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Coming Full Circle:

Mid-Career Women Leaving Administration and Returning to Faculty

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*“Leaving administration is part of the career cycle. However, if universities listened to those women who left their administration, they would have a better understanding of the problems facing their future and current female leaders and how to handle their exit, when time.”*

Depending on how the numbers are viewed, women administrators have either made impactful strides in academe or they are still facing barriers to access and promotion in the administrative ivory towers. Reports show the numbers of female leaders in higher education administration have risen, but whether these data are dramatic or not is more complicated. Numbers may not tell the entire story of women as leaders as their roles and status in academe can be viewed from a variety of social patterns, institutional cultures, and power structures, creating a complex web not simple to digest.

Women administrators at U.S. public institutions increased by less than 1% from 1978 to 1987, from 21.3% to 22.3% of executive positions (“Climbing the Ladder Very Slowly,” 1990). In 1998, women held 24.3% of university and college presidencies, a change of only 3.5% since 1986. By 2001, the success of women in administration showed mixed progress (“Women College Presidents Share Success,” 2001; see also, Office of Women in Higher Education, 2002), and the increase in top female administrators was found mostly in public colleges, not research and doctoral institutions, with significant growth in community colleges. Most female presidents headed schools with 3,000 or fewer students, with the situation explained: “The culture of the community may be less accepting of women in general, but it can be particularly harsh for single and minority women” (in “Women College Presidents Share Success,” 2001, para. 9). The

American Council of Education found the most difficult road for women seeking administrative positions in higher education was the one where race and gender intersect: “Women of color are underrepresented in academic administration and not just because they’re newer to the pipeline. Prejudice and marginalization bar them from mid- and senior level campus jobs” (Office of Women in Higher Education, 2002, p.1).

Coming full circle, from faculty positions and a return to faculty positions, females interviewed for this article provide a missing piece in the literature on women leaders in higher education – mid-career decisions to leave administrative positions and return to their academic roots of faculty. This study shares interview data from 12 women who have voluntarily or involuntarily left their academic affairs administrative positions and re-entered faculty ranks at their institutions. The voices of these women provide rich insights into why and how mid-career women leave administration and their perceptions of these experiences. Few higher education studies have focused on the end of females’ administrative experiences, and the researchers feel the main reason for the dearth of literature is the continuing struggle for female entrance into administration, especially at upper level positions. After a comprehensive review of literature, the authors found only one study that addressed specifically and qualitatively women exiting administrative roles in institutions of higher education (Schmuck, Hollingsworth, & Lock, 2002).

### Review of Literature

Some researchers believe the organizational and cultural environments of colleges and universities remain distinguished by traditional, bureaucratic, and male-oriented structures (Brooks & Mackinnon, 2001). Within this context, the position of women leaders remain tenuous – women are “...still largely excluded from much of the power brokering” (Blackmore & Sachs, 2001, p. 63) in higher education institutions, and women’s leadership often remains marginalized and unrecognized. Glazer-Raymo (1999) concluded, “Ultimately, the institutional culture of most universities is not compatible with the needs and concerns of women in academia” (p. 207). When women exit administration, it is often based on conflict between their individual goals and visions and direction of the larger institution. In the only study the authors identified regarding women exiting higher education administration, Schmuck, Hollingsworth, and Lock (2002) stated,

The gendered political relationships in educational organization create a different dynamic for female administrators than for male administrators. Males who collide with institutional agendas are often given alternatives to withdraw from the collisions, such as lateral promotions or early retirements with favorable press releases to save face. Women’s exits, especially feminist women, are more likely to be personally and professionally devastating. (p. 97)

Noting the culture of higher education, a study based on 13 roundtable discussions with women presidents (Office of Women in Higher Education, 2001) found leaving administration may be positive or negative – women make choices to try something new or balance their lives, while others internalize a sense of failure.

In 2002, Nuss encouraged female senior student affairs officers to think about their roles as assignments rather than permanent jobs. She explained, “...the needs of institutions and the demands on the role change over time,” further clarifying it is “...often difficult to accurately assess whether one’s leadership style is appropriate for the current challenges an institution or organization faces” (Nuss & Schroeder, 2002, p. 84). Nuss and Schroeder stated chief student affairs officers exit positions because of physical and emotional demands of the job, declining interest in the position, and feeling of goals accomplished. Those officers involuntarily removed from positions often experienced more transitional difficulty.

