



CONNIE J. GORES

“We have made great strides, but our work is not done.”

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From the Chair of the Women's Network Executive Council

When we were younger, many of us yearned to be older so we could drive the family car, or have a later curfew, or whatever it was that signified to us that we had arrived—that we had reached that special milestone we sought to achieve. Sometimes in our haste to move forward, though, we can take some things for granted; we can lose sight of those who came before us, or forget about those who are walking beside us or coming behind us. Especially in the first year or two of a new position or assignment, the pace is quick and the learning curve is steep. And just when we think we do have something figured out, along comes another opportunity for us to learn something, and we have the chance to gain additional insights and experiences.

For me, one particular learning experience stands out. It occurred in the first year of my new role of university president. As a first-generation college student from a family the size of a softball team (10 brothers and sisters), I learned early on about the meaning of hard work and the importance of preparation. Throughout my life, I tried not to take anything for granted. As my mother's first daughter, I have always had a lot of responsibility and I have been in leadership roles from a young age. But that history and all my preparation didn't stop me from being caught off guard.

I had been invited to speak at the monthly luncheon of a group of professional women who met to network, learn, and connect with each other. Just as we were about to sit down for our meal, which was to be followed by my address, our hostess asked each of us to pause for a moment to reflect on the "historic occasion" that we were experiencing. Unsure about what she was referring to, I listened carefully to what she said next: "We have the first woman president of the university." That was me!

Of course I was aware that I was the first woman to serve in the role, but it had not occurred to me that my presence at the luncheon would be a "historic occasion." I was accustomed to serving in senior leadership roles, and I had experienced my share of "firsts" along the way. What I had overlooked on that particular day, with this specific group, was what my appointment as president meant to others, especially to this room full of professional women, all of whom had worked hard to get where they were. I had failed to see that each of us leaders carries with us the hopes and dreams of others; that we represent more than ourselves or our positions; and that no matter how hard we have worked or how much we have prepared to reach our goals, we stand on the shoulders of those who have come before us. I was also reminded of the responsibility that each of us has to reach across the room to others and to extend a hand to those coming behind us—we need to help other women on their leadership path. As we move forward, we need to reach back.

In the ACE Women's Network, we are committed to furthering our work centered on our IDEALS of *identifying, developing, advancing, linking, and supporting* women leaders along their path and in the pipeline. We have made great strides, but our work is not done. We may have personally reached the goal we set for ourselves, but we must not be lulled into thinking that our work is complete; we must focus on the greater good and our responsibility to build future leaders and create opportunities for advancing other women. Our work is not complete until we reach critical mass—a point of parity in the academy—where it is not seen as historic to have a woman serving in the top leadership role of president or chancellor. So we all want to encourage our women colleagues to place themselves in searches so that reaching parity is possible.

Connie J. Gores

Chair, ACE Women's Executive Council  
President, Southwest Minnesota State University

## From the Director



**W**e recently sent out a survey to ask the state coordinators to reflect on their work through the lens of the four goals of outlined in the Moving the Needle: Advancing Women Leaders in Higher Education (MTN) initiative. We know the work you are accomplishing around the nation is inextricably tied to these four goals, and we want to raise awareness by having you reflect on your work with the MTN goals in mind. Here is a sample of some of the responses.

### **How does your network create a sense of urgency regarding advancing women in higher education leadership positions?**

“Our network communicates this message at every event with the hope that high-level administrators and college presidents, who are in the audience, hear this important message and reflect on it when they go back to their institutions.”

“Our state network brings the women's leadership conversation to the council of presidents, boards of regents, and Utah System of Higher Education in a formal way, while drilling down to the needs and desires of women on each campus and the various institutional objectives that matter most to them.”

“We are encouraging institutional representatives to raise this topic on their campuses. We also encourage members, including the board, to recommend women from the network when positions become available on their campus.”

