

Leadership Foundation for Higher Education Tracking the careers of TMP alumni

In this project, jointly funded by the Leadership Foundation and Equality Challenge Unit, we aim to explore the career trajectories of alumni from the Leadership Foundation's Top Management Programme (TMP). The findings of the project will be used to inform the Leadership Foundation's and the ECU's developmental activities, in particular, focusing on how to make more progress both in improving the diversity of the sector's leadership and enhancing leadership for diversity. While the project will focus primarily on gender, the research will place a strong emphasis on intersectionalities relating to ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and other aspects of diversity.

Research indicates that between 1970 and 2008 there has been a six-fold increase globally in the number of female students and that across the world, there are slightly more women enrolled on undergraduate courses than men. However, there is still a gender gap globally in the leadership of higher education. At a Round Table event hosted by the Leadership Foundation in July 2012, it was noted that the leadership of higher education in the UK is shifting towards a less inclusive profile, with leaders being predominantly male and public-school educated. Many other issues were raised including that there is a perception of equality having been 'done' and that greater diversity at leadership level is not a guarantee that things will change.

This new research project will be guided by a steering committee chaired by Professor Janet Beer, Vice-Chancellor, Oxford Brookes University and Joint Chair, Equality Challenge Unit who is herself a TMP alumnus. The fieldwork will consist of interviews and focus groups with TMP alumni, an exploration of the nomination and follow-up processes for TMP with senior HE staff and a survey of all contactable TMP alumni. Given that the research population is small and selective, confidentiality of the data will be important. The outcomes of the project will include recommendations for the Leadership Foundation and ECU as well as other relevant stakeholders. General findings will be communicated to the sector more widely through suitable media.

We hope that TMP alumni will wish to participate fully in this project and we look forward to further contact with colleagues as the project begins. We expect that the research will take approximately nine months to complete. If you have any comments about the project that you would like to share with us at this stage, please contact Diane Bebbington on 020 8540 0647. Thank you in advance for your help.