Other studies exemplify the experiences of women administrators outside of higher education. For example, a study of 25 female K-12 public school administrators found numerous reasons why women were

leaving school leadership, ranging from difficult, challenging school environments to demands of work and family (Williamson & Hudson, 2003). Marshall (1995) studies 16 women in management in three countries who had voluntarily left employment, who were forced out of administrative positions, or who were considering leaving their jobs. These women's accounts reflected (a) desires for a different life style, (b) need for a more balanced life, and (c) lack of support in facilitating organizational change. Marshall (1995) concluded three themes appeared in her subjects' stories: significant dissatisfaction in working in a male-dominated environment, difficulty in maintaining a sense of self and authentication, and ongoing stress and tiredness.

### Viewing this Study

The principles of mid-career development were used as the theoretical lens to understand women's experiences in exiting higher education administration and transitioning back to faculty. Herr and Cramer (1996) characterized mid-career changes, whether negative or positive, as healthy, normal, and important parts of mid-career development, although Neugarten (1976) argued unexpected life events or expected career events that occur *off time* are potential crises. While executive women experienced periods of stability in their careers, White, Cox, and Cooper (1992) noted periods of transition, questioning, and rebalancing of their personal and professional lives were often common.

In discussing mid-career changes, Schlossberg (1984) viewed transitions as having identifiable phrases: preoccupations with the change, disbelief of the situation, sense of betrayal by the organization, confusion, anger, and finally resolution. Zunker (2002) found stressful circumstances for women evoke emotions of anger, sadness, and guilt, which can serve as springboards for developing coping skills for managing transitions. In developing a repertoire of coping strategies, men and women bring a combination of strengths and weaknesses to change (Sargent & Schlossberg, 1988). Yet, Long and Kahn (1993) saw gender differences as critical to handling adversity:

First, women experience more and different work stressors than men (e.g., sex discrimination and harassment). Second, culturally shared beliefs (e.g., gender-role stereotypes) affect men's and women's perceptions of appropriate ways to cope with stress, such as disclosing to friends. Third, women are disadvantaged with regard to coping if they lack workplace coping resources (e.g., power, perceived competence), or other personal resources (e.g., child care, finances). (p. 302)

Carter (2002) found the experiences of female business leaders in mid-career exemplified "...how permeable the boundaries can be between personal and professional lives" (p. 82). Ongoing conversations with and emotional support from colleagues, supervisors, friends, and family members were important during change in women's careers (Greenglass, 1993; Korabik, McDonald, & Rosin, 1993; Zunker, 2002).

After spending years in administration and developing a work identity tied to a university web of relationships, a disconnection from administrative status and identity can be disconcerting (Brockner, 1988; Kaufman, 1982). If a person has "...the ability to self-reflect, to continue assessing and learning about her- or himself, and to change behaviors and attitudes, the chances are much better for a successful midcareer transition and a good fit with the new work environment" (Hall & Mirvis, 1995, p. 277). From an organizational perspective, Louis (1980) explained institutions have given little thought to employees exiting positions, noting conceptualization of what is needed to help people leave, let go, and reinvest must be addressed.

### Objectives of the Study

The study was based on the thesis that the cycle of women in administration is not complete without hearing the final chapter of women leaders – their exit from administration and a return to faculty. The

study was guided by the following objectives: (a) to ascertain factors surrounding female administrators' exit from administrative positions, (b) to determine female administrators' feelings upon exit and levels of support and treatment, and (c) to examine female administrators' perceptions and experiences of transitioning to faculty and the impacts of this on their lives. This study is a beginning, not an exhaustive examination of women in higher education administration who exit their positions. The researchers did not consider all internal and external variables that might impact these women's experiences and believe the results may be context-specific reflecting unique orientations of the institutions and the subjects, thereby precluding generalization to all women in higher education exiting administration.

## Research Design and Methodology

Most institutions do not conduct exit interviews of administrators, either male or female, and if they do, an exit interview may not be seen as an environment of trust, safety, and openness (especially if the individual will be remaining at the institution). Confidential information and painful experiences of an individual leaving an administrative position are not easily obtainable or easily shared. Such sensitivities presented the researchers of this study with challenges on how to gather qualitative data from exiting female leaders.

