if these institutions are willing to consider either CAOs from other types of institutions or central academic affairs officers or deans from within their own type of institution, the pool of available talent is likely to be much larger. For example, 70 percent of deans and 73 percent of central academic administrators at doctorate-granting institutions are aged 60 or younger.

**Table 4. Characteristics of Senior Administrators: Doctorate-Granting Institutions**

	Chief of Staff	Executive Vice President	CAO/Provost	Central Senior Academic Affairs Officer	Dean of Academic College	Senior Administrative Officer	Senior External Affairs Officer	Chief Student Affairs or Enrollment Management Officer	Chief Diversity Officer	Total
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
White	83.2	95.8	93.3	87.1	86.2	87.4	86.9	77.2	12.3	84.3
African American	8.4	0.0	1.7	6.4	3.8	7.6	6.4	15.5	70.8	8.4
Asian American	3.2	0.0	5.0	2.0	4.9	0.3	1.5	1.0	6.2	2.5
American Indian	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Hispanic	4.2	4.2	0.0	4.2	2.4	3.9	5.2	6.3	10.8	4.1
Other/Multiple races	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5
<b>Gender</b>										
Female	61.6	16.0	23.0	37.1	19.3	37.8	34.6	38.5	56.1	34.0
Male	38.4	84.0	77.0	62.9	80.7	62.2	65.4	61.5	43.9	66.0
<b>Age</b>										
50 or younger	32.6	8.3	5.8	19.5	15.7	30.7	38.7	35.3	41.5	24.4
51 to 60	46.3	50.0	52.9	53.8	54.1	48.3	44.2	49.3	38.5	50.7
61 or older	21.1	41.7	41.3	26.7	30.2	21.0	17.1	15.5	20.0	24.9
<b>Years in Current Position</b>										
Two years or less	36.8	41.7	45.1	40.5	35.4	31.5	37.2	32.5	37.9	37.0
Three to five years	27.4	29.2	24.6	26.4	26.0	21.3	23.8	22.0	31.8	25.0
Six to 10 years	18.9	20.8	16.4	19.5	24.0	22.1	23.4	22.0	18.2	21.3
11 years or more	16.8	8.3	13.9	13.6	14.6	25.1	15.6	23.4	12.1	16.8
<b>Type of Hire</b>										
External	34.8	52.2	48.2	26.9	52.1	54.5	62.7	48.9	51.6	44.6
Internal	65.2	47.8	51.8	73.1	47.9	45.5	37.3	51.1	48.4	55.4
	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)
<b>Average Age</b>	53.1	59.0	58.9	56.1	57.3	54.1	52.5	52.9	51.2	55.3
<b>Average Years in Position</b>	5.8	5.9	5.2	5.5	5.6	7.5	6.0	7.0	5.2	6.0

Note: For a complete list of positions, with group assignments, see Appendix.

The percentage of women holding senior administrative positions (34 percent) is lower at doctorate-granting institutions than at any other type of institution. Women also are least likely to lead this type of institution; only 14 percent of doctorate-granting institutions are led by female presidents. The share of senior administrators who are women ranges from 62 percent for chiefs of staff and 56 percent for chief diversity officers to 16 percent for executive vice presidents, 19 percent for deans, and 23 percent for CAOs. The low share of women in senior academic roles is especially troubling, because these positions form the primary pathways to the presidency.

The racial/ethnic distribution of senior administrators at doctoral institutions is generally comparable to the distribution for all institution types, with several important exceptions. Asian Americans are more likely to serve as the chief academic officer or dean of an academic college at doctorate-granting institutions than at other types of institutions (5 percent of CAOs and deans are Asian American), suggesting that there is a small but still significant pool of Asian-American talent in these positions that could be tapped for presidential leadership. Conversely, African Americans are less likely to serve as CAO at doctorate-granting institutions than at any other type of institution (2 percent versus 5 percent for all institutions), and no Hispanics or American Indians serve as CAO at the doctorate-granting institutions responding to this survey. These data suggest bleak prospects for any significant surge in presidential diversity unless these institutions hire leaders from other sectors or consider candidates in positions other than CAO.

The selection of internal versus external candidates is distinctive at doctorate-granting institutions. Overall, these institutions are more likely than other types of institutions to appoint internal candidates to senior positions; 55 percent of all senior administrators at doctorate-granting institutions were promoted internally, a higher rate than at any other institution type. In particular, central academic affairs officers were more likely to be promoted internally at doctorate-granting institutions than at other types of institutions, suggesting that these positions could provide an important venue for promoting women and people of color who might eventually ascend to the presidency. On the other hand, deanships—which appear to be a more likely route to the presidency—are much more likely to be filled externally at doctorate-granting institutions than at other types of institutions.

