



Council of College of Arts & Sciences ADVANCE Initiative

CCAS 2010-2011 Deans: A Demographic Analysis

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January/February, 2012

Recognizing that academic deans play a pivotal role in the recruitment, retention, and advancement of STEM women faculty, the Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences (CCAS) is the focus of a collaborative effort funded through the National Science Foundation's (NSF) ADVANCE program. As described in the CCAS ADVANCE program announcement, the goal of that program is to “develop systemic approaches to increase the representation and advancement of women in academic science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers, thereby contributing to the development of a more diverse science and engineering workforce.” As part of the CCAS ADVANCE initiative, the 2010-2011 CCAS roster of participant deans was examined by gender to understand better the representation among CCAS deans, many of whom have oversight of STEM disciplines. Women are generally underrepresented among higher education leadership roles (King & Gomez, 2008; The White House Project, 2009) and deanships can be an important pathway to such senior-level administrative positions (ACE, 2007; Eckel, Cook, & King, 2009). The arts and sciences deanship, as represented by CCAS participants, provides a rare opportunity to examine gender-based patterns within an administrative role at a national level. For the purposes of this study, “dean” is inclusive of individuals holding the title of Dean, Associate Dean, or Assistant Dean. Capitalization of that term (“Dean”) denotes the more specific title.

Overview of CCAS Membership

The CCAS 2010-2011 roster of participant deans consists of 1,599 individuals, fifteen of whom come from institutions that do not have Carnegie classifications and therefore are excluded for the purposes of this analysis. Of the remaining 1,584 CCAS deans, 941 are men (59.4%) and 643 are women (40.6%). The majority of deans come from public institutions (77.1%) and hold the title of Dean (n = 682; 43.1%) or Associate Dean (n = 673; 42.5%). Only 14.5% hold the title of Assistant Dean (n = 229). Referencing the Carnegie classifications of member institutions, half (49.7%) of the individuals (n = 787) come from Doctorate-granting Universities, 43.1% from Master’s Colleges and Universities (n = 682), and 7.3% from Baccalaureate Colleges (n = 115). About a fifth (n = 314, 19.8%) of CCAS deans are from Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs).

Female CCAS Membership

Although women comprise 40.6% of the CCAS deans, gender segregation is notably exhibited when examining deans by type of institution and individual title. In general, the CCAS data for 2010-2011 reveals that women are better represented at lower-ranking titles (e.g. Assistant Dean) than higher-ranking titles (e.g. Dean). This circumstance seems to be particularly prominent at the more research-oriented institutions (e.g. Doctorate-granting Universities).

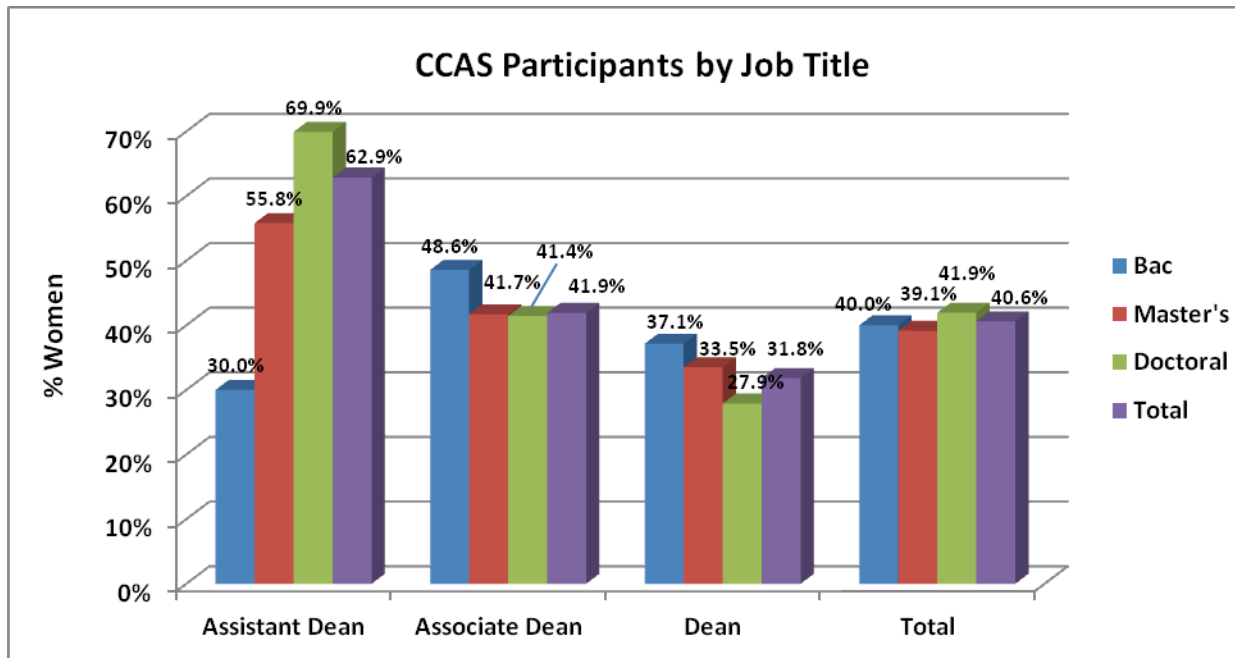


Figure 1. Women comprise almost two-thirds (62.9%) of Assistant Dean positions, noticeably the smallest population by title, while women account for less than a third (31.8%) of CCAS Deans.

