

## Politics of Upward Mobility

“Politics” of Upward Mobility for Women and Minorities in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

“Politics” of Upward Mobility for Women and Minorities in Higher Education

A recent publication by the American Council on Education’s, Office of Women in Higher Education (2010), shows that women and minorities promoted to senior level administrative positions have made gains. However, they remain underrepresented on most campuses. This paper argues that the slow emergence of women and minorities into senior level administrative positions suggests that inter-play among ‘politics’ and ‘power’ may contribute to the existing gender gap and, that the problem is more complex than the figures show. The assumption by this writer is the inter-play among ‘politics’ (power play among various forces or stakeholders) and ‘power’ (real or imagined) combine to influence the end game. Bolman and Deal’s Four Frames; *structural, human resource, political, and symbolic* offer a fresh perspective to approaching higher education issues including how /why women and minorities advance or don’t advance in higher education and accompanying barriers. The significance of the study is to provide a basis for addressing the barriers that minorities and women encounter at their work place theoretically and practically using the Bowman and Deal’s framework. The question is: how can we break through the negative cycle created by the denial of career advancement for women and minorities?

## **“Politics” of Upward Mobility for Women and Minorities in Higher Education: Selected Challenges**

### Introduction

A recent publication by the American Council on Education’s, Office of Women in Higher Education (2010), shows that women and minorities promoted to senior level administrative position have made gains. However, they remain underrepresented on most campuses. This paper argues that the slow emergence of minorities and women into senior level administrative positions suggests that inter-play among ‘politics’ and ‘power’ may contribute to the existing gender gap and, that the problem is more complex than figures show. The study proposes how to combat the effects of politics and power using Bolman and Deals’ Four Frames. Although the number of women being promoted to leadership positions in higher education has grown, that figure is still very small compared to the general pool.<sup>1</sup> The data reported by the American Council on Education’s, Office of Women in Higher Education (1995), shows that of the 2,903 higher education institutions in the U.S., only 16 percent are headed by women presidents. A 4 percent increase in women presidents occurred between 1992 and 1995, and the highest proportion of women leaders are found in private two-year institutions. Since this last and current publication, the status and representation of women in higher education have improved; however, female faculty members remain underrepresented on most campuses.

This paper argues that the slow emergence of women into senior level administrative positions over this long period of time suggests that the problem facing women in higher

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<sup>1</sup> Source American Council on Education Issue. “Higher education leadership: analyzing the gender gap”, (*ASHE-Eric Higher Education Reports*, 25, no.4): 1-97.

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education is more complex than figures show. When women emerge in male- dominated areas with formal organizational power, they are clustered at the middle as a subset within a larger population. No one knows exactly why this is the case.

The assumption by this writer is the inter-play among ‘politics’ (power play among various forces or stakeholders) and ‘power’ (real or imagined influence to make changes). These are often inevitable in higher education. Although this political atmosphere has improved somewhat for women, many issues still face today’s women administrators--all having to do with conflicted state holders jostling for different interests. The obstacles that women face when aspiring for leadership positions are so prevalent that many simply forgo pursuing their dreams of becoming top administrators. The barriers to women leaders need to be overcome by women themselves. Unfortunately there are still some men who believe that women lack leadership experience and intelligence to handle high risk situations. As a result, many women give up altogether and accept ‘power’ and ‘politics’ in higher education as the norm. The danger is that such submission fuels a never-ending vicious cycle. Or some settle for mediocrity in leadership – one that is based on compromising quality and accountability. This writer, like some other women, believes that although not all ‘politics’ and ‘power’ – as defined here - are necessarily negative, it is important to know how to navigate through informal organizational channels, the institutional governance structure that one finds herself in. These are people who are active in the organization and are connected to the formal structure. What do women need to combat these obstacles? Women need to identify and tap into the political informal networking system and learn appropriate behaviors that will enhance their leadership advancement without compromising their core values.