In the spring of 2004, a study conducted by the authors examined the experiences of 12 females who had held mid-career administrative positions at two large public universities in the United States, and who had left their administrative positions either voluntarily or involuntarily and returned to faculty at the same institution. For the study, mid-career women were defined as having both faculty and administrative experiences with faculty career years remaining after exit from administration. These women's years of administrative experience as department chairs, director, associate deans, deans, vice provost, and provost ranged from 4 to 15 years, with an average administrative tenure of 8 years. At the time of the interviews, the participants were asked demographic questions regarding marital status, ethnicity, and children. Of the 12 participants, six were married, four were partnered, one was single/never been married, and one was divorced. In regard to ethnicity, four identified themselves as Latinas, and the other eight women were white. When asked about children, 58 % of the women had no children and 42% had children. All study participants wished to remain anonymous and therefore pseudonyms are utilized in their stories.

Seidman's (1998) in-depth interviewing procedures were utilized to understand the experiences and perceptions of administrative women returning to faculty ranks. This model of interviewing involved one 120-minute interview with each participant wherein open-ended questions were utilized to reconstruct the experiences of former females in administration. The authenticity of what is said makes it reasonable to have confidence in the validity of each woman's story (Seidman, 1998). By seeking to understand the meaning of events and interactions, the researchers and their interpretations can be influenced by interactions with the interviewees. Therefore, the researchers asked: What do we understand now? What connective themes are among these women's experiences? And how are these connections consistent with the literature?

This qualitative research study captured participants in their own terms: their emotions, the way in which they view their worlds, their thoughts on their experiences, and their perceptions and values. Though human behavior is complex and qualitative research can generate multiple interpretations and realities, the words of participants provide meaning that is often missing with quantitative data.

## Voices of Leaving

The purpose of this study was to listen to the voices of experience – those of women who saw themselves as leaders, who held administrative positions in universities, and who were returning to the faculty ranks after varying years of administrative service to their institutions.



## *Why and How of Exiting*

Most of the former female administrators chose to leave their positions voluntarily, expressing they needed a change or had disagreed or experienced conflict with others and therefore elected to leave. Three women described their individual exits as forced resignations.

Department Chair Nelson had served in a capacity of administrative positions within her university and was considered adept at “cleaning up” mismanaged areas and turning them around. More than once was she assigned faculty members who were considered by administration as disgruntled, problematic, and incompetent. When the opportunity arose to chair a newly created department within an established college, she was delighted with the challenge. Within a short period of two years, Dr. Nelson realized that

...the dean and the faculty would not let the new department, which I chaired, succeed. I was also the only female administrator in that college and did not receive support nor did I have parallel goals and ideals as the other male chairs and the male associate dean and the male dean.

Dr. Nelson broached administration about returning to her faculty appointment noting,

Because I had faculty expertise in a very narrow area that was not duplicated in other departments and colleges, administrations saw that I could be a very productive, fruitful faculty member. I also agreed to move to a statewide site when most faculty members would not consider this possibility. Administration was encouraged by this flexibility.

Of the three women who described their exits as involuntary, Dr. Wright, former associate dean, explained she had been mentored to advance to the next administrative level when things suddenly changed. She called her similar experiences of limited support as “wounding around the deanship:”

This is a story that I have never told to any faculty member. I was the interim dean and had support of the president and vice president. The president had told me that I was ready for the deanship and I had faculty support. But then the vice president came to my office unexpectedly without an appointment...[The person] looked ashen and was very emotional. I was told that the president had decided that the deanship should be opened to a national search, and I knew their support no longer existed...So a national search was conducted and a candidate known personally to a state politician applied and was hired. I asked myself over and over again – is that all there is for me, after dedicating myself to this institution for so long?

All of the female interviewees felt communications regarding their situations were handled poorly. Ms. Hernandez, a director who had reported directly to the president, noted the decision for her departure was made one week before the holidays without her input. Former Associate Dean Johnson, who said she felt unappreciated and not supported in administrative decisions, described the situation as untenable and too stressful. She explained, “I told the dean that I wanted to resign, and all he said was ‘I should have had you sign a prenuptial agreement.’” Dr. Sanchez, a former director, further articulated her disillusionment with the exit process. She stated, “They did nothing to keep me. The provost didn’t even know I was leaving. She was not aware that my contract had ended. She didn’t care. There was no communication.”

