

How prepared are academic administrators? Leadership and job satisfaction within US research universities

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A national sample of 1515 university administrators (academic deans, directors, associate deans, and department chairs) completed a survey of leadership skills, preparedness for administrative role, and job satisfaction. Overall, participants felt least well prepared in the areas of developing entrepreneurial revenue, developing metrics to document progress, and handling grievances and appeals. Leaders who had taken courses in business administration, human resources/leadership, industrial-organisational psychology, and behavioural psychology reported feeling more prepared for their administrative role than those who had not. Indications of role strain were evident. The majority of participants had become less interested and less enthusiastic about their work since beginning their administrative appointment. Approximately half reported that duties of the administrative role regularly interfered with well-being and quality of life. Only 20.5 per cent of participants reported feeling good at their job every day. Women reported feeling more overwhelmed and less well compensated than men – yet also more skilled in inspiring others and addressing poor performance. Our findings highlight the need for continued leadership development and management training, as well as mechanisms to support leaders in maintaining wellness behaviours. This study provides baseline measures on how academic administrators experience their roles and is part of an ongoing longitudinal investigation of leadership in higher education.

Keywords: academic administration; development; job satisfaction; leadership

Limited empirical research has been conducted on the preparedness of academic administrators. The term academic administrator is used throughout this paper to refer predominantly to individuals who began as tenure-track faculty and subsequently assumed leadership and management roles within the US university system. The available literature suggests that few academic administrators have had any leadership training prior to beginning their post (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004; Hecht, 2004; Wolverton, Gmelch, Montez, & Nies, 2001). Most deans report no preparation for their leadership role beyond informal mentoring (Del Favero, 2006). This stands in contrast to corporate America, which has more routinely recognised the critical importance of leadership and management development (Conger & Fulmer, 2003). Annual corporate spending on leadership training has increased consistently and was estimated at over \$15 billion in the US alone in 2013 (O'Leonard & Krider, 2014). We concur with the observations of Wolverton and Poch (2000) regarding the similarities between the work of CEOs and academic leaders, and their conclusion that higher education may benefit from a more concerted development approach.

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Deans, directors, and department chairs have decision-making responsibilities that influence large numbers of faculty, students, and staff. However, most administrators rising from the faculty have had no prior training and development in business, management, or leadership. Anecdotally many academic administrators comment on feeling somewhat ill-prepared in various business and employee management aspects upon beginning their first administrative post. Leaders are expected to set the tone and establish conditions under which their faculty and students thrive, units climb in the rankings, and external funding and donor dollars rise. The lack of a systematic approach to training, developing, and coaching academic leaders leaves to chance how they deliver on these results. Poorly prepared leaders may at best slow the progress of their organisation and at worst adversely affect productivity and morale.

It has been estimated that one in five department chairs and academic deans will leave their positions each year (Gmelch & Miskin, 2011; Wolverton, Ackerman, & Holt, 2005). A proportion of those vacating their spots will move upward in administration and others will return to the faculty. Among those who abandon the administrative path, high stress and low job satisfaction are primary causal culprits (Gmelch & Burns, 1994; Wolverton, Gmelch, Wolverton, & Sarros, 1999). It is unclear the length of time necessary for an administrator to become proficient in the role, but as the typical length of time served in an administrative position is under 6 years, it suggests a substantial number of leaders are still in the process of learning their roles and developing the necessary skills for success (Wolverton et al., 2001). Without support and access to leadership development opportunities, many individuals may burnout and derail their administrative careers; other may remain in place, but be ineffective in their roles. Losing promising people or retaining less competent leaders is bad for business and affects the morale of everyone with whom they work. To become skilled in their areas of research, faculty spend years in mentored educational experiences. Why should we expect deans, directors, and department heads to excel at their roles from the start? Why would we expect them to be successful in handling the business as well as the people management/development that comes along with these administrative roles without proper mentoring, support, and training?

Academic leaders are expected to operate and produce results in an increasingly complex climate (Meek, Goedegebuure, Santiago, & Carvalho, 2010). Declining state budgets place ever-increasing pressure to generate revenue (Garrett & Pooch, 2011). Increased regulation and demands for accountability mean more time spent on paperwork and navigating bureaucracy – and less time for contemplation and proactive work like vision setting and people development. Ambiguity and role conflict are common (Wolverton, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 1999). Individuals who set out with lofty goals may end up stuck in a mire of seemingly endless meetings and finding their idealism turning to burnout.