### **How does your network encourage governing boards, college and university presidents, and policymaking bodies to implement policies and best practices that support the recruitment and hiring of women to chief executive positions?**

“Hopefully by bringing to their attention through various initiatives such as our annual conference, our Women of Color Collaborative (WOCC), Young Women Strong Leadership (YWSL), Legislative Dinner, Ready to Run (for political office), and annual newsletter to all presidents in the state of Michigan. Our Institutional Rep (IR) program has increased the capacity of serving women through its expanded outreach programming, sharing our mission, goals, and objectives. We also have a very vibrant website where all program initiatives are listed along with professional opportunities available for women.”

### **How does your network build professional capacity in women to advance to both mid-level and senior-level administrative positions in higher education?**

“Building professional capacity is the strength of our network. We offer several workshops throughout the year which offer a variety of training [opportunities] and information with a heavy focus on strengthening leadership capabilities. Our annual fall dinner recognizes notable leaders in our state and individuals who have demonstrated great leadership potential. We offer an annual Leadership Summit, which is a one-day workshop with a variety of sessions centered on developing women in higher education. In addition, we offer two networking events each year, which include a presentation from a guest speaker who has an area of expertise in a topic that we are interested in.”

“We offer events which highlight women in higher education leadership positions who speak about the issues and trends, and also share their own personal stories about leadership. They emphasize the need for women leaders. In addition, we offer professional development opportunities for our membership and advertise the many positions available within the region and across the nation.”

### **How does your network acknowledge and advance best practices and models for advancing women in higher education?**

“Our network is very fortunate that our long-time members and more experienced members are very active in our network. They continuously serve as models and mentors without actually having a formal mentorship program. In my opinion, the best mentoring occurs when a natural relationship is fostered as opposed to a formal mentorship where two people are assigned to each other. Relationships have developed between many members in our network, and this has developed into many networks for sharing information and supporting each other.”

It is critically important to bring attention to this important alignment with the four MTN goals as we reflect on our progress. The ACE Women's Network is a powerful messenger in this work and has the ability to contribute significantly. I know you will bring to light more stories of your work in this context, and we look forward to sharing the survey results with you. Please add your response to the Moving the Needle Survey (<http://www2.acenet.edu/webforms/forms/IEG/Moving-the-Needle-Survey.aspx>) by May 1, 2015.

Sincerely,



Director  
Inclusive Excellence Group  
American Council on Education

# Puerto Rico ACE Women's Network Launched



Raquel G. Vargas, Delia M. Camacho Feliciano, Margarita Benítez, and Denise Hammon

On December 3, 2014, during the recent ACE National Women's Leadership Forum, four representatives from private and public colleges in Puerto Rico met to discuss the revitalization of the ACE Women's Network in Puerto Rico.

In attendance were:

- Hilda Colón Plumey, Associate Vice President, Office of the President, Ana G. Méndez University System
- Lydia Espinet, Dean of Academic Affairs and Students, Universidad del Sagrado Corazón
- Delia M. Camacho Feliciano, Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of Puerto Rico
- Raquel Vargas, Rectora, Universidad de Puerto Rico en Utuado

The meeting was chaired by Denise Hammon, president of Marian Court College in Swampscott, Massachusetts. Hammon served as chair of the Massachusetts Network for four years and served on the board of directors for eight years. She is currently on the Women's Network Executive Council. This meeting was organized by Margarita Benítez, interim assistant vice president of ACE's Emerging Leaders Group and the ACE Fellows Program, and Gailda Davis of the ACE Inclusive Excellence Group.

These senior-level women represent four of the institutions of higher education that span the beautiful island of Puerto Rico. With full enthusiasm for reigniting the network, they discussed several topics for workshops and event speakers, including the role of women on university boards and the challenges and opportunities of being a professional educator.

Davis and Hammon offered some start-up suggestions and best practices from other state networks, and these will be explored by the Puerto Rico Network in the new year. Hilda Colon Plumey offered to be the initial state coordinator, and her colleagues quickly offered to help her in establishing the network.

