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Making a difference or just managing? - female, middle managers in Australian universities

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**Making a Difference or Just Managing? – the
development experiences of female middle managers in
Australian universities**

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Introduction

For the past decade in Australia, women have been entering academic frontline, middle and senior management in somewhat greater numbers. However, this is occurring in a climate of shrinking government funding and globalisation pressures that have resulted in corporate managerialism, economic restructuring, increased competition and entrepreneurial pressures (Blackmore & Sachs 2001; Currie & Thiele 2001; Ramsay, 2000). It is maintained that universities have been reconstructed as 'knowledge factories' where knowledge is commodified as a source of value in the capitalist economy and the humanistic foundations of the traditional university have given way to the global knowledge economy, more technocratic management processes and new work environments (Brooks 2001, p. 15). Furthermore, the increased need for universities to source funds outside government funding to universities has meant that an 'entrepreneurial' culture lives alongside a 'rationalising', instrumentalist culture. For example, the oldest university in the country has disestablished its nursing program, while all universities now chase the dollar through international and transnational education and industry partnerships.

Australian studies have examined the experiences of women in particular academic discipline areas (Wyn 1997), women at 'the top' of five university structures (Chesterman et al 2003), academic women across a range of academic and management roles in several universities (Blackmore and Sachs, 2001), in both academic and administrative roles (Higher Education Workers – HEW) in eighteen of the thirty six universities (Probert 1998) and academic and administrative staff in depth in two separate studies in a west coast university (Eveline 2004) and academic staff in one east coast university (Probert 2005). While the voice of women at the top has been clearly heard as has that of the 'rank and file', it appears that those of women in middle academic and administrative management are somewhat less distinct. While I acknowledge that senior management is not every woman's goal and that some women in middle management struggle with the paradoxes and pressures of their roles (Priola 2004; Wallace 2003) it can also be presumed that some of these women want to progress to the next level of responsibility and power. A number of the most senior women in higher education in Australia have recently or imminently will retire (Chesterman et al 2003) and there is a concern that the current reasonable number of women at VC, DVC and PVC level may drop. It thus appears worthwhile to explore more fully the experiences of these middle managers in the new culture of corporate managerialism in universities, which have long been acknowledged as highly gendered organizations (Allport 1996; Aitkin 2001).

My earlier, small case study of women in one university (Wallace 2003) that indicated a dearth of development opportunities and paradoxes in the middle management role, a reading of the literature on women in Australian universities and a reading of the women in management literature that suggests formal and informal development opportunities are one of the factors that help women succeed in gaining promotion prompted my study, part of which is reported here.

My research thus explores two related phenomenon. Firstly, I am interested in the paradoxes, satisfactions and challenges faced by female middle-managers in the corporatised and entrepreneurial new world order of Australian universities. Secondly, I am interested in the range of formal and informal development opportunities that women managers have been able to access. In other words what is their experience of management and how have they been prepared for their current roles and developed for their future roles? Are they 'just' managing, in the instrumentalist sense, are they just 'managing' to keep their heads above water in their role and career development or are they really managing?

While my study explored the experiences of both academic and administrative university women, this paper reports the results for the academic women. Other results, including that of follow up interviews will be reported elsewhere.

Context

In relation to the approximately 34,000 academics in Australia 15.8% of the approximately 16,800 men are at levels above Senior Lecturer, while 3.8% of the approximately 16,700 female academics are at levels above Senior Lecturer (DEST 2004). Nevertheless, women from senior lecturer level and above have been taking on management roles in greater numbers than would be expected given their under-representation. Most recent figures indicate that women make up 24% of managerial positions overall, 25% are Vice-Chancellors and 22% Deputy Vice-Chancellors (Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) 2002). At the Executive Dean/Deanship level, women make up around 32% (AVCC 2002). It is harder to ascertain the number of women in middle management positions overall (academic and professional staff), however I identified at least 1,000 in what appeared to be middle management roles from the publicly available AVCC 2004 Website (AVCC 2004).

