

2020

# THE WOMEN'S PLACE Status Report on Women at Ohio State



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

The Women's Place



## CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF THE WOMEN'S PLACE AND OHIO STATE WOMEN

As The Ohio State University celebrates its sesquicentennial anniversary, The Women's Place (TWP) celebrates its 20th anniversary and its part in making Ohio State a thriving community for talented women staff and faculty.

The Women's Place identifies and implements evidence-based strategies for promoting women's advancement through four focus areas: **culture change, policy review, leadership development, and reporting the status of Ohio State women.** This report highlights the accomplishments of TWP and women at Ohio State, as well as highlights the trends that can make Ohio State a present and future leader in gender equity.

### BUILDING MOMENTUM FOR CHANGE AT THE UNIVERSITY

When Ohio State began classes in 1873, several women applied to attend, but the Board of Trustees had not anticipated admitting women. After holding a special meeting to deliberate a decision, the trustees granted women entry. Still, because Ohio State had been established primarily to meet the needs of men, its culture did not immediately prioritize women on an equal basis.

Dissatisfied with the slow pace of change towards gender equality, in the 1980s and 1990s, informal grassroots networks among women—as well as the Association of Faculty and Professional Women (now the Association of Staff and Faculty Women), the Council on Academic Excellence for Women, and Critical Difference for Women—advocated for women's recognition and advancement. Building momentum over the years, women's networks laid the foundation for the creation of The Women's Place. With the administrative support of Ohio State presidents Gordon Gee and William Kirwan in the 1990s, The Women's Place was launched in January 2000.

As an example of the difference The Women's Place has made on campus over the years, Sara Childers points to her own career at Ohio State. Sara began as a graduate assistant at TWP during its first year of development in 1999-2000. She completed her doctorate, became a faculty member, and then returned to TWP to work as the assistant director. Now she is the director of strategic diversity planning, training and assessment in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. "Much of what I learned about negotiating university politics I learned at TWP and took that with me into faculty

life. Now I am back in higher education administration and there is not a day that goes by that I do not call on past relationships and experiences to guide how I do my work," she said.

Wanda Dillard, director of Community Development for Wexner Medical Center, had a similar experience. "The Women's Place has assisted me in learning about campus and networking and inspired me to be a better person," she said. The Women's Place aims to enable many more women to attest to their positive experiences and success at Ohio State.



Since its inception, The Women's Place has had four directors (left to right): Jennifer Beard, Hazel Morrow-Jones, Deborah (Deb) Ballam and Judy Fountain Yesso. Each one extended the vision and reach of The Women's Place.

## CREATING A MORE INCLUSIVE UNIVERSITY CULTURE

As part of its mission to **change university culture**, The Women's Place models the practice of the [Art of Hosting Meaningful Conversations](#) (AoH): a collection of highly effective techniques to harness collective wisdom and the self-organizing capacity of groups. When Deb Ballam was TWP director, she introduced Art of Hosting as a discussion model that values the multiple perspectives people bring to meetings and decision-making. This approach includes women and other underrepresented individuals who often are not consulted or respected. Core to the Art of Hosting approach is the idea that it matters for everyone to have a seat and a say at the proverbial table. Over the years, The Women's Place has shared these techniques with more than 400 Art of Hosting practitioners. The impact of Art of Hosting can be summed up best by one of its most dedicated practitioners, Mary Jo Burkhard, an associate dean at the College of Veterinary Medicine: "Art of Hosting was transformational in starting me down the path I'm on ... It helped me understand you could think and lead differently, from a co-hosting, co-leading model ... I use the leadership, Art of Hosting and diversity training in every aspect of my current position."

