



Dear Friends and Colleagues,

It is my distinct pleasure and honor to serve as a Presidential Sponsor and to welcome you to the American Council on Education Women's Network of Northern California.

Throughout the years, this group has been at the forefront of the effort to advance and create opportunities for women to gain executive roles in higher education. While much progress has been made, all of us realize our work has just begun.

On the campus I lead, California State University, Stanislaus, 66 percent of the students are female, so the vast majority of the talented graduates Stan State prepares to send into our region's workforce are women. A smaller disparity exists nationwide, with women making up 57 percent of college students, and according to federal data 39 percent of women aged 25-to-29 have completed a bachelor's degree, compared to 32 percent of men in that age range. However, when you examine Fortune 500 companies, roughly 5 percent have women CEOs. That makes it incumbent on us to expose our students to women in powerful positions in business, to be inspired and to be able to visualize their own paths to the top floors of major corporations.

One of the best ways to introduce students to powerful female leaders is to ensure women have access to opportunities in leadership positions within your own universities. I am very proud to have worked for the last 33 years within the California State University system, which as of last year passed the 50 percent threshold of women in the highest executive positions with 12 female presidents within the 23-campus system. I applaud CSU Chancellor Timothy P. White for his commitment to gender diversity at the executive level.

Unfortunately, the gender gap is not closing quickly enough on a national scale, with less than one-third of the nation's four-year colleges led by women presidents or chancellors. But that's why we're here. The ACE Women's Network exists to identify and harness the power and wisdom of women so that we can help identify and open the doors for the next wave of leaders and help them find their own paths in higher education. Gender diversity is a paramount aspect of effective leadership, whether in the corporate boardroom or within the halls of academia.

You are making a difference through your support of ACE Women's Network, and I commend each of you on your continuing efforts on behalf of women in higher education.

Sincerely,

Ellen Junn, Ph.D.
President

Office of the President

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A proud member of the 23-campus California State University system.