The largest and oldest university system is the public University of Puerto Rico (UPR), with 11 campuses. The largest private university systems on the island are the Sistema Universitario Ana G. Méndez, which operates the Universidad del Turabo, Metropolitan University, and Universidad del Este; the multi-campus Inter American University; the Pontifical Catholic University; and the Universidad del Sagrado Corazón. Puerto Rico has four schools of medicine and three American Bar Association-approved law schools.

With such terrific institutions as these, and the interest and experience of these senior leaders, we know that the Puerto Rico Network will soon be up and running.

*¡Felicidades y bienvenido a la nueva red de ACE de mujeres líderes en Puerto Rico!*

*Denise Hammon is president of Marian Court College (MA).*



Gailda Davis, Margarita Benítez, Denise Hammon, Hilda M. Colón Plumey, Lydia Espinet, Raquel G. Vargas, and Delia M. Camacho Feliciano

## Moving the Needle Goal Group Summaries

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### **Goal 1:** *Generate a national sense of urgency elevating the need for advancing women in higher education leadership positions.*

Today, 26 percent of college and university presidencies are held by women. To date, progress has been incremental at best: It has taken a decade to move the needle just three percentage points toward reaching parity. We will need a national imperative to advance women leaders and a carefully crafted agenda to guide its implementation. No single organization can accomplish this alone. Working in collaboration with like-minded associations and organizations and other leadership agendas will allow us to leverage our individual efforts more effectively.

Goal Group 1 is charged to generate a national sense of urgency to elevate the need for advancing women in leadership positions. To date, our work has focused on five immediate objectives:

- To develop a must-read list of critical research findings from social science and corporate research sources that support the imperative for women serving increasingly senior roles and on policymaking groups.
- To develop concise messages that frame the argument.
- To identify and customize messages in order to target audiences and disseminate information on the benefits and imperative of advancing women to the presidency and seats on governing boards.
- To identify key individuals of national renown to disseminate/advocate the imperative and deliver key messages.
- To identify various venues and platforms for disseminating the imperative.

Question for the state network: *What key audiences can your state network reach to disseminate the benefits and imperative of advancing women in higher education and increasing their involvement on governing boards and in other policymaking groups?*

Alternative question: *How can the activities of your state network facilitate and advance the conversation and raise a sense of urgency for advancing women to higher positions in higher education, including seats on governing boards?*

### **Goal 2:** *Encourage governing boards and other higher education institutional decision-making and policymaking bodies to consider recommended practices for recruiting and hiring women to chief executive offices.*

- We have started to compile a list of must-read publications regarding advancing women on boards.
- We discussed having guest speakers on the calls to help us get a more granular view on how diversity on boards is factored into board success.
- We have held or are setting up telephone interviews with leaders of organizations such as the Association of Community College Trustees, the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, the National Governors Association, and others to raise awareness of our goal and get their input on how they may help lift up this critical issue.

**Goal 3:** *Achieve women’s advancement to mid-level and senior-level positions in higher education administration by building capacities in women and in institutions.*