There is comprehensive literature regarding women academics in higher education in Australia. Everitt (1994) identified a number of factors that illustrate women's disadvantage in higher education employment. She found that gender differences in rank were not caused by differences in age, higher degree, publications and time at one's university, that women gained much lower rank than their qualifications would provide if they were men and that these effects were pronounced at senior lecturer level and higher. However, Castleman et al (1995, p. 18) have argued that women who are successful in Australian academic life are those who have emulated the characteristics of a male career path, namely overseas degrees, publications in international journals (not Australian) and overseas sponsors, speed of promotion and number, not quality of publications.

As the new managerialism, corporatisation and restructuring of work practices started to impact in the late-90s in Australia, Wyn et al (1997) examined the experiences of senior women academics working in faculties of education in Australia and Canada. Themes of marginalisation and not being taken seriously

both in the discipline area and within the masculinist culture were cited. One of the interesting factors in this study was that once women had come through to higher levels a large number maintained a very real commitment to supporting collegial and democratic practices, recognizing staff members' emotional needs and life responsibilities, emphasizing open information networks and placing a priority on issues of social justice and equity and advocating for students (Wyn et al 1997, p. 126). This has been evident in the study of the University of Western Australia where a turnaround in certain practices that worked against gender equity, particularly for academic staff was fostered by a visionary (female) VC (Eveline 2004).

Wyn's empirical Australian work was conducted over ten years ago and related to women working in solely education faculties and occurred just at a time when the Australian higher education landscape began to change. Probert et al's (1998) national study of pay equity (1,683 women and men from eighteen universities) indicated that the main predictors of women's lower pay were academic level, years in higher education and formal qualifications. The surprise finding in their study was the number of women who had begun their careers without a PhD and the relatively fewer who went on to attain PhDs (52.9% of women in comparison to 61.9% of men). I would argue from a human capital perspective that in these corporatist times in the Australian academy a PhD in one's discipline area is an entry level qualification that does not fully prepare a middle (or senior) manager for the internal and external political climates, the human resource, industrial relations, strategic and financial planning challenges of the role unless it may have been in the management/business discipline area.

More recent scholarship (Blackmore & Sachs 2000) has argued that discursive practices relating to flexibility, productivity and 'performativity'¹ reflect the values of contemporary higher education and now shape worker identity in the academy. They (Blackmore and Sachs 2001) examined the situation for Australian women academics across a number of discipline areas, exploring how educational restructuring had changed the nature of the academic work and how leadership was viewed in that changing context. They argued that Australian universities had become:

...less like public institutions imbued with a sense of service and a history of social trusteeship and more like a corporate international company of expert professionals who sell to the highest bidder in a global market.
(Brint 1994 quoted in Blackmore & Sachs 2001 p. 48)

Furthermore, they suggested that management work and the identity formation of the academic manager was situated within practices of aggressive competition,

¹ efficiency and effectiveness become the criteria for judging the worth of knowledge (Bloland 1995); being seen to perform rather than performing itself (Blackmore & Sachs 2001).

measurability, marketability and redefinitions of what was seen to be progressive, innovative or meritorious seeing these as evidence of the 'managed-self at work' (Blackmore and Sachs 2001, p. 55). They also identified many of the practices that reconstitute individuals according to these values as highly gender inflected.

Their views resonate with the work of several post-structuralist scholars, who have explored work identity. Townley (1994 p. 142) has observed that work identity formation occurs as;

... the individual becomes tied, through the desire to secure the acknowledgment, recognition and confirmation of self, to practices confirmed by others as desirable.

Similarly, du Gay (1996 p. 7) has argued that discursive practices at work 'construct particular identities for employees' and has explored 'how the latter negotiate these identities in everyday life'. He has theorised the concept of the 'enterprising' or 'self-governing' subject, who, through a range of management practices, is reconstituted into the 'strategic human resource' of an organisation. Blackmore and Sachs (2001) have discussed this reconstitution in terms of the adaptations success-oriented individuals make to 'fit' in to new organizational cultures, for example tailoring research to fit funding objectives, repackaging learning in online or other modes or participating as a manager in organizational restructuring and downsizing operations.

