



**Moving the Needle:  
Advancing Women in Higher  
Education Leadership  
Communications Toolkit**



## Moving the Needle Communications Toolkit

Thank you for joining the Moving the Needle: Advancing Women Leaders in Higher Education commitment. We appreciate your support of this important initiative. In this toolkit, you will find information about how to talk about the importance of this campaign, along with templates for materials that you can use to communicate about Moving the Needle to your colleagues and other interested parties.

Please feel free to:

- Give the [“Who Will Succeed Us?”](#) and the [“Next Generation of Presidents”](#) pages to your public affairs or press office staff so they can communicate information about this campaign to key audiences.
- Tailor the press release template and distribute it with your logo and the Moving the Needle logo, announcing your support of the campaign.
- Tailor the “Dear Colleague” letter and send it to your presidential colleagues (especially those working within your system, if applicable, or institutional members of associations that you are also a member of), telling them about Moving the Needle and asking for their support.
- Include the Moving the Needle logo on your website and encourage your colleagues to feature this logo on their websites if they join the campaign.
- Add a link on your website to ACE’s Moving the Needle: Advancing Women Leaders website about the progress of the campaign: <http://www.acenet.edu/JoinMTN>.
- Include an article in your e-newsletter, print newsletter, or blog. ACE’s Inclusive Excellence Group and Public Affairs staff can help provide the language you need.
- Spread the word about the campaign on your institution’s blog or social media sites, including Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook (see attached for suggested posts).
- Invite ACE’s Inclusive Excellence Group staff and ACE Women’s Network Executive Council members to speak about the campaign.

Have other creative ideas? Let us know by emailing [movingtheneedle@acenet.edu](mailto:movingtheneedle@acenet.edu) and we’ll add them to this list.

## How to Talk About Moving the Needle: Advancing Women Leaders in Higher Education

The following are useful ways to explain the importance of achieving gender parity in higher education leadership to key audiences—what we are trying to achieve, why it makes both institutional and economic sense, and why your institution has joined the commitment. Please feel free to use these messaging points in press releases, letters, articles, or on your website.

- Moving the Needle: Advancing Women Leaders was launched in 2010 and is a collaborative, multi-association initiative led by ACE that seeks to increase the number of women in senior leadership positions in higher education through programs, research, and resources.
- The goal of Moving the Needle is to create parity for women holding, and aspiring to hold, leadership positions in the academy through partnerships with higher education institutions, their presidents and governing boards, and other organizations (both for-profit and nonprofit), so that by 2030 half of all college presidencies will be held by women.
- Today, women hold 26 percent of college and university presidencies. Progress has been made, but gains have been incremental, at best, toward achieving the goal of proportionate representation of women serving in presidencies.
- With over 60 percent of sitting presidents age 61 or older, higher education will see an unprecedented turnover in its leadership in the next decade. This presents a historic opportunity to shape the leadership of our nation's colleges and universities for the decades to follow.
- As presidents, we must do our part to prepare the next generation of leaders, offering our sponsorship as well as our mentorship. As a president, I recognize my ability to effect change, inform perception, and elevate priorities. I have a pivotal role in shaping the next generation of presidents who will succeed me.
- Among other findings, women-led or women-governed organizations demonstrate financial success, productivity, innovation, employee satisfaction, retention, engagement, and positive reputations. Certainly the benefits associated with women leaders in the private sector should and do apply to colleges and universities as complex organizations in their own right.

## Press Release Template for Presidential Signers

Contacts: [Institution's Media Contact]

[Insert Institution Name] Signs on to Commitment to Advance Women Leaders in Higher Education

[Insert City and Date]—[Insert Institution Name] has announced that it has signed on to the Moving the Needle: Advancing Women Leaders in Higher Education call to action campaign to work toward ensuring that 50 percent of chief executives of our nation's higher education institutions will be women by 2030.

The campaign was launched in January 2016 by the American Council on Education (ACE), the coordinating body for all the nation's higher education institutions. It encourages colleges and universities to increase awareness by signing a statement of support to advance women into senior leadership positions in higher education.

[Insert President's Name] joins a group of over 100 leaders that recognize that there is a pivotal opportunity to help advance women into the CEO position at America's colleges and universities as higher education is beginning to see turnover of a generation of leaders.

[PLACEHOLDER FOR QUOTE FROM INSTITUTION PRESIDENT]

The campaign notes that although women now earn the majority of all college degrees, they have made surprisingly little progress when it comes to gaining the top job at colleges and universities, moving the needle just three percentage points since 2006. As of 2011, only 26 percent of college and university presidencies were occupied by women.

"As presidents, we must offer our sponsorship and mentorship and recognize that every presidential vacancy is an opportunity to advance women," said ACE President Molly Corbett Broad. "The presidents that have already signed on have sent a powerful signal about the importance of this issue and this campaign."

The Moving the Needle campaign is overseen by the Inclusive Excellence Group of ACE's Leadership Division, which offers a comprehensive suite of programs that support and advance higher education leaders.

"For decades, ACE has demonstrated a commitment to advancing women along the higher education pipeline," said Kim Bobby, director of the Inclusive Excellence Group. "The Moving the Needle call to action is a bold new initiative to increase awareness and join together in a collective effort to increase and sustain gender parity in higher education leadership."

