



Winter 2020 Newsletter

## TEXAS WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION E-NEWSLETTER

*TWHE Mission: Texas Women in Higher Education (TWHE) advances women who hold or aspire to leadership roles in higher education.*

*TWHE is the American Council on Education (ACE)  
Women's Network State Organization for Texas*

ACE WOMEN'S  
Network™



[Registration  
Now Open!](#)

2020 TWHE State  
Conference

Denton, TX

March 29-31, 2020

Our annual conference is for women in Texas higher education who are looking to grow and refine their professional and leadership skills. Sessions will include keynote addresses from leaders in higher education, and there will be numerous breakout sessions ranging in topics from communication skills to developing a brand to faculty-staff interaction. There will also be ample networking time. There will also be the opportunity to support a local charity and to donate gently used professional attire. **Visit the [conference website](#) for more information.**

Click [here](#) to register. **The deadline to register is March 15, 2020.** Regular registration is \$250. The pre-conference session is \$35, and the Institutional Representative reception is \$50.

Click [here](#) to book your hotel room. **The deadline to reserve a room with the special rate is February 27, 2020.**

Click [here](#) to submit a concurrent session proposal. **The deadline has been extended to February 17, 2020.**



## President's Welcome

Happy New Year!

I hope each of you had a relaxing and joyful holiday break and is enjoying the busy start to 2020.

One of the many things I like about working in higher education is that we have so many new beginnings. Each new class, each new semester, each new academic year allows us to learn from the past and start fresh.

This year is a great fresh start for TWHE! We have a full, active board for the first time in several years, and the board is planning several new initiatives (stay tuned for details about those). We are also starting to send out quarterly newsletters again, after a several-year hiatus.

If you're like me, I don't make all of my resolutions on January 1 but instead spend the entire month of January planning and dreaming and preparing for the new year. Several of my plans this year include focusing on my career and professional development, and hopefully, yours do too! TWHE can certainly help. Getting involved with TWHE and attending the state conference is a great way to focus on yourself (personally and professionally) so that you can achieve whatever goals you set for yourself.

Our annual state conference is coming up! It will be on March 29-31 at the Embassy Suites in Denton. We hope to see you at the conference as an attendee and/or a speaker! Visit [our website](#) for all the information about the conference and for how to submit proposals.

If you read further in the newsletter, you will also find our strategic goals and plans for the year. If you have any question about TWHE or you would like to get involved with any of these goals, please contact me at [jenny\\_branson@baylor.edu](mailto:jenny_branson@baylor.edu).

We hope to see you next month!

Jenny Branson

TWHE President 2019-2021



## Meet your TWHE Board of Directors

### **President**



Jenny Branson (expires 2020)  
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### **Immediate Past President**



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### **Emeritus**

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### **Ex-officio – Former Chairs**

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## **TWHE Board Member Perspective**



**Martinella M. Dryburgh, Ph.D., Executive Director and The Leslie B. Crane Chair of Leadership Studies, Posey Leadership Institute, Austin College**

***~How long have you been involved with TWHE? What types of TWHE activities did you participate in before joining the board?***

I joined the board in 2018 after attending my first annual state conference in Frisco. I was in awe of all the amazing women I met during the conference and knew that I wanted to become involved in the organization. In my role as Executive Director of the Posey Leadership Institute, I hosted women leaders on campus so they could share their leadership philosophy with Austin College students.

***~Why do you find service on the TWHE board rewarding?***

I truly believe that TWHE is the premier professional organization for women in higher education across the state. The annual conferences are a great way to network with professional women that can become new colleagues, mentors, and friends. Additionally, the organization allows women to learn about the many career paths they can take to reach their professional goals. This is critical as many women find ways to reach their goals on their own timelines and paths to leadership can be unique.

***~List your degree/s and corresponding institution/s?***

Bachelor of Business Administration, The University of Texas at Austin; Master of Liberal Arts, Southern Methodist University; Doctor of Philosophy, The University of Texas at Dallas.