White (2003) maintains that the continuing under-representation of women at the top of Australian universities is a result of the dominant Anglo-Celtic, middle-class, male executive profile and that male managers tend to promote men (and some few white, middle-class women) in their own image while ignoring or regarding as 'light-weight' the majority of women. Furthermore, constructions of merit and informal networks that operate within senior management are part of a male hegemony, 'boys club' that marginalises women from the informal communication and decisionmaking channels. She identifies the corporatisation of higher education, where middle managers such as heads of schools are charged with managing budgets and changes set by senior management as a cause of stress. She suggests that such factors have made many women think twice about taking on management roles. White also maintains that diversity programs in higher education have not really worked and there is still an element of tokenism in relation to women; change to the masculinist cultures of universities are needed if the situation for women is to improve.

Most recently Eveline (2004) has documented and analysed a gender equity change process at the University of Western Australia where an inclusive climate and culture was fashioned from a highly traditional, male-centric work environment. This culture made practical diverse changes such as modifying the promotion system to acknowledge teaching, and implementing a Leadership Development program for women that supported their promotion aspirations and making the physical environment safe for women. By giving permission for this

cultural change and by having more women at or near 'the top' of the organisational hierarchy, symbolic support was also offered to academic and administrative staff women, raising their expectations of themselves and of a fair and equitable workplace.

Somewhat in contrast to this, Probert (2005) has argued that national data does not fully support women's under-representation at higher levels in Australian universities. She maintains that women are not clustered in the ranks of casuals any more than men, are not less successful than men at applying for promotion (although fewer women put themselves forward and are less likely to have multiple 'tries' at promotion than men) and do not have higher teaching loads. However, they do have lower qualifications and entry levels than men (12.2% with PhDs on entry compared to 38.25% of men, 50% of women enter at Level A compared to 34.4% of men), are less likely than men to apply for promotion, have a lower research output and spend more time on administration and student issues.

At the University of New South Wales where Probert conducted her case study, it was apparent that fewer female academic staff lived with a partner than is the national higher education average and that a number of women divorced during or just after their PhD studies leaving them with greater family responsibilities (Probert 2005). Furthermore the impact of caring fell more heavily on all female academic staff, not just for young children but for teenage children (more complex life issues, which could not be dealt with by anyone other than a parent) and aged relatives. Probert concluded that the gendered pattern of PhD completions, which was a human capital factor in promotion was related to women often being too exhausted to take up or complete PhD studies. Their full time work in the academic job that never ends and through which they cannot exert the power of absence (ability to work from home is a double edged sword meaning more juggling over most waking hours) and the gendered nature of their family responsibilities (gender politics of the home, absent or no partner) leave little time for research.

All of the studies above offer pieces of the jigsaw that indicate women's under-representation at higher levels and in management roles in universities is a phenomenon of multiple and complex factors. I will add one more human capital perspective to that mix; that of formal and informal development opportunities that give women both the skills, networks and confidence to take on more senior roles.

The kinds of development experiences that enable women to take that leap to middle and senior management have been identified as an important, although not the only, factor in career progression (Wentling 2003). Existing Australian studies do not appear to focus on the human resource development aspects of career progression for women in universities although there is broader evidence from the management literature that human resource development activities

including a range of management development skills (communication, leadership, negotiation, strategic management and financial planning) and mentoring by experienced senior staff are contributing factors to career progression (Wentling 2003). I acknowledge that HRD is only one of many factors that support women in management roles but also acknowledge that the management literature suggests that middle management is a demanding role that usually prepares individuals to be the higher level managers of tomorrow.

This paper presents some results from two studies of female academic managers. The first is a qualitative case study undertaken in an Australian regional university. Issues for the women surrounding leadership and management styles, workplace culture, work/life balance and work identity are examined in the light of concepts of work identity and the 'enterprising subject' (du Gay 1996). The second study, presented here as preliminary results, involves a survey of three hundred and forty two women, middle managers (both academic and administrative) from the broad range of Australian universities. Discussion in this paper focuses on human resource development (HRD) practices and other experiences that have prepared the academic women for their current roles and explores the learning opportunities open to them to support career development. Other related experiences in their roles are also discussed. In doing this I acknowledge that not all women aspire to glass ceiling leadership (Priola 2004). Interviews will be conducted with a number of the women in the second stage.

The Case Study

The first study involved in depth interviews with the majority of women in academic management roles in one, small Australian university (Wallace 2003). At the time of the study (2002) in this university, there were eighty-one men and twenty-six women in positions of senior lecturer and above (University X - EEO Profile 2001). Yet nine of the twenty academic managers from heads of schools to PVC were female as women had put themselves forward in a less than 'chilly' climate created by the then (male) VC.