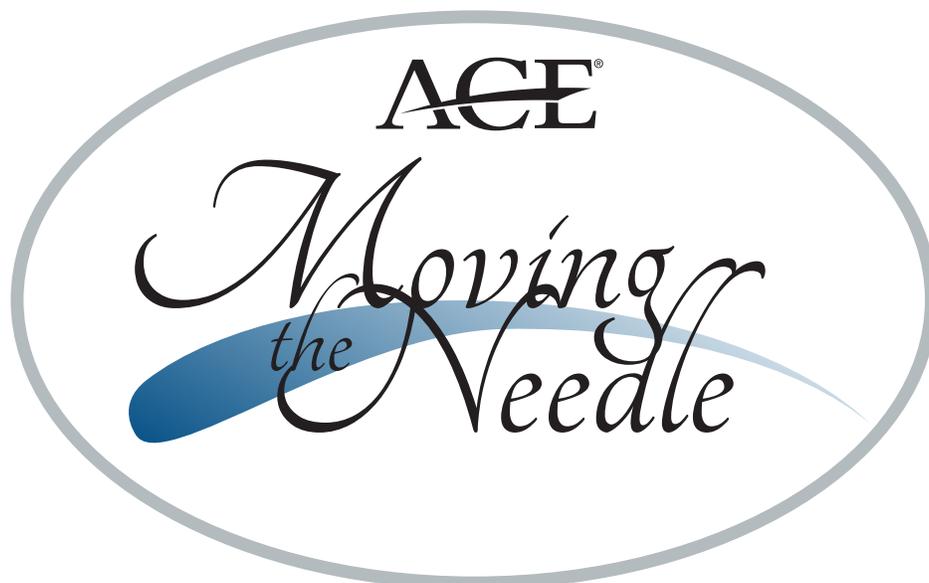
After extensive discussion throughout fall 2014 of possible action areas for priority focus, the group identified the following three for initial response during spring 2015, with others to be added as we reach milestones:

1. Offer capacity-building training sessions, in particular on those skill sets/knowledge bases that women often (1) aren’t given opportunities to obtain experience in, (2) don’t feel confident about with regard to their abilities, or (3) are perceived by others to not have competency in, e.g., intercollegiate athletics, financial acumen/budgeting, and fundraising/development.
2. Describe and catalogue various pathways/trajectories to key senior/executive positions, including key decision points on these pathways as well as (1) how milestone decisions can impact the journey further down the pathway/trajectory, and (2) how one can shift/adjust after this has happened.
3. Develop and distribute a white paper that includes a self-assessment toolkit to assist institutions with examining institutional policies, executive practices, and cultural norms that either directly or indirectly reinforce limiting gender and/or sex-role stereotypes or promote/foster gender inequity (e.g., discussing business matters informally while playing golf).

Members of Goal Group 3 have indicated their interest in which action area they would like to be assigned, and we have conveners for Action Areas 1 and 3; we are still seeking a convener for Action Area 2.

**Goal 4:** *Suggest recommended practices and models and recognize success in advancing women in higher education.*

- Establishing criteria for the Moving the Needle: Advancing Women Leaders in Higher Education Institutional Award. We have the first draft of the criteria completed and it is now scheduled to move forward to ACE leadership review.
- One member of Goal Group 4 has volunteered to serve on the Moving the Needle marketing committee.



# Setting Up Your State Network as a 501(c)3 Webinar

## Webinar Update:

The Setting Up Your Network as a 501(c)3 webinar was hosted by the ACE Inclusive Excellence Group and led by ACE Women's Network Executive Council member Leah Witcher Jackson Teague, associate dean and professor of law at Baylor Law School (TX), on Monday, February 23, 2015. To view the presentation from the webinar, follow the instructions below.

1. Click on this link: <https://acenetevents.webex.com/acenetevents/lr.php?RCID=090352b752a807a519c8d835d0d62b0c>
2. You may be given the option to select between playback or download. Playback will allow you to stream the recording, while download will allow you to save the recording to your computer or device.
  - a. If opting for playback, you must allow Cisco WebEx access to your computer.
  - b. To download the recording, you must download the WebEx ARF player as prompted.

## First Mid-Atlantic Multistate ACE Women's Network Conference

On November 14, 2014 the first Mid-Atlantic Multistate ACE Women's Network Conference was held in New York. This was an innovative collaboration between the ACE Women's Networks in Connecticut, Delaware, New Jersey, and New York. For over a year, a planning team of current and former state coordinators and members of the ACE Women's Network Executive Council (WNEC) came together to design an innovative program highlighting the uniqueness of each state network. Over 100 women convened to hear wonderful insights from Margaret L. Drugovich, president of Hartwick College (NY), Mary A. Papazian, president of Southern Connecticut State University, Ileana M. Smith, president of Delaware Technical Community College, and Kathleen Waldron, president of William Paterson University (NJ).