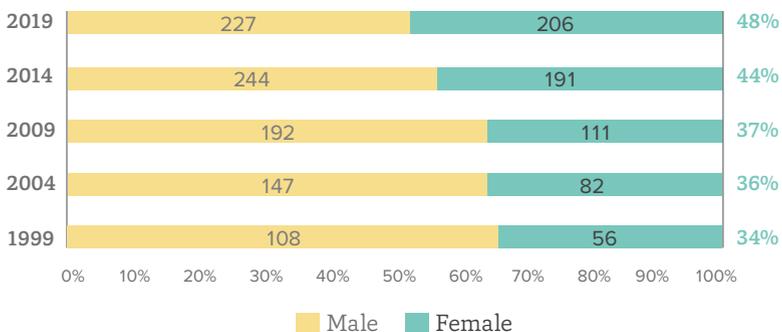
The Women's Place also **advocates for policies** that not only encourage more women to work for Ohio State, but also help Ohio State work for women. In coordination with TWP, the President's Council on Women (later renamed as the [President and Provost's Council on Women](#) - PPCW) was established in 2001 to advocate to senior administrators for policies and practices that improve the working conditions for women at the university. Each year, PPCW task force committees focus on target issues, such as employee career progression and mentoring, work/life balance, and the availability of affordable childcare. Recently, the council explored the barriers to current Ohio State staff taking fuller advantage of the tuition benefits the university offers to employees.

Together, TWP and PPCW have partnered in championing policies such as these:

- flexible work arrangements
- extension of the tenure clock for birth, adoption or illness
- expanded parental leave that includes postdoctoral researchers

These improvements demonstrate that creating an environment in which women can thrive benefits the entire campus community. Susan Williams, English professor and former vice provost for academic policy and faculty resources, explains, "The Women's Place has helped create policies and practices, especially related to work-life balance and career development, that have made Ohio State a better place to work, engage, teach, and conduct research."

### Hires By Year (1999-2019)



While, in 1999, the university hired men as faculty nearly twice as often as women, now men and women are hired at nearly equal rates as incoming professors.

# CULTIVATING DIVERSE LEADERSHIP

**“Much of what I learned about negotiating university politics I learned at TWP and took that with me into faculty life. Now I am back in higher education administration and there is not a day that goes by that I do not call on past relationships and experiences to guide how I do my work.” – Sara Childers**

advance into formal leadership positions, but also can lead from whatever positions they occupy. Participants in PPLI and SLS recognize leadership as the practice of asserting ethical, informed, and meaningful influence to disrupt traditional hierarchies.

Nearly 300 women have completed SLS and almost 200 participants have taken part in PPLI. Past participants have advanced into campus leadership in positions such as program directors, department chairs, deans, and executive staff. Women now constitute 29% of department chairs compared to 18% in 2010. Leaders such as Alicia Bertone, now dean of the Graduate School, Nicole Nieto, assistant vice provost for the Office of Outreach and Engagement, and Sarah Hughes, director of advising on the Ohio State Newark campus, are among those who are former participants in TWP leadership programs.

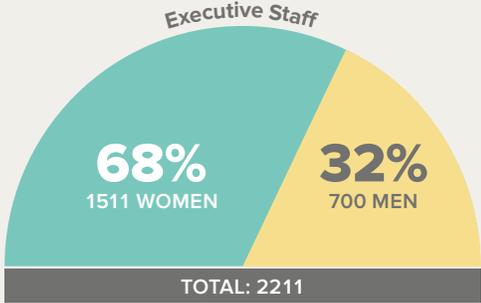
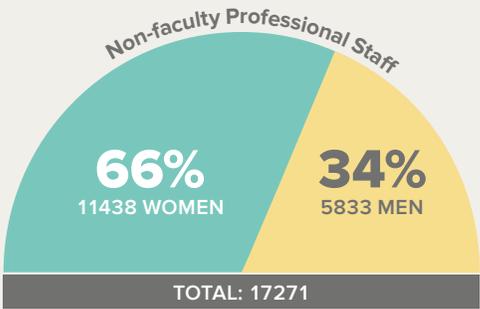
**Fostering women’s leadership** is key to both building on Ohio State’s past and maximizing the present. Motivated to equip confident and capable women leaders, TWP created two interactive leadership series in partnership with the Office of Human Resources: The [President and Provost’s Leadership Institute \(PPLI\)](#), primarily for faculty, and the [Staff Leadership Series \(SLS\)](#).