When presidents sign the Moving the Needle: Advancing Women Leaders commitment, they commit to:

- Nominating qualified women to the highest positions of leadership in higher education wherever and whenever possible.
- Providing opportunities for emerging women leaders to gain access to the skills and experiences necessary to advance.
- Educating others, including boards, on the benefits of a gender-diversified leadership.
- Empowering leadership teams in their own institutions to sponsor women leaders.

For more information on the Moving the Needle: Advancing Women Leaders campaign, please visit [www.acenet.edu/JoinMTN](http://www.acenet.edu/JoinMTN).

*About ACE: Founded in 1918, ACE is the major coordinating body for all the nation's higher education institutions, representing more than 1,600 college and university presidents and related associations. It provides leadership on key higher education issues and influences public policy through advocacy. For more information, please visit [www.acenet.edu](http://www.acenet.edu) or follow ACE on Twitter @ACEducation.*

## Dear Colleague Letter Template

[Date]

[Address Block] [Address Block] [Address Block]

Dear Colleague,

Over the next decade, higher education will see unprecedented turnover among its presidents—over 60 percent. And as of 2011, only 26 percent of college and university presidencies were occupied by women. I believe this presents a pivotal opportunity to shape the next generation of higher education leadership.

That's why I have joined the American Council on Education's Moving the Needle: Advancing Women Leaders call-to-action campaign, a new initiative that asks the presidents of colleges, universities and associations to help effect change, inform perception and elevate priorities so that by 2030, 50 percent of chief executives of our nation's higher education institutions will be women.

The campaign encourages colleges and universities to increase awareness by signing a statement of commitment to advance women into senior leadership positions in higher education. As a [president/chancellor], I recognize that there is a vibrant pipeline of women who desire to lead but face particular barriers in advancing into leadership roles.

By signing on to this commitment, I promote the advancement of women to the presidency by:

- Nominating qualified women to the highest positions of leadership in higher education wherever and whenever possible
- Providing opportunities for emerging women leaders to gain access to the skills and experiences necessary to advance
- Educating others, including boards, on the benefits of a gender-diversified leadership
- Empowering leadership teams in my own institution to sponsor women leaders

I hope that you will join me in adding your name to the growing list of presidents pledging their commitment to the Moving the Needle initiative.

To add your name in support, please visit <https://www.acenet.edu/JoinMTN>

Sincerely,

[Signature of Signer]

## Suggested Tweets

We recommend using the following link when talking about Moving the Needle on Twitter: <https://www.acenet.edu/JoinMTN>

In your tweets, please use the campaign hashtag [#movingtheneedle](#) whenever possible.

### Tweets for Institutions:

We commit to effect change to achieve gender parity in #highered leadership by joining ACE's #movingtheneedle [LINK]

[Insert Institution Name Here] promotes the advancement of women to the presidency #movingtheneedle @aceducation [LINK]

Today, we joined \_\_\_ #highered institutions in signing ACE's #movingtheneedle initiative to promote female leaders to the presidency [LINK]

We are proud to support @ACEducation's #Movingtheneedle initiative to achieve gender parity in #highered [LINK]

### Tweets for Presidents:

I signed on to support the #movingtheneedle initiative to promote women to the presidency [LINK]

I signed on to @ACEducation's #movingtheneedle initiative. Learn more here: [LINK]

I believe women can hold 50+ percent of CEO roles in #highered by 2030. I've signed on in support: [LINK]

Today, women hold just 26% of college & university presidencies. I pledge to make that number at least 50% by 2030 [LINK]

Proud that I pledged my support for ACE's #movingtheneedle initiative to help advance women to presidency roles [LINK]

## Suggested Facebook and LinkedIn Posts

We recommend using the following link when talking about Moving the Needle on Facebook and LinkedIn:  
<https://www.acenet.edu/JoinMTN>

Today, \_\_\_ higher education institutions across the United States committed to helping achieve gender parity so that by 2030, at least 50 percent of chief executives of colleges and universities will be women. Read more here: [LINK]

As of 2011, only 26 percent of college and university presidencies were held by women. ACE's Moving the Needle: Advancing Women Leaders initiative hopes to double that number by 2030. We are proud that we pledged our support today! [LINK]

President/Chancellor [Insert Presidents Name Here] pledged [his/her] support to the next generation of higher education leaders by signing on to American Council on Education's Moving the Needle: Advancing Women Leaders in Higher Education, a new campaign with the goal of helping women hold at least 50 percent of chief executive positions at colleges and universities by 2030.

We're happy to announce [Insert President's Name Here] has signed on to the American Council on Education's Moving the Needle: Advancing Women Leaders in Higher Education initiative. [LINK]

Today we signed a commitment to promote the advancement of women to the presidency at U.S. colleges and universities. Learn more here: [LINK]

What will the next generation of presidents look like? See how [Insert President's Name Here] has committed to creating parity for women holding—and aspiring to hold—chief executive positions at institutions like ours. [LINK]

[Insert institution here] teams with the American Council on Education's Moving the Needle campaign to support the advancement of women to the presidency. [LINK]