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The questions to be asked here are what is power? What is politics? According to Pfeffer (1992), power is the potential ability to influence behavior, to change the course of events, to overcome resistance, and to get people to do things they would not otherwise do. The skills of managing others require the ability to develop the network of mutual obligation and personal power to affect positive influence on others at personal and professional level.<sup>2</sup> According to the dictionary definition, politics in accordance with good policy is the act of prudent, discreet, astutely contriving or intriguing. Politics is the process by which groups of people make decisions. In addition, Bean, Readence and Baldwin view politics to mean any social and cultural arrangement in which people make decisions that have consequences for other people. To this extent, Bolman and Deal's four frames to approaching higher education - to which the writer subscribes – can help women and minorities begin to overcome these barriers.<sup>3</sup> Bolman and Deal (2008) identify these frames or lenses as structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. Through these frames one can examine how structures are designed to fit organizational or institutional circumstances including its goals, technology, workforce, and environment, problems and performance gaps that arise from structural deficiencies and how it can be remedied through analysis and restructuring. The human resource frame addresses the notion that organizations exist to serve human needs rather than the reverse. Leaders who examine organizational needs through human resource frame bring their visionary appeal to bear on the ideals and moral values of their followers, and inspire them to view ideas or problems from different dimensions, and foster their interests in improving of their organization of

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<sup>2</sup> J. Pfeffer, "Organizational decision making as a process: The case of a university budget," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (1974): 135-151.

<sup>3</sup> Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, *Reframing Organization* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.), (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008).

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institution. People and institutions need each other to guide the direction of established goals by clarifying roles and task requirements. Institutions need ideas, energy, and talent; people need careers, salaries and opportunities. A good fit benefits all as individuals find meaningful and satisfying work, and organizations get the talent and energy they need to succeed. Through the political frame lens you view institutions as coalitions of diverse individuals and interest groups that share commonalities and enduring differences that make conflict central to institutional dynamics and underline power as the most important asset.

The focus here is to view selected barriers that women and minorities encounter at their work place using the Bowman and Deal's political frame. How do we break the code? The political aspects of any organization or institutions are closely related to positional power, personal power, influence, and the "Old Boy" network. It is imperative for administrators, particularly women, to be skilled at influencing, compromising (healthy compromises) and collaborating in order to implement and achieve personal, departmental and institutional goals. Politics and power are not negative if viewed and used correctly. Some women have complained about how this "Old Boy" network is a blockade to them, therefore, it is a constant battle to try to navigate the political system.

### Toward a Conceptual Framework: Framing

Framing is a body of knowledge that we depend on to make sense of a complex situations. According to <sup>4</sup>Julia Wood (2000), frames are models relied on to make sense of experience. Wood said that people make meaning of the world by using multiple frames and by

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<sup>4</sup> Julia Wood, *Communication theories in action: An introduction*, (New York, NY: Wadsworth Thomas Learning, 2000).

interacting with significant others and society as a whole.<sup>5</sup> Supporting Wood is Mead's (1934) theory of symbolic interaction, which emphasizes that human beings interact through existing symbols such as words, gestures, rules and roles to interpret and give meaning to the world. Expanding on Mead's theory of symbolic interaction is<sup>6</sup> Goffman (1974), who argued that we rely on frames to create definitions of situations for us and for others. These researchers suggested that frames are fundamental cognitive structures, which guide the perception and representation of reality. Goffman also said that frames are unconsciously adopted in the course of the communication process. Frames also provide the structure by which leaders interpret and make sense of physical reality. This physical reality may include organization or institution. Concurring with the notion that frames aid selective of reality is<sup>7</sup> Todd Gitlin (1980), a sociologist and Mead scholar. He described frames as "principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters" (p.6). When applied to leadership, framing is when the leader demonstrates the ability to clearly define the purpose of his or her organization or institution in highly meaningful terms and cultivate human relationship through modeling attractive and appealing behaviors that are appropriate and ethical.

Thus, many elements are involved in the framing process, including selectivity, symbolism and real or perceived cognitive decisions. Bolman and Deal (2008) posit that leaders use different frames to make sense of complex learning environments and to help us to deem things important.

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<sup>5</sup> George Herbert Mead (1934) often cited as the main contributor to symbolic interactionism theory.

<sup>6</sup> Goffman, Erving, *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*, (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1974).