Dedicated administrators put in long hours in the office and may give up many evening and weekend hours to university events. When days are filled with meetings, leaders may find they must accomplish primary and critical tasks from home during off-hours merely to keep from sinking. Advances in technology make it easier to remain accessible at all times. With not enough hours in the day many leaders begin scrimping on sleep. While the public is becoming more aware of the dangers of driving sleep deprived, not enough attention has been paid to the negative consequences on decision making and interpersonal interaction from accumulating sleep debt (Luyster, Strollo, Zee, & Walsh, 2012). A good leader is an asset. It is time educational organisations take a cue from industry and learn to protect their assets. This will require a cultural shift in many organisations. Attention to quality of life and wellness behaviours will generate a return

on investment through increased productivity and unit morale. The concept of 'do more with less' has been pushed to the brink within many institutions. Simply working harder may be insufficient or even physically impossible. We must work smarter. With each newly added task, accountability step, or regularly scheduled meeting, something less critical must be let go. Functioning in line with what is essential necessitates broad vision and strategic goal setting. Goals must not only be set but also reviewed and modified regularly.

Women remain under-represented in upper-level university administration, with under one-third of leadership positions (and 14 per cent of presidencies) in doctorate-granting institutions being held by women (The White House Project, 2009). This gap does not appear to be merely a function of ability. In general, studies of leadership suggest that women leaders are perceived to be more effective on tasks requiring interpersonal skill and are more likely to engage in transformational leadership styles (Eagly, 2007; Paustian-Underdahl, Walker, & Woehr, 2014). Much has been written about institutional structures that may lead to fewer women in senior administrative positions (Jones & Palmer, 2011), yet the empirical literature on gender differences in leadership preparation and job satisfaction among academic leaders remains relatively limited.

The goal of this study was to obtain information from a national sample of academic administrators on the level of preparation for, and experience of, their administrative roles. This study represents the baseline phase of an ongoing longitudinal study. A central theme of this work is to inform strategies to better prepare and support academic leaders in being successful and having maximal positive impact on the institutions in which they work.

Method

Participants

Participants were 1515 academic leaders (963 department chairs/heads, 332 associate deans, 128 deans, and 92 directors; 1041 men, 474 women) surveyed from the 145 Carnegie ranked US public research institutions. Racial composition was 92.4 per cent white/European-American, 3.6 per cent Asian, 2.1 per cent African American, .5 per cent American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 1.3 per cent multiracial; 2.9 per cent of participants were Hispanic.

Measures

The survey included 102 items. The first section covered demographics (gender, age, etc.), background questions on administrative positions held (e.g., role, years of service), and strategies used to develop or improve administrative skills (e.g., seminars, consulting services). Primary variables for this report included:

Educational background

Participants were asked to indicate whether they had or had not taken undergraduate or graduate coursework in business administration, human resources/leadership, industrial-organisational psychology, or behavioural psychology. These course areas were selected for their relevance to leadership and management.

Preparation for administrative role

Using a five-point Likert-type scale, participants rated the extent to which they felt prepared in 10 areas of responsibility prior to beginning their current administrative position (e.g., managing staff members, handling the financial budget).

Leadership skills

Participants provided self-ratings for 15 specific behavioural categories (e.g., setting clear expectations, providing helpful feedback). These items were drawn from extensive literature review and have been used extensively in a consulting context across a broad range of management and leadership development interventions. Responses were rated on a five-point Likert-type scale. Higher scores represent greater skill endorsement.

Job satisfaction

Six items, rated on a five-point Likert-type scale, addressed satisfaction with administrative role (e.g., feeling happy and fulfilled, high degree of autonomy, adequate compensation). Higher scores represent greater satisfaction.

Role interference

Five items rated the extent to which the administrative role interfered with participants' daily life (family commitments, social relationships, eating healthfully, getting regular exercise, and getting a good night's sleep). These items were rated on a scale from 1 (never) to 4 (always). Higher scores represent greater role interference.