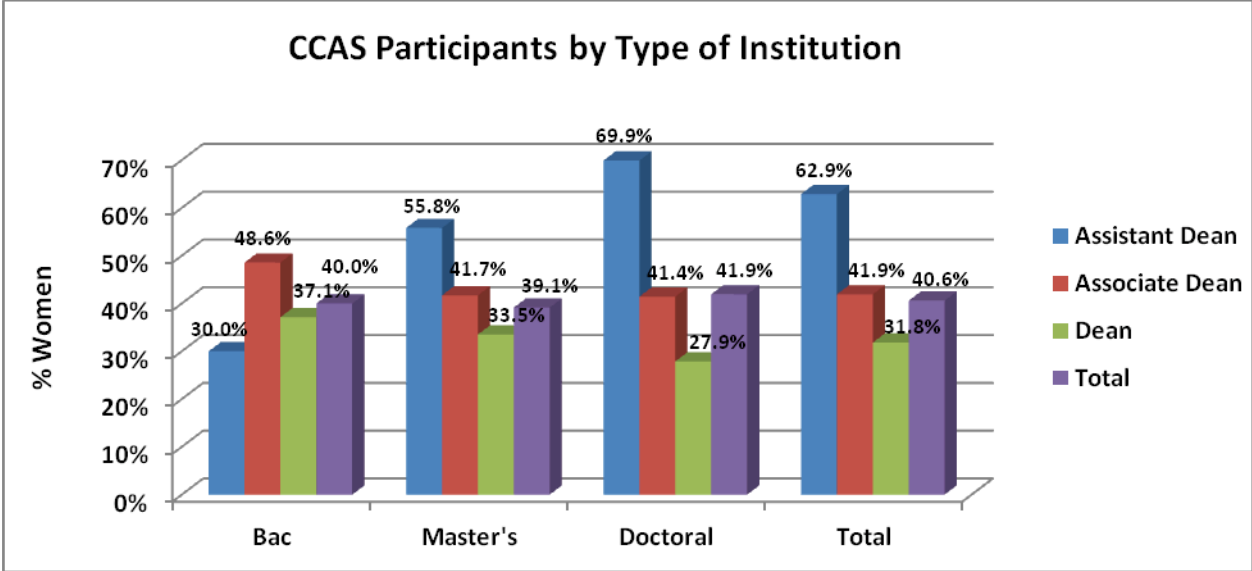


Figure 2. When examining title by gender at Doctorate-granting Universities, women hold 69.9% of Assistant Dean, but only 27.9% of Dean positions. This trend is reversed when examining title by gender at Baccalaureate Colleges. Women represent only 30.0% of Assistant Deans, but represent 37.1% of Deans at Baccalaureate Colleges.

