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Developing female middle-managers in Australian universities / Michelle Wallace and Teresa Marchant

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Abstract

Universities should be developing female middle-managers for reasons of gender balance (Aitkin in The Last Boilerhouse Address, Canberra University 2001), the skills shortage, pending mass retirements (Chesterman in Not doable jobs?? Exploring senior women?s attitudes to leadership roles in universities. Women?s Higher Education Network Conference, Bolton, 2004) and sustainable, post-bureaucratic organizations (Kira and Forslin in J Organ Change Manage 21(1): 76?91, 2008). Investigating the learning and development of women managers is timely. Research assumes that women in academe have the qualifications, experience and skills for management. Is this the case? The paper provides the first national demographic and development profile of women middle-managers in academic and the research-neglected administrative streams in Australian universities, with a sample of 342 women (46% response rate). Age is a particularly notable demographic with the majority of academics within 5?10 years of retirement. Nearly 60% of

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academics experienced few current development opportunities and their discipline-based qualifications did not prepare them for management. However, a greater number of administrative managers received relevant preparatory training. Once in their current management roles women experienced markedly fewer development opportunities. If higher education institutions are learning organizations, continuous learning should be evident (Watkins in Adv Dev Hum Res 7(3): 414, 2005). Our research shows this is far from the case. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Wallace, Michael,
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