Burnout

Job burnout was measured through the 16 items of the Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS; Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 2010). The MBI-GS includes three scales: exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy. The MBI has been extensively validated and is the most widely used measure of burnout (Taris, Schreurs, & Schaufeli, 1999). Lower scores are preferable for exhaustion and cynicism; higher scores are better for professional efficacy.

Participants also rated the leadership behaviour of their immediate superior via the Multidimensional Leadership Questionnaire. Those findings, along with comparisons of the experiences and perceptions of department chairs versus college deans, are presented in a separate report (Morris & Laipple, 2015).

Procedure

Email addresses for deans, associate deans, and department leaders of arts and sciences and business colleges were obtained from university websites. Potential participants were sent an email message describing the study and inviting their voluntary participation through SurveyMonkey, an online survey management tool. A single automated reminder was sent if no response had occurred within 14 days. Participant representation was obtained from all 145 US public research institutions (and all 50 states).

Results

This was the first administrative post for 43.2 per cent of the sample; 3.6 per cent were in an interim appointment. Mean number of years in current position was 4.74 (*SD* 4.31, range 1–35). Mean number of years in administration (all posts) was 15.63 (*Mdn* = 14 years). The majority of participants had served the administrative portion of their career within a single institution (*M* number of institutions served = 1.26, range 1–7).

Mean age of participants was 55 years (range 35–77). Women (*M* = 53.98) were on average 1.5 years younger than men (*M* = 55.55; *F* 12.39, *p* < .001) and had served fewer years in administration (*M* = 14.43 vs 16.23 years, *F* 8.22, *p* < .01). Due to multiple comparisons, we have adopted a more conservative threshold of *p* < .01 in reporting of significant differences throughout this report. As our initial goal was to provide a snapshot of the experiences and perceptions of a national sample of academic leaders, we first provide the reader with information on the total sample and then present gender-based comparisons when relevant. All gender differences reported below remained significant after controlling for length of administrative service.

Educational background

The proportion of participants completing coursework in the four targeted areas were as follows: business administration 19.8 per cent, leadership and human relations 18.8 per cent, industrial-organisational psychology 16.1 per cent, and behavioural psychology 15.1 per cent. In general, such educational experiences did appear advantageous for later administrative work. Participants who had taken at least one course in business administration had higher scores on overall preparedness (*F* 13.96, *p* < .001) and job satisfaction (*F* 6.37, *p* < .001) than those who had not. Those who had taken a course in human resources/leadership had higher composite scores on preparedness (*F* 34.45, *p* < .001), leadership (*F* 7.45, *p* < .01), job satisfaction (*F* 19.10, *p* < .001), and professional efficacy (*F* 16.96, *p* < .001). Coursework in industrial-organisational psychology led to higher perceptions of preparedness (*F* 12.78, *p* < .001) and professional efficacy (*F* 5.02, *p* < .001). As with the other targeted areas, coursework in behavioural psychology was associated with higher preparedness scores (*F* 8.17, *p* < .001). Of note however, a background in behavioural psychology was the only target area that conferred an advantage in lower composite scores for administrative role interference with daily living (*F* 6.68, *p* < .01).

Perceptions of preparedness and leadership skills

Participants' perceptions of how prepared they had been to begin their administrative roles are presented in Table 1. Overall, academic administrators felt they had been least well prepared in the areas of developing entrepreneurial revenue, developing metrics to document progress, and handling grievances and appeals. Women reported lower perceptions of preparedness than did men in developing entrepreneurial revenue, allocating limited resources, and managing their unit's finances.

Self-ratings of leadership skills are presented in Table 2. Women rated themselves higher than did men on being proactive, providing helpful feedback, using meeting time effectively, and inspiring others. Women also rated themselves as less likely to avoid making decisions. Despite these gender differences, the overall pattern of lowest versus highest rated skills was the same for both men and women. Overall, leaders felt they were most skilled at following through on commitments, matching actions and words, and being open to feedback. Areas in

Table 1. Ratings of preparedness for administrative role.