Seven of nine female academic line managers participated in the study. One of these women was an Indigenous Australian; the other six were white, middle class Australians with a predominantly Anglo-Irish heritage. Three of the seven women were Professors, one was an Associate Professor and three were Senior Lecturers. Their backgrounds were in the humanities, education, arts and sciences. Four of the women had PhDs or equivalent and two were undertaking PhDs. None of the women had children at home and two had never had children. All of the women were aged between the late forties to late-fifties.

One of the striking findings from this study was the general lack of preparation the women had experienced for their roles, other than ad hoc experience, and the lack of development once in their roles. Another was the pressures on the women managing in a corporatised and entrepreneurial environment. This was

not about discipline bases, which their qualifications had equipped them for but it was about managing and planning in a highly competitive, gendered environment and, with the exception being Blackmore and Sachs (2000), there was a general silence in the Australian literature about women managing in new times in the academy. These findings thus prompted the second study.

It has previously been identified that 'little attention has been given to the leadership attitudes, performance and development needs of women holding leadership positions in universities' (Joyner and Preston 1998) and it seems that this was still the situation at the case study university. Few of the women had experienced any structured development for their current or previous management roles but went 'straight in the deep end' and their preparation had been on-the-job through experience as course co-coordinators, project managers, directors and non-line-manager centre heads – all untrained.

Several women also mentioned observing the management behaviour of others, including what NOT to do as well as effective behaviours. Concern was expressed that an individual and organizational opportunity had been lost at the case study university in not getting all managers together for strategic planning activities and not developing strategic management and business/entrepreneurial skills. The 'boys in Business', business and management schools, were seen to be in the ascendancy in the organization as entrepreneurs and managers as they already had some of these skills from their discipline bases.

Two of the women spoke of the developmental advice offered by an immediate previous supervisor. In these cases there were more male informal mentors than female, unsurprisingly as more senior academic personnel are male. Although several did report some mentoring from their more senior, female or male supervisor in the case study organization, three felt that they had not been supported in their roles and they had not been mentored. It was seen that a greater amount of informal mentoring went on with male senior and junior staff whereas the women felt that they needed to go out of their way and explicitly ask for mentoring from a male or female supervisor. Ramsay (2000, p. 6) offers evidence that women in universities are less likely to be mentored than their male colleagues and has identified that:

Exclusion from informal networks, career sponsoring relationships and other avenues, which provide the basis for career advancement and advantage to their male colleagues has been identified as critical for women in all forms of organizations, including universities.

Experience and, in some cases, mentoring, had given these women some informal preparation for their roles. One woman noted the lack of formal or senior management supported development activities for academic women managers in the case study institution, commenting, 'Our Equal Opportunity figures look OK so it seems we don't need further development'.

While at face value human resource development interventions may be seen as benign, it should also be acknowledged that specific women in management programs can also be seen as an appropriation by the new corporate culture of women's strengths (Brooks 2001) and that mentoring can be viewed as a practice that 'clones' or reconstitutes the academic identity to organizational ends (Townley 1994). Notwithstanding this, most of the women identified areas of unmet development needs including industrial relations, financial management, strategic management, entrepreneurial/business skills, business negotiations skills and further understanding of sectoral issues. While laudable from one perspective it must also be acknowledged that all of these skills also better 'fit' the individual for the demands of the more corporatised and managerialist university sector, making them 'better' managers. This paradox of the incorporation of women 'into the new masculinist managerialism' (Leonard 1998, p. 79) was not lost on some of the participants.

As may be expected, their own leadership styles were seen by the women to be consultative with an emphasis on communication. A commitment to success and the active facilitation of planning was seen as both part of moving their unit through change processes. Taking a longer-term view, engaging in strategic planning and adopting some more innovative business planning and accountability practices was also seen to be part of their change management focus.

The development and support of staff and accountability to their peers was seen by all as an important part of their role: 'The people issues are 90% of the job - it's the responsibility you have to other staff'. One woman saw her role specifically as a 'motherly' one, nurturing each staff member for the overall good of the work group. Another felt particular responsibility for the career development of the large number of professional staff in her unit. Similarly, valuing people was also seen as important: 'You need to recognize people for what they do'. This ranged from giving public praise and recognition to staff for achievements, to offering practical support to staff undertaking higher degrees.

