



WHAT WILL IT TAKE: EQUALITY IN LEADERSHIP BY 2030

Technology Action Plan

The Transforming Women's Leadership Pathways event and the development of Plans took place online, and on Gadigal and Bidjigal land (Australia). We recognise the peoples of the Eora nation as the traditional custodians of the land (Australia). We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging and extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We acknowledge that this land has long been a place of teaching, learning, and creating. Sovereignty has never been ceded.

Arizona State University's four campuses are located in the Salt River Valley on ancestral territories of Indigenous peoples, including the Akimel O'odham (Pima) and Pee Posh (Maricopa) Indian Communities, whose care and keeping of these lands allows us to be here today. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.



TECHNOLOGY WORKING GROUP ACTION PLAN

Aspiration 2030

To strengthen the leadership pathways for women in the technology workforce to leverage a broader and more diverse talent base.

To restore and enhance economic development, the digital transformation of industry, government and academia must be accelerated. Leadership pathways for women in the technology workforce must be strengthened to leverage a broader and more diverse talent base.

We propose the following set of aspirations to help strengthen the technology pipeline and create a pathway for women in leadership in technology organisations:

- Increase the percentage of women in the technology workforce by 10%
- Remove the wage gap and ensure equal pay for women, including women in leadership
- Increase the percentage of female IT professionals on boards of all organisations to a goal of 50% of board membership

The current state of the technology discipline - key findings and power statistics

Despite the growing support for inclusive initiatives in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) recruitment, cultural and economic gender gaps in technology persist. As technologies evolve rapidly, the discipline has an opportunity to strengthen the talent pool while encouraging and supporting women throughout the pipeline.

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“We need women at all levels, including the top, to change the dynamic, reshape the conversation, to make sure women’s voices are heard and heeded, not overlooked and ignored”

– Sheryl Sandberg, American technology executive, philanthropist, and writer. Former COO of Facebook (Meta) and Founder of LeanIn.org



Barriers and opportunities



BARRIERS



There is a shortage of women in STEM disciplines generally. Role stereotypes linger throughout society to create biases, social norms and expectations about what a typical technologist looks like. This can dissuade young girls from engaging with STEM disciplines.

One of the key challenges that limit women's pathways to senior leadership in the technology profession is the lack of visible role models; the elevation and celebration of female leadership success stories. Stories that highlight women's successes are not common.



OPPORTUNITIES



Recruiting girls into STEM disciplines needs to occur early (primary school, high school, early university). It is important to express how technology is a lucrative and useful skill set. It opens career paths in many industries.



It is imperative for the discipline to combat the stigma of sharing one's story and discuss the gender barriers one has overcome by celebrating women's successes, building support for existing women in leadership and contradicting cultural stereotypes that challenge their credibility. Seeing women in leadership can also help build self-confidence in aspiring female leaders. In sharing skills and the concrete successes of females, other individuals can step in to support the pathway to leadership, which can mitigate individual biases of immediate managers to promote females.



With a lack of gender equality in pay and a higher attrition rate for women compared to men in the technology industry, it is important to provide flexible working conditions, support for families, and parental polices, along with initiatives to help employees overcome the stigma of using such benefits. These initiatives would help to build and protect the pipeline.



Research indicates that strategies such as sponsorship, positive matching and/or reverse mentoring programs are effective at increasing female leadership in organisations. Offering constructive pathways and training to help high potential employees grow can create a strong pipeline for female leadership.



And finally, transparency in the attribution of work outcomes (acknowledging male and female contributors) and pay (perhaps via negotiation training) must be promoted

Recommendations

PUBLIC AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUITY

Government, Industry and Universities

● Make women's success stories more visible and accessible. Establish and maintain a recognition loop, either online or physical, where women's achievements are displayed. Regularly highlight the projects and hard, technical skills of women in technology teams.

- Provide a repository and a voice for success stories
- Discuss skill sets over gender
- Celebrate how success worked in terms of families, share perspectives of mothers, fathers, caregivers being successful despite real and perceived barriers
- Highlight how people with different backgrounds became and remain successful
- Launch public relations (PR) campaigns to share success stories
- Include women's STEM success in course curriculum (elementary, high school, and university)

● Establish and empower a gender equity working group, including all genders. The group needs strong endorsement and engagement from senior executives and a clear articulation of aim/purpose and strategy that frames the benefits of positive gender diversity for employees in terms of business performance, compliance obligations and customer/industry reputation. It could be established within a division (such as technology), or it could be regional or enterprise-wide, depending on the organisation's size.

- Host events that provide opportunities for all our people (but especially women) to come together, network and be inspired by stories of leaders within the organisation and externally. These events should be sponsored by Directors, who participate directly in the events and lead discussion forums.
- The potential outcomes are: (a) executives hear ideas from team members to improve the development of female talent, reduce the barriers they face and receive suggestions on how the organisation's leaders can assist; and (b) team members will get to know the Executive Committee better, which may help to reduce feelings of isolation about issues they face in their working lives.
- Senior executive involvement and the relatively informal / casual tone of the events may encourage people to share personal stories. The group could employ a phrase such as "bring your whole self to work."

● Implement a balanced approach to parental responsibilities. Establish and promote gender equality for childcare. Ensure that male and female employees have access to (are encouraged to use) flexible working options and parental leave and that these are thoroughly discussed with them.

Universities

● Establish and fund an initiative to prepare women for Board participation.

TRAINING AND MENTORING

Government, Industry and Universities

- Offer negotiating training.
- Offer sponsorship, positive matching and/or reverse mentoring programs within the workplace
- Offer defined pathways and training programs to help high potential employees grow
- Partner with initiatives such as the Male Champions of Change (MCC), the Anita Borg Institute, and the Global Institute of Women's Leadership.

Universities

- Universities can be trailblazers in increasing the number of women in STEM by recruiting women as instructors and role models to attract young women.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Government, Industry and Universities

- Ensure organisations offer equal opportunities for interviews (academic and employment) to applicants of all genders. Ensure that women are represented and active in interview panels.

INCREASING VISIBILITY OF FEMALE LEADERSHIP

Government, Industry and Universities

- Elevate and celebrate female leadership success stories. Highlight the gender barriers that have been overcome by celebrating women's successes, building support for existing women in leadership and contradicting cultural stereotypes that challenge their credibility.
- Share the skills and concrete successes of females.

Working Group Lead



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