	Total	Men	Women	
	<i>n</i> = 1482	<i>n</i> = 1023	<i>n</i> = 459	
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>F</i>
Managing staff members	3.60 (1.14)	3.61 (1.23)	3.58 (1.18)	.19
Performance reviews	3.49 (1.16)	3.48 (1.14)	3.50 (1.18)	.15
Grievances and appeals	3.29 (1.18)	3.30 (1.16)	3.25 (1.23)	.47
Running efficient meeting	4.21 (.96)	4.20 (.95)	4.22 (1.00)	.05
Allocating limited resources	3.77 (1.07)	3.82 (1.03)	3.66 (1.14)	6.98**
Managing unit's finances	3.43 (1.21)	3.49 (1.19)	3.31 (1.25)	6.89**
Entrepreneurial revenue	2.64 (1.28)	2.73 (1.27)	2.43 (1.30)	16.52***
Balancing requests	3.55 (1.06)	3.58 (1.03)	3.48 (1.11)	2.93
Setting strategic goals	3.80 (1.03)	3.80 (.99)	3.79 (1.11)	.05
Developing metrics	3.25 (1.16)	3.25 (1.10)	3.26 (1.27)	.04
Composite score	35.08 (8.19)	35.31 (8.00)	34.54 (8.59)	2.61

Note: ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 2. Ratings of leadership skills.

	Total	Men	Women	
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>F</i>
Sets clear expectations	4.12 (.71)	4.11 (.72)	4.13 (.71)	2.06
Matches actions and words	4.52 (.61)	4.51 (.60)	4.52 (.63)	.01
Follows through on commitments	4.58 (.62)	4.56 (.62)	4.63 (.62)	3.32
Is proactive	4.23 (.78)	4.16 (.80)	4.39 (.72)	28.39***
Focuses on critical activities	4.23 (.75)	4.22 (.76)	4.27 (.72)	1.52
Poor performance – fair and objective	3.92 (.85)	3.90 (.84)	3.98 (.87)	3.12
Is someone others want to follow	4.00 (.78)	3.97 (.78)	3.98 (.87)	5.49
Provides helpful feedback	4.16 (.70)	4.12 (.71)	4.25 (.69)	10.20**
Comfortable leading change	4.27 (.80)	4.24 (.81)	4.34 (.76)	4.70
Open to feedback	4.38 (.72)	4.39 (.72)	4.40 (.72)	.11
Uses meeting time effectively	4.30 (.80)	4.27 (.81)	4.39 (.78)	6.97**
Inspires others	3.66 (.80)	3.60 (.78)	3.79 (.82)	17.12***
Micromanages the work of others	1.93 (.89)	1.89 (.88)	2.01 (.90)	5.64
Talks rather than listens	2.29 (.91)	2.26 (.91)	2.36 (.91)	3.48
Avoids making decisions	2.01 (.99)	2.05 (.98)	1.90 (.99)	7.06**
Composite score	62.23 (6.65)	61.88 (6.72)	63.02 (6.41)	8.83**

Note: ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

which they felt least skilful were inspiring others, addressing poor performance objectively and fairly, and being someone others want to follow. As might be expected, composite leadership scores were higher among more experienced ($M = 63.43$) versus first-time administrators ($M = 60.74$), $F(1, 1459) = 59.09$, $p < .001$.

Job satisfaction, burnout, and interference with wellness

Ratings of job satisfaction are presented in Table 3. Women reported feeling more successful in accomplishing goals, yet also more overwhelmed and less adequately

Table 3. Ratings of job satisfaction.

	Total	Men	Women	
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>F</i>
High degree of autonomy	3.79 (.98)	3.78 (.97)	3.81 (1.00)	.30
Feels happy and fulfilled	3.47 (1.12)	3.44 (1.10)	3.55 (1.16)	3.14
Has power to effect change	3.61 (1.02)	3.58 (1.01)	3.67 (1.03)	2.37
Accomplishes goals	3.97 (.81)	3.93 (.80)	4.07 (.81)	9.85**
Feels overwhelmed	3.16 (1.26)	3.06 (1.23)	3.40 (1.30)	23.37***
Adequately compensated	3.21 (1.28)	3.29 (1.23)	3.03 (1.35)	12.28***
Composite score	20.89 (4.24)	20.96 (4.18)	20.72 (4.35)	.97

Note: ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

compensated than did men. Job satisfaction was higher among more experienced ($M = 21.64$) versus first-time administrators ($M = 19.93$) $F(1, 1459) = 60.74$, $p < .001$.

