

# 2022 Women's Leadership Forum—Highlights

*Challenge and inspire. Standing together for change.*

The TIAA Institute's fifth annual Women's Leadership Forum brought together approximately 150 women in higher education, healthcare, philanthropy and business to share insights on the challenges they face today, along with practical ideas and research to guide their journeys and growth as leaders. One of the Forum's key goals is to build a supportive community of women leaders that together can effect change.



This year's Forum agenda was inspired by the 50th anniversary of Title IX—powerful legislation that spurred progress toward gender equity in the United States. At the same time, though, the anniversary lookback reveals a long way to go toward achieving equality. These persistent gender inequalities—particularly in women's pay and retirement savings—motivated TIAA's related [RetireInequality](#) initiative.

The summaries that follow capture key takeaways and insights from each of the sessions, which featured a rich line up of informative, thought provoking, and inspiring speakers. You can also [watch several sessions on video](#).

## Change we need: Attitude, aspiration and action

**Kourtney Gibson**, Chief Institutional Client Officer, TIAA, moderator

**Sue Enquist**, Former UCLA Softball Coach and founder, Bruin Enterprises

**Linda Livingstone**, President, Baylor University

**Tamiko Strickman**, Special Advisor to the President and Executive Director, Equity, Civil Rights and Title IX Office, University of Michigan



Fifty years after Title IX's passage, we celebrate meaningful progress toward gender equality and acknowledge that shortfalls remain. This session centered on where society should focus its future efforts, leaders as change agents, and ways to infuse the spirit of Title IX into attitudes, aspirations and actions that can drive positive outcomes and help close the equity gap.

## The power of advocacy

- Title IX didn't change women's sports on its own: women's voices persistently advocated for women's equality over many years—and need to continue to do so.
- Leaders can take equal rights—in multiple realms—into their own hands and help pull others up personally and professionally.
- A proactive approach helps to instill the spirit of Title IX in American society and its institutions, as opposed to being driven solely by the need to comply with the law.

## Title IX's reach

- Title IX applies to not only educational institutions—K-12 and colleges and universities—but also to any activity receiving Federal assistance. Community-based programs, for example, could be subject to Title IX.
- Title IX's early focus was on girls and women's athletics opportunities, and soon expanded to encompass other types of discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

## How to be the change

- Stand up for what you believe even when it's very hard.
- Continue to press for transparency, ask questions, and spur the conversations that need to happen. Create “vibrations” that grow into more powerful vehicles for change.
- Tap universities' potential to effect change by cultivating in our students a confidence that every individual can create positive change.

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“The more we can be proactive the more it [Title IX] can be embedded in our culture. The more metrics and assessment mechanisms we have to show how we're doing on our campuses, the less [backward] changes in regulations are going to affect us because we know we're going to be doing the right thing for the right reasons.”

—Linda Livingstone

## Change we need: Act on the facts

**Anne Ollen**, Managing Director, TIAA Institute, moderator  
**Jacqueline Bichsel**, Director of Research, CUPA-HR  
**Fawn Cothran**, Hunt Research Director, National Alliance for Caregiving  
**Shelly-Ann N. Eweka**, Senior Director, Financial Planning Strategy, TIAA  
**Andrea Silbert**, President, Eos Foundation



Gender equity disparities start early, last throughout women's lives and stubbornly persist—despite decades of national attention. Where do gaps occur? Considering both individual and institutional factors, why do they occur? And what can be done to (finally) rectify the issues? Experts on gender equity shared their research and facts, along with proposed solutions to motivate and facilitate change.

*The economic effects of family caregiving on women*, by Fawn Cothran and Patrice Heinz, National Alliance for Caregiving.

- The outsized economic effect of family caregiving on women is a societal inequity reinforced by socialization. Family caregivers provide an average of 23 hours of unpaid care per week—the equivalent of part-time employment.
- Economic effects of caregiving include financial strain such as being late to pay bills, diminished ability to save, and risks to long-term financial security.
- Policies to mitigate these effects include improved paid family and medical leave, tax credits for caregivers, and Social Security credits for time taken off to be a caregiver.

*Women in the higher education workforce will never achieve pay equity without increased representation in leadership*, by Jacqueline Bichsel and Melissa Fuesting, CUPA-HR.

- CUPA-HR research documents that women in administrative positions earn more at colleges and universities that have female presidents and/or provosts. More women in leadership roles will help close the gender pay gap.
- Women comprise 52% of assistant professors, the first rung of the tenure ladder, but just 46% of associate professors and 35% of full professors—the top of the faculty profession and the path to top leadership positions in higher ed. Tenure and promotion policies that ensure that women have equal opportunities to advance their careers must be formalized to reduce bias.

*Fix the system, not the women: The Women's Power Gap Initiative*, by Andrea Silbert, Eos Foundation.

- Women represent 6% of S&P 500 chief executives; 1% are women of color.
- At our nation's top universities (R1 Carnegie classification), the gaps between men and women as academic deans and provosts are 61% to 39% and 62% to 38%, respectively. The gaps grow at the presidential level (78% men, just 22% women) and get even worse for system presidents (90% men, 10% women).
- The primary approach of too many initiatives to increase leadership diversity is to offer professional development to train women to fit into the existing culture. What's needed is energy devoted to creating a new culture that draws upon a multitude of leadership styles and perspectives.