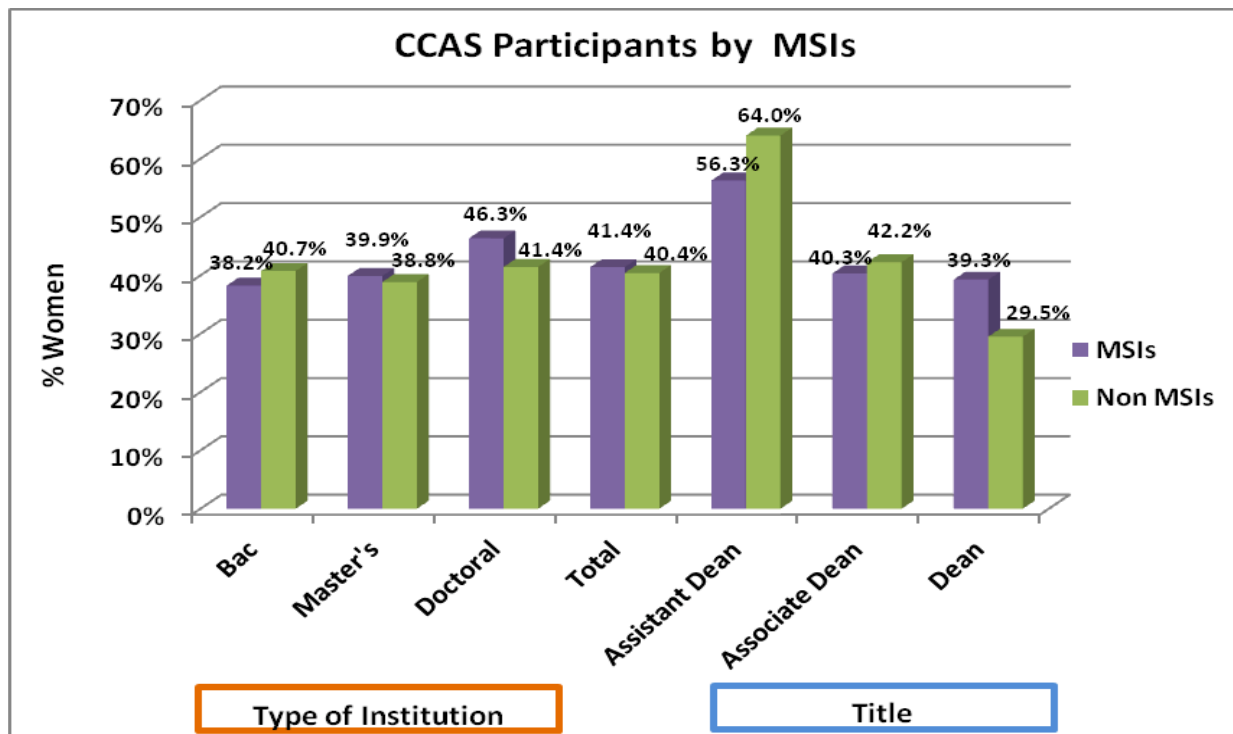


Figure 3. Women’s representation among deans in MSIs (41.4%) compared to non-MSIs (40.4%) is roughly similar. However, when comparing the data solely among Doctorate-granting Universities, there are more women represented as deans at MSIs (46.3%) than at non-MSIs (41.4%). MSIs evidenced a higher percentage of women holding the title of Dean (39.3%) than did non-MSIs (29.5%). This discrepancy is amplified when examining Deans at MSI and non-MSI Doctorate-granting Universities. Women are well-represented as Deans at MSIs categorized as a Doctorate-granting University (44.8%); however, they only make up a quarter of Deans at non-MSIs at those same institutions (25.7%) (Note: this is a crosstab analysis and is not graphically depicted in the figures above).

Discussion & Implications

The analysis reveals that, among CCAS deans in 2010-2011, women account for 40% of dean positions. However, when this encouraging statistic is examined by gender in relation to leadership title and type of institution, it becomes apparent that there are a number of gender differences by specific title (i.e., Assistant Dean, Associate Dean, and Dean) as well as the institution's Carnegie category and MSI vs. non-MSI status. Overall, women have greatest representation among those positions with the lowest ranking title (e.g. Assistant Dean) and are most poorly represented at the highest ranking title (e.g. Dean). Differences in the representation of women among the three decanal titles generally increase as the institutional type becomes more research-oriented. Interestingly, these differences in women's representation among the titles of Assistant Dean, Associate Dean, and Dean, while observed among MSIs, are less pronounced than in non-MSIs.

Gender disparities present among the deanship merit attention with regard to women's representation in higher education leadership at the senior-most ranks. The dearth of women in senior leadership roles is exemplified by women accounting for less than a quarter of university presidents (23%) (The White House Project, 2009) and only 14% of university presidents at doctorate-granting institutions (King & Gomez, 2008). Baltodano, Carlson, Jackson, & Mitchell (2012) assert this gender discrepancy in leadership is due to a lack of opportunity for women in higher education and not ability, ambition, or commitment. When examining the pipeline to these leadership roles, there is evidence that the dean position is a key pathway to the role of provost, which in turn is a prime stepping stone to the presidency (Eckel, Cook, & King, 2009; ACE, 2007; King & Gomez, 2008). Thus, under-representation of women in the deanship may translate to continued disparities at the executive levels of academic leadership. For example, the striking under-representation of women Deans at Doctorate-granting Universities documented in this study parallels the finding that women's representation of senior administrative positions is lower (34%) at doctorate granting institutions than any other type of institution (King & Gomez, 2008). The findings of this study lend support for a continuing examination of women's representation by title and institutions' Carnegie classification throughout each stage of the leadership pipeline, so that inequities are acknowledged and actions may be taken to address them.

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Suggested Citation:

Battles, D.A., Schneider, J.S., & Huffaker, L.A. (2012, February). CCAS 2010-2011 deans: A demographic analysis. *Council of College of Arts and Sciences January/February 2012 Newsletter*, 34(1). Retrieved from <http://www.ccas.net/advance/publications>

Acknowledgement of Support and Disclaimer

This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. 0930138. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.