Several leaders discussed bringing together factionalised and often hostile groups among academics or between academics and professional (administrative or technical) staff or of bringing back 'into the fold' individually disaffected staff. It was perceived by a number of the women that an understanding of different group cultures and grievances was needed. Individual approaches and communication with staff as well as facilitated group meetings that sought common ground and a shared vision and commitment to the future success of the unit were seen as proactive ways to move groups forward.

Recognition from their superiors and peers as leaders and skilled managers was important to a number of the women. For some women there was an issue in being taken seriously as a manager, as one woman said, ' We need to rise to the

challenge to be recognized appropriately'. Consultation, sharing rather than withholding of knowledge, being open and fair were thus ways of being recognized by peers and staff. However it was also acknowledged that to be taken seriously as a manager one had to 'Call on reserves, do lots of homework for funding and grants, provide skills to others, not take any bullshit, watch my back and stand up for my discipline area'.

Other factors were also seen to be important in achieving recognition from university Executive. Earning extra funds for the organization in the entrepreneurial climate was seen as a behaviour that was rewarded in managers in terms of organizational kudos and respect from senior management as Sara stated, 'Those who advance the university in dollar terms advance their own career'. Initiating entrepreneurial activities and winning large dollar research grants or consultancies were perceived as among the behaviours most valued in the organizational culture. Ramsay (2000, p. 7) has identified this continual imperative for women in leadership positions to re-establish credibility with superiors, peers and subordinates as a factor that drains morale and threatens productivity.

Although it was recognized that there was not an overt 'boys club' in the organization, especially when women were present, it was perceived that such behaviours were latent among some staff:

There is a bravado and point scoring – never when we are all together although it's there and wouldn't take much to get a hold.

The women below full professorial level particularly discussed stalling their careers because of their management roles within the juggling act of teaching and research. These women saw themselves spread too thinly over each area and recognized that possessing higher degrees and having a robust research profile as well as 'making money' were needed if they wished to further their careers. These women saw getting time for research and completion of PhDs as problematic.

In attending to the people issues, all of these women seem to be undertaking a great deal of emotional labour for the organization (Hochschild 1983) or performing the 'glue work' that keeps an organization functioning (Eveline 2004). Several mentioned organizational expectations of them as managers related to 'keeping the lid' on issues, 'controlling the troops when the flack hits', 'being responsible managers of the budget', 'compliance and conservatism'. However, the qualities that some of the women identified in themselves and other women managers as selflessness, humour and a high ethical stance were noted as the very qualities that worked against them in terms of playing the politics of 'managing up' for recognition and patronage and gaining time to research or publish.

A number of the women articulated the paradoxes in their roles. The very skills and qualities that made them good people managers were also seen as positioning them as part of the managerialist culture, 'doing the dirty work for management' when difficult matters needed to be dealt with. Several of the women appreciated that their consultative styles could be appropriated by the new managerialism to keep the workforce involved and compliant, particularly in relation to industrial relations issues such as intensification of work. However, these women also perceived that they brought a more humanistic orientation to often difficult staffing and budgetary matters and argued that because of their transparent management practice: 'It would be worse if we weren't in there working'. Each woman had also had to make a specific commitment to or decide to opt out of the entrepreneurial culture although the needs for business skills was appreciated by all.

Munford and Rumball (2001) identify that many women experience greater discomfort or tension if they are operating in situations that seem contrary to their own philosophy. A number of the women expressed an awareness of the considerable pressures on academic managers to reconstruct the self to performativity criteria and thus gain the 'goodies' of recognition from senior management, including promotion. However, alongside this was a very clear commitment to equitable and inclusive practices.

At one level, the work identities of the women in this study have been reconstituted to performativity criteria as they have taken on the contemporary values of the sector and the organization in governing the workforce. The paradox is that while there is also a level of resistance on the part of the women to certain practices or management roles that are not humanistic and empowering, their very 'women's way' of managing is also co-opted to organizational ends.