Although communications were limited and awkward, most of the women stressed they gave their supervisors input in how and when they would leave their positions. Dr. Garza, one of the only Latina female chairs at her university who described her situation as intolerable with a dean who lacked integrity, stated,

I determined how I would leave, and I negotiated salary and a semester of administrative leave. I wanted to leave on my own terms. I had great women mentoring me so I knew what to ask for – I made it work to my advantage as I returned to faculty.

Former Provost Smith explained her planning for administrative exit:

There was nothing formal in writing because I was electing to leave. I told my supervisors that I wanted to leave the positions. I made a proposal in letter format, which included leave and a sabbatical; I made a recommendation for my faculty salary. The date of leaving was negotiated; staff members worked as my agents in proposing my exit salary and the date of exit.

### *Feelings and Treatment*

Although three of the participants said they felt find, good, and relieved when they exited administration, most of the women expressed less positive feelings and emotions, ranging from anger to quiet disenchantment, describing the experience with such words as sad, depressed, unappreciated, powerless, used, disillusioned, alone, and ashamed. Former Vice Provost Mesa, a Latina, retorted,

Mad! A less competent person, in my opinion, and not a good fit for the situation, was hired. Because I was actively applying and interviewing for other positions outside and was offered some, however, there was an ego booster. People and agencies came to me with concerns about the new person, and I couldn't tattle. I felt pretty powerless. There was the question of presidential support – I felt that they were pushing to have something different.

Former Associate Dean Wright expressed her feeling as

angry, depressed, and then relieved. I felt a loss as I was out of the information loop, which is more important than the power loop. I said, "Ok, you're wounded here. What can I focus on, doing what I do best?"

The former female administrators noted their feelings were indicative of their experiences of treatment by others as well as perceptions of the treatment between males and females exiting administrative positions. Most of the study participants felt they were not treated well by administration with two women succinctly summarizing their experiences: "It was if I died, but they hadn't buried me yet;" "Out of sight, out of mind – for all parties." A different woman, who felt her treatment by administration was awkward and uncomfortable, concluded she felt like screaming at the top of her lungs: "Is that all there is?" Two females stated they were treated fine, a former provost noting, "My institution even sent me to a conference on women and leadership when I wasn't even in administration anymore." Another woman pointed out, "...at the college level, I was treated as a confidante by top administration. By university administration, I had a degree of affiliation. This affiliation has been the most long lasting."

The women talked about male administrators leaving their positions, and the researchers then inquired about perceptions of gender-equitable treatment. Interestingly, the women said,

I really don't know the answer. I felt I was treated fairly – I negotiated hard – no one came to me with a package. I had to ask for it, and I had no problems asking.

I think that we need to ask, "What are the rules of the game and who knows them?"

Since this is such a big secret, I'm not sure that I really know. But looking at men's faculty salaries and women's faculty salaries, I would say that men do a better job in negotiating higher faculty salaries upon leaving administration.

A former director, Ms. Hernandez, noted her perception of inequitable treatment:

Absolutely not was I treated the same! Men get back to their positions with full salary. With men,

administration finds ways to assist, giving employment, finding them new employment. Men and women are treated differently when they are asked to leave – women receive no benefits, no assistance. Men are publicly acknowledged for their contributions. They are given plaques and awards; women just disappear. Different treatment! Another person – a man – was asked to leave and he got another position and retained his salary. There was a deafening silence when I left. It was uncomfortable. Even friends could not really support me well – there was a climate of fear.

Study participants were asked about the level of personal and professional support received in their exit, with the women split on their responses regarding support. A former associate dean noted she did receive professional support:

I received a good salary. I continued to have access to key administrators. I got incredible support for my promotion to full professor. I received incredible support from the dean and provost. My policy work weighed heavily in this promotion. On a personal level, I received no support. I never had a person ask: “How is this transition going?”

When a different associate dean noted she received no support, she clarified by adding,

No *real* professional or personal support. The problem is that I know don’t feel like I have personal referents. I feel that my administrative possibilities at this institution are over. I don’t know whom I can call for references. The former dean didn’t offer support at all. I feel that she lied. It feels bad to have no institutional support.

In terms of personal support, most of the participants gave varying perceptions. Former Department Chair Nelson explained,

My personal support was great. Some of my friends thought that I was taking risks, but I don’t think that they worried about me. They knew that I was on a mission to improve my personal life (and my professional one at the same time). I hope that they missed me as a friend and colleague. It was hard not being in the same building anymore. It really was starting a new life.