<sup>7</sup> Gitlin, Todd. *The whole world is watching: Mass media in the making and unmaking of the new left*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980).

***The Research Conceptual Map: Framing***

Figure 1 illustrates the process by which this study examined framing and reframing of institutional goals through Bolman and Deal’s four frames; structural, political, symbolic, and human resource. Looking at the institution through these four frames helps individuals who are in senior leadership positions and those who are aspiring to leadership position to make sense of the inter-play of politics and power in a workplace.

Figure 1: The Research Conceptual Map: Framing

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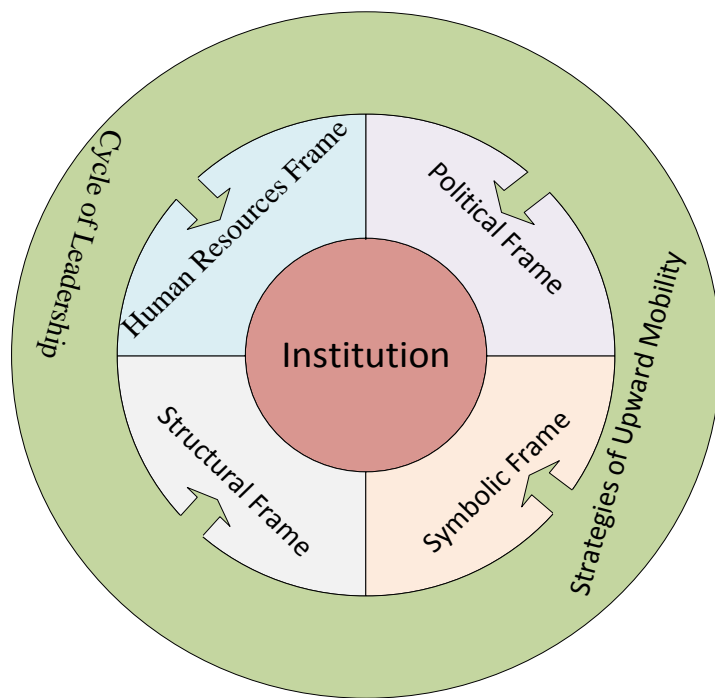




Figure 1 depicts Bolman and Deal's four frames as lenses through which leaders examine the complex situation of interplay of politics and power. In any institution, there are situations where women and minorities have to face political dilemmas and they struggle with how to break the roadblocks of politics and power. Through Bolman and Deal's Four Frames: structural, symbolic, political, and human resource, participants reflect on how they use the four frames daily to maximize their strengths and improve on of their leadership roles.

### Bolman and Deal's Four Frames: An Example of Frames

In their seminal text *Reframing Organizations*, Bolman and Deal (2008) use the term *frames* to describe the ways in which leaders make sense of the multiplicity of compelling stimuli that compete for our attention as leaders on a daily basis in educational and other settings. These frames may be seen as windows, maps, tools, lenses, orientation, and perspectives. According to Bolman and Deal (2008), the frames are "a set of ideas or assumptions you carry in your head...you can't begin to learn without some concept that gives you expectations or hypotheses" (pp. 12-13).

The *Four Frames* described by Bolman and Deal (2008) are: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. By definition the *structural frame*, was adapted from the field of sociology and focuses on goals, specialized roles, and formal relationships. Typically, organizations assign responsibilities to individuals who make rules, policies, procedures, and hierarchies to coordinate a wide range of activities into a unified plan. Leadership behaviors, policies and practices provide examples for the structural frame in action. Next, the *human resource frame* emphasizes the human side of the organization. Leaders who lead through the human resource frame equate the organization to an extended family that has needs, feelings,

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prejudices, skills, and limitations, and challenges. The human resources frame posits that “people have a great capacity to learn and often an even greater capacity to defend old attitudes and beliefs” (p.14). To that end, leaders who lead through the human resource frame support the organization’s need to adapt to individual needs. In contrast to structural and human resource frames, the *political frame* refers to organizations as arenas, contests, or jungles in which the powerful members of the organization compete for *power* and scarce resources. Conflicts may occur due to equally compelling needs, perspectives, and lifestyles among competitors, including groups and individuals. In this political atmosphere, bargaining, negotiating, and coercion are expected. Despite their varied approaches and perspectives, leaders who embrace the different frames tend to agree that, and compromise occurs daily. Finally, the *symbolic frame* considers cultural change as the basis for organizational transformation. Drawing from social and cultural anthropology, the symbolic frame describes organizations as tribes, theaters, or carnivals. In the symbolic frame, organizations are driven by rituals, ceremonies, stories, heroes, and myths rather than by rules, policies, and managerial authority found in the other frames.