*It's time to retire inequality*, Shelly-Ann N. Eweka, TIAA.

- Women earn 83 cents on the dollar on average compared to men. Over a 40-year career, on average women stand to lose \$400,000 because of the wage gap; women of color fare worse, and on average lose \$1 million over their careers.
- Lower earnings lead to lower savings and less financial security: Women on average retire with 30% less savings than men. Yet they live about five years longer and so have higher needs for retirement savings.

- Employers have a responsibility to educate their employees about how to prepare for a secure retirement. They can provide more and better financial education resources, and offer employees a range of savings options, including annuities that will guarantee them a stream of income in retirement that they will not outlive.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these [financial] disparities: nearly two million women dropped out of the workforce during the pandemic, and many families will never make up for the lost earnings and savings.”

—Shelly-Ann Eweka

## Voices of experience: What would I tell my younger self?

**Corie Pauling**, SVP, Chief ID&E Officer and Head of CSR, TIAA, moderator

**Paulette Dillard**, President & CEO, Shaw University

**Madeline Pumariega**, President, Miami Dade College

**Yves Salomon-Fernández**, Senior Vice President for Operations Planning, Southern New Hampshire University

**Gloria Thomas**, President, Higher Education Resource Services (HERS)



Given what you know today, what advice would you give your younger self? This session featured several personal perspectives on career decisions and trajectories, life goals and ambitions, and opportunities arising from turbulence and change. Speakers shared lessons on impactful leadership and valuing and sharing the special gifts we each possess.

## Work-life balance

- Don't be ashamed to ask for help, and focus on building strong supportive networks to lean on when you need them.
- Learn to say no and not take on too much.
- Appreciate the gift and value of being fully present rather than continually multi-tasking.

## Career advice

- Keep an open mind, know that many paths are possible.
- Don't be afraid to take risks and get out of your comfort zone.
- There's no need to rush into a career: take the time to consider what works for you rather than follow someone else's script or expectations.
- Think about your "why"—which most likely will be at the intersection of what you care deeply about and your values.
- Show up every day, work hard, do your best, and learn everything you can.
- Find joy in your work and be sure the positives outweigh the negatives. If not, prepare to move on.

## On leadership

- Strive to make a positive difference in peoples' lives: that clarity of purpose lights the path forward.
- Know that you have more control over what you can or cannot do than you may realize.
- Show employees that you care; act from a position of empathy and know that people want to be seen.
- Be transparent and build relationships at all levels to create the trust that will help you accomplish your and your organization's goals.

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"The rules of life that I created for myself had to do with a sense of confidence in your abilities, being present in the environment you're in, and making a way out of no way."

—Paulette Dillard

## Change we need: Freedom and the fortitude to be authentic

**Micky Onvural**, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, TIAA, moderator

**Carmen Rita Wong**, Writer, Producer, Nonprofit Board Leader and Personal Finance Expert, Malecon Productions



Carmen Rita Wong's new memoir *Why Didn't You Tell Me?* describes how an immigrant mother's long-held secrets upended her daughter's understanding of her family, herself, and her place in the world. This intimate and engaging conversation explored how a woman's self-perception and how others see her can affect her leadership skills, financial behaviors, and definition of success.

## On authenticity

- Women often leave too much of themselves outside of work, as they shape themselves to fit in and succeed in workplaces often dominated by cultures other than their own.
- There's power to be gained by not always trying to fit in and be accepted by everyone, but rather stepping into your own identity and truth. Successes achieved when women allow parts of themselves to break through build confidence to continue on the path to authenticity.
- There's likely more opportunity to grow and thrive in a workplace where you can be your authentic self. Continue to strive for that ideal fit.

## On leadership

- Women leaders can model authenticity for their employees and help them bring their authentic selves to work.

- Equality starts when people are seen as full human beings. More women in leadership can help move that forward and lift up other women in a sisterhood of support.
- Lead with confidence and a lack of ego. Leading with ego is damaging to everyone and blocks others out. Leaders should be willing to say they've made a mistake, or acknowledge when they don't know something—but will find out!
- It's never too late to get started on your financial planning. Women in particular need to, as they often are the ones who will care for their parents and for their children—both of which have high impacts on their finances.
- Teach your daughters to be financially literate! Model that for them.

### On personal finances

- Know that women belong in banks, in finance, and at the table for savings and investment decisions. Pay attention to your money and finances, it's all too important to not be involved.

“My sisterhood has contributed to my success. We help each other, bring each other up, every single day...Surround yourself with people you admire and who admire you.”

–Carmen Rita Wong

### About the TIAA Institute

The TIAA Institute helps advance the ways individuals and institutions plan for financial security and organizational effectiveness. The Institute conducts in-depth research, provides access to a network of thought leaders, and enables those it serves to anticipate trends, plan future strategies, and maximize opportunities for success.

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