Ratings of burnout and the extent to which the demands of the administrative role interfered with wellness and daily living are presented in Table 4. Examination of individual MBI-GS revealed that 15.2 per cent of participants reported feeling burnout from their work at least once a week, with 3.6 per cent reporting feeling burnout every day. Notably, the majority of participants had become less interested (76.4 per cent) and less enthusiastic (77.2 per cent) about their work since beginning their administrative appointment. Only 20.5 per cent felt good at their job every day.

A striking proportion of participants reported that the demands of their administrative role interfered 'frequently' to 'almost always' with family commitments (47.4 per cent), social relationships (46.5 per cent), eating healthfully (34.7 per cent), getting regular exercise (54.6 per cent), and getting a good night's sleep (49.4 per cent). Women reported higher levels of role interference than did men; however, the reported interference did not differ between first-time versus more experienced administrators.

Table 4. Burnout and job interference with wellness.

	Total	Men	Women	
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>F</i>
Maslach burnout inventory scales				
Exhaustion	2.63 (1.35)	2.55 (1.33)	2.80 (1.36)	10.44**
Professional efficacy	4.30 (.96)	4.26 (.93)	4.40 (1.02)	5.48
Cynicism	2.09 (1.44)	2.10 (1.42)	2.07 (1.48)	.10
Job interference w/				
Family commitments	2.48 (.67)	2.45 (.66)	2.54 (.71)	5.62
Social relationships	2.48 (.72)	2.42 (.71)	2.61 (.73)	21.38***
Eating healthfully	2.24 (.79)	2.15 (.76)	2.45 (.80)	47.44***
Getting regular exercise	2.57 (.89)	2.49 (.87)	2.75 (.90)	27.44***
Getting a good night's sleep	2.50 (.77)	2.43 (.76)	2.65 (.78)	25.07***
Composite score	12.28 (2.85)	11.95 (2.76)	13.02 (2.91)	44.88***

Note: ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 5. Strategies used to develop leadership and administrative skills.

	Per cent			χ^2
	Total	Men	Women	
Seeking advice from senior colleagues	91.3	91.1	91.8	.20
Reading about administration and leadership	67.7	64.7	74.3	13.49***
Institutionally mandated seminars/workshops	51.8	51.2	53.2	.50
Seminars through professional organisations	41.6	35.6	54.6	48.42***
Optional seminars through institution	4.6	3.4	7.4	11.95***
Paid professional consultation services	4.2	3.6	5.5	3.05
None (reports having done nothing)	3.2	3.3	3.0	.10

Note: *** $p < .001$.

Leadership development strategies

Strategies used by participants to develop or improve their leadership and administrative skills are presented in Table 5. Gender differences were noted, with more women than men reading about administration and leadership, taking seminars through professional organisations, and participating in optional seminars through their institutions. Higher professional efficacy was predicted by use of paid consultation services $b = .073$, $t(1458) = 2.74$, $p < .01$.

Discussion

This study provides descriptive data on leadership preparation, leadership skill, and job satisfaction among a large national sample of academic administrators in US public research universities. Although the demographic picture of university leadership is changing, the majority of academic administrators remain middle-aged white men (Carroll & Wolverson, 2004). Our sample is representative of that population. The results are limited by the population sampled and may not be applicable to all organisational settings. Findings also may be limited by the self-report nature of the survey. Future research including third-party reports and observational methods is warranted to corroborate these findings.

Based on reports of how well prepared leaders felt they were prior to taking on their administrative role, additional professional development appears needed in the areas of generating entrepreneurial revenue, developing metrics to track progress, and handling grievances. Finances are rarely a professional concern for the typical faculty member, yet financial stewardship becomes a crucial concern upon stepping into an administrative role. It is not the numerical balancing of a spreadsheet that is at issue, but how one handles requests for resource and raises necessary funds given shrinking operational state budgets. Establishing vision, long-term planning, and prioritising are key to maintaining transparent procedures and mobilising and directing the staff. Executives in the corporate world often have a longer horizon as well as more ready access to shorter term (daily/weekly/monthly/quarterly) results to track organisational progress and make changes as needed. Few administrators have been trained to examine and calculate return on investment (with its many complex and at times intangible considerations). If we are to move towards more empirically based decision making, academic leaders must work towards establishing

more refined and sensitive metrics to track short-term goals that will lead to long-term success.

