The American College President in 2023 and Beyond

American Council on Education | Education Futures Lab
Welcome & Background

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Presentation of Key Findings

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Key Finding #1: Making Representation a Priority

- Student, faculty, and staff diversification has been a priority, but these efforts have not reached the C-Suite to scale.

- Men still outnumber women 2:1 in the college presidency.

- A 10 percentage-point gap exists between White presidents and presidents of color when asked if the search process gave them a realistic assessment of the challenges facing the institution or system.
Perception of Disclosures Within the Search Process: 2022 and 2016

- A clear understanding of the institution or system’s expectations
- A clear understanding of the board’s expectations
- A full and accurate disclosure of institution or system’s financial condition
- Realistic assessment of the current challenges facing the institution or system

Notes: Percentages represent those who answered 'yes' to each question. | Data from 2022 are weighted by Carnegie Classification.
Key Finding #2: With Challenge, Comes Opportunity

- There’s been little movement towards representation by race, ethnicity, and gender. But imminent opportunity exists due to anticipated churn and turnover.

- In their current positions, one in four presidents anticipate stepping down within the next year or two; 30 percent in the next 3-5 years.

- Higher education needs to create opportunities for presidents to aspire to the presidency earlier in their careers and by different pathways, particularly for women leaders and leaders of color.

- Even if opportunities are created, the sector must interrogate what draws or repels quality leaders to the college presidency.
### Table 2.3. Average Age of First Presidential Aspiration, Application, and Appointment, by Gender and Race and Ethnicity: 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Age (in Years)</th>
<th>Aspiration</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Appointment</th>
<th>Aspiration to Appointment Time Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>(+) 6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>(+) 7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>(+) 5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men of color</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>(+) 8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women of color</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>(+) 5.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These are averages within the sample and not weighted by Carnegie Classification.
Presidents are at the forefront of reimagining how higher education serves students and society. Support from boards and C-Suite leaders is increasingly critical as presidents approach new demands in leading the institutions of tomorrow.

- Approximately two out of three presidents report some level of agreement they struggle to find people who understand the experience of being a president.

- The context of leadership today exists beyond the presidency proper – the lived experiences, personal obligations, and operating realities influence the scope of presidential leadership.