



# WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SERIES

## REPORT TO THE WOMEN'S INITIATIVE'S COMMITTEE

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In 2014, the City provided funding for implementation of a leadership series targeted toward increasing representation of women at the highest levels of leadership. Research at the time showed that gender disparities in highest level leadership is a national issue. Females make up less than 5% of all CEOs of fortune 500 companies, and only 16% of corporate officers. The leadership series was planned and implemented in both 2015 and 2016. This report is intended to summarize the design of the series, highlight key outcomes, and review evaluations.

Women are consistently rated as equally competent leaders as men, and traditional reasons for the absence of women in top leadership roles focus on the fact that women are less effective at networking than men and that women are more likely remove themselves from the labor market. Research related to women in leadership from 2014 suggested that a contributing factor to this disparity also includes a gap in confidence. While some of this confidence gap could be attributable to internalized biases, the research indicated that "compared with men, women don't consider themselves as ready for promotions, they predict they'll do worse on tests, and they generally underestimate their abilities." Social science research in fact supports this confidence gap beginning with girls at a very young age. As confidence increases, there is an expected correlation in likelihood to apply for promotional opportunities.

One study demonstrates that while women are perceived as equally effective leaders, they are perceived as less competent in three key areas: strategic planning, effectively exploiting business opportunities, and financial understanding. Supporting literature demonstrates that perception of an individual as competent in strategic planning is important to advancement.

Based on the above, we embarked on development of the Women's Leadership Series, positing that significant strides in achieving higher representation of women in senior management requires a multi-layered approach that doesn't simply address bias or hiring practices, but is also tailored to address some of the unique skills and behaviors necessary for equitable advancement. Any such organizational development tool must address basic leadership competencies as well as the role confidence plays in leadership, strategic analysis and planning, and the persuasive skills necessary to sell their ideas.

### QUOTE:

*The workshop information gave me the confidence (and energy) to step outside of what had become my comfort zone and move forward... so I stepped outside of the box... and got the job!! I'm very excited to move forward and start a new chapter in my life with confidence that I will be successful. I have encouraged other women to take the workshop if ever they get the opportunity and know I will refer back to the materials when I need that boost again.*

- Participant



## ***Design of the Program***

The Women's Leadership Series was focused on the specific leadership development needs of women, and was created as a feedback-intense learning experience. The series was intended to provide participants information and an understanding of all of the following:

- Unique challenges of women in leadership: how to lead with authenticity and confidence, clarify personal values and how they fit within the organizational culture, and how to think strategically about actively managing one's own career.
- Networking and mentoring: strategies for networking and using power and influence more effectively within the organization, as well as how to cultivate formal/informal mentoring to increase development opportunities.
- Leadership and emotional intelligence: building a strong foundation for extraordinary leadership by increasing emotional intelligence and self-leadership — which impact all aspects of life, health, career and relationships.
- Effective communication and relationship intelligence: the perspectives and techniques that make exceptional leaders effective communicators, including training on relationship intelligence, active listening and self-awareness.
- Conflict management skills: the perspectives, strategies and skills needed to manage difficult interactions and overcome team toxins.
- Strategic planning and motivation: the critical skills needed to create environments that motivate, support and inspire the best performances from others toward strategic goals.

The City of Madison Women's Initiatives Committee (WIC) provided feedback on key needs for the series including mentoring, networking, and career planning. The five-day series included all of these main focus areas and was structured to include external facilitation from local Women's Leadership expert consultants each of five mornings and afternoons with practice, workshops, facilitated discussions, and leadership panel discussions to reinforce the learning from each morning. Selected external consultants included Darcy Luoma, Krista Morrissey, Angela Russell, and Laura Page. Participants included approximately 100 participants the first year (2015) to approximately 80 participants the second year (2016), and were sourced from City, County, State, and local non-profits.