Furthermore, in undertaking the often invisible emotional work of the organization a price is paid by those women in more front-line positions as they have little time or energy to 'do the things that really count' in terms of organizational values. While these women recognized that they were being good people managers, the perception was also expressed that the 'real action' was happening elsewhere and that they were putting inordinate time into maintaining organizational health. Chesterman et al (2003) in their broad study of Australian senior female university managers has observed a similar phenomenon.

At the same time several of the women articulated the wish to pursue their career paths with a management element and identified the lack of structured and informal development opportunities, specifically around financial management, industrial relations, strategic planning and the management of change in an environment that has become more complex, turbulent and competitive.

The Survey

The survey was sent to all women I identified as middle managers (academic and administrative staff) on the Australian Vice-Chancellors' (AVCC) List of Senior University Women (AVCC 2004) under the following definitions:

'...the managers above direct supervisors, but below executive level management in an organization'.

(www.ivey.uwo.ca/intl_students/dictionary/OB_dic.htm)

'The level of management that includes general managers, division managers, and branch managers who are responsible for tactical planning and controlling'.

(www.mhhe.com/business/busadmin/nickels_6_ub/student/olc/glossary.mhtml)

'A level of supervisory employees who implement the decisions of top management'.

(glencoe.com/sec/busadmin/marketing/dp/entre/gloss.shtml)

The women were invited to complete the survey if they deemed that this description applied to them. Questions involved basic demographics, including academic or administrative levels, years in role, hours worked, highest qualifications and highest qualifications related to their current management job, development activities experienced, recommendations for a management induction program suited to women, satisfactions and dissatisfactions with the job and challenges facing female managers. The findings presented here are preliminary and partial. Follow up interviews will also be conducted with those who have contacted the researcher as invited.

Seven hundred and fifty surveys were distributed by mail and there were three hundred and forty two replies, one hundred and seventy of these from academics. A summary of basic demographics and some HRD information regarding the academic staff only appears in Appendix 1.

The academic women were generally Deans or Deputy Deans, Heads of Schools/Departments/Directorates/Research Centres. They had a much higher PhD rate (71.8%) than the women in Probert's study and this may be a factor of their age, years of service and academic levels. Again from the human capital perspective one of the most interesting aspects is the relative dearth of development activities. Of the 170 women 39.6% reported no relevant activities at all. The following tables summarise the type and participation levels in development activities of those 60% of women who did receive development. Some women reported more than one activity hence the columns will not reflect 100%.

Table 1 Development Activities for Academics in Preparation for Current Role

	Yes %	No %
In-house management training	32.4	67.6
In-house technical training	7.6	92.4
In-house leadership development program	24.1	75.9
AVCC leadership or management program	15.9	84.1
ATEM leadership or management program	1.8	98.2
Short course outside university	10.0	90.0
Mentoring	32.9	67.1
Accredited professional qualification	4.7	95.3
Degree in area related to role	15.3	84.7

AVCC – Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee

ATEM – Association of Tertiary Education Managers

Of the sixty three responses to the open ended question regarding what other HRD activities had prepared them for their current role, twenty-nine cited other work experience, including eighteen who had previously worked outside the university sector and nine only, who reported other types of formal courses (such as at the Australian Graduate School of Management).

What was striking from this material and that in Appendix A was that while a relatively high number had PhDs, only 56% of these women deemed these qualifications were related to their current roles. In addition, it was apparent that some women had been involved in multiple development opportunities and these tended to come from the UniTechs, which have had a specific Women in Leadership Program since the late 90s and from individual universities that cannot readily be identified but are from across the range. A number of those women who did have multiple development opportunities had experienced them in other sectors and experiences in other sectors was seen as an advantage in university management (This was also a dominant factor for HEW staff).

Given the percentage of women who report no relevant development and from the Table above, the levels of development appear to be quite low with the exception of in-house management training and leadership development and mentoring.

These figures can be compared to female academic managers development activities while in their current roles, where 59% of female academic managers reported no relevant activities.

Table 2 Development Activities for Academics while in Current Role

	Yes %	No %
In-house management training	38.2	61.8
In-house technical training	14.7	85.3
In-house leadership development program	30.6	69.4
AVCC leadership or management program	13.5	86.5
ATEM leadership or management program	1.2	98.8
Short course outside university	10.0	90.0
Mentoring	28.8	71.2
Accredited professional qualification	1.2	98.8
Degree in area related to role	4.7	95.3

While the number of women receiving development activities has declined, those who do appear to have had development report an increase, especially in forms of in-house development. Mentoring has declined somewhat.