When problems arise in the organization, leaders need to reframe in order to ascertain the root cause of the problems. Reframing is done by applying more than one frame or perspective in solving a problem. This approach is effective as it allows for flexibility, creativity, and interpretation. Reframing exercises play a pivotal role in the present study. Participants in this study will engage in an interview process in which they will reflect upon how they have used these four frames to break political barriers in a workplace.

### Significance of the Study

Bolman and Deal's Four Frames offer a fresh perspective to approaching higher education issues including how and why women and minorities advance or don't advance in higher education and accompanying barriers. Bolman and Deal (2008) identify these Frames as *structural*, *human resource*, *political*, and *symbolic*. Through these lenses one can examine how structures are designed to fit organizational or institutional circumstances including its goals, technology, workforce, and environment as well as performance gaps that arise from structural deficiencies (structural frame) and how they may be remedied. The human resource frame addresses the notion that organizations exist to serve human needs rather than the reverse. Nevertheless, people and institutions need each other. Institutions need ideas, energy, and talent; people need careers, salaries and opportunities. A good fit benefits all as individuals find meaningful and satisfying work, and organizations get the talent and energy they need to succeed. Through the political frame one may view institutions as coalitions of diverse individuals and interest groups that share commonalities and enduring differences that make conflict central to institutional dynamics and underline power as the most important asset. Through the symbolic frame, the organization is seen as putting forth its best efforts to ameliorate the gender gap when the public senses practical changes in how business is conducted.

The focus here is to provide a basis for addressing the barriers that women and minorities encounter at their work place theoretically and practically using the Bowman and Deal's framework. The question is: how can we break through the cycle of career advancement for

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women and minorities? This information is relevant to institutions striving to find a balance between gender and racial disparities in a work place.

### Methodology

This research project is qualitative in nature; it entails interviewing women and minorities in the higher education from different ethnic and racial backgrounds (Asian American, African-American, and Latino-Americans, and Euro-American) occupying or aspiring to hold senior level administrative positions. During the interviews, emphasis is placed on Bolman and Deal's Four Frames (Political, Structural, Symbolic and Human resource frames) in preparing for upward mobility and reframing organization. Ten participants were consulted for this study; nine minorities and one Caucasian. For the purpose of the study selected responses were used for analysis.

### Findings

Table 1 depicts responses to questionnaire items 1 through 6 by senior male administrators, a college dean, and a vice-provost for academic affairs. Featured are some of the steps these administrators have taken applying tenets of Bolman and Deal's *Four Frames*: structural, symbolic, human resources and political frames to navigate the inter-play between power and politics, as well as to make sense of the cultures of their respective institutions.

**Table 1:** Male Administrators’ Perspectives on Upward Mobility

Interview Questions	Responses
<p>1. How have you organized and structured the groups and teams to get results?</p>	<p>The first thing was to link the desired results or outcomes to the strategic goals of the institution. So you need to understand your strategic goals be able to explain that to the group. So in organizing the group you need to make sure that you have people who understand the strategic plan of the organization and to be able to link the outcome to that strategic plan.</p> <p>The second thing is to explain the specific goals to be accomplished and then subdivide your groups or create a small task force with a designated leader. Assign the goals of each subgroup leader to each group and the leader in each group will report to the larger group once achieved. And then you set specific deadlines for them to achieve and then report back and in between they should be follow-ups from you as the organizer of the group. These are two things I have done.</p> <p>First of all, you identify the interests of faculty. After you have recognized their interests, then organize them into groups and assign a specific task to each group and have them compare and then report back to the faculty.</p>
<p>2. How have you used organizations to improve human resource management and build positive interpersonal and intrapersonal skills?</p>	<p>You provide a forum for discussion - meetings, town-halls, etc. where you invite all individuals who have a stake in the matter. For the town-halls and to the meetings you send out an agenda with specific items that need to be discussed so that people can start thinking about these items. They can start thinking about them and begin formulating their own opinions and begin understanding what the issues mean to them and how to approach them. So when everybody gathers together you can begin to have substantive policy conversations. That’s what I have done.</p> <p>What I have done basically is to be familiar with our staff. There is a tendency for us to focus more on the faculty not taking into account we need character and skills of staff. So what I have done is to try to</p>