## ***Incumbent Representation***

Internally, racial and gender disparities continue to exist in the City permanent workforce. The percentage of women in the workforce has been consistently dropping since 2007 (see chart on page 3), and data related to the percentage of women in all "Top Management" positions (compensation groups 12, 14, 18, 21, 23, and 44), dropped from 35.62% in 2008 to 34.83% in 2012.

"Top Management" positions were initially defined in a 2008 report by the Department of Civil Rights. It should be noted that this data was compiled from a variety of sources, and included positions which may not even be supervisory positions, let alone considered a part of our highest levels of leadership. To get a better idea of longer

term trends in representation, this data was helpful, but for purposes of this report, managerial and senior managerial positions are defined consistent with the initial proposal.

Information from the initial proposal (for the calendar year 2013) included the following:

*However, while women make up approximately 50% of the general population and 50% of hired employees when non-traditional occupations are included, when all position types are included, women make up approximately only 30% of all City employees. Further, this percentage is reduced as you climb the leadership ladder. Across all agencies, for example, women only comprise approximately 22% at the managerial level (CG 18/13 or equivalent and above), 18% at the senior management level (CG 18/15 or equivalent and above), and only about 16% of department heads.*

While the City has several ongoing initiatives aimed at addressing internal racial and gender bias, this leadership series was designed to address gaps at the management level (not including professional, non-supervisory, or lower level supervisory positions) and above, as many of these key leadership positions are internally sourced.

**Key Outcomes**

After completion of two years of the program, it was not anticipated that we would see an increase in the representation of women in “Top Management” (CG 12, 14, 18, 21, 23, and 44), nor the managerial and senior managerial levels highlighted above. However, since 2012, representation of Women in “Top Management” positions has increased from 34.83% to 39.01% in 2016, after the noted decline in representation in the four years before it.

Further, in looking at those positions defined in the initial report (CG 18/13 and above), representation initially decreased from 2012 to 2014, going from 23.0% in 2012 to 22.8% in 2014, but has seen a significant increase to 29.4% in 2016.

In those positions defined as senior management in the report (CG 18/15 and above), representation of women went from 18.6% in 2012 to 21.3% in 2014 to 25.7% in 2016.

While representation in senior leadership has increased significantly, City Department Head representation of women has declined to approximately 12.5% in the same period of time; where the total number of Department

Year	Permanent Employees	Women	Perc Women
1981	1857	497	26.76%
1982	n/a	n/a	n/a
1983	1820	497	27.31%
1984	1773	494	27.86%
1985	2077	552	26.58%
1986	2053	542	26.40%
1987	2119	570	26.90%
1988	2114	580	27.44%
1989	2136	618	28.93%
1990	2158	643	29.80%
1991	2238	685	30.61%
1992	2252	702	31.17%
1993	2249	715	31.79%
1994	2294	723	31.52%
1995	2320	735	31.68%
1996	2369	767	32.38%
1997	2438	801	32.85%
1998	2492	829	33.27%
1999	2574	860	33.41%
2000	2549	849	33.31%
2001	2565	864	33.68%
2002	2602	879	33.78%
2003	2645	889	33.61%
2004	2661	898	33.75%
2005	2657	892	33.57%
2006	2635	902	34.23%
2007	2661	908	34.12%
2008	2712	887	32.71%
2009	2717	866	31.87%
2010	2767	865	31.26%
2011	2728	857	31.41%
2012	2701	837	31.0%
2013	2693	811	30.12%
2014	2715	807	29.72%
2015	2778	819	29.48%
2016	2768	816	29.48%



Heads (CG 21) went from 25 to 24, and representation of women from a total of 4 to 3. Note that numbers of vacant positions are not included in any of the reported numbers; rather numbers and percentages are generated by looking at incumbency at the time of the reports. Representation of women in managerial and senior managerial positions from 2012, 2014, and 2016, including the actual numbers of employees is included in the following three charts.