Both programs aim to develop a pipeline of ambitious women and people from under-represented backgrounds who not only can



**Through hands-on activities and discussions, leaders in SLS and PPLI build networks and experience.**

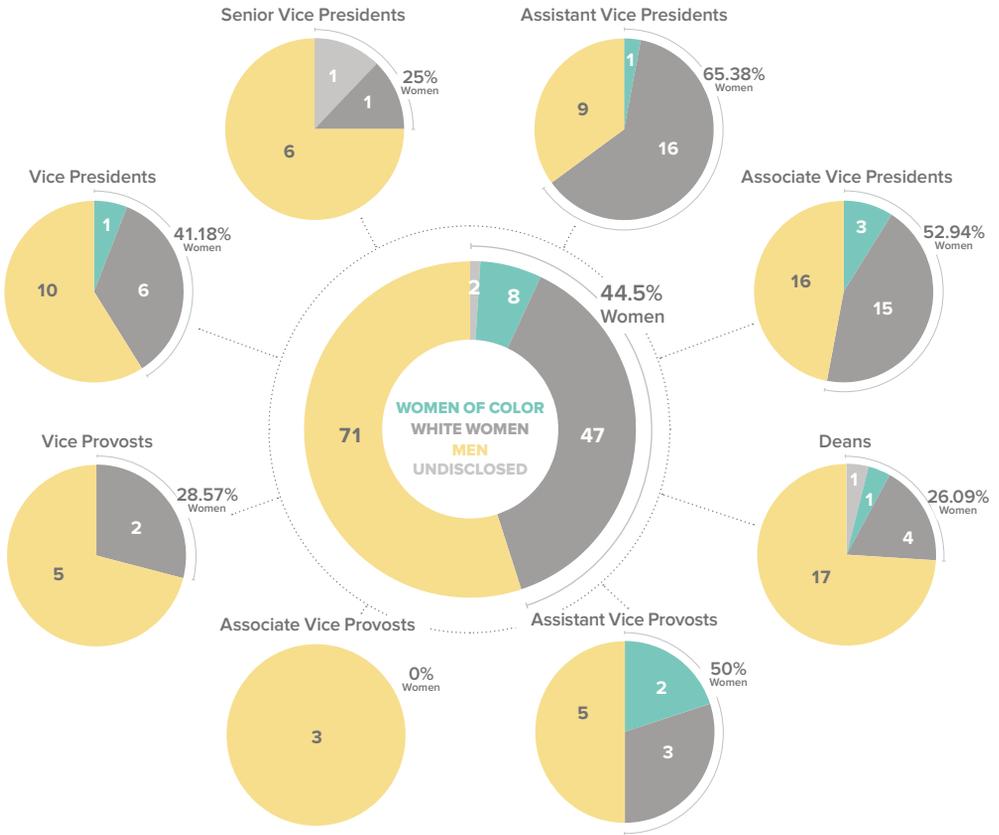
## Professional and Executive Staff By Gender



Women constitute the majority of executive staff leaders with titles such as director, assistant and associate directors, and managers. Among non-faculty professional women, 78% are white women.