### Planning Team

#### Current State Coordinators:

Sandra G. Affenito (CT), Audrey M. Parajon (DE), Manina Urgolo Huckvale (NJ), Allyson Straker-Banks (NJ), Judith Tabron, Associate State Coordinator (NY), and Patricia Burlaud (NY)

#### Former State Coordinators:

L. Christie Boronico (CT), Michele Helmin (CT), Julia O'Hanlon (DE), and Reva Curry (NJ)

#### Special Thanks

Regional Representatives and WNEC Liaisons  
Concetta M. Stewart (NY) and Deborah M. McCreery (PA)

Hofstra University (NY)  
*(for designing and printing the program)*

## Upcoming Leadership Events

### The Nebraska Women in Higher Education Leadership State Conference

September 28, 2015 • Lincoln, NE

### Michigan ACE Women's Network Annual Conference

June 8-9, 2015 • Lansing, MI

### ACE Leadership Programs 2015 (detailed on page 8)

### Inclusive Excellence Group Programs (detailed on page 9)

If you have an idea or an experience that you would like to share, we invite you to do so by sending submissions to Cynthia Smith Forrest, *NetworkNews* editor, at [cforrest@une.edu](mailto:cforrest@une.edu).

## NetworkNews Editorial Board

### Cynthia Smith Forrest (Editor)

Kim Bobby

Pamela Kalbfleisch

Denise Hammon

Beatriz Gonzalez-Robinson

## State Coordinator: Training Ground for Advanced Leadership



Serving as the regional coordinator for the Southern California ACE Women's Network has been incredibly rewarding. Over the last year, our network has worked diligently to strengthen its infrastructure and expand its reach. Through newly formed committees, we are creating bylaws, growing membership, and cultivating opportunities for professional development and networking. The Women's Leadership Forum, our network's annual conference, is always the highlight of our activities, bringing together our members for a powerful day of learning and connecting.

Coordinating our productive and energetic network is challenging; however, serving as regional coordinator has provided me the unparalleled opportunity to work closely with an inspirational group of higher education women leaders. I am being mentored by encouraging role models, including Karen Haynes, presidential sponsor for the regional network. I have benefited from the stories of their journeys and have a newfound perspective on higher education leadership and my place in it. The ACE Women's Network has afforded me a community, and I now have a greater confidence in my ability to contribute to moving the needle toward parity for women in higher education.

Most recently, the role of regional coordinator has helped to prepare me for my new position as associate vice president of community engagement at California State University, San Marcos. As associate vice president, I am focused on making meaningful university-community connections and nurturing relationships to meet collective goals. As regional coordinator, I am also working to facilitate meaningful connections and relationships within our network to support the advancement of women in higher education leadership. I have found a great deal of overlap in these two roles, and I appreciate how much my professional accomplishments are grounded in the work of our regional network. While it is difficult to articulate how grateful I am for all that the ACE Women's Network has given to me—professionally and personally—I look forward to continuing to demonstrate my gratitude through service to this incredible organization.

*Sarah R. Villarreal is the associate vice president of community engagement at California State University, San Marcos.*

# ACE LEADERSHIP™

[Leadership@acenet.edu](mailto:Leadership@acenet.edu)

[@LeadershipACE](https://twitter.com/LeadershipACE)

To serve the multifaceted needs of diverse campuses around the country, ACE offers leadership development programs and activities that equip leaders with the tools they need to make practical day-to-day decisions, build institutional capacity, and plan for future success.