2012		
Management	Senior Management	Dept Heads
28	11	4
94	48	21
122	59	25
23.0%	18.6%	16.0%

2014		
Management	Senior Management	Dept Heads
28	13	4
95	48	21
123	61	25
22.8%	21.3%	16.0%

2016		
Management	Senior Management	Dept Heads
40	18	3
96	52	21
136	70	24
29.4%	25.7%	12.5%

Workforce demographic changes are not representative of this development program alone. Significant work has been done in our other City agencies, including but not limited to, the Department of Civil Rights and the Department of Human Resources, to combat and reduce the impact of implicit and explicit bias in hiring decisions.

However, workforce demographics are not the only source of data related to outcomes of the sessions. As an example, testimonials from several women included report of an increase in a feeling of preparedness for higher level positions and a greater likelihood to apply for promotional opportunities.

QUOTE:

*“When the conference began I was deciding whether or not to apply for a leadership position in my organization. During a small group break-out, I mentioned that I was feeling very uncertain about applying, nervous that I didn’t have what it takes to manage a team and a large program. A couple other participants talked to me about this fear. They asked me, “What are you afraid of? If you don’t get the job you don’t lose anything for trying.” I replied by saying that I wasn’t afraid of not getting the job. I was afraid of getting the position and not being good enough, letting the organization down. A woman turned to me, looked me solidly in the eye and said, “What would you tell your daughter if it was her hesitating to apply for a job?” That was a life-changing moment for me. They were right! I applied and got the Manager position and my daughter was watching me the entire time, cheering me on! I’m so grateful.”*

- Participant



## **Program Evaluation**

While key outcomes are the most significant measure of the success of the program, additional information can be gleaned from the evaluations from the participants. Each session has been individually evaluated, including differing evaluations for those led by outside consultants (Darcy Luoma, Krista Morrissey, Angela Russell, Ananda Mirilli, and Laura Page). Evaluations were compiled and reviewed after each session by those planning the series, to allow for emerging needs to be addressed in subsequent sessions.

Each of the sessions had an overall session score that participants had to fill out, as well as perception of instructor knowledge with a range of both questions of 1 to 5. The average overall score across all sessions was 4.5 out of 5 and instructor knowledge was 4.6 out of 5. Further, when looking at usability across all five sessions for both years, over 80% of participants indicated that the percent of usable information was either 70% or 100%, with 39% of participants indicating that the amount of usable information was a full 100%. Possible responses for usability of information included 10%, 30%, 50%, 70% and 100%.

Throughout all of the surveys, common themes related to the presenters and sessions were positive and included words like engaging, motivational, knowledgeable, and dynamic. Participants found self-awareness and self-management, the importance of designing an alliance, how fear relates to confidence, powerful questions, and how to sell your ideas, to be particularly useful components. Comments about the series included quotes like:

- *This was an excellent program and I am very glad I had the chance to attend; the speakers were amazing, great job!*
- *Focus on self is great, but it is hard when the system is not being addressed in support of these changes.*
- *The biggest thing holding me back (as I discovered today) is caring too much what others think of me, plus lack of confidence do to that.*
- *This was an excellent series and a powerful learning session.*
- *The Women's Leadership Conference provided very practical take-aways that I put to use immediately. The conference is helpful not only if you are in formal leadership, but also if you just want to create positive change in your organization. For that reason, it is helpful to women at all levels and in all stages of their careers.*

Part of the success of this series included the time period between each session (typically 2-3 weeks) to help tailor information based on the specific feedback from the evaluations.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, the Women's Leadership Series, intended for third year implementation in 2017, has been shown to be correlated with increases in representation of women at the management level. While no development tools can be everything an individual might need in preparing for leadership positions, one participant described it as the *"Best City training I've been to in 20 years!"*

Finally, the development and implementation of the series could not have been accomplished without the full support of the Women's Initiatives Committee, City Human Resources, Department of Civil Rights, and City leadership and policy makers, nor the contributions of key City/County staff including Victoria Larson, Melissa Gombar, Jordan Bingham, Amy Deming, Donna Collingwood, Susan Gafner, Sarah Olson, Emaan Abdel-Halim, and Julie Trimbell.