	<p>improve my interpersonal skills: to establish a staff council which I called it administrative staff council. I encourage them to attend multi meetings. I put myself on the agenda just to know what's going on with them and also know how I can best talk with them.</p>
<p>3. How have you managed power and conflict, and used the experience to cope with internal and external politics?</p>	<p>Politics is a bit tricky. Often times you don't know exactly where people stand in their internal groups and external groups. But I think overall it's a two-way process.</p> <p>I am conflicted sometimes because individuals do not understand who the power brokers and the power frames are. And so the best way to do it is through a two way communication. You communicate to those who you consider might be opinion-makers. and you also provide opportunity for them to communicate with you. Through better communication, there will be understanding. So you minimize conflicts if you are able to communicate properly. And as you communicate you entertain feedback; you understand that you may not agree with them and they may not agree with you. So through communication, you begin to find common grounds which will lead to compromise</p> <p>Regarding power and conflict, we might be able to understand that I know things that I can do without consulting with staff, faculty, or anybody from the matter. But I also know that if I move, I try to use my power to implement the policy, there might be backlash and I will create conflicts. Another choice is not to over use my power. I know I have it, but I try not to use it. Faculty and staff realized that I do have the power to do certain things, but I try not to use my power. At the long run, the process helps and makes easier for them to be more forthcoming and to work with me. Overall, it is good to let them be part of the plan and to buy into the idea. In fact, even you have some control, let them come up with the idea themselves, and you take the idea and try to modify it until you are also comfortable with the idea that's presented to you.</p>

<p>4. How did you make sense of the culture of your workplace, and used the experience to understand the political make-up of higher education in an attempt to promote team spirit? (Symbolic Frame).</p>	<p>The culture question is a bit tricky because over time culture changes and shifts, but in every organization there is a culture. But usually I review historical documents. I have reviewed, for example, some of the studies conducted for years to see if there are specific patterns that emerge and to see what those studies have shown. The other thing I have done is to interview individuals. Individuals who have been in this situation, you find out, you obtain information from their wisdom and their experiences. So by reviewing historical documents, by reviewing campus climate studies, by interviewing individuals who have been there for a long time you learn a lot. You are able to understand what the key issues are. Some issues have evolved and they are no longer issues but in the process the new problems have come up. So the question becomes moving forward how do you frame and reframe the dialogue? So you always look for opportunities to reframe the dialogue and celebrate past accomplishments, and then to chart a new course for the future. You may not get it right the first time, so you do it again. You do it over and over until you get to the point where you feel that you are actually moving in the right direction.</p> <p>One thing I have done is to take time to go over the minutes, look critically at the issues and the results of the issues. I also use the policies in place to give me the directions of the values and culture of the organization. And once you have understood that, that will give you a sense of rewards, a sense of acceptance, acceptance of your faculty and staff. Also, your understanding of the culture gives you an insight into the politics of the school and organization, and a sense of what/who might support you in the future.</p>
<p>5. What advice do you have for women/minorities that are aspiring to higher leadership positions? Continued</p>	<p>The first thing I would say is to be alert for opportunities to grow. Opportunities come in many different ways. You might get something in the mail, you might get something through email, you might get something from your boss. Be alert for these opportunities for growth and apply for them. The last thing you want to do is to regret that you did not apply for them. So you are alert to them and apply to them. The second thing is if you apply and get selected it may be necessary for you to sacrifice in order participate in those opportunities because once they are gone, you might not see them again. The next advice is to take</p>