While the experiences of the female HEW managers will not be explored here, it is worth noting that in almost every category these women have received somewhat more development than their academic colleagues. For instance, only 17% report no relevant prior development and 34.6% report no relevant, current development. In relation to leadership development 20.9% report participating in AVCC programs (academics 13.5%), and 25% report being involved in other leadership programs (academics 10.3%). Mentoring is almost identical for both groups. One of the reasons for this higher level of training may be that academic managers are still seen as mainly working in the teaching and research sphere while HEW managers are more involved with legislative, financial, human resource, industrial relations and other spheres. The evidence from the open ended questions asked of the academic managers only partially bear this out.

Overwhelmingly, the academic managers reported people issues as the greatest source of satisfaction in their jobs. 'Developing and mentoring people', 'developing achieving teams', 'developing staff morale', 'helping others achieve their goals', 'helping students, including post-graduates', 'improving the work environment', 'personal career development of colleagues' and 'contributing to the development of the work group and university' were cited by almost 100% of respondents.

Related to this and coming a close second was elements relating to the planning and the management of change in the discipline area: 'getting the school to forward plan in the teaching and learning area and address assessment issues rather than ignoring them' 'achievements in the discipline', 'make progress by getting more students and more grants'.

Finally, a few addressed broader issues of 'project management and co-ordination of complex tasks' and 'formulating specific plans and initiatives to

improve systems and meet student and staff needs' and 'ability to make a difference – innovate and influence change in the wider university'.

While all of these may be seen as 'glue work' they evidence a group of managers engaged with the discipline content and people context of their work. Only about 7% of the respondents expressed such dissatisfaction with their role that they considered leaving management or the university sector. The majority appeared to be women of the organisation in there to work hard, 'make a difference' and for many, seek advancement.

The managers dissatisfactions in their roles overwhelmingly related to the the behaviours of senior management. They cited 'slowness of Senior Executive to respond to new initiatives', 'lack of support form senior management in enabling Deans to manage their own staff', 'continual changes in reporting relationships with changes in senior managers', 'continual regressive change and restructuring', 'lack of clarity of direction from senior management'. While such comments may be seen as the lot of the middle manager sandwiched between competing demands there is a real sense of distance between senior and middle management and frustration with planning and communication processes. While this issue will be further explored in the interviews one reason could be that senior management is so busy managing in the increasingly turbulent funding and industrial relations environment in Australia that the 'managing down' has been sacrificed to the 'managing out'. Another possibility relates to the speculation that private enterprise or better paid overseas posts are now attracting many of those who would once have aspired to university Executive roles (Hare and Devlin 2005).

Overdemands of the job, lack of resources, internal politics and hidden agendas in their organizations were also noted by a number of women. All of the comments on dissatisfaction could equally be applied to the situation of male middle managers and numbers of women noted this. However, when read alongside reports on the challenges of being a female, academic middle manager they offer a slightly different picture.

Unsurprisingly, the questions regarding the challenges facing female managers in universities and the opportunity to raise other issues evoked the greatest and most emotive responses. Seventy percent of the academic women reported challenges in achieving work/life balance and while many related this to carer responsibilities and the loose concept of academic work hours many comments echoed the following:

I have no children but I will not compromise my relationship for work. I attend 1-2 after work functions per year out of 11 or 12'.

The second most mentioned challenge is that of being recognised in the university environment for the work one does. This included reference to 'promotion criteria that continue to privilege research over service or teaching',

'that effective management is constructed from a male perspective' and 'being given the grunge aspects of the work while men are given the show pony stuff'. A related aspect was a strongly reported opinion that a 'boys club' still exists through 'lack of transparency and informal decision-making among a few men', 'the scarcity of men in volunteer service roles' and 'the lack of quality in many of the males above' and 'paternalism' and 'avuncular behaviour' that is condescending and disempowering. However, there was recognition that it is who you know in the university network(s) and accessing male patronage, playing the politics and networking as well as being technically excellent that supported advancement.