## ACE EXECUTIVE Leadership Group™ [ExecutiveLeadership@acenet.edu](mailto:ExecutiveLeadership@acenet.edu)

ACE Institute for New Presidents (2015-16 class: 1st meeting)	December 1-3, 2015	New Orleans, LA
ACE Institute for New Presidents (2015-16 class: 2nd meeting)	March 11-12, 2016	San Francisco, CA
ACE Institute for New Presidents (2015-16 class: 3rd meeting)	July 26-28, 2016	Washington, DC
Institute for New CAOs (2015-16 class: 1st meeting)	July 28-30, 2015	Washington, DC
Institute for New CAOs (2015-16 class: 2nd meeting)	December 1-3, 2015	New Orleans, LA
Institute for New CAOs (2015-16 class: 3rd meeting)	March 11-12, 2016	San Francisco, CA
CAO-CBO Workshop	August 3-4, 2015	Washington, DC

## ACE EMERGING Leaders Group™ [EmergingLeaders@acenet.edu](mailto:EmergingLeaders@acenet.edu)

Leadership Academy for Department Chairs	July 29-30, 2015	Washington, DC
Leadership Academy for Department Chairs	October 20-22, 2015	Itasca, IL
2016-17 Class of ACE Fellows	August 2016-August 2017	

## ACE INCLUSIVE Excellence Group™ [InclusiveExcellence@acenet.edu](mailto:InclusiveExcellence@acenet.edu)

Spectrum Aspiring Leaders Program	April 27-28, 2015	Scottsdale, AZ
Regional Women's Leadership Forum	April 29-May 1, 2015	Scottsdale, AZ
Moving the Needle Roundtable	June 16, 2015	Arlington, VA
National Women's Leadership Forum	June 17-19, 2015	Arlington, VA
Spectrum Aspiring Leaders Program	Fall 2015	TBD
Regional Women's Leadership Forum	October 28-30, 2015	Miami, FL
National Women's Leadership Forum	December 2-4, 2015	Arlington, VA

## ACE INSTITUTIONAL Leadership Group™ [InstitutionalLeadership@acenet.edu](mailto:InstitutionalLeadership@acenet.edu)

Retirement Transitions Conference	Winter 2015	To Be Announced
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## ACE ANNUAL MEETING [AnnualMeeting@acenet.edu](mailto:AnnualMeeting@acenet.edu)

98th ACE Annual Meeting	March 12-15, 2016	San Francisco, CA
99th ACE Annual Meeting	March 11-14, 2017	Washington, DC
100th ACE Annual Meeting	March 10-13, 2018	Washington, DC

# ACE<sup>®</sup> SPECTRUM ASPIRING Leaders Program™

Scottsdale Marriott at McDowell Mountains  
Scottsdale, Arizona  
April 27-28, 2015

This two-day aspiring leadership program is for midlevel administrators (typically department chairs, directors, and assistant/associate deans) with high potential for advancement in higher education administration. Topics will focus on the contributions that leaders from diverse backgrounds can bring to an increasingly diverse higher education landscape.

Visit [www.acenet.edu/leadership](http://www.acenet.edu/leadership) to register.



Scottsdale Marriott at McDowell Mountains  
Scottsdale, Arizona  
April 28-May 1, 2015

This three-day leadership program is for mid-level women administrators (typically department chairs, directors, and assistant/associate deans) with high potential for advancement in higher education administration. Topics will focus on unique contributions that women bring to leadership.

Visit [www.acenet.edu/leadership](http://www.acenet.edu/leadership) to register.