While many institutions may hold meetings for chairs and deans on grievance policies, it is training in the nuances of behavioural and conflict management that may be most in need. Administrators can read policy documents; interacting with a tearful or raging faculty member standing in your office is quite another matter. Effective leadership is critical both in terms of immediate crisis management and in improving the overall working climate of the organisation – which in turn may reduce the likelihood of personnel actions reaching crisis proportions. Leaders should work with their administrative teams to identify what mechanisms are in place that help to provide early warning signs that issues may be emerging. Highly successful leaders are adept at checking in with individuals, getting them to be upfront about challenges and difficulties, and working through things together.

Certain educational backgrounds may confer an advantage in leadership and management. In some settings, this may be a consideration in the selection process. However, it is unreasonable to expect all potential administrators to have had coursework in leadership or behavioural psychology. The message that may be worth taking from our findings is the potential benefit of incorporating aspects of those areas into the ongoing training and professional development of university administrators.

The participants in this study reported feeling relatively less skilled in inspiring others, being someone others want to follow, and addressing poor performance objectively and fairly. Reading, consultation, and interactive training in human behaviour principles may go a long way in increasing the confidence and performance of university leaders. We would stress however that mere exposure to information is insufficient. Developmental gains are best when training approaches include watching others perform activities well, discussing what was observed, practising the observed skills with others, and receiving feedback on performance. Such training can be difficult to implement in real-world settings, but coaching support for administrators can help transfer classroom learning to practical application.

While composite leadership skill was higher among more experienced leaders, it is unsettling that the majority of participants in our study reported that their interest and enthusiasm had declined since beginning their administrative role. Unengaged leaders can have a ripple effect across other administrators, faculty, researchers, and students. A planned and deliberate strategy should be put in place to develop leaders and to support them in their roles. Ongoing feedback will be critical in helping leaders not only feel better about the work but to deliver on the results for which they are accountable – including creating a positive work environment for others. Greater attention to quality of life issues must be part of this strategy. As technology has enabled us to work virtually all the time, too many leaders do – and do not – spend the time necessary to take care of themselves. Leaders may be reluctant to show any signs of weakness among their fellow deans, directors, or chairs. Programmes or strategies geared towards confidential peer-to-peer mentoring may help normalise experiences and diffuse certain sources of stress before they have deleterious impact or derail an administrative career.

Our study yielded a number of gender differences. Notably, women felt less prepared and less skilled in a number of more traditional business management aspects of their administrative role (e.g., managing the unit's finances, allocating limited resources, and generating entrepreneurial revenue). Whether this is due to differential opportunity for skill development or perceptual biases is a matter for future research. Our findings do

suggest that professional development programmes targeted at women leaders may benefit from greater inclusion of practical business management.

In contrast to perceptions of the handling of financial matters, women reported feeling more skilled than men in a number of areas of social behaviour including inspiring others and addressing poor performance. This is consistent with socialisation differences where on average girls and women are reared to be more attentive to emotional and nonverbal cues from others (Kennedy Root & Denham, 2010). Professional development with male leaders may benefit from increased attention to these areas. Interestingly, women were more likely to engage in a number of leadership development strategies than were men. It is unclear whether this was due to feeling more in need, of being more proactive, being more open to feedback, or being expected to do so given the proliferation of professional development activities pitched directly at women faculty (e.g., the National Science Foundation's ADVANCE initiatives).

The women in our sample reported feeling more overwhelmed, experiencing more administrative role interference with activities of daily living, and being less well compensated. These are not likely matters of mere biased perception. Salary surveys suggest that although the gap is narrowing, overall women continue to be paid less than men; among full-time, fully promoted professors, salaries for women are at 89 per cent of salaries for men (American Association of University Women, 2013; Curtis & Thornton, 2014; West & Curtis, 2006). Research on childcare and housework demonstrates that working women continue to put in more hours on the home front than do men (Kan, Sullivan, & Gershuny, 2011; Sani, 2014). Time will tell whether societal shifts yield more balanced gender distribution in family and domestic activities. It is not our intent to suggest that life is easy for men – far from it. Our findings indicate that far too many administrators – men and women – are experiencing adverse effects on well-being as a result of their administrative duties. More support and attention to quality of life is needed all around. We suggest that this will lead to higher job satisfaction, better retention, enhanced productivity, and a better working climate for all those involved.

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