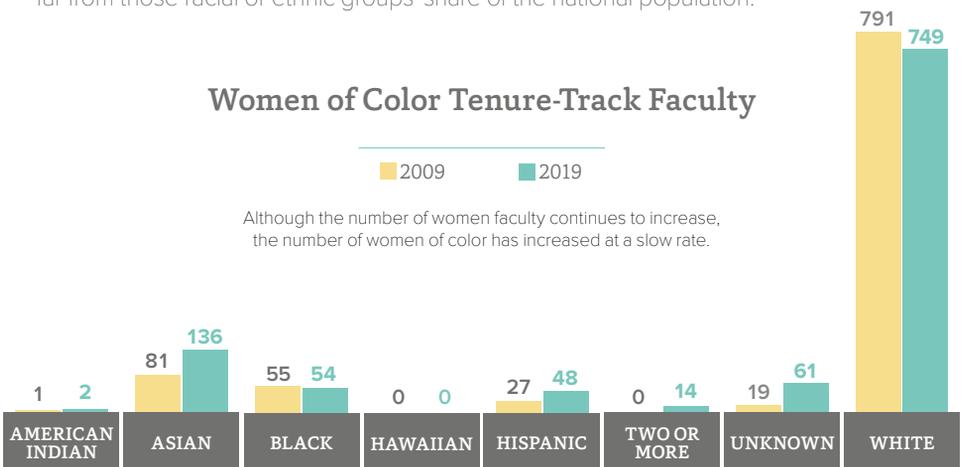
**Data throughout the report provided by the Office of Human Resources and the Association of American Universities Data Exchange (AAUDE). Report reflects data as of September 2019 for academic year 2019-2020.**

# Women in Senior Administrative Positions



When Ohio State invests in cultivating women’s leadership and providing opportunities for their internal promotion, the university stands to move the needle of progress even further in the direction of gender parity and inclusive representation. Invigorating the university’s commitment to diversity is key for recently appointed campus leaders such as Wendy Smooth, who completed PPLI and is now associate dean for diversity, equity and inclusion for the College of Arts and Sciences. Still, information for both Ohio State and national benchmarks indicate that women—particularly women of color—are underrepresented in leadership. Over the past two decades, the status of all women of color working in the academy has seen only minimal gains and, in some cases, decline. There are fewer Black women tenure-track professors at Ohio State now than a decade ago. While the total number of women of color employed by Ohio State continues to increase, this growth is proportionate to the increase of employees in general. As a result, the percentage of women of color faculty at the university remains far from those racial or ethnic groups’ share of the national population.

## Women of Color Tenure-Track Faculty



Although the number of women faculty continues to increase, the number of women of color has increased at a slow rate.

## ENVISIONING A BOLD FUTURE

The situation for women at Ohio State has improved, but challenges remain. Full inclusion of women in higher education includes expanding the language and practices to welcome and support **all** woman-identified, non-binary, and gender nonconforming individuals at the university. Gender equity affects everyone.



**In 2018, The Women’s Place convened a dialogue for LGBTQ+ faculty and staff and subsequently produced a guide to highlight Ohio State’s resources, including medical benefits for same-sex partners and trans-affirming health care at the Wexner Medical Center.**

It is everyone’s responsibility to create a just environment. Such transformation cannot be the work of women alone. To this end, The Women’s Place coordinates the [Advocates & Allies](#) program. Through this program, committed senior male Advocates facilitate conversations among male faculty and staff about how to be Allies in improving the campus climate. Advocates have facilitated conversations with nearly 500 male Allies across Ohio State, including on the regional campuses. Cesar Seguil, director of programs and administration in the College of Pharmacy, reflects, “As a staff member in a leadership role, I’ve greatly valued my involvement in the

Advocates & Allies for Equity initiative. I’ve learned to leverage my male privilege to advocate and support others that are underrepresented.” [Nominations for new Advocates](#) are welcomed through the TWP website.

A 21st-century land grant institution must foster inclusive excellence. Ohio State has the highest percentage of women faculty by headcount in the Big Ten with 36.4%, but more needs to be done to increase women’s representation across faculty ranks. Nationwide, although women of all races make up 51% of women at the assistant professor rank, women’s representation declines at the higher ranks, with women as 45% of associate professors with tenure and only 33% of professors. At Ohio State, women now constitute 44% of associate professors with tenure, but only 28% of full professors, below the national averages. The diminishing rate of women faculty progressing through their careers to the highest ranks is a concerning trend.