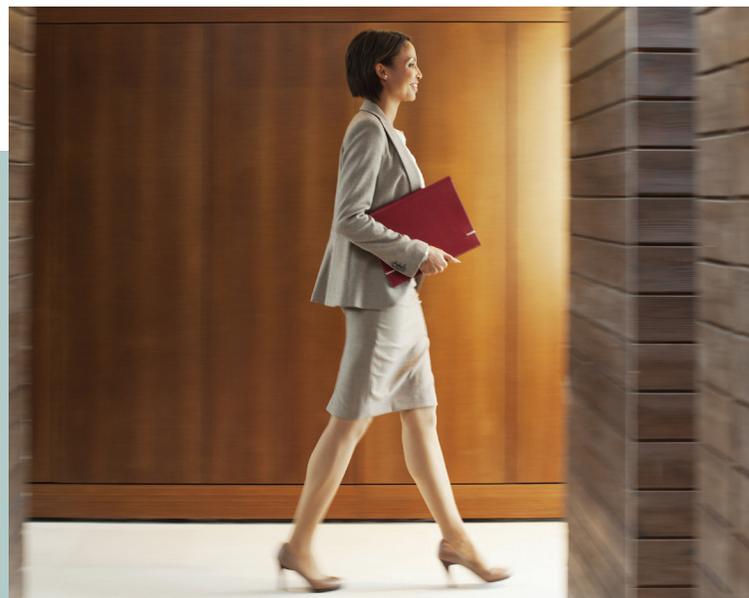
# ACE<sup>®</sup> REGIONAL WOMEN'S Leadership Forum™

# ACE<sup>®</sup> NATIONAL WOMEN'S Leadership Forum™

The Westin Arlington Gateway Hotel  
Arlington, Virginia  
June 17-19, 2015

This three-day leadership program is for senior-level women administrators (typically deans or above) seeking a college or university presidency, vice presidency, or major deanship.

Visit [www.acenet.edu/leadership](http://www.acenet.edu/leadership) to register.



For more information, please contact  
[InclusiveExcellenceGroup@acenet.edu](mailto:InclusiveExcellenceGroup@acenet.edu) or (202) 939-9390.

ACE<sup>®</sup> INCLUSIVE  
Excellence Group™

## Notes from the Editor

By Cynthia Smith Forrest



**A**s we anxiously await the arrival of spring in Maine and throughout New England, new growth underneath the snow promises to bring changes such as colorful blossoms and budding trees. We will see and experience the transformation of the world and landscapes around us. This rebirth beckons each of us to use this time to reflect about how we can individually and collectively advance women in their careers. This process starts with each of us. In our musings, we should ask ourselves to consider our professional and personal next steps. The American Council on Education's (ACE) Moving the Needle Initiative provides us with the perfect impetus to reach and grow in new directions. In this process, it is essential to support ourselves and our women colleagues. As the earth nourishes and the sun warms, we experience these similarly powerful forces that summon new life in the world around us.

We, as members of the ACE Women's Network, experience the beckoning energy provided by the Inclusive Excellence Group and our state networks. Our challenge is to cultivate our plans for our professional gardens, developing our timetables to nourish our professional competencies, sharpening our tools, and reaping the bounty of new opportunities we pursue. ACE has invested in the Moving the Needle Initiative in a robust, creative, and expansive way. I hope that each woman leader

in higher education can find her place for engagement in this national endeavor. I would encourage you to write about your personal professional journey so that we can learn from each other's evolving sense of possibilities along with tried and perfected strategies. I am reminded of statements made by Thomas Edison that are important for women to consider as we test the soil for new jobs and futures. As he said, "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work." For women, our thoughts often thwart us; however, Edison reminds us that "many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up." So this initiative reminds us to keep reaching for new horizons and joining with colleagues at new institutions as leaders with great gifts!

A quotation often attributed to Mahatma Gandhi says, "Be the change you wish to see in the world." Moving the Needle reminds us that we can make a difference in so many ways. Please make changing the landscape of leadership in this country your personal priority. We are striving for parity: Women are the majority of graduates in many fields of endeavor, yet still lag in the ranks of leadership in most types of organizations. Transformation is possible through our collective endeavors. We invite you to share your story through the pages of *NetworkNews*. Inspiration, aspiration, and determination are keys to our success. Best wishes for a joyous spring!

*Cynthia Smith Forrest is vice president for student affairs at the University of New England (ME).*