	<p>reasonable risks. Prepare to take the risks, in order to gro. Sometimes you may have to take some risks. The other thing I would say is to be humble. Be sincere with yourself. And be genuine. You can't be one way today and another way the next day. Be prepared to work hard. I would say be prepared to accept rejection. Rejections would come in some many different ways. Be prepared to handle them, just because you are told no doesn't mean that something is wrong with you. Finally, I would say there are all sorts of discrimination out there. You have to be willing to accept that fact at some point somebody would discriminate against you for whatever reason but that should not be used as an excuse to stop pushing. Those are some of my advice.</p> <p>The one thing I think the person needs to have is to really understand the sections of majority that have the control and some of the stereotypes. I think we have a duty to grow up to avoid and to do anything to reinforce the stereotypes. Whether you are women or minorities, if you are aspiring to leadership position, you need to be role models of not being a part of those stereotypes or reinforcing them.</p> <p>As you know, there are very few women in leadership position and as a result, that really impact the matter of power available to them, and the politics coming into play that are correctly associated with "male" network which is still very much alive. The politics play at all levels, department level, school level and the university level. And when it comes to the issue of general promotion, women in general don't tend to fit well. And what you also see is that women in mid-level positions do not have enough time to consider the ABC of the game. The process is not too obvious for a lot of us who are able professionals. If you want to make somebody understands the process, it really takes time, and make efforts to work with that person, not on a weekly or monthly thing, it's an ongoing effort. And the possible is also to be mentored. One thing is to provide advice, and to follow through with your suggestions.</p>
<p>6. How do you view inter-play among 'politics' and 'power' as contributing factors to the</p>	<p>Again, that's very difficult because sometimes it's happening before your eyes and you don't even know it. You can only control what you can control. Sometimes it is not who you know but who knows you. So you have to take opportunities to build networks and connections. Through those networks and connections, you begin to understand who the power-brokers are and how to communicate with them in order to make yourself accessible. But again, even with the process of power and inter-play of power and influence and all of that, you still need to have set of skills, set of habits, humility, integrity, team work, good personality, so even as you try to understand the inter-play, you still</p>



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existing slow emergence of women into senior level administrative positions?	need to know who you are and where you would fit in a scheme of things. And keep them around you and they should be important to you as you mingle with those who make decisions that affect you. The other thing to remember is that sexism exists – there are those who say that one group is better than the other in certain situations and certain roles. Again, I don't agree with that, but there is nothing we can do with it. There are those who make decisions. So again, it is how you handle rejection, how you play the cards, and how hard you are willing to push.
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Note: The left column shows the interview questions as featured in the Appendix. The right column shows participants responses to interview questions.

The [minority male] administrators' responses were indicative of their awareness of their responsibility as leaders in higher education as they carry out their daily administrative duties through the four frames. During the process of the interview, these minority administrators expressed that they were cognizant of their roots - a constant reminder that they must work harder to understand the interplay between politics and power and be alert to the frequent changes in the culture of their work place. Through application of Bolman and Deal's *Four Frames*: structural, symbolic, political, and human resource, these administrators developed the understanding that these frames may serve as guides for making sense of different types of human situations and interactions among faculty and staff, and other stakeholders. Furthermore, one of the participants expressed that once the interplay among these frames are cognitively processed, these frames may be used unconsciously every day. For example, when asked an additional question not specified in the questionnaire; How do you use these frames: structural, human resources, politics and symbolic to maximize your leadership? One male administrator said, "I use these frames every day without realizing that I am doing so. I actually see all of these frames, structural, symbolic, and human resources, to be related to politics, because everything you do involves politics."