### **MASTER'S INSTITUTIONS**

With regard to gender and age, senior administrators varied in a manner consistent with the traditional hierarchy of institutional types. Senior administrators at master's institutions were younger and somewhat more likely to be female than their colleagues at doctorate-granting institutions, but older and more likely to be male than their colleagues at either baccalaureate or associate's institutions (see **Table 5** on next page). There were no major differences by institution type in the share of all senior administrators who are people of color.

CAOs at master's institutions provide one notable exception to these general patterns; they are more likely to be people of color than their peers at any other type of institution. African Americans

**Table 5. Characteristics of Senior Administrators: Master's Institutions**

	Chief of Staff	Executive Vice President	CAO/Provost	Central Senior Academic Affairs Officer	Dean of Academic College	Senior Administrative Officer	Senior External Affairs Officer	Chief Student Affairs or Enrollment Management Officer	Chief Diversity Officer	Total
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
White	83.9	82.4	88.6	87.2	88.1	86.2	89.3	82.3	19.6	85.2
African American	11.3	5.9	6.7	6.9	6.2	7.8	6.0	12.4	60.7	9.0
Asian American	1.6	0.0	2.9	1.5	1.8	0.8	0.3	0.8	3.6	1.3
American Indian	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.3	0.6	7.1	0.5
Hispanic	3.2	11.8	1.9	2.9	2.0	4.2	3.8	3.4	7.1	3.3
Other/Multiple races	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.5	0.4	0.3	0.6	1.8	0.7
<b>Gender</b>										
Female	44.9	31.6	37.6	46.0	28.2	38.7	35.8	36.7	56.1	38.3
Male	55.1	68.4	62.4	54.0	71.8	61.3	64.2	63.3	43.9	61.7
<b>Age</b>										
50 or younger	31.2	17.6	16.0	30.1	22.4	34.4	42.8	44.9	46.6	32.4
51 to 60	40.0	52.9	46.0	44.4	47.6	49.5	41.5	42.1	34.5	45.0
61 or older	28.8	29.4	38.0	25.5	30.0	16.1	15.7	12.9	19.0	22.6
<b>Years in Current Position</b>										
Two years or less	32.0	35.3	39.6	41.2	39.1	28.2	41.2	34.3	38.6	36.6
Three to five years	25.6	17.6	26.4	21.3	24.6	19.3	25.6	22.3	15.8	22.7
Six to 10 years	23.2	35.3	18.4	19.9	22.4	28.0	20.1	20.1	19.3	22.1
11 years or more	19.2	11.8	15.6	17.5	13.8	24.5	13.1	23.4	26.3	18.6
<b>Type of Hire</b>										
External	50.8	42.1	52.8	30.0	47.3	66.3	65.1	49.1	49.0	50.7
Internal	49.2	57.9	47.2	70.0	52.7	33.7	34.9	50.9	51.0	49.3
	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)
<b>Average Age</b>	55.0	57.8	57.4	54.7	56.2	52.9	51.9	51.0	51.3	53.9
<b>Average Years in Position</b>	6.2	5.6	5.4	8.3	5.9	7.6	5.0	6.9	6.9	6.8

Note: For a complete list of positions, with group assignments, see Appendix.

are particularly well represented among master's institution CAOs, holding 7 percent of these positions. Women are also better represented among CAOs at master's institutions than at either doctorate-granting or baccalaureate institutions. And while these patterns do

not hold with regard to other academic affairs leadership positions, there appears to be a significant pool of women and racial and ethnic minorities serving as CAO at these institutions who could be tapped to fill presidential vacancies.