***~What would you say to a colleague interested in learning more about TWHE (or interested in attending a conference, serving as an IR, joining the board)?***

I would advise anyone interested in TWHE to reach out to her institutional representative or anyone on the board to connect more fully with the organization. Board members are always looking for new ways to engage with more women across Texas. If you have an idea or a story to share that will help us engage with more women, we would love to hear it!

***~What is a key issue for you as a (woman) higher education administrator and how is TWHE addressing it?***

There are two key issues that are very important to me and TWHE is addressing both of them. First, the conferences and regional meetings are a great way to learn different ways to reach leadership positions in



higher ed institutions, especially for women outside of the traditional tenure track. When women share their stories at keynote speeches and HerStories panels, I always come away with new knowledge that I can apply to my professional development and leadership goals. Second, I appreciate the sessions on how to deal with difficult situations and manage conflict with others. These are essential skills for leaders and I enjoy learning from women about how they overcome struggles to become better leaders.



### **TWHE Recognizes President Lynda Villanueva, PhD**

Dr. Villanueva was selected as President and Chief Executive Officer of Lee College in Baytown, Texas. She began her new position on January 2, 2020 as the tenth president of Lee College since it was formed in 1934. Dr. Villanueva is no stranger to community college higher education. She previously served as the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs at Brazosport College in Lake Jackson, Texas. Prior to her Vice Presidency at Brazosport College, she served as their Dean of Instruction. Dr. Villanueva earned her Doctor of Philosophy degree in industrial/organizational psychology; a Master of Arts in psychology from the University of Houston and a Bachelor of Science in psychology from Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Dr. Villanueva credits many important and influential experiences on her pathway to the presidency. First, she developed, implemented, taught and trained faculty to teach Brazosport's first student success course, incorporating research-based strategies. Her efforts resulted in amazing results in four years including:

- 58% increase in degree and certificate attainment.
- 21% increase in Fall-to-Spring retention.
- 22% increase in successful completion of gatekeeper English courses.
- 16% increase in successful completion of College Algebra.
- 36% increase in successful completion of developmental Reading.
- 21% increase in successful completion of developmental Writing.
- 49% decrease in the withdrawal of students in gatekeep English.
- 61% decrease in the withdrawal of students in College Algebra.

Dr. Villanueva also credits her experience as both the Core Team Leader and a Data Coach in Achieve the Dream (AtD) in shaping her skills, mindset and ability to become an effective college president. She stated that these experiences shaped her approach as a practitioner, supporting colleges in engaging in bold, holistic, sustainable institutional change, leading to cultural reforms at both Brazosport College and abroad. The network developed through AtD was key to shaping her core value of serving all students regardless of their preparation or background.



Dr. Villanueva was a participant in the Aspen Presidential Fellowship which was formative in her development as a leader. She states that “as a member of a diverse, student-success focused cadre of reformers who collectively can push the field forward, I was nurtured and trained to take the next step in my journey”.

Her humble spirit and servant leadership style was clearly articulated when asked what influenced her to seek administrative positions in higher education. Dr. Villanueva stated she was never motivated by a title or a position. In her pursuit to solve problems, she needed a bigger platform with more resources and the ability to shape policy, culture and whole college reform. These were her greatest influences when seeking more responsible positions.

Dr. Villanueva said she had been very lucky to have been surrounded by incredible mentors along her way to college presidency, in fact, too many to count, as she believes that mentors can be anyone that can answer questions and support you. Dr. Millicent Valek, President of Brazosport College and Dr. Villanueava’s former supervisor, Dr. Ken Tasa nurtured her every step and allowed her both the autonomy and the resources to accomplish her career goals. She says that she has grown with the most amazing team of professionals at Brazosport College. One of her core values is to be surrounded by those who are experts in their own right. They are all mentors to her. She reflects on childhood when she dreamed of having a better life. At times her dreams focused on just being safe and well fed. The place where her dreams seemed to be the most real was when she was at school. She credits that to being surrounded by amazing individuals who believed in her and encouraged her to dream bigger than she had ever imagined. Looking back, she attributes the numerous teachers since grade school among her mentors.