A number of women did report that women still have to work harder to be recognised but that 'we are more circumspect in putting ourselves forward'. It was admitted that:

Often we spend more time on getting the job done really well and taking our eye off what has to be done for our own advancement. We have to fight the 'worker bee' syndrome.

Long hours (42% reported working between 51 and 60 hours per week), excessive travel demands, administrative layers, bureaucracy and the increased climate of risk management, compliance and complaint were recognised as challenges but around half the women recognised that these were the same challenges for men in middle management as well. Interestingly, mention was not overtly made to managing in a turbulent, competitive and entrepreneurial climate. However, when asked to suggest the kinds of development activities a middle manager should have, the ability to operate politically and entrepreneurially along with the related aspects of financial management/budgeting were the most mentioned factors. Leadership development, understanding power structures and 'managing up' were also strongly reported. Two of the most mentioned development techniques were mentoring and shadowing a successful manager. The interviews will further probe these issues.

Conclusion

In the case study five of the women articulated the paradoxes in their roles. The very skills and qualities that made them good people managers were also seen as positioning them as part of the managerialist culture, 'doing the dirty work for management' when difficult matters needed to be dealt with. Several of the women appreciated that their consultative styles could be seen to be appropriated by the new managerialism to keep the workforce involved and compliant, particularly in relation to industrial relations issues such as intensification of work. However, these women also perceived that they brought a more humanistic orientation to often difficult staffing and budgetary matters and argued that because of their transparent management practice: 'It would be worse if we weren't in there working'.

At one level, the work identities of the women in the case study have been reconstituted to performativity criteria as they have taken on the contemporary values of the sector and the organization in governing the workforce. The paradox is that while there is also a level of resistance on the part of the women to certain practices or management roles that are not humanistic and empowering, their very 'women's way' of managing is also co-opted to organizational ends. The engagement of the women in the survey can also be seen to be doing the 'glue work' of the organization, keeping staff productive and managing change in a way that causes the least ripples of dissent.

In both studies, through undertaking the often invisible emotional work of the organization a price is paid by some women as they have little time or energy to 'do the things that really count' in terms of organizational values or advancing their careers. These findings accord with those of Probert (2005). While these women recognized that they were being good people managers, the perception was also expressed that the 'real action' was happening elsewhere and that they were putting such inordinate time into maintaining organizational health that they had taken their eye off their own advancement or development and needed windows of time 'to do self-development and research to improve career options'.

In both studies gendered university cultures were recognized as still existing and this may well be where 'the action' and real decision making occurs. Both studies strongly evidenced a concern that women were not recognised for their contribution to the core business of the university and wanted this recognition. This need for recognition is part of the identity work that the women in both studies appear to be engaged in as the 'practices confirmed by others as desirable' (Townley 1994, p. 142) such as PhDs, development opportunities, promotion, interesting projects, possibly travel are the rewards of academe. In a previous study of women on the 'sticky floor' of organizations (Wallace 2003) I identified similar types of discursive practices such as development opportunities, interesting work, recognition by the almost exclusively male management as factors in work identity formation.

It is also clear from both studies that a large number of the women were keen to progress their careers and recognized that they needed to do less of the, often taken for granted, 'glue work' and focus on developing the 'hard' business and political skills to progress their careers perhaps thus tying themselves to the masculinist cultures of their institutions.

My initial hunch that the increased corporatisation and profitmaking mission of universities was offering even greater management challenges to women was not fully borne out by the responses. I had deliberately not begged the question of the more competitive and entrepreneurial nature of university work in the new order of things but will probe this more specifically in interviews as both White (2003) and Blackmore and Sachs (2001) have flagged this issue. It may be surmised that just as more women are taking on management roles in academe,

the going has got harder through government funding cut backs, increased industrial relations and other legislative interventions that reinforce the competitive and masculinist cultures of universities (Bartram 2005). Whether this factor has affected women in middle management definitely needs further exploration.

Notwithstanding this I did not find evidence that these women were 'just' managing to keep their heads above water nor were they just 'managing' in the instrumentalist sense as they were fully engaged in the people and change management and discipline specific aspects of their roles. They are really managing in more transactional ways but do recognize that they do so in a culture that remains gendered and that they need further human capital in the forms of development opportunities to remain 'competitive' and be taken seriously in their environments.

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