Former Department Chair Garza said,

I really didn’t need much support. I had strong women around me – my mentors – they supported me. My partner, she supported me. I didn’t rely on the university community for support – I have never gotten my personal needs met at work. Traditionally, I don’t look to people at work to fulfill me on a personal level. I have around five good friends within the institutional community; they are my support, but other than that I don’t look to people at work to support me. If I did, I think I would be disappointed. I went through a depression after I left administration, I couldn’t talk to many people about this – I felt the loss, both professionally and personally.

### *Back to Faculty: Transition and Transformation*

The former female administrators were asked about their revived faculty appointments and the process of moving back to that position. When asked about settling in, most of these women defined their positions as renewing their teaching, developing courses, and advising students. All noted the transition was difficult, described, in part, as the following:

- When I went back to faculty, I realized that my life was pretty shallow. I had made work my life – I am just now learning to diversity my life. It is difficult, because my tendency is to work, work, work. Now I have to learn to re-create parts of my life and figure out what I like to do again.
- I maintained a low profile. I read lots of poetry and re-evaluated my networks on a national campus

level. I focused more on students. I purposely stayed away and worked more at home – I was not as visible.

- It's difficult to transition and settle in when people always ask, "What are you doing now?" People are still confused about my status.
- I have not settled into my new position. I am held suspect as to why I left. Age plays a part. Men are looked at as seasoned professionals; women are looked at as old horses. When you are women, a woman of color, an older woman, one that speaks her mind and tells the truth, problems arise.
- The transition was difficult. Because I was one of the first full-time faculty members to relocate away from the home campus, people didn't know what to expect. They didn't understand about the roles and responsibilities of faculty members and wanted to treat me like a staff member (e.g., wondered why I wasn't clocking in as they had to or keeping an open appointment book for all to schedule). It was hard to do my job without a computer, bookshelves, etc. for the first few months. The staff members thought that I was being difficult to work with; I thought I had moved to hell. After one semester, I asked to relocate to a different office where the staff members were more comfortable with faculty folk. This turned out to be life saving for me.

However difficult the transition, the women's comments and perspectives were generally positive in nature upon final reflection of their new lives. A former associate dean exclaimed, "Life is better." A different woman said, "I am much happier, more relaxed, doing things I have never had time to do." Former Associate Dean Wright noted,

Given that I have more freedom from pressure, I have been able to pursue creativity avenues. I wasn't able to do that before. I have deepened my personal and spiritual life, redefined who I was beyond my professional positions. It happened to me 10 years away from retirement, so I got in touch with the fact that I was driven and unhealthily focused. Now my life is more whole, healthy, and enjoyable. I know myself better. There is now no pressure of carrying the female gender on my back.

Former Director Hernandez pointed out,

It has given me time to reflect on what's important to me – the value of people in my life. I have also learned to reaffirm who I am as a good manager and leader, acknowledging my strengths. Women need to reaffirm their belief system.

Former Department Chair Garza, who had many differences in opinion and philosophy from her dean, explained,

I spend more time in contemplative work. I am not so rushed or stressed. I have time to be to myself, and I am learning to reconnect with personal interests and I am making new friends. I am learning that work does not need to consume all aspects of my life. This has been a tough lesson for me to learn. I have been forced to question myself and ask, "Why did I allow administration to define me so narrowly? Why did I make it my life when my exit was a whimper?"

All of the women expressed their appreciation for an opportunity to discuss their transitions from administration to faculty. One female noted the institution needed a support group for people in transition – a thoughtful comment considering most of the women expressed limited professional support and advocacy upon exit. One woman wanted to make sure people reading the interview data would not leave with all negative thoughts. She stressed,

Women should be administrators. You can impact a lot of people and can make considerably more money. Your influence is for the good. Women have to be in administration to do what needs to be done. And the fact is that women hire more women and minorities when they are in administration. Women can take care



of other women. Without female administrators, the power of the female voice is lost in the work environment.