### Faculty By Gender 2019



Ohio State has the opportunity and resources to be a national leader on gender equity. The Women’s Place is dedicated to continuing to advance these efforts by advocating for more women in senior leadership positions, eliminating gender gaps in pay equity, mentoring women to promotion, and embracing diversity and inclusion in hiring.

# WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT AND GENDER EQUITY?

- **Credit women publicly for their ideas and contributions to scholarship, discussions, and collaborative projects.**
- **Incorporate discussions, announcements, and trainings about inclusive excellence into regularly scheduled faculty and staff meetings.**
  - o Make clear how promoting diversity is critical to the success of your unit's academic mission and business purpose. Consult with The Women's Place about how to facilitate these meaningful conversations through the [Art of Hosting](#).
- **Mentor a woman colleague. Connect women with resources and networks that can help advance their careers.**
- **Nominate a woman colleague for a university or national award, prize, or leadership position.**
  - o [Write letters](#) that emphasize women's intellect, skills, accomplishments and potential over their personal qualities.
- **Promote work-life balance for all employees, including those with caregiving responsibilities.**
  - o When scheduling meetings and events, recognize that women often have disproportionate responsibilities for childcare and caring for elders during evenings, weekends, and peak school drop-off and pick-up times.
  - o Support men in taking parental leave.
- **Commit to addressing gender pay gaps.**
  - o As a woman employee, negotiate to your advantage by thinking specifically and creatively about the kinds of compensations and resources that enable your career progression.
  - o As a supervisor or hiring manager, establish fair and transparent practices for rewarding employees.
  - o Find out more about how Ohio State is joining the Columbus Women's Commission in addressing the gender pay gap through The Columbus Commitment, an initiative for local employers to promote pay equity. [columbus.gov/payequity/](http://columbus.gov/payequity/)



- **Donate to Critical Difference for Women (CDW) at The Women's Place.**
  - o [CDW re-entry scholarships](#) support students who are returning to complete a degree after a disruption in their education. To donate, choose [fund number: 601496](#).
  - o [CDW professional development grants](#) support students, faculty and staff who want to advance their careers. To donate, choose [fund number: 309677](#).
  - o [CDW research grants](#) support students, faculty and staff who want to conduct research on women, gender and gender equity. To donate, choose [fund number: 641324](#).
- **Learn more about challenging bias in the workplace.**
  - o The Women's Place can provide ["Gender By Us" toolkits](#) and conversation starters from The Women's Fund of Central Ohio.
  - o The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity provides online modules that prepare you to take positive action. [kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/implicit-bias-training/](http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/implicit-bias-training/)
- **Stand up to tell colleagues about your commitment to gender equity.**
  - o Contact The Women's Place to schedule a facilitated conversation with [Advocates and Allies for Equity \(A&A\)](#) in your department or unit.



The Glass Breaker Award highlights the success of people at Ohio State who have improved workplace culture for women. The 2019 awardees (left to right) are Rose Backs, Nicole Nieto, and Heather Brod.

For more information and links to additional resources, visit [womensplace.osu.edu](http://womensplace.osu.edu).

## WHAT DOES THE WOMEN'S PLACE MEAN TO YOU?



“Change—in The Women’s Place—  
means being at the forefront of  
addressing issues that affect women.”

- Jacquelyn Meshelemiah, Associate  
Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion



“The Women’s Place has helped create  
policies and practices, especially  
related to work-life balance and  
career development, that have made  
Ohio State a better place to work,  
engage, teach, and conduct research.”

– Susan Williams, English Professor and former  
Vice Dean, College of Arts and Sciences



“[It’s] a network of friends and  
colleagues experiencing amazing  
learning opportunities”

-Donna Hight, Assistant Dean, Student Life  
& Success at Ohio State Mansfield campus



“It’s a valuable resource for all  
leaders, faculty and staff—inclusive  
excellence in action!”

