



H·E·R·S
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

I hope this finds you all enjoying your official kick-off to the summer season! Though for some summer may symbolize rejuvenation and relaxation, we know it's a busy time for many in higher education—and HERS is no exception.

As the HERS team is in the thick of our summer program offerings, it feels only natural that this installment of the HERS Quarterly Newsletter would focus on celebrating the success and accomplishments of our esteemed alumnae, including the following:

- In 2019 alone, we have had 126 graduates complete our HERS Institute program offering at Wellesley College (Massachusetts) and Colorado School of Mines (Colorado)
- We have 65 women participating in the July offering of the Institute at Bryn Mawr College, and look forward to having about 20 women join us at Next Stages Next Steps workshop in August
- We have noted 7 appointments amongst our alumnae to leadership roles at their institutions of higher education

We are thrilled to welcome our 2019 HERS Institute graduates to the HERS Network, which boasts over 6,000 program alumnae. Upon program completion, our program alumnae contribute their unique voices and perspectives to their respective institutions by providing bold, new direction, while serving as role models and mentors for staff. It's an honor for our organization to work with them to reach their greatest potential and support them in their higher education career trajectory, wherever the journey may take them.

As we continue our Quarterly Newsletter, please [let us know](#) if you would like to nominate a woman or personally participate in a HERS Network Spotlight. Additionally, please reach out if you have feedback regarding these newsletters and have any suggestions for topics you would like to be included.

In Awe of Your Leadership,

Verna

Verna Fitzsimmons, Ph.D.

President

UPCOMING EVENTS:**2019 HERS Institute in Bryn Mawr, PA**

July 8 – 20, 2019

Next Stages Next Steps in Chicago, IL

August 8 – 10, 2019

[Register Here!](#)

2019 – 2020 HERS Institute in Wellesley, MA

Four Weekend Sessions: October 10-12, 2019; November 14-16, 2019; February 6-8, 2020, March 19-21, 2020

[*Applications still being accepted!](#)

HERS NETWORK SPOTLIGHT: Dr. Michelle Stewart

(Institute for Clinical Social Work, IL)

Congratulations to Dr. Stewart, an alumna of the HERS Institute at Bryn Mawr (2015), on her recent appointment to President of the Institute for Clinical Social Work located in Chicago, Illinois. She will assume her duties starting on July 1, 2019. Dr. Stewart will be leaving her positions as Vice President for Academic Affairs and Associate Professor of Sociology at Lane College (TN), where she spent 12 years advocating for academic excellence, social justice, and sustainable community engagement and development.



While Dr. Stewart prepares for her new leadership role, we were honored to sit down with her and reflect upon her HERS experience and how it helped inspire her career trajectory within higher education.

What did you value most during your time with HERS?

One of the things I most valued was the unique opportunity to complete a mock job interview with a professional search firm that specialized in higher education. This provided me with hands-on experience with industry professionals of what I could expect when participating in job interviews focused on leadership roles in higher education. I also found incredible value in a specific session that focused on working with the media. To this day in my career, I've never forgotten what the media expert advised us on, which was to be prepared to get the institution's message across, to be repetitive in your messaging and not to be deterred by the interviewer's questions. This is a strategy I have used in multiple interviews since participating with HERS. Though I understand the HERS Institute curriculum has changed since I went alum, these are simply mere examples of the amazing skills I was able to acquire while attending the program offering that helped influence my leadership journey.

How was the HERS experience different than other leadership development organizations you've participated in?

What's truly unique about HERS is the format of the leadership programming it offers. For example, I participated in the HERS Institute, which was a two-week immersion program, during the summer of 2015 at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania. Many

leadership programs available in higher education are much shorter, but I believe the length of the HERS programming is advantageous, as I was able to soak up the experience and take the appropriate time needed to work through all aspects of the curriculum.

Also, because HERS is the only organization that provides leadership development opportunities solely for women in higher education, the curriculum was uniquely tailored to women. For me personally, sometimes the most straightforward advice is the best advice and that was the case at HERS. In fact, I still have my HERS portfolio, and in one of the first presentations by the HERS leadership team we were given the following advice: “If you are going to lead, lead.” That simple message was transformational for me, empowering me to own my (then) current position of Vice President of Academic Affairs and go back to my institution and lead academic affairs with confidence. It also motivated me to assist others throughout the institution in developing the capacity and confidence to lead.

Another important aspect of the format and experience is a participant’s introduction to the HERS Network, which allows for the opportunity to form meaningful bonds with women across the higher education sector. Coming out of the experience with a built-in cohort of women I could look to when I needed them was incredibly empowering.

How did HERS pique your interest to work toward a presidential role at an institution?

I think it was the motivational aspect of the program that helped to encourage me to begin thinking about the presidency. Prior to HERS, I viewed myself as an assistant; someone who assisted others in their leadership roles and in leading the institution. HERS helped me to ask and answer the question, “Why not me?” It was also at HERS that I developed a plan outlining the experiences and additional skills that I would need to develop prior to searching for a presidential role at an institution. HERS encourages women to be confident, to embrace their skills and abilities, and to have the courage to lead by engaging in several powerful exercises that provide the transformational experience many women are looking for.

What advice would you give to a woman in higher education who wants to advance their career?

To help them take responsibility for their career advancement, I would provide the following advice:

1. Develop a career plan for yourself with clear goals and objectives;
2. Invest in yourself and seek out career opportunities that are in alignment with your goals; and,
3. Seek out mentors and a network of individuals who share your goals and want to see you succeed.

LEARNING MOMENT: Getting Political

We’re sure you’re well acquainted with the phrase “What got you here won’t get you there”—and our team has been having countless conversations with individuals within the HERS Network regarding how they personally have had to shake up or hone in on their political skills for their leadership role. For some, the politics they

handle will stay in higher education and what's happening on their respective campus, while others may leave higher education and run for a school board, local city council, or the state legislature. As the women HERS works with learn more about the external factors which will impact their institution, some realize their leadership could have a much broader impact outside of their original career plan and far beyond the higher education sector. For example, HERS Institute alumna (1979), Harriette L. Chandler, serves as the senate president of Massachusetts. Chandler began her political career when she was elected to the Worcester School Committee in 1991 and has since served three terms in the Massachusetts House of Representatives and became the first Worcester woman to be elected to the Massachusetts State Senate when she was elected in November of 2000.

In what ways does political strategy play a role in your current position and how can these skills positively impact your career trajectory or ambitions?

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