**Table 6. Characteristics of Senior Administrators: Baccalaureate Institutions**

	Chief of Staff	Executive Vice President	CAO/Provost	Central Senior Academic Affairs Officer	Dean of Academic College	Senior Administrative Officer	Senior External Affairs Officer	Chief Student Affairs or Enrollment Management Officer	Chief Diversity Officer	Total
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
White	78.4	88.2	92.4	83.7	80.6	87.8	91.6	88.7	13.5	85.3
African American	14.9	11.8	5.7	10.6	12.2	9.8	5.1	8.3	59.5	10.3
Asian American	2.7	0.0	0.6	1.7	5.5	1.2	0.5	0.8	10.8	1.8
American Indian	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.4	0.0	0.1
Hispanic	4.1	0.0	1.3	3.6	0.6	0.9	1.9	1.1	13.5	2.0
Other/Multiple races	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	1.2	0.3	0.5	0.8	2.7	0.5
<b>Gender</b>										
Female	63.6	22.2	33.8	53.4	34.4	40.8	40.0	38.5	45.9	41.8
Male	36.4	77.8	66.3	46.6	65.6	59.2	60.0	61.5	54.1	58.2
<b>Age</b>										
50 or younger	42.3	11.8	25.9	38.2	24.8	41.4	45.8	51.9	55.6	40.0
51 to 60	39.4	70.6	45.6	41.5	44.1	43.7	40.7	38.8	33.3	42.1
61 or older	18.3	17.6	28.5	20.3	31.1	14.9	13.6	9.3	11.1	17.8
<b>Years in Current Position</b>										
Two years or less	37.0	29.4	50.6	45.2	37.8	29.7	42.2	37.9	62.9	39.7
Three to five years	19.2	17.6	29.4	21.3	25.1	22.8	22.7	20.4	20.0	22.8
Six to 10 years	16.4	35.3	14.4	13.5	16.3	26.3	20.9	20.4	11.4	19.3
11 years or more	27.4	17.6	5.6	20.0	20.8	21.2	14.2	21.2	5.7	18.2
<b>Type of Hire</b>										
External	57.7	47.4	48.1	34.8	42.4	63.2	63.9	57.9	73.0	54.0
Internal	42.3	52.6	51.9	65.2	57.6	36.8	36.1	42.1	27.0	46.0
	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)
<b>Average Age</b>	51.6	57.2	55.8	52.8	56.1	52.3	50.6	49.4	46.0	52.3
<b>Average Years in Position</b>	7.4	7.2	3.8	6.0	6.3	7.3	5.3	6.8	3.1	6.1

Note: For a complete list of positions, with group assignments, see Appendix.

### BACCALAUREATE INSTITUTIONS

As a group, senior administrators at baccalaureate institutions vary little from their colleagues at other types of institutions. However, some important differences do exist among academic affairs executives. Deans of academic colleges at baccalaureate institutions are the most racially and ethnically diverse

of any institution type, suggesting that there is a significant pool of minority candidates for higher levels of leadership at these institutions (see **Table 6**). African Americans and Asian Americans in particular are better represented, holding 12 percent and 5 percent of deanships, respectively.

The other striking feature of academic administrators at baccalaureate institutions is the comparatively short tenure of CAOs. Fifty-one percent of CAOs at baccalaureate colleges responding to the survey have been in office for two years or less. Central academic administrators and deans have more experience; their average time in office is approximately six years. The short average tenure of CAOs at baccalaureate colleges suggests that many of these individuals may not be willing or ready to ascend to the presidency until they have served in their current roles for several more years.

### **ASSOCIATE'S INSTITUTIONS**

Perhaps not surprisingly, given that women are most likely to lead associate's institutions (29 percent of presidents at this type of institution are women), community colleges have the highest proportion of women in senior administrative roles of any institution type.<sup>5</sup> More than half (52 percent) of these positions are held by women (see

**Table 7**). Not only do women hold the majority of such positions as chief external affairs officer, chief of staff, and chief student affairs officer, but they also occupy 59 percent of the central senior academic affairs positions. While not in the majority, women are more likely to serve as CAO or dean of an academic college at associate's institutions than at any other type of institution (43 percent and 45 percent, respectively, versus 38 percent and 36 percent at all institution types).

Given the high level of representation of women at associate's institutions, one might expect a corresponding level of representation among racial and ethnic minorities. Only Hispanics are slightly better represented in academic affairs positions at community colleges than at other types of institutions. This pattern mirrors that seen at the presidential level. Women have made more progress into the presidency of community colleges than have people of color.

5 Because almost all of the responding associate's institutions were public community colleges, we use the two terms interchangeably in this section.