## Discussion and Reflections

Although men leave administration and return to faculty too, the added dimension of women in the male-dominant field of higher education leadership invites the examination of women's forced or chosen exit from administration – a level of employment that took years to gain. Some attention has been given to corporate attrition and women leaving positions of power and leadership in business and industry. While no singular reason dominates this literature, common themes appear in terms of a hostile and inflexible work environment where marital and family responsibilities conflict with high level positions (Rosin & Korabik, 1990). As reasons why women left senior management jobs, Marshall (1994) found reoccurring stories of lack of control, negative work challenges, and re-evaluation of worth and values. The voices of the women in this study in many ways mirror the perceptions and feelings of women leaders in business and industry. From the selected theoretical lens, the exit of women from educational industry correlates to women's career development lifespan and those choices and decisions made in mid-career stages. Although there is some discussion that women's development is different from men and women's developmental patterns are more individualized, there is general agreement that mid-career changes allow for reappraisal of the past, continued search for meaning in life, and examination of individual integrity while moving away from an intensive work identity (Kram, 1985; Super, 1977, 1980).

Although the why and how these women exited their administrative positions, as well as the degree of input to their leaving, may have determined their feelings, these women's comments reflect developmental tasks of mid-career decisions (Super, 1977, 1980). The final clarity of administrative position versus self in the leaving process (conflict of philosophy, integrity, or ethics) helped the women realize a major adjustment from leader to faculty member would be necessary (Brooks, 2001). Although the emotions described by these former female administrators are complex, multi-layered emotions demonstrable in women's adjustment to their exit and transition are common themes in women's mid-career development (Schlossberg, 1984; Zunker, 2002). Most of the women in the study expressed negative feelings and shared discomforting experiences surrounding their leaving administration. While the exit of women from administration may be uncomfortable and negative, there are implications and possibilities women and institutions need to explore. Treiman (1993) told us women's departure might not be pretty when she poignantly stated,

A women's path to a top level post of the most hallowed, traditional, authoritative place in the intellectual world, is not doubt a unique one. Conversations are fraught with disillusionment, mystery, misunderstanding and a sense of betrayal. They turn to whispers when women share intimate pain, stories are told of silent footsteps as leave takings, turning of backs and a quiet tip-toeing away into the darkness of vague things behind the well. (p. 176-177)

Although the women gave varied perceptions of support, it was clear they felt professional and personal support was or would have been important. This correlates to the career development concept of coping strategies during mid-career transition. In discussing treatment in comparison to male colleagues, the women made statements similarly supported in the literature: "Many women are unaware of the pervasiveness and subtlety of gender discrimination in the academy or how their experiences compares with that of their male and female peers" (Carli, 1998, p. 278-279). Some researchers have documented women's lower feelings of entitlement due to lower expectations and lack of awareness and information (Carli, 1998). Women's resentment of perceptions of "...inequitable treatment or unreasonable behavior by senior male colleagues" is well documented by females in professions outside of education (Becher, 1999, p. 133).

Although some of the study participants were married with children, none of the women noted the

demands of work and family in their perceptions of their exit from administration. Further interview data regarding balancing of work and home would be necessary to ascertain if marital status and children had any direct impact on these women's administrative careers and their exit and return to faculty.

For this study, a higher percentage of Hispanic women were interviewed. This does not reflect the demographic profile of women of color either in faculty ranks or professional or managerial positions in the United States (see Costello, Wight, & Stone, 2003). Gender barriers continue to permeate higher education, and the added distinction of being a woman of color in administration contributes an additional disadvantage to females in leadership positions. However, women's perceptions and experiences in this study were not tied specifically to ethnicity. More questions aimed at understanding female administrators' experiences based on race would be required to determine if this factor were contributory to women's perceptions of leaving administration and returning to faculty.

## Conclusions

Given there are fewer women in administrative ranks at the university level, the institutional community needs to understand the experiences of women leaving administration, and exit interviews would be a good start in gathering information to assist women. As these women plan for changes in their professional lives, higher education institutions can make vital contributions toward women's transition back to faculty by implementing initiatives that allow for internal support systems. One of the study participants noted the need for a support group, and higher education should examine such initiatives.

When females leave administrative positions, they often find themselves forgotten or lost in the academy. They are no longer part of administration nor are they readily re-inculcated to faculty culture. Their voices become muted or silenced; their professional frameworks change over night. One day they are administrators; the next day they find themselves sitting in smaller faculty offices focusing on teaching courses again and revitalizing old research agenda. Mapping out new careers and lives becomes urgent. Because women's voices after they have left administration are rarely heard, this study encourages listening to the stories of former female administrators. Women's voices need to be heard, and these voices need to inform the university as a whole how to assist women as they transition out of administrative positions and back to faculty. This study raises the issue that further mentoring is needed for women as they enter, maintain, and exit university administrative positions and return to faculty positions, coming full circle.

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