Table 2 depicts responses to questionnaire items 1 through 6 by senior female administrators, an associate dean, and a program director. Featured are some of the steps these administrators have taken applying tenets of Bolman and Deal’s *Four Frames*: structural, symbolic, human resources and political frames to navigate the inter-play between power and politics, as well as to make sense of the cultures of their respective institutions

Table 2

**Female Administrators’ Perspectives on Upward Mobility**

Interview Questions	Responses
<p>1. How have you organized and structured groups and teams to get results? (Structural frame)</p>	<p>Equitable representation is essential in our faculty governance and committee structure. Aside from representation in terms of academic units, rank and gender, I do consider colleagues’ interests and how well they have worked in the past with certain colleagues. Most of all, I would, to the extent possible, put someone there who is chair/leader material and would be interested to serve in that capacity. This is particularly applicable for our appointed committees.</p>
<p>2. How have you used organizations to improve human resource management and build positive interpersonal and intrapersonal skills? (Human Resource Frame)</p>	<p>We have encouraged and sent some of our faculty and staff to a number of training opportunities both in and off-campus including those that are provided by our university’s Human Resource office. Some of our faculty, for example, has participated in diversity workshops at Poynter Institute. Also a few of our staff have attended various HR seminars on improving communication skills or conflict resolution recently.</p>
<p>3. How have you managed power and conflict, and used</p>	<p>I basically focus on areas that are within my control or at least I perceive as within my “sphere of influence.” My philosophy is I’ll do my best and try to learn from things that didn’t quite work as</p>

<p>the experience to cope with internal and external politics? (Politic Frame)</p>	<p>well as I would have wanted.</p> <p>In academia, we have this uniquely interesting concept and practice called peer leadership but at the same time we do report to upper administration. While an idealized state of a flat organization is inherently assumed in peer leadership, we all know that there is in reality a hierarchy, among supposedly “peers.” For instance, there are tenured and tenure-track faculty as well as assistant, associate and full professors that have both obvious and subtle “privileges” associated with the status or rank. With all these nuances in mind, I try to treat every person as I would like to be treated. And as a leader I wouldn’t ask of anyone anything that I wouldn’t do myself. Basically I have come to understand that at the core of peer leadership is consensus building and therefore respect for what everyone can bring to the table, whether they are staff, student and faculty on my committee, school or college.</p> <p>I think I have developed a sense of the different approaches to use based on the type of issue or task at hand. Power is and can be negotiated. If I enable or empower people and develop trust and confidence in them, a lot of the good will can translate to working together to accomplish certain organizational goals.</p>
<p>4. How did you make sense of the culture of your workplace, and used the experience to understand the political make-up of higher education in an attempt to promote team spirit? (Symbolic Frame).</p>	<p>I spent a good amount of time observing while participating in a variety of roles and committees. Reading policies and talking to different people across campus and within the immediate academic unit helped me make sense of the culture of my university. In doing this, I recognize and appreciate what we are doing well and what we need to improve as an institution.</p>

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<p>5. What advice do you have for women/minorities that are aspiring to higher leadership positions?</p>	<p>Get some formal leadership training within and outside the university that are designed or targeted for women and minorities. Preferably have some of these in the discipline you are in. Use these as both a learning and a networking opportunity. Also go for leadership positions as they become available.</p> <p>Having a mentor is important. Women need to understand though that there is a huge difference between mentoring and sponsorship. Men do sponsorship. They are very good in circling the wagons and sponsoring other men who are aspiring for leadership positions.</p>
<p>6. How do you view inter-play among ‘politics’ and ‘power’ as contributing factors to the existing slow emergence of women into senior level administrative positions?</p>	<p>What I have observed in my many years of academic experience is that in disciplines that have or still are male-dominated it’s the men of course who are making the decisions. And here’s where the democratic method is contributing to the slow emergence of women in senior level administrative positions -- if decisions are driven by a majority vote, women are clearly at a disadvantage. The women vote will always be outnumbered by the men. The power dynamics and politics of gender of course can shift if there are more progressive-thinking men who do see the value of inclusion and what the other half of humanity can contribute, if given leadership roles. Faced with this kind of an uphill battle, women no matter how small their number in the organization, should consolidate their ranks. A united front and the ability/willingness to “circle the wagons” will go a long way, I suppose.</p>

Note: The left column shows the interview questions as featured in the Appendix. The right column shows participants’ responses to interview questions.