**Table 7. Characteristics of Senior Administrators: Associate's Institutions**

	Chief of Staff	Executive Vice President	CAO/Provost	Central Senior Academic Affairs Officer	Dean of Academic College	Senior Administrative Officer	Senior External Affairs Officer	Chief Student Affairs or Enrollment Management Officer	Chief Diversity Officer	Total
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
White	85.0	72.4	89.9	83.1	85.8	86.9	90.1	73.5	20.4	83.2
African American	5.6	17.2	4.5	7.7	7.7	8.0	5.0	16.4	53.7	9.3
Asian American	0.9	3.4	1.5	1.9	2.0	1.5	0.0	0.7	1.9	1.4
American Indian	0.9	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.0	0.4	5.6	0.5
Hispanic	7.5	6.9	3.5	6.0	3.0	2.6	5.0	9.0	16.7	5.1
Other/Multiple races	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	1.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.5
<b>Gender</b>										
Female	53.8	37.9	43.0	58.9	45.1	47.0	62.5	56.1	58.9	52.2
Male	46.2	62.1	57.0	41.1	54.9	53.0	37.5	43.9	41.1	47.8
<b>Age</b>										
50 or younger	25.0	13.8	20.4	32.4	31.4	38.8	45.2	43.6	53.6	35.5
51 to 60	50.9	72.4	57.2	49.6	51.5	48.7	40.7	44.0	33.9	48.5
61 or older	24.1	13.8	22.4	18.0	17.2	12.5	14.1	12.5	12.5	16.0
<b>Years in Current Position</b>										
Two years or less	30.8	37.9	42.9	37.8	35.7	28.7	33.9	37.0	59.3	35.5
Three to five years	21.2	17.2	24.5	21.8	23.4	17.2	22.1	20.4	13.0	21.0
Six to 10 years	25.0	24.1	19.9	22.0	21.9	29.3	26.8	23.4	14.8	24.1
11 years or more	23.1	20.7	12.8	18.4	19.0	24.8	17.1	19.2	13.0	19.4
<b>Type of Hire</b>										
External	45.5	48.1	50.8	48.7	41.8	60.3	62.5	47.2	70.6	52.0
Internal	54.5	51.9	49.2	51.3	58.2	39.7	37.5	52.8	29.4	48.0
	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)	(#)
<b>Average Age</b>	55.4	56.5	55.4	53.1	53.8	52.4	51.0	50.6	48.1	52.7
<b>Average Years in Position</b>	7.3	7.9	5.8	6.6	6.6	7.6	6.4	6.5	4.3	6.7

Note: For a complete list of positions, with group assignments, see Appendix.



# Conclusion

This study is an important first step toward understanding more about senior campus leaders other than presidents.<sup>6</sup> With regard to the age and gender profile of these incumbents, the results are encouraging. Most senior campus leaders are not yet near retirement age, and may entertain the ambition to lead a campus. Further, with women holding 45 percent of the positions studied, and 38 percent of CAO positions, higher education has ample opportunity to create greater gender diversity in the presidency. The survey also found that half of all senior administrators were promoted to their current positions internally, suggesting that succession planning can be an important institutional strategy for enhancing the diversity of campus leadership.

The findings with regard to people of color are less optimistic. Only 16 percent of all senior administrators at the responding institutions are people of color, and less than 10 percent of CAOs are racial or ethnic minorities. The survey uncovered some important areas of opportunity where a significant pool of potential minority presidential candidates may exist, including among Asian Americans at doctorate-granting institutions, African Americans at master's and baccalaureate institutions, and Hispanics at community colleges. But overall, these data suggest that institutions will have to make significant efforts to create greater racial/ethnic diversity at the presidential level, by reaching out to the relatively small pool of current senior administrators, attracting more minority faculty into administrative positions, and increasing the number of minority faculty members so that the pool of individuals who might someday ascend to a presidency grows.

6 To gain greater insights into the backgrounds, current challenges, and career aspirations of chief academic officers, ACE plans a special survey of these individuals to be fielded in 2008 and released early in 2009.