When asked about challenges she’s faced as a woman in higher education leadership, she reflected that as a minority female, her primary challenge was that she didn’t have others that looked like her in the positions she sought. Dr. Villanueva further reflected that while minorities now make up the majority of students at community college, more than 70% of leaders are white and close to two-thirds are men. As a president, she is something of a rarity. Only a third of community college presidents are women, with just 5% being Latino and only 2% Asian American. She is a rarity indeed and an exceptional leader who is changing the face of higher education.

Core values is what Dr. Villanueva believes is the right skill-set to become a female president. She believes that if you are not driven by a focus to equitably support students and their success, your skill set is irrelevant. Outside of this, she finds it is important for leaders to collaborate with others to create a vision for the work of the college, to engage followers as full and respected partners and to focus on achieving agreed upon goals. She feels leaders must take reasoned risks to support student success. A strong president must be skilled developing a culture that builds toward a desired future rather than being mired down in the many daily operational challenges that arise. “A president is not a vice-president on steroids”. Excellent leaders identify and develop leaders, including faculty, in service to the college’s mission, vision and core values. A president must have the courage to address the established culture of a college and the backlash that will come. They



must be understanding of what needs to be done, even if the way to do it is unclear. She goes on to say that presidents must be committed to staying around long enough to see their efforts be successful.

Dr. Villanueva is most looking forward to changing the lives of students and the communities they reside in her new role as president of Lee College. When asked what advice she has for women seeking to advance their careers to presidential positions in colleges/universities, she said “Don’t Wait”! Women often suffer the worst from imposter syndrome. She said that as women, we tend to wait and tell ourselves “I have to obtain this or that, accomplish this goal or that goal, and put in the many years here or there”. The truth is that most men don’t wait. Neither should we. Too many women have fought for our right to succeed. Too many students need our leadership. Our time is now.....Take it! Congratulations to you, Dr. Villanueva on your new job as President of Lee College.

## Readings

Pipelines, Pathways, and Institutional Leadership: An Update on the Status of Women in Higher Education. Heather L. Johnson

This article was a follow-up report to the 2009 *White House Project: Benchmarking Women’s Leadership*, which identified women in academia making up more than half of the all college students, yet only a quarter of full professors and less than 15 percent of presidents at doctoral granting institutions. Johnson discusses the pipeline myth that promotes the idea of too few women qualified to hold leadership positions. Johnson indicates that “there are more than enough qualified women to fill available leadership positions. In fact, the pipeline is preparing women at a greater rate than it does men”.

Women have earned over 50% of associates degrees since 1978; bachelor’s degrees since 1982; master’s degrees since 1987 and doctoral degrees since 2006. While women have continued to earn degrees at a higher rate, they have not continued to be promoted at the same rate as their male counterparts. Johnson reveals “even though women have higher education attainment levels than men, they do not hold positions with high faculty rank, salary or prestige. She goes on to expose that during the 2015-2016 academic year, women faculty members earned an average of \$15,408 less than males in the same or similar positions.

Presidents and Chief Academic Officers (CAO’s) are also underrepresented by females, with women presidents only comprising 30 percent across all institutions of higher education. The percentage of CAO’s declining from 2008 to 2013 in public doctoral degree-granting institutions.



## TWHE Strategic Initiatives

### **Strategic Initiative #1: Programs and Events**

**Long-term goal:** Create and execute high quality, meaningful conference and training programs that support values of the organization.

### **Strategic Initiative #2: Professional Development**

**Long-term goal:** Empower women to move forward in their careers through professional development, networking, and mentoring to enhance the pipeline of women leaders in higher education.

### **Strategic Initiative #3: Reputation and Awareness**

**Long-term goal:** Create awareness and elevate the prominence of TWHE and its members.

### **Strategic Initiative #4: Participation**

**Long-term goal:** Understand and improve individual, institutional, and community engagement.

### **Strategic Initiative #5: Board of Directors Governance**

**Long-term goal:** Improve the short-term and long-term effectiveness of the organization.

## Check out TWHE Listserv

For the latest news and information on TWHE and other topics related to women's leadership, sign up for the TWHE listserv by emailing [twheconnect@gmail.com](mailto:twheconnect@gmail.com).

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## TWHE Newsletter

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