- Leon McDougle, Chief Diversity Officer, Wexner  
Medical Center

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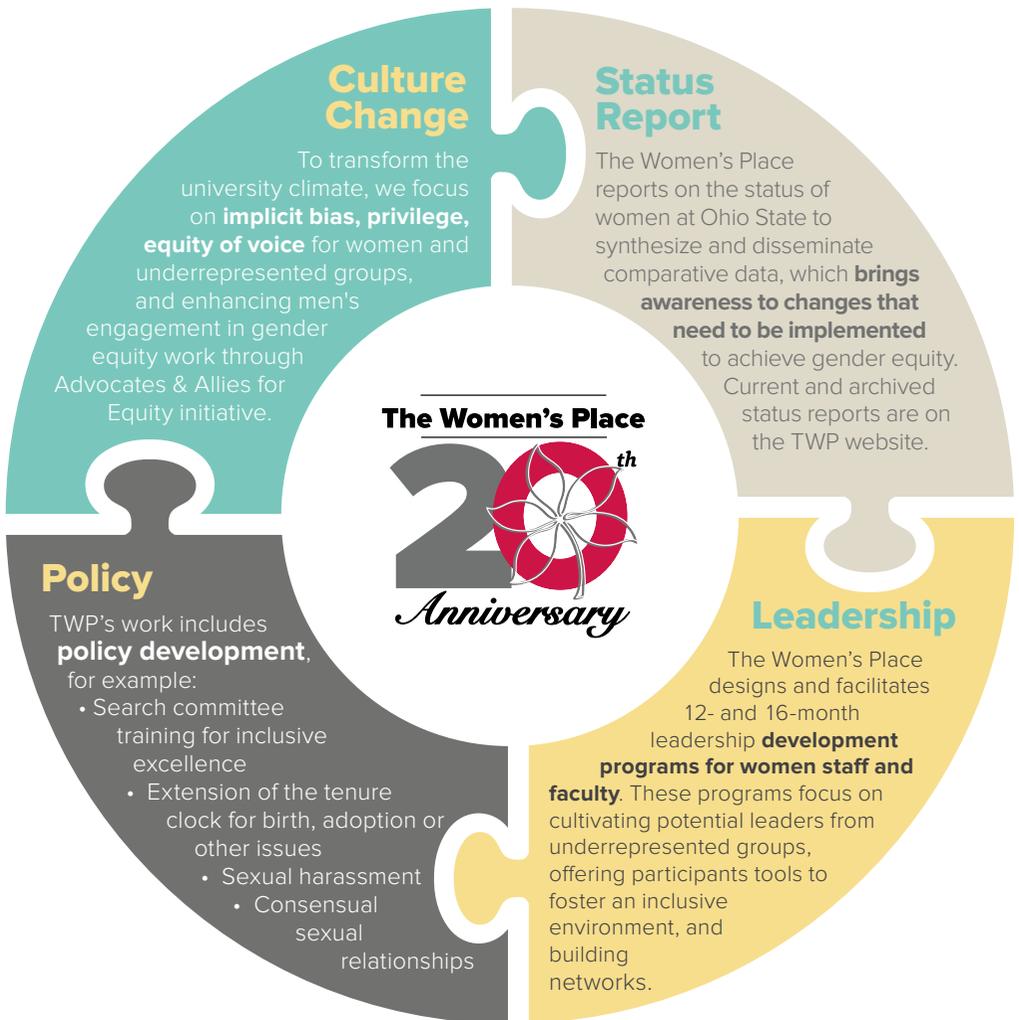
## Mission

The Women's Place (TWP) serves as a catalyst for institutional change to expand opportunities for women's growth, leadership and power in an inclusive, supportive and safe university environment consistent with the goals of the Academic and Diversity Plans.

## Vision

To be a 21st-century leader in the equity and advancement of all women in higher education.

The Women's Place works to catalyze change at Ohio State by focusing on these four areas: policy, culture, leadership, and reporting the status of women.



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