# Appendix

## Characteristics of Individual Positions (in percentages)

POSITIONS	GENDER		RACE/ETHNICITY		
	Women	Men	White	African American	Hispanic
<b>Chief of Staff</b>					
Executive Assistant/Chief of Staff for CEO of a System or District	54.1	45.9	77.3	6.5	12.7
Executive Assistant/Chief of Staff for CEO of a Single Institution	54.8	45.2	84.7	9.7	3.6
<b>Executive Vice President</b>	31.0	69.0	79.8	12.3	6.0
<b>CAO/Provost</b>	38.0	62.0	90.5	5.0	2.4
<b>Central Senior Academic Affairs Officer</b>					
Chief Health Professions Officer	62.6	37.4	90.4	4.0	4.0
Chief Research Officer	41.5	58.5	88.8	3.9	3.9
Dean, Continuing Education	57.4	42.6	84.5	9.5	1.6
Dean, Graduate Programs	40.7	59.3	85.8	8.1	2.9
Dean, Instruction	52.7	47.3	80.0	10.3	7.8
Dean, Undergraduate Programs	37.8	62.2	79.8	11.3	4.0
Director, Continuing Education	65.4	34.6	92.3	3.8	3.6
Vice Provost	40.5	59.5	81.3	9.6	6.3
Associate Provost	47.0	53.0	85.4	6.6	4.7
Assistant Provost	59.9	40.1	73.0	15.5	9.1
<b>Dean of Academic College</b>					
Dean, Arts and Letters	37.8	62.2	85.2	9.6	1.6
Dean, Arts and Sciences	41.3	58.7	88.1	6.2	2.4
Dean, Biological and Life Sciences	36.0	64.0	82.7	14.0	1.7
Dean, Business	27.9	72.1	86.6	5.4	1.8
Dean, Engineering	11.3	88.7	80.3	1.9	3.4
Dean, Humanities	43.2	56.8	87.9	6.3	3.9
Dean, Law	20.0	80.0	88.8	6.7	3.4
Dean, Occupational Studies/Vocational Ed/Technology	41.7	58.3	87.3	9.0	2.6
Dean, Sciences	45.5	54.5	87.9	5.3	2.6
Dean, Social Sciences	48.0	52.0	78.2	11.9	2.3
<b>Senior Administrative Officer</b>					
Chief Administration Officer	29.2	70.8	88.8	7.0	2.5
Chief Business Officer	25.1	74.9	89.3	6.5	3.1
Chief Financial Officer	39.2	60.8	89.7	5.4	2.5
Chief Human Resources Officer	70.3	29.7	82.4	11.4	2.6
Chief Legal Affairs Officer (General Counsel)	49.3	50.7	84.3	12.3	2.9
<b>Senior External Affairs Officer</b>					
Chief Development Officer	48.1	51.9	93.9	3.3	2.6
Chief External Affairs Officer	52.8	47.2	91.6	3.8	3.5
Director, Community Services	59.8	40.2	80.5	11.6	6.0
Director, Governmental/Legislative Relations	33.9	66.1	76.5	12.7	10.4
<b>Chief Student Affairs/Enrollment Management Officer</b>					
Chief Enrollment Management Officer	41.8	58.2	83.5	7.7	6.6
Chief Student Affairs/Life Officer	47.9	52.1	77.0	17.3	4.7
<b>Chief Diversity Officer</b>	55.6	44.4	17.6	59.0	13.2
<b>ALL POSITIONS</b>	<b>44.6</b>	<b>55.4</b>	<b>84.2</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>4.0</b>

Note: Data were weighted to reflect the national distribution of institutions by Carnegie Basic classification.

RACE/ETHNICITY			AGE			YEARS IN CURRENT POSITION				TYPE OF HIRE	
American Indian	Asian American	Other/Multiple Races	50 or Younger	51 to 60	61 or Older	Two Years or Less	Three to Five Years	Six to 10 Years	11 Years or More	External	Internal
2.8	0.6	0.0	22.1	48.0	29.9	46.4	22.9	16.9	13.9	49.7	50.3
0.0	2.0	0.0	32.7	45.1	22.2	29.4	22.5	23.6	24.5	47.2	52.8
0.0	1.9	0.0	13.1	66.4	20.5	36.5	19.1	27.2	17.2	47.7	52.3
0.2	1.9	0.0	19.4	51.8	28.7	44.1	26.0	18.0	11.8	50.4	49.6
1.6	0.0	0.0	15.2	50.9	33.9	34.5	26.5	22.3	16.7	46.7	53.3
0.3	2.9	0.2	37.3	45.9	16.9	40.3	15.9	24.5	19.3	56.4	43.6
0.8	1.6	1.9	26.9	46.9	26.2	32.7	21.8	25.0	20.5	44.5	55.5
0.0	2.1	1.0	22.6	47.2	30.2	41.7	26.8	18.5	13.0	26.1	73.9
0.0	1.9	0.0	19.3	56.4	24.3	40.7	16.8	25.7	16.8	48.2	51.8
0.0	2.0	2.8	15.9	53.3	30.9	26.7	28.0	20.2	25.1	23.1	76.9
0.0	0.2	0.0	35.0	44.6	20.5	34.3	24.0	21.9	19.9	42.8	57.2
0.0	2.2	0.7	23.2	53.2	23.6	39.8	24.4	15.0	20.9	32.8	67.2
0.0	2.7	0.6	34.1	49.1	16.8	51.2	23.5	15.2	10.1	22.2	77.8
0.6	1.7	0.0	47.2	41.6	11.2	48.0	25.4	11.6	15.0	26.2	73.8
0.0	2.7	0.9	31.8	44.5	23.6	41.6	19.7	19.5	19.2	27.4	72.6
1.0	2.1	0.2	26.1	51.4	22.5	39.8	32.2	14.8	13.2	43.7	56.3
0.0	1.7	0.0	19.2	52.3	28.4	28.4	24.2	19.8	27.5	41.0	59.0
0.6	4.2	1.4	25.2	51.5	23.3	41.0	25.2	20.8	13.1	49.0	51.0
0.5	8.2	5.8	31.8	40.9	27.3	39.8	20.9	21.2	18.1	60.8	39.2
0.0	2.0	0.0	31.7	48.1	20.2	35.1	19.7	24.2	21.0	43.2	56.8
0.0	1.1	0.0	20.0	49.4	30.6	32.8	28.3	27.2	11.7	64.8	35.2
0.0	0.0	1.1	22.9	59.7	17.4	28.5	25.1	25.7	20.7	36.9	63.1
0.0	3.3	0.9	26.1	45.4	28.5	35.4	21.2	27.9	15.5	47.5	52.5
2.3	1.8	3.5	22.3	48.6	29.0	33.4	18.5	27.6	20.5	43.3	56.7
0.0	1.7	0.0	35.0	46.5	18.5	29.1	15.3	32.7	22.9	53.3	46.7
0.0	0.8	0.3	31.0	50.1	18.9	28.2	19.4	26.7	25.7	61.0	39.0
0.4	2.0	0.0	46.7	43.0	10.3	31.5	22.2	25.1	21.2	60.0	40.0
1.3	1.2	1.1	39.5	49.2	11.3	28.3	18.1	30.2	23.4	64.2	35.8
0.0	0.0	0.5	36.6	48.3	15.1	29.3	21.3	22.1	27.3	68.9	31.1
0.0	0.2	0.0	44.9	39.4	15.7	40.9	23.2	19.4	16.6	67.0	33.0
0.5	0.2	0.3	41.6	45.4	13.0	34.7	20.4	28.9	16.0	65.1	34.9
0.0	1.3	0.6	42.0	43.0	15.0	30.9	30.3	30.3	8.4	42.0	58.0
0.0	0.4	0.0	48.0	37.3	14.7	36.6	23.8	23.2	16.5	63.2	36.8
0.8	0.9	0.4	50.6	41.3	8.1	38.7	22.0	21.6	17.7	51.7	48.3
0.1	0.7	0.2	41.4	43.8	14.9	34.3	20.3	21.8	23.6	49.9	50.1
3.9	4.5	1.7	50.5	34.7	14.8	52.1	17.9	15.7	14.3	63.7	36.3
<b>0.4</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>34.0</b>	<b>46.9</b>	<b>19.1</b>	<b>36.7</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>18.6</b>	<b>51.0</b>	<b>49.0</b>





# THE SPECTRUM INITIATIVE

## Advancing Diversity in the College Presidency

Capitalizing on the imminent wave of college presidents' retirements and the resulting opportunity to ensure a more inclusive pool of leadership talent, a group of leading higher education associations are partnering to launch The Spectrum Initiative: Advancing Diversity in the College Presidency. This multiyear national agenda is designed to diversify and broaden executive leadership talent in higher education through programmatic and research initiatives involving, among others, institutional boards of trustees, executive search firms, campus search committees, current presidents, and aspiring leaders.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- ◆ To broaden and strengthen the leadership pipeline for women and racial/ethnic minority administrators and prepare them for senior leadership positions in higher education.
- ◆ To ensure that the presidential search and selection process is widely inclusive.
- ◆ To promote on-campus leadership development, mentoring, and succession planning.

### RESOURCES

ACE has released two other publications in tandem with this study:

- ◆ *Broadening the Leadership Spectrum: Advancing Diversity in the American College Presidency* frames both the leadership challenge facing higher education and avenues for change based on a roundtable discussion of presidents, trustees, candidates, and search firm executives.
- ◆ A special supplement to the winter 2008 issue of ACE's magazine *The Presidency* features presidents' perspectives on creating greater diversity in higher education's leadership.

For more information on The Spectrum Initiative, visit [www.acenet.edu/spectrum](http://www.acenet.edu/spectrum).

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