The female administrators’ responses were indicative of their awareness of their struggle and responsibility as leaders in higher education. They expressed the struggles that they had encountered professionally that helped them. One of the female administrators said, “What I have observed in my many years of academic experience is that in disciplines that have or still

are male-dominated it's the men of course who are making the decisions. And here's where the democratic method is contributing to the slow emergence of women in senior level administrative positions ...” This statement supports this paper argument that the slow emergence of women into senior level administrative positions over this long period of time in higher education is due to the inter-play among politics and power.

### **Analysis**

Upon interviewing the women and minority men who have leadership positions as vice-provost of academic affairs, dean of colleges, department chairs, vice-president of student affairs, directors of programs, they identified with some of the strategies provided by Bolman and Deals' (2008) Four Frames. They expressed their struggles as well as the trainings they had received that helped to reconstruct their strategic plans. They became engaged in inside and outside activities, and networking with both informal and formal organizational structures has paved the way for them. What these women and men learned very quickly is that inclusive leadership is perhaps the most important managerial function one can learn and appreciate because without the collaborative efforts of others, it will be difficult to accomplish the goals and objectives of the organization, and individual career advancement. The ability to navigate the network is knowing the people you work with and what motivates them. It is knowing the dynamics of the group with which you work and the willingness to share and communicate the characteristics of tasks and projects that will enable you to resolve conflicts, and build an effective team. Supporting these concepts is Miller's purpose for “breaking the barrier”. According to Miller (1988), there are eight ways to break this barrier and become included in the “Old Boy” Network.

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1. Demonstrate self-confidence and initiative
2. Acquire the behaviors and traits of successful managers (i.e. savvy of the informal organization, knowing the Big Pictures, being a direct communicator, flexibility, problem- solving, being a team player, knowing politics and having a high profile).
3. Know your organization from top to bottom (how it works, how things get done, how it is organized and strategic plans)
4. Personally know as many of the “movers and shakers” that you can.
5. Establish multiple reciprocal networks with others (it is effective for you and your department, and some of these relationships may with individuals who get promoted to the top).
6. Get psychological support from informal women’s groups (inside and outside).
7. Get involved in activities that gain their attention (high visibility projects, task forces, etc.).
8. Become indispensable to their success on key projects (i.e. you are the best planner and organizer and they need you; you have a friend from an earlier network that has been promoted to the president’s staff, you add an extra element to the project-in addition to competence- that they value such as a good sense of humor, good people skills to keep everyone motivated).

### Conclusion

Studying the four frames by Bolman and Deal (2008) has given the writer two things: context and perspective. The writer is more able to visualize the big picture and to reframe the challenges that women encounter in higher leadership positions and the intra-structure of the

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work place. While one cannot afford to ignore the political pressures on women to conform and compromise than their male counterparts in the “Old Boy” network, it is more crucial that women be informed of what is going on in their institution. They need to develop positive networks based on mutual respect for the expertise of others and identify with where the power lies in the institution.

In conclusion, it should not be overlooked that in order for women to advance in the academy, they must be persistent and demonstrate courage. They will also need self-confidence, commitment to their profession, effectiveness in their work and initiative to advance their personal leadership style. As stated, excessive use of positional power and politics are challenges women and minority groups encounter on campus. Inevitably, power and politics require developed skills necessary for maneuvering in the organization. Therefore, until men and women have mutual respect and value for each other as professionals and fully embrace inclusionary leadership, women will not be fully integrated into the political system. As professionals we must support behaviors and actions that promote full equity in the workplace and on our university/college campuses.

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### Appendix

#### Questionnaire

Leadership Interview Questions
1. How have you organized and structured groups and teams to get results? (Structural frame)
2. How have you used organizations to improve human resource management and build positive interpersonal and intrapersonal skills? (Human Resource Frame)
3. How have you managed power and conflict, and used the experience to cope with internal and external politics? (Politic Frame)
4. How did you make sense of the culture of your workplace, and used the experience to understand the political make-up of higher education in an attempt to promote team spirit? (Symbolic Frame).
5. What advice do you have for women/minorities that are aspiring to higher leadership positions?
6. How do you view inter-play among 'politics' and 'power' as contributing factors to the existing slow emergence of
*Please note that additional questions